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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

THE PASSING AWAY OF M.

It is with a heavy heart that we record the news of the passing away of Mahendranath Gupta—better known as Master Mahashay or M., on the 4th June last at 6-30 a.m., of heart failure. For some time past he had been ailing under different complications due to the infirmities of old age, but still nobody expected that the end would come so suddenly. His last words were, “Mother, take me in Thy arms.” At the time of death, he was seventy-eight.

M. was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and came in contact with him first in the year 1882. He was then the Headmaster of the Vidyasagar High School at Shambazar, Calcutta and a Brahmo by faith. A young man of brilliant parts, fresh from College after a distinguished academic career, with the pride of his learning and scholarship, having little faith in God with form, considering image worship as a superstition to which only ignorant minds were victims, M. found his egotism completely crushed by one, who, to his great

astonishment, had no book-learning but yet talked words of wisdom. From the very first meeting, M. felt greatly drawn to the Master and began to repeat his visits. Referring to this Sri Ramakrishna humorously remarked, “A peacock was given a dose of opium at four o’clock. The next day it appeared again precisely at that hour. It was under the spell of opium and came for another dose !”

Well, this ‘dose of opium’ brought M. frequently to the Master, till he completely surrendered himself to him and had his life completely metamorphosed. During the latter part of his life, any one who had any occasion to meet M., could easily perceive that he literally lived, moved and had his being in Sri Ramakrishna and his life was a veritable window through which the Master shed light upon many a weary soul. M. lived constantly, as it were, in the atmosphere of the temple garden at Dakshineswar, where he saw and had the privilege of mixing with the

Master. His thoughts always wandered there—nay, were there, and it was with an effort that he talked of any other thing. Humming to himself the songs which the Master had sung, his far-away look bridging up the distance between him and the time when the Master lived in physical body, his whole being resonant with the music of the Master's soul, M. was a source of great spiritual inspiration to many, who would go in pilgrimage, from far and near, to the open space on the roof of that building in Amherst Street, where he used to receive visitors. If in *Kathâmrîta*, (the Bengali diary of M.) he recorded the 'gospel' of the Master in print, in this place, he echoed the living words that fell from his divine lips. It seemed as if not one word was lost, not a single incident was forgotten which had even a remote connection with the Master—nothing was trifling, nothing was insignificant, everything was treasured in M.'s heart and was ever vivid in his memory. They were the subjects of his hourly meditation—nay, they were the very breath of his life, and a moment's talk with him would unmistakably reveal the world which was his. Broach any subject—not necessarily religious—and you are lifted up into the atmosphere which the Master created around him many years back, and you are admitted to the company of those who lived with the Master: for the answer was sure to bring out some incident in the life of the Master. You scratch him however slightly and you find his Master coming out. You do not see a devotee in M. in the sense of a separate existence from the Beloved: M. lost his very existence in the Master. So it was that though his words supplied the daily bread of spiritual life to many, M. did not seem to be a teacher. Nor was there any conscious attempt in him to preach. When visitors met him, he

simply thought aloud in relation to any subject that was raised, and people would pick up the pearls according to their respective understanding and capacity.

But his words as also his writings—*Kathamrita*—have served as a veritable explosive to many lives: for numerous are the persons who, stimulated by them, have left their hearth and home in search of God, and innumerable are the persons who, under their influence, are slowly burning with a discontent that their life is not what ideally it should be. The burden of his talk was: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all other things shall be added unto you. Living in the heart of a metropolis, where the surroundings spurred every one to strive after material enjoyments and to look outward, M. never failed to emphasize that search for God is the only thing worth giving attention to in life and that the bliss of God-realization is the only enjoyment worth hankering after. If anybody raised a topic of religious controversy, his only answer was that continence and inner discipline were the first requisites for understanding religion. He would often repeat the stories from the Upanishads of disciples who were sent back many times to practise continence, before they could be initiated into the mystery of spiritual life.

Moulded in the life of Sri Ramakrishna as he was, there was no trace of bigotry in him. One could hear from him the teachings of other Prophets and other religions. Sayings of Christ flowed from his lips as spontaneously as those of his own Master. It seemed as if he had the whole of the Bible in his memory. And he found new meanings into everything said there which, when disclosed, would be of great practical help to those who listened. A Christian might well envy his knowledge

of the Bible and the mine of inspiration which he discovered there.

M. was humility itself. His humility did not allow him to reveal his identity in the books he wrote, though they are sure to immortalize him: he took the pen-name of M. This humility was so very natural with him that anybody who met him, though sorely embarrassed by that, would be struck with its grace and beauty. It did not create a cramped and artificial atmosphere around him, as is often the case under such circumstances; but, on the contrary, it sanctified the surrounding, which had its attraction as well as its dread. One would feel small before him, but to an equal degree would be aroused in one an attraction for his company. With a young visitor, he would forget entirely the difference due to his own old age. And his humility could be seen at its highest if anyone, who had made even the slightest sacrifice in search of God, approached him. Though many Sannyasins would visit him to have inspiration from his words and to learn from him, the respect which he showed to them (or to the ideal they stood for?) would kindle the fire of discontent in them for reaching the goal of their life and give them a fresh impetus to their strivings. His life was an education to all.

Sri Ramakrishna once said with reference to M.: "You are of my own group—of the same stuff—like father and son. So long as you did not come here, you forgot yourself." And truly M. showed by his life that he was a living instrument in the hand of his Master, to give solace, strength and spiritual sustenance to innumerable souls, weary and heavy laden in life. M. did not formally renounce the world like many other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Perhaps the Master did not desire that; perhaps he thought that by being in the world, M. could be an instrument of help to a larger circle of people and a better source of inspiration to those who were all eager to seek God but had not the circumstances in their favour 'to deny themselves.'

By the passing away of M. another beacon-light in the spiritual life of many is gone; many will become spiritually orphan. But let us remember that only by a burning earnestness to make our life better, we can fill up the void that is in our heart, and let us not forget that in none of our good intentions and noble endeavours we can miss the strength of the good wishes of those who, though now physically absent, were in their lifetime all love and blessings to us.

Om Shantih! Om Shantih!! Om Shantih!!!

NOTES OF CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

[FROM THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE]

17TH DECEMBER, 1921.

The class of the Adhyatma Ramayana was over. After having seen Sri Ramachandra, the sage Sharabhanga no longer kept his body; he threw himself into a

pyre in his presence. Swami Turiyananda said, "When once God has been seen, what is the further use of the body? So he gave up his body. But this cannot be called a suicide."

The sage Sutikshna, after seeing Rama, said, "Oh Rama, let them do that who want to see you in our impersonal aspects as inconceivable, infinite, etc., but may I ever see you in this form—blue like a fresh cloud—which I have seen now." On this point Swami Turiyananda remarked, "Yes, true indeed! If one sees this, it is equal to seeing that; and if any one sees that, he has seen this also."

27TH DECEMBER, 1921.

Swami: "(To a certain gentleman) God can be known only through indication (तदस्य बुद्धि). As for instance, when it is said, "गङ्गायां वीषः" —a hamlet of cowherds on the Ganges—it means that the hamlet is on the bank of the Ganges and not on the waters. God can be known, only when the heart becomes pure. How nice is the condition of children! They have attachment for nothing. It was for this reason that Sri Ramakrishna loved children so much. How simple-hearted they are! After a wash on coming from the latrine, they will ask others to examine whether they have been perfectly clean! They do so out of sheer simplicity. But as they grow up, this condition of mind goes away. It is completely lost, when lust, anger, etc., grow within them. Half of it is gone, when marriage takes place, and one is completely done for, when one gets an issue. It is for this reason that Tulsidas prayed, 'Make my mind free from the blemishes of lust, etc.' There may be cases that one is a devotee and at the same time he has lust still left in him. But that is not an ideal state. One must aspire to be a devotee with having no trace of lust in him."

At this stage a Brahmachari, not belonging to the Order, came to see Swami Turiyananda, accompanied by his younger brother.

Swami Turiyananda asked him, "Are you going on well with your meditation and spiritual practices?"

Brahmachari: "Yes, sir, tolerably well."

Swami: "Do hard meditation and prayer. How many are the obstacles one has to meet with, in one's spiritual practices! But one has to tenaciously stick to them. All difficulties and obstacles *must* have to be overcome. Good things are always fraught with manifold difficulties."

Then the Swami said with reference to the younger brother of the Brahmachari, "Just let me see whether he will become a Sannyasin." And he took off his blue glasses to examine him. But his eyes began to grow defective due to age and so he could not examine the boy. The boy had come to the city of Benares for the ostensible purpose of study. From the Brahmachari, his elder brother, Swami Turiyananda learnt that the boy at times felt restless for home. At this the Swami said, "Why is it? Why should it be so? One who has come out, has come out for good." To the elder brother, the Swami said, "Make him also a monk. In the world one has indeed to slowly rot! So the greater the number of those who become monks, the better. What do you say? It means that so many people are saved from the meshes of the world."

Then the Swami quoted a Sanskrit verse which means that one must renounce.

DANGER AHEAD

BY THE EDITOR

I

“If God is kind, why has He ordained that man should earn everything as the fruit of his hard labour God being all-powerful, could He not make life easier for man?” asks the idler. The question might as well be asked why at all there was the creation, which means woes and sufferings to so many. But answers to these questions cannot be got; and taking things as they are, life means struggle,—sometimes hard struggles without even any hope of success. It is said that creation is the outcome of the loss of balance amongst the Gunas; the universe is striving to regain the lost equilibrium of the three Gunas, and in the process of that striving is seen all that goes by the name of creation. As such, the whole universe is in a constant struggle to get back its lost state, and human beings as a part of the universe have to undergo the same struggle.

That man should live by the sweat of his brow is deemed according to Christianity a curse. According to Hinduism it is a play. Life is full of struggles—but to those who have got the eyes to see—these struggles are necessary to give a zest to the play. Those who join the play willingly, enjoy life; those who want to escape, suffer, as escape is impossible. To play against one’s will is always a great suffering, and life also becomes a drudgery when we seek immunity from its hard fight.

Those who are physically debilitated and mentally weak, get daunted by the difficulties of life and waste their energies in philosophizing, but those who have got strong virility, gird up

their loins to grapple with them; they rather enjoy facing difficulties just as an expert sailor enjoys weathering a storm. This is true of individuals as well as of nations. When a nation is in a healthy state, it vigorously tries to remedy any defect that has entered into it, or to tide over any disaster that has overtaken it. But when the national life is in a diseased condition, people, under such circumstances, tend to spend all their energies in simply theorizing till nothing is left for action.

In the last great War, Germany lost all her wealth, and the financial crisis she had to face after the peace, was terrible. She had to pay a heavy toll in men also. But she did not succumb to despair at this very sad and deplorable condition. German people with new vigour engaged themselves to save the nation from the grip of imminent death, and now within a few years the achievements of Germany in the sphere of industry, trade and the reconstruction of the country as a whole have been an object of wonder to the whole world. It is said that no conquered or plundered people, in the history of the world, has shown such achievements before.

Similar has been the case with the Austrian people. To speak of Vienna only: The city was in a terrible condition of chaos as the aftermath of the War—its population was starving, the treasury was empty, and it seemed that there was no hope of recovery. But within a decade the city has so much improved its condition that a recent Indian visitor to it was wonder-struck by all that he saw. He writes, “It is no wonder that thousands of people

from every nook and corner of the world, with no political prejudice or sentimental bias, are impressed by the magnificent and splendid achievement of the socialistic municipality of Vienna, and are coming here to study the measures and methods, which they applied to make the old metropolis, whose decline and fall was confidently predicted, into a modern city—a city whose example will possibly be emulated by many others.”

The condition of Russia is greatly similar to that of India. It is a vast agricultural country. For many centuries its peasant population had to live in an abject condition of dirt, disease and distress. It seemed that it was doomed to eternal suffering. But after the Revolution, the Soviet Government has so much improved the condition of the masses that, according to the opinion of Rabindranath Tagore, their condition nowadays can be very favourably compared with that of the labour population of India. The poet in his visit to Russia was wondering if that could be at all possible—so much varied and astounding has been the progress. Yet Russia has to work in face of antagonism from the whole world, one may say.

To speak of another suffering and much-persecuted race—the Negroes of America. It is said that the Negroes have made a progress within half a century that no people in the world has yet done within a similar period. “Illiteracy among negro has been reduced from 90 per cent in 1863 to less than 20 per cent in 1920. Starting as slaves the negroes about now ten millions have an estimated wealth of ten billion dollars. When the negro obtained his freedom there was in the whole United States a few farms controlled by a very small number of previously ‘free Negroes.’ Today they operate in the

South alone some 100,000,000 acres of land. The Negroes in America now own more than 200,000,000 acres of land.”

II

When one studies these figures and the report of so rapid progress in other countries the question naturally comes in one’s mind, “Where is India? How much has been done in the matter of constructive work in India?” True, India has to labour under tremendous difficulties and disabilities. But what fallen nation has not or had not? These are the inevitable lot of people, who have suffered a shipwreck in national life. There is no use trying to measure the staggering volume of obstacles in the way, or quarrelling with tools in the hand. The wisest counsel will be to face difficulties boldly and do what is best even under discouraging circumstances.

No problem is so keen in India to-day as the problem of the masses. India cannot rise, if the condition of the masses be not improved. Unless that is achieved, they will always pull back as a deadweight against all progress of the country. Those who sincerely seek the advance of the country, must try to carry the masses along with them. A few educated people inspired by Western ideas and modes of thought do not constitute the country, it is the masses who form the backbone of the nation. But except till lately no attention has been bestowed on them, and even now little has been done for them.

Our masses live in abject poverty, in a state of utter helplessness, without any light of education, an eternal prey to diseases, victims of money-lenders and are exploited from so many sources. So many classes of people live at the expense of the masses, but none genuinely think of doing any substantial good for them. At best our feelings for them end in frothy talks, but genuine sym-

pathy which is sure to be transformed into action is very rare. Nowadays people can be found in plenty who want to see India raised to the dignity of any free nation of the world, and they are ready to undergo even great sacrifice for that. But the fact that even such persons are not actuated by a thought to divert their energies to ameliorate the condition of our dumb millions, indicate that they are moved more by a glamour of political ideals than any sincere love of the country. What is a country? It is not an abstract thing? If one cannot love one's neighbours, if one is not moved to pity at the distress of one's fellow brethren, if the sufferings of one's helpless villagers do not disturb one's peace, how can one be said to be loving the country? If a man's love for the country is genuine, he will be as much anxious to remove the present distress as to devise safeguards against misery in future.

Nowadays many people are more busy to build a bright future than to attend to the problems of the immediate present. As a result it is found much easier to keep up an agitation by some artificial stimulus or through the help of sensation, than to do some constructive work. The number of people will be very small, who are ready to build the foundation of the future nation by working in the villages, behind all public notices, unknown and unapplauded. But the greater we can create the number of such workers the more assured will be the future of the country.

III

Now who will work for the uplift of the villages? Who are most fitted for the task? Well, it is those people who live in the village itself and are in a comparatively good condition. Nowadays the tendency is that our young men, when they get education, leave the villages and come out in the cities.

Even those who catch the fire of patriotism, join movements in towns and cities and find themselves incapable of working in the villages. Even those who feel inclined to work in the villages, go to work there, as it were, like alien people. They find it difficult to so identify themselves with the interest of the villagers that the latter will take them as one of their own. It should not be complained that the villagers do not respond to the appeal for their own good. There is no man who will not welcome any measure for his own good. If the villagers are found apathetic towards persons who want to work for them, the reason is that the workers have not been able to break down the barriers of distrust and suspicion with which human nature receives every new thing. The attempt of the city-bred to fix a ready-made programme in villages has all over the world failed, and it is bound to. Growth is always from within. It cannot be engrafted; at best it can be helped. So better result can be expected, if some of the villagers—rather village young men—can be inspired to work for the villages. One such earnest, self-sacrificing young man can change the entire outlook of the whole village. His earnestness will at first spread infection amongst his companions and his family members and gradually amongst others. It is said in regard to the matter of rural uplift in England that the work has been mostly done by the country parson, the squire and their wives and their children. One or two families in each village through their sympathy and love formed the nucleus for the reconstruction of the whole village life on a better basis. That is, some of the villagers themselves took up the initiative.

In India also formerly much of the happiness and prosperity of the village life was greatly due to the Zeminder

or landlord of the village. He would consider it his religious duty to do some social service (to use a word of modern parlance) by way of digging tanks, sinking wells, starting Pathshalas, etc. In times of any social or religious ceremony his house would welcome all villagers without any distinction of caste, creed or wealth, and this would tighten the bond of love and sympathy between himself and the rest of the villagers. In times of any epidemic and pestilence, his help would greatly go to assuage the calamity, and in times of any difficulty his counsel would be sought for by all. Nowadays the advent of modern civilization has totally destroyed our village life, and the work of rural reconstruction, if at all any attempt is made, is begun at the wrong end. That is, those who are in a position to help the village work leave the village and persons bred and brought up in the atmosphere of cities go with sentimental feelings and work-ed-up sympathy for the poor villagers to work for them. No wonder, that such attempts—though their number is not great—meet with failures.

What is greatly wanted is to create a spirit of service amongst all. Formerly service to others in various forms constituted a part of the religious life of the villagers. Every house was open to receive even unknown visitors, one would consider it a sin to take one's meal while one's neighbour was starving, one family fallen in distress was sure to receive the sympathy of all the families in the village. But now religion also has received a rude shock due to the invasion of modern spirit in every pore of our national life. And the villagers very often find it difficult to look to the needs of others as they themselves are in the grip of hard economic struggles. In any case, if our villages are to be revived, an atmosphere is to be created

surcharged with a spirit of willing service. Persons are not rare in the country who give up all in the name of God and religion; nowadays we hear of political Sannyasins, persons who show remarkable self-sacrifice to work in the field of politics; we want also persons who will stake their all in the work of the uplift of their villages, who will make the village-work—the religion of their life.

For temporary philanthropic work, in times of flood and famine, nowadays there occurs no dearth of men and money. But now the greater need is for an attention to be paid to more permanent works. A class of permanent workers for rural reconstruction can be had in two ways: (1) If at least some of the village young men, who have received education, give up the lure of city life and remain at their villages to do some work of rural reconstruction. (2) If some outside agencies can give stimulus to some of those who are compelled to live in villages to take to village work.

The Government can do a great deal if there is in the staff persons who are filled with a genuine spirit of service. Mr. F. L. Brayne, I.C.S., has shown by his work in the Gurgaon district of the Punjab, what amount of work a single official can do if he really takes into his head to do some permanent good to the people. Within the short period of a few years he was able to bring about such a marvellous improvement in the rural life of the district that the comparative figures showing what he has done seem almost impossible to believe. His experiences are recorded in *The Remaking of Village India* which should be in the hands of every worker engaged in the similar task.

Formerly the people of Gurgaon would say—in the same way as throughout the country all people do—when cattle

were bad, crops failed, or insect destroyed them, that it was 'taqdir' (fate) or the will of Providence and not think of their own folly, idleness or ignorance. Under the inspiration of Mr. Brayne they soon knew that *Zamindar ki beaqli parmeshwar ka qasur*" (the folly of the peasant is the fault of Providence)—a saying which has now passed into a proverb in that district. But Mr. Brayne also had to pass through considerable difficulties and many discouraging circumstances; he was, however, determined to make the impossible possible through earnest zeal and unflagging efforts. The greatest obstacle in his way was his official position which did not lead people easily to believe that he was sincerely moved by an earnest desire to do some permanent good for them. But so long the Government does not take to such work earnestly or finds it hard to achieve any success in that direction, people themselves should try to improve their own lot. The great lesson of Gurgaon work is that our village life may be altogether metamorphosed, if the people sincerely try, without wasting energies in sighing or blaming 'taqdir.'

The village work in the country suffers not so much for want of a perfect programme as from the dearth of genuine workers. Programme will be evolved by the workers themselves when they undertake the work seriously and continue to wrestle with the obstacles that come in the way. For, experience is the greatest teacher. And besides, every village has got problems which are peculiar to its own. In some village perhaps the most pressing problem is that of malaria, in another it is of litigation and party faction, in the third perhaps the problem that requires immediate attention is how to save the agricultural population from the ravages of yearly floods. But no problem will remain difficult to those who will make it a mission of their life

to solve it. In other countries one hears of persons who have devoted their whole life to one particular act of social service—it may be improvement of the lot of prisoners, or the spread of education amongst the labourers, or building an asylum for the orphans, and so on. Can we not expect similar things in our own country, where religion means to see the same Self pervading all?

IV

One great essential thing in the matter of rural reconstruction is to remove the feeling of helplessness amongst our village population. Living in ignorance and being out of touch with the outside world, many of their sufferings they take as inevitable. If they knew that similar difficulties—sometimes of more serious nature—face the people in other countries also and are removed by them, then they would not so easily submit to fate. It is essentially necessary that a conviction should be created in them that to a great extent it depends on themselves to ameliorate their lot. Mr. Brayne says: "Why do villagers of 40 look like 60? Because they live in fear—fear of hunger and famine, fear of disease, fear of law courts, of money-lenders, and their neighbours. . . ."

"Our work is to replace these fears with confidence that if they follow our advice, they and their families will be healthy, happy, well-fed and well-clothed and well-housed, and at peace with everyone." Perhaps many years of sufferings have brought about this state of helplessness, and hence is the necessity of help from those who are fortunately in a better position.

The common problems of all villages throughout India are those of education, sanitation and poverty. People live in ignorance, they lead unhygienic life, put up in unsanitary surroundings, and as

such fall easy victims to epidemics, not to speak of slow death to which they are constantly subject. They are in a chronic state of poverty due mainly to the exploitation of money-lenders, litigation, want of foresight, over and above the general economic distress in the country. But many problems become easy of solution, if the problem of education be solved.

Here education should not be taken to mean only the literary education, or the knowledge of the three R's. Though the percentage of literacy in the country is abjectly small, yet it has been found that in many cases even the primary education has done to the villagers greater harm than good. So much so, that it was the experience of an Educational Officer in Bengal that the villagers in a place heaved a sigh of relief when the village school was abolished: for they invariably found that the children who spent a few years in the Pathshala no longer returned to the agricultural work, and thus became often a burden to the family. More than the knowledge of the three R's,—though we do not altogether ignore its necessity—the villagers require the knowledge of those things which will stand in good stead to solve the problems of their life. As such, an experienced, old man of the village is often a centre of greater education to the village in general than persons even of high academic distinction. Even without the help of books, more fruitful education can be spread amongst the villagers through talks and conversations, personal examples and guidance. In fact, this latter method will be found occasionally more convenient and beneficial.

Above all, education must be made dynamic, *i.e.*, people must be led to apply theories at once into life. In the country the number of people will be legion who suffer for want of the know-

ledge of sanitary and hygienic laws, but the number of those also will not be small, who know them theoretically, but will not stir themselves to action. Many know that in a state of poverty, it is simply inviting greater misery to indulge in litigation or to spend money beyond one's means in social functions for the sake of mere prestige, but few have the strength to curb their spirit of litigation, or the moral courage to keep the consideration of their pecuniary state above that of social prestige. Now the spread of right type of education, and as a consequence the atmosphere that will be thereby created, will save the villagers from many easily preventable evils.

One thing which the village workers should sedulously guard against is, not to introduce revolutionary changes in the village in their eager desire to see speedy progress. Instances we know where workers, keenly feeling the social injustice to which some people have been subjected, created such an atmosphere in their attempt to remove that, that the peace of the whole village was disturbed, and they found it impossible to continue their work. In all these matters it is better to follow the line of the least resistance.

It is also better that village work should be kept apart from politics. For politics is always of distracting nature and will be unsuitable to those who want to do village work uninterruptedly. Besides, by eschewing politics and social problems of complex nature, village workers will be able to enlist a wider sympathy, which will mean greater progress.

V

The history of the world shows that when the sufferings of a people reach the worst limit there comes a reaction

amongst them. They, then, actuated by a sudden zeal for progress and moved by the memory of their past long suffering, bring about a veritable revolution in the society and often throw away even the good that ought to be preserved in going to eradicate the evil that should be removed. As such, though there is progress in one direction, there is a setback in another direction. In India, the misery of the masses is heart-rending. There may come a time when their

state of helplessness will be turned into a feeling of resentment against those in whom lay the power and resources to help them. Before that dreadful time comes, it is better that those who have got the welfare of the nation and society at heart, devote more attention to the constructive work—to improving the lot of our masses. Otherwise there lies a great danger ahead, and the history of other countries is bound to be enacted in India also.

RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

BY BEPIN CHANDRA PAL

I wish I could be present with you to-night* to pay my homage to Swami Vivekananda. But my age and the present condition of my health do not encourage me to risk it. These anniversaries of those who have helped to make modern Bengal are exceedingly useful in preserving the memories of a generation that is unfortunately being pushed into oblivion by the new forces that have recently come in our public life. Vivekananda belongs to that generation.

I

Vivekananda, however, does not stand alone. He is indissolubly bound up with his Master, Paramahansa Ramakrishna. The two stand almost organically bound up, so far as the modern man, not only in India but in the larger world of our day, is concerned. The modern man can only understand

Paramahansa in and through Vivekananda, even as Vivekananda can be understood only in the light of the life of his Master. The Master was a great spiritual force. He was therefore inevitably a mystery to a generation possessed by the un-understood slogans of what is called rationalism, which really means lack of that imagination which is the soul of all spiritual life. Imagination is not fancy. It is really the power to cognize, if not to visualize, that which stands above not only the sensuous but also the intellectual plane. The generation to which Ramakrishna belonged, lacked this imagination. He was, therefore, a mystery to it. It was given to Vivekananda to interpret and present the soul of Paramahansa Ramakrishna and the message of his life to this generation in such terms as would be comprehended by them.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa belonged to no sect or denomination or to put it in another way, he belonged to all sects and denominations both Indian and non-Indian. He was a true Universalist,

*Written on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's birthday anniversary meeting, held last February, at the Albert Hall, Calcutta, under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society.

but his Universalism was not the Universalism of Abstraction. He did not subtract the particularities of different religions to realize his universal religion. With him the Universal and the particular always went together like the sun and shadow. He realized therefore the Reality of the Universal in and through the infinite particularities of life and thought. Vivekananda clothed this realization of his Master in the language of modern Humanism.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa's God was not the God of logic or philosophy, but the God of direct, personal, inner experience. Ramakrishna believed in his God not on the authority of ancient scriptures or traditions, nor on the authority of any Guru, but on the testimony of his own direct, personal experiences. He was a Vedantist; because, his direct allegiance and early training was in the cult of Shakti. The Shakti cult in Bengal has been built upon Vedantism. But the Vedantism of Ramakrishna Paramahansa could hardly be labelled as Shamkara-Vedantism, nor could it be labelled either as any of the different schools of Vaishnava-Vedanta. These labels are for those who borrow their theology from speculations of great thinkers. But Ramakrishna Paramahansa did not belong to this class. He was not a philosopher; he was not a Pandit, whether modern or ancient, he was not a logician; he was a simple seer. He believed in what he saw.

The seer is always a mystic. So was Paramahansa Ramakrishna: so was Jesus; so were all the great spiritual leaders of men. The crowd cannot understand them; least of all are they understood by the learned and the philosophers of their age. Yet they reveal that which all philosophies grope after. Paramahansa Ramakrishna, like Jesus Christ, need-

ed an interpreter to explain him and deliver his message to his age. Jesus found such an interpreter in St. Paul; Ramakrishna found him in Vivekananda. Vivekananda therefore must be understood in the light of the realizations of Paramahansa Ramakrishna.

II

The story of Vivekananda's conversion has not as yet been told. I do not know if anybody knows how this miracle happened. Vivekananda had been a rationalist and a deist, though he fancied that he was a theist. His early religious associations were with the Brahma Samaj. They were not very congenial to the development of faith in saints and seers. Ramakrishna Paramahansa attracted however many members of the Brahma Samaj by his great psychic powers and more particularly by his passionate love of God. But they never were able to open the secret springs of the life and realizations of the Paramahansa. They saw him through the prism of the intellect. The Paramahansa never really opened to most of them the secret chambers of his piety. Vivekananda was favoured by the Paramahansa in this matter.

Paramahansa Ramakrishna saw into the innermost composition of Vivekananda's nature and spirit and recognized in him a fit instrument for delivering the message of his own life. This is the real story of Vivekananda's conversion. It is the story of the conversion also of Saul, though it was set in a different psychological setting. Vivekananda felt drawn to his Master by what he hardly knew. It was the operation of what is now called soul-force. When one soul touches another on this deep spiritual plane, the two are united for ever by unbreakable spiritual bonds. The two henceforth become practically one; the Master working in and through the dis-

ciple, the disciple not even knowing that he is dancing to the tune of the Master. People call it inspiration. Vivekananda worked after his conversion under the inspiration of his Master.

III

The message of Vivekananda, though delivered in the term of the popular Vedantic speculation, was really the message of his Master to the modern man. Vivekananda's message was really the message of modern humanity. His appeal to his own people was, "Be men." The man of religion in India had been a mediæval man. His religion was generally a religion of the other world. It was a religion that enjoined renunciation of the world and all the obligations of the physical and the social life. But this was not the real message of Paramahansa Ramakrishna. He was as much a Vedantin as a Vaishnava. His ideal of piety was a synthesis between these two rival schools of Hindu religion. His cult of the Mother was really the cult of 'Bhakti,' or love of God, realized in the terms of the human motherhood. As with the Bengal Vaishnavas, so with the Paramahansa, the Ultimate Reality was not an abstraction. It was not carnal, but therefore it was not without form. And the real form of the Ultimate Reality is the Human Form—not the sensuous form of man which we see with our eyes, but the spiritual form which stands behind it, invisible to mortal eye. Man and God are generically one.

To help man to realize his essential divinity is the object of all religious culture. This is what Vivekananda really meant when he appealed to his people to be men. In the ritual of divine worship of the Brahmin, is used the following

text which says :—"I am Divine. I am none other. I am not subject to grief and bereavement. I am of the form of the True, the Self-conscious and the Eternally Present. I am by nature eternally free." This was the message really of his Master as delivered to the modern world by Vivekananda.

It is the message of freedom, not in a negative sense, but in its positive and most comprehensive implications. Freedom means removal of all outside restraint. But constituted as we are, we cannot cut ourselves off from all outside relations, whether with our natural environments or our social environments. Such isolation spells death both physically and spiritually. The law of life is therefore not isolation, but association, not non-co-operation but co-operation. And real freedom is achieved not through war, but through peace only. War or renunciation or isolation has a place no doubt in the scheme of life, but only a temporary place as a means to the attainment of the ultimate end which is not perpetuation of the inevitable conflict of evolution, but the settlement and cancellation of these conflicts in a closer and permanent union. Freedom again is one. Freedom from the domination of our passions and appetites is the first step in the realization of the ideal. Freedom from the fear of brother-man is the next step. Freedom from the domination of any external authority must follow next. In this way from personal freedom, through social freedom including political freedom, man must attain his real freedom. And when he attains it, he realizes finally that he and his God are one. This is the message of the Vedanta as interpreted by Vivekananda. This is really the message of his Master to the modern world.

A NEW RELIGION

BY SWAMI DEVATMANANDA

I

It has been a common practice with the people of the modern times to declare that religion must be rehabilitated to suit the needs and requirements of the present age. Thoughts and ideas have constantly been evolving since the dawn of human civilization and particularly with the advent of the age of Renaissance the very outlook of life has been speedily outgrowing the old conceptions; and in the midst of such changes in this struggle for a readjustment and a new orientation the demand for a new religion is obvious and natural. This demand has been spurred on for good or evil, by the revolutionary achievements of science. The rational mind of the scientist is not willing to admit dogmatically the existence of a supermundane spiritual Being Who is considered to be the omnipotent ruler in shaping and guiding the destinies of man. With the scientist, matter in contradistinction to spirit is the alpha and omega of the creation, and the active principles are the various natural laws to which man is subservient. He is a helpless creature at the mercy of these forces: or, in short, his existence is fortuitous, devoid of any so-called spiritual values of life. Further, the discoveries of science and their application to the furtherance of human comfort have eliminated from the minds of many the ideas of God and religion and their necessity in fulfilling the higher human purpose. Consequently, Mr. Whitehead rightly observes, "Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as science does. Its principles may be

eternal but the expression of those principles requires continual developments." (*Science and Modern World*, p. 270). In other words, we have to define or re-define religion once more or once for all, so that we can safely steer our boat ahead.

From time immemorial man has been striving to understand the true meaning and right application of the concept of religion. Undoubtedly, religion is vitally important with man and various peoples at various times succeeded in their own ways in formulating their conceptions relating thereof. And at the present day, the result of such attempts has been a countless number of doctrines and dogmas, sometimes and perhaps often conflicting in their assertions. For some reason or other man feels an urge for a religious life: but, on the face of facts, only blind faith and unreasoned belief can give him some relief in some religious doctrine. On the other hand, a little free thinking leads him to the region of no-religion. Thus, the modern age is well characterized as "protean" in every respect. It is the age of reason more in the sense of the questioning than of rational thought; hence, it is the age of revolution. The human nature is violently asserting itself breaking through all the barriers of limitations. It is madly rushing onward in its wild chase after something *apparently* unknown, and with the passing of days and changing of circumstances, it gains more strength and vigour from the freedom of thought that is manifest everywhere. Freedom of thought is followed by freedom in action, which is eventually followed by

chaos if not properly guided. The want of a sensible and right form of limitation to our thought and action makes a difference between a civilized society and the primitive and wild state of man almost nil. For, in spite of the fact that the modern age is marked by a mighty advance in scientific knowledge, it has miserably failed in achieving the end of life. Machine has indeed been perfected but not man. And these machines are the tools and instruments in the hands of man to be used in other ways. For truly 'science cures in retail, and destroys in the end, wholesale.' Under such circumstances the animal in the primitive man makes its appearance only in a refined and polished garb in the civilized man.

Our present age is unique in its conception of universalism as against those of clanish, tribal, or racial ideas of olden days. Now, with the progress of scientific knowledge the old barriers of nature have been much overcome, and races of people have thus been drawn out of their nooks and corners and made to stand face to face with one another. The time is fast approaching when people will no more be talking and counting their interests in terms of a particular country or nationality, but in terms of one human brotherhood. It is not the prediction of a coming millennium when evil will disappear leaving behind its trail all rosy hues and an unbroken empyrean and golden rule. This world of ours is one of variety and change and it will be sheer foolhardiness on the part of one to expect one continuous reign of good and happiness here, undisturbed by the slightest puff of wind of turmoil and distraction. At least, the human history up to the present day does not bear witness to that. Furthermore, a casual glance at the origin of religious ideas brings home the fact that man wanted to take re-

fuge in some higher and mightier power beyond, because he is handicapped in innumerable ways. This life is not at all secure and it is not enough. He wanted this life to be not all: it should be extended to the super-mundane realm. Fundamentally thus the psychological origin of religious conception, consciously or unconsciously, was in pessimism. And all religious doctrines, without any exception, hold the hope of eternal optimism when man will be born anew in the life divine, here or hereafter. Obviously, man hoped and still hopes to find peace and happiness in religion when they are stubbornly denied to him by nature. In other words, religion offers to faltering and weak man a haven of infinite bliss in the most comprehensive and universal sense of the term.

II

Under such circumstances religion should be and always is considered as the panacea of all the ills of life. And the religious history of mankind proves the veracity of the same in unmistakable terms. All the spiritual teachers, prophets, and leaders of all countries and of all times preached the same divine love, the same eternal harmony, peace and goodwill to man. And why the pages of the history are so often marred by bloody stains and rancorous feuds in the name of all that is holy and sacred? How could all these be possible in the name of the all-merciful and loving Father whose children we claim to be? Who could sanction and guarantee such acts to be perpetrated? Are those serene and seraphic teachers and prophets,—the representatives of the Most High, and their sublime teachings responsible for the same? They yet stand out boldly before all humanity to proclaim that they are

not surely responsible for such things and their lives and holy utterances defying all the ravages of time still bring unto the ears of not a scanty few the whispering, and at the same time life-giving and soul-stirring message of a divine life.

Consequently, the whole blame rests with the religionists and more particularly the mighty spiritual potentates, the earthly custodians of the kingdom of God. In their sublime zeal for the propagation of the holy doctrines of the Heavenly Father amongst His children, weak and helpless, most horrible persecutions in the form of sword and fire were carried on for ages. The kingdom of God had to be established on the sighs and tears of widows and orphans! It has ever been the holy act with the priestly class, the hard-brained theologians who are never tired of spinning out a highly metaphysical meaning from some worthless and unimportant ritualistic dogma, in order not only to strengthen their grip upon their own followers, but also to wield a mighty weapon against the meek and believing votaries of other faiths. They, indeed, are the sincere upholders of the Faith. But this sincerity is infected with a blind narrowness, and hence, it is fanaticism. Like very many ritualistic and dogmatic forms unessential and unnecessary though they are, fanaticism is considered to be one of the important factors of a religious life. Fanaticism is a canine instinct. But the difference between a dog and a fanatic is that the former recognizes his master in any garb whatsoever, whereas the latter knows only his own master, his God, in one form alone. Thus, this form of doctrinal bias gives an exclusively patented right of holiness and divine origin to one particular faith irrespective of all consideration of

living a rightly uplifted life of spiritual beatitude on the part of the protagonists of the faith.

It will not be out of place here to point out that all the Oriental religions, without any exception, have a distinct characteristic in this respect. Though the modern scholars are growing more inclined to show a great deal of charitable disposition toward the alleged outworn and degenerate civilization and culture of the Orientals in general, it is a historical fact that centuries ago these ancient religious faiths were carried smoothly and unobtrusively to the farthest corners of the earth, the remnant of which can yet be distinctly noticed in the old Mithraism and the cultures of the Jews, the Mayas, etc. These Orientals did not require the aid of marching cohorts to herald the advent of the kingdom of God, nor did they preach the message of peace and love, to the woes and sufferings of the weak and helpless, and leave behind them the marks of their triumphant march in the warm blood of the prostrate millions. Yet, at a time when there was no modern means of quick communication, those early faiths were disseminated amongst the people of various lands like the bracing and soul-inspiring vernal breeze, bringing countless numbers of budding souls into bloom. They were the messages not of an ever-angry, vindictive, and partial God, more often ready to curse than to love and bless His creatures, but they were of a mightier and nobler life, a life of serene beauty of divine love and God-consciousness. It remains thus with the scholars to determine what was mainly responsible for such a unique phenomenon in the religious history of the world; whether it was due to the nature of the religious thoughts or of the votaries themselves, or of both, that the real significance and meaning of the

term religion were so successfully maintained.

Obviously, then, the religions as presented by their respective theologian doctors cannot but prove to be uncongenial and unacceptable to the tastes of many a sincere truth-seeker. It is against the tide and trend of time; and people can no further be spoon-fed, hoodwinked, and entertained by outworn and half-mythical stories. They had their time and now changed circumstances demand rational explanations of everything natural and super-natural. The super-natural can never be the exclusive property in the experience of a privileged few. That which ever remains beyond the reach of human experience in general and which cannot be used for the uplifting and ennobling the humdrum common life of man, can never have any practical worth whatsoever. Again, there cannot be an escape by referring to the sanctified authority of Faith. It has its undoubted value in building up a truly religious life, but a blind belief should on no account be confused with faith. It grows out of a conviction in a mere belief. But this belief in order to develop itself into a firm faith has to pass through a rigid form of criticism. If a certain belief in a certain idea or object successfully stands the onslaughts of rational questionings, naturally it gains strong root in the heart of man. But we too often forget in this connection that any belief in any thing or idea may not have a necessary counterpart in reality. Whereas every religion demands an unquestioning belief in all its doctrines and dogmas unreservedly as the first and last steps in a devoutly religious life on the part of the votary. And it has a just claim, being a divine revelation; but so are others also. Hence all the differences between one religion and another are

also divinely sacred; the consequence is that instead of there being one religion based upon the eternal unity of Godhood, there are innumerable religions struggling for supremacy. They, thus, agree in their eternal difference, not in their agreement of divine unity.

This the religious doctors are not fully unaware of, but for obvious reasons they cannot give up their foothold. The ritualistic observances are surely subsidiary to the spiritual life although sometimes they are not wholly inessential. But in the frenzy of religious ardour for keeping the faithful within the fold, the external forms have been rigidly and stubbornly enforced at the cost of the spirit. "Man's plight would, indeed, be sad if he had to be kept in order through fear of punishment and hope of rewards after death," justly remarked Professor A. Einstien. Man has been actually kept under such circumstances beyond his patience and now the reaction has clearly set in. It is no wonder that when he exercises his reasoning faculty, he gets dissatisfied with what is offered to him, and no wonder it is again, that such a questioning is regarded as an act of perfidy and effrontery on the part of the questioner. But it does not necessarily mean that he is a hard-boiled and perverted atheist or heretic as so often such people are considered to be. The most glaring and outstanding example of this is the huge-scale experiment going on in the present-day Soviet Russia, and its tremendous impact upon various states of Europe and America. "The whole anti-religious movement in Russia is an attack, not upon religion, but on priestcraft," observed the eminent savant Mr. Bernard Shaw, after his return from his visit to Soviet Russia. The fact is that many people have a real inward hankering for an uplifted life of the spirit, but their doubts are not

met with satisfactorily; on the other hand, the urge for a higher life is often stifled, for, instead of food they receive stones.

III

People are of opinion that science is the foremost enemy of religion and that the greatest harm is being done to it by unjustified and unwarranted attacks from scientists. But this criticism is not wholly correct. We often confuse the scientist with the materialist or atheist. The scientists are not all materialists, on the other hand, there is a good number of believing souls amongst them. But because they have a peculiarly questioning attitude of mind, they want to see things and understand their meaning in the light not of blind belief, but of reason and experience. And when they discover that the most important part of the present-day religion is nothing but a mass of external observances unsupported by scientific truths, they naturally get disappointed, and that is often considered to be a mighty sin on their part for which they are condemned. We are scarcely given the freedom to choose between what we do believe and what we ought to believe, and the exercise of this choice ultimately turns people into unbelievers.

However, to mend matters many theologian doctors are coming forward with a make-show to screen off the weak points in their dogmatic religious beliefs. "Within the last hundred years the advance of science has been bewilderingly rapid," says Dr. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, "but the Church has learned its lesson, and has lightened the ship by throwing over many antiquated traditions, and the educated Christian has accepted Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton; he has accepted Darwin, he has accepted Jeans and Eddington.

He is prepared to accept Einstein if he could understand him. He has surrendered the geographical heaven and hell, perhaps without fully realizing all that surrender implies." (*Science and Religion—a Symposium*). Scientific discoveries will never lose their value and importance whether or not they are recognized and accepted by religion. They will ever be there, because they are facts of nature and they will always go against simple beliefs. A mere assertion of acceptance of the scientists and their statements will never raise the status of religion in any way whatsoever. Rightly the Rev. E. W. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, remarks, "I wish to make it quite clear that many beliefs associated with religious faith in the past, must be abandoned. They had to meet the direct challenge of science, and I believe it is true to say that in every such direct battle since the Renaissance, science has been the victor." Of course it is equally a perverted dogmatism on the part of some extreme scientists to maintain that God cannot be accepted until He is proved and demonstrated in a laboratory test-tube. Science has its working data far different from those of religion and as regards method of procedure also they differ. Hence there cannot be any conflict between the two unless science oversteps its boundaries and enters the jurisdiction of religion and metaphysics. The real conflict between science and religion becomes evident when the facts of both differ. Truth is always the same and because a religion is considered to be a revealed one, it cannot claim to speak of what is not corroborated by facts. So instead of denying any conflict with science in high-phrased language we have to lay particular stress upon the fundamental principles of religion and prove to the hilt that

they not only do not contradict the facts of nature, but they corroborate and support the truths of science also.

IV

Thus to steer the boat clear of the Scylla and Charybdis of unbelief and confusion of religious opinions, some sincere thinkers are trying to trace out a new course by formulating a new religion for mankind, based not upon the speculative conceptions of an extra-cosmic God and hopes of reward and threats of punishment hereafter, but upon the broad principles of humanity at large. The old religion dictated to man the worship of an all-powerful God sitting on the judgment seat in the highest heaven: the new religion proposes the worship of man by way of service to him in his evolutionary progress toward a fuller life. A greater, mightier, and grander humanity is the new God to be worshipped in man, ignoring all considerations of a future life. Thus, the individual, the society, and lastly humanity as a whole will move toward the consummation of a higher life right here. This should be, according to these thinkers, the religion of man. Undoubtedly it is a plausible and fascinating doctrine, but its practicability is questioned so long as no standard of judgment, with which not only humanity but also the individual has to be judged, is offered. Humanity is an abstract idea and the individual must understand the full implication thereof in the light of the cosmic values and his own relation thereunto. To solve these mysterious problems of life man seeks refuge in what are known as religion and philosophy. When they are rightly answered, we shall be in a position to realize fully whether we should worship humanity as our goal, or a transcendent Being called God and why. To make the long story

short, we can by no means dispense with religion and philosophy as unnecessary accretions to the growth of a higher life.

Religion, in fact, aims at certain eternal truths which are virtually the fundamental principles of life. However much it remains imbedded underneath the heap of superstitions and crude beliefs, it will ever remain a vital part of our being inasmuch as it is expected to show us practically the way toward the realization of these truths. But so long as it will be identified with the crudities of dogmatic beliefs it will always fail to satisfy the sincere cravings of man and in spite of all conservatism and orthodoxy it has to be changed, modified, and overhauled according to the demands of time. Thus, such a religion or religious idea will continually evolve with the evolution of the human conceptions of God, nature and man. On the other hand, so far as truth is concerned, religion cannot change or evolve. Truth does not undergo modification under any circumstances whatever. It does not pay homage to time or place. But although it is eternally the unchanging Reality, the various ways of viewing It will always differ and these are the so many religious doctrines, the interpretations of the same Truth. The claims of all the special religions for the monopolized right over Truth are no more than a sectarian slogan. Such a doctrine is doomed forever. Truth is universal and all-comprehensive; and a religion that stands upon the bedrock of Truth is eternal. It is unlike one which has its foundation in the quicksand of doctrinal beliefs and dogmatic authority. Consequently, it is the metaphysical exposition of the eternal Truth in terms of logical and scientific reason that will ever more be the beacon light to guide and lead man to his destiny.

This has been the religion of man knowingly or unknowingly from time immemorial and this will ever remain so. It is high time that we be a little more sincere in our motive, and bold enough to face fact in our quest after the spiritual ideal. Man is indeed a machine, but not a dead mechanical one in the hand of nature and the *raison d'etre* of his existence is not a higher eclecticism by way of engrafting upon him the higher emotions and nobler sentiments of life. It is a living organism that grows from within propelled by an apparently unknown power (*Elan Vital?* or *Dynamic Vitalism?*). On the face of such a fact it is beyond comprehension how the working of that power can be regarded as blind and unpurposive. The products of nature are vitally different from those of a machine in so far as the latter are always marked by uniformity; whereas the former have a unity in variety. Such a phenomenon is not possible unless there be a dynamic and living force behind, which allows the ani-

mate object, infinite scope and possibilities for growth.

Consequently, not only the microcosm but also the macrocosm are a purposive whole and the individual as a part thereof has to recognize that to enable himself or herself to realise the supreme goal of human life. It is the eternal identity of the individual self with the Universal Soul or Spirit, the Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute. Our approach toward It may be conditioned, coloured, distorted, and perverted, but our goal remains everlasting by the same. Consciously or unconsciously everyone is wending his or her way toward the common destiny, but a consistent philosophy of life helps us to move forward quickly. In fine, it is neither Epicureanism, nor Hedonism, nor again a new Humanism, but a fuller and greater life of the Spirit in the light of the all-comprehensive Truth irrespective of creed and dogmas, will be the religion of to-morrow.

SOCIAL IDEALISM IN GOETHE'S LYRICS AND DRAMAS*

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

GOETHE'S CONTEMPORARIES

1982 is the year of two great literary death centenaries, the one of Goethe (March 22) and the other of Scott (September 21). Scott (1771-1882) was a junior contemporary of Goethe (1749-1832), born as he was when Goethe was twenty-two years old and had already

* Written on the occasion of the celebration of Goethe's death centenary by the Bangiya Goethe Smriti Parishat (Bengali Goethe Memorial Society).

completed his *Goetz* (published later in 1778), the epoch-making drama of *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress). *Goetz* is an important landmark in the history of world-literature as the first artistic and original expression of the same mediaevalism in the romantic movement of which Scott was later to become the most emphatic embodiment both in ballads and romances.

For the purposes of comparative chronology in modern literature it is

further necessary to observe that Blake's (1757-1827) *Poetical Sketches* were not published before 1783, Cowper's (1731-1800) *Task* not before 1785, and Burns's (1759-96) *Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* not before 1786. The only mentionable document of the "new spirit" in British literary art that may be said to have preceded the German masterpiece was the *Vicar of Wakefield* (1760) by Goldsmith (1728-1774). Finally, the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Coleridge (1772-1834) appeared in 1798. Besides, at Byron's (1788-1824) birth Goethe had seen thirty-nine summers and at Shelley's (1792-1822), forty-three. Byron and Shelley were in age mere boys to Goethe and as ill luck would have it both died also as mere boys long before Goethe departed from the world.

At Goethe's death Tennyson (1809-92) was twenty-three years old and Robert Browning (1812-89) twenty. The *Poems chiefly Lyrical* of the former were published two years before Goethe's death and *Pauline* by the latter a year after.

Surveying the French neighbours of Goethe we find that Mme de Stael (1766-1817), Chateaubriand (1768-1848) and Lamartine (1790-1869), although contemporaries were really juniors to him, Chateaubriand's American-Indian story *Atala* came out as late as 1801 and Lamartine's *Meditations poetiques* in 1820 while Victor Hugo (1802-85) the avatar of French romanticism, virtually made his debut with the poems entitled *Les Orientales* in 1829 and the drama *Hernani* in 1830. On the other hand, it is necessary to observe that the *Encyclopaedie* (1749-72) edited by Diderot (1718-1784) ran its course with the first period of Goethe's life, while Rousseau's (1712-1778) epistolary romance, *Julie la nouvelle Heloise* was published in 1761 and educational story

Emile as well as *Contract Social* in 1762. To young Goethe literary France meant perhaps the France of Rousseau and especially of Voltaire (1694-1778) whose *Essai sur les moeurs* (essay on manners) was published in 1756. In regard to these his French seniors Goethe said to Eckermann early in January, 1830, as follows: "You have no idea of the influence which Voltaire and his great contemporaries had in my youth and how they governed the whole civilized world. My biography does not clearly show what was the influence of these men in my youth and what pains it cost me to defend myself against them, and to maintain my own ground in a true relation to nature."

Among the Italian great masters Meli (1740-1815), the Sicilian author of *Theocritean pastorals*, and Monti (1754-1828), whose romantic tragedy, *Gaetano Manfredi* was published in 1788 and *Bassvilliana*, an epic in imitation of Dante portraying the excesses of the French Revolution, in 1793 were Goethe's contemporaries. Of the two Italian romanticists of world fame, Foscolo (1778-1827) was likewise a contemporary and Manzoni (1785-1873) although a contemporary was quite a junior. It may be observed that the former's *Jacopo Ortis* (1798) was suggested by Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*. And when the latter's *I promessi sposi* (The Betrothed) appeared in 1825 it left a powerful impression on Goethe. In 1827 he had long conversations with Eckermann in the midst of which we are told that "Manzoni's novel soars far above all that we know of the kind," that "we are constantly passing from emotion to admiration and again from admiration to emotion," and that "he has sentiment but is perfectly free from sentimentality."

It should be relevant to observe that among the epoch-makers of those days

our Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) was like Scott a junior contemporary of Goethe's who was himself a junior to the father of the American Republic, George Washington (1732-99). Frederick the Great (1740-86), although a few years older, died comparatively young, while Napoleon filled the world canvas during the second half of Goethe's life.

THE WORKS OF GOETHE

Goethe's literary career may be represented as a drama in three acts: (1) First Act, 1749-73, a period of twenty-four years ending with the publication of *Goetz*; (2) Second Act, 1773-1806, a period of thirty-three years commencing with the inception and closing with the appearance of *Faust Part I*; it may be described as the epoch of *Faust*; and (3) Third Act, 1806-32, a period of twenty-six years.

Externally, the first period is characterized by the exploits of Frederick the Great and the Seven Years' War. The French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon constitute naturally the greatest socio-political complex of the second period. This is for German *Kultur* the epoch of Herder (1744-1803), the exponent of world-culture, folk-manners and national soul (*Volksseele*), Schiller (1759-1805), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Fichte (1762-1814), Von Martens (1756-1822), a founder of positive international law, and others.

During the third period "Young Germany" successfully carried on the glorious "war of liberation" (1806-13) from Napoleon's yoke, and the foundations of *Zollverein* (custom-union) were laid (1819). Industrial revolution may be said hardly to have touched the German people. This is the epoch *par excellence* of Hegel (1770-1831) but also of Fichte, Schlegel (1772-1845), and

Adam Mueller (1779-1829), champion of romanticism in politics and economics, and last but not least, of Frederick List (1789-1846) in whose *Outlines of American Political Economy* (1827) are to be found the principles which later became systematized in the *National System of Political Economy*, a volume which has served as a veritable Bible of industrialization and national power to all comparatively backward peoples. To this epoch belong likewise the constitutional and agrarian reforms (1807-12) of Stein and Hardenberg in Prussia; and the achievements of Bismarck (1815-98) are not far off.

The more prominent works of Goethe may now be placed chronologically in three groups:

I. FIRST PERIOD (1749-73)

1765. *Thoughts on Jesus Christ's Descent into Hell*, poem.
 1767-68. *The Lover's Whim*, pastoral drama.
 1769. *The Accomplices*, comedy.
 1771-73. *Goetz Von Berlichingen*, prose drama.

II. SECOND PERIOD (1773-1806)

(a) Pre-French Revolution

1773. Commencement of *Faust Part I*, tragedy.
 1773. *Prometheus*, dramatic fragment.
 1773. *Prometheus*, ode.
 1774. *Sorrows of Werther*, romance.
 1774. *Satyros or the Diefied Satyr*, drama.
 1774. *Mahomet's Song*, ode.
 1774. *Plunderoweilern Fair*, puppet show.
 1774. *Clavigo*, tragedy.
 1774. *Stella*, tragedy.
 1776. *The Brother and Sister*, prose drama.
 1776. *Hans Sachs's Poetical Mission*, poem.
 1776. *The Triumph of Sensibility*, dramatic whim.

1778. *Lila*, melodrama.
 1779. *Jery and Bately*, melodrama.
 1780. *The Birds*, after Aristophanes, comedy.
 1782. *The Fisher-Girl*, melodrama.
 1783. *Elpenor*, a fragment, tragedy.
 1783. *Iphigenia auf Tauris*, classical drama.
 1783. *Ilmenau*, poem on the Duke's birthday.
 1785. *Sport, Canning and Revenge*, opera.
 1787. *Egmont*, tragedy.
 1788. *Claudine Von Villa Bella*, melodrama.
 1788. *Erwin and Elmire*, melodrama.
 (b) Post-French Revolution
 1789. *Torquato Tasso*, drama.
 1789. *The Grosscopta*, comedy.
 1790. *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, prose.
 1790. *Roman Elegies*.
 1792. *Sakontala*, verselet.
 1793. *The Burgher-General*, comedy.
 1793. *Reinecke Fuchs*, poem.
 1798. *The Rebels*, drama.
 1794. *Epistles* (3), poems.
 1794. *The Excited*, dramatic fragment.
 1795. *Conversation of German Emigrants*, novel.
 1796. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, romance.
 1796. *The Four Seasons* (99), poems.
 1797. *Hermann and Dorothea*, poem in nine cantos.
 1797. *The Bride of Corinth*, ballad.
 1797. *The God and the Bayadere*, ballad.
 1798. *Prophecies of Bakis* (33), poems.
 1798. *Archilleis Canto I*, poem.
 1799. *The First Walpurgis Night*, cantata.
 1802. *What we are bringing*, prelude (dramatic).
 1803. *The Natural Daughter*, tragedy.
 1808. *Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, translation.
 1805. *Epilogue to Schiller's Song of the Bell*, poem.
 1805. *Notes on Winckelmann*, prose.
 1806. *Faust Part I*, published.
- ### III. THIRD PERIOD (1807-32)
1808. *Pandora*, drama.
 1808. *Letters from Switzerland*, prose.
 1809. *Elective Affinities*, romance.
 1810. *Theory of Colours*, prose.
 1811. *Life of Philip Hackert*, prose.
 1811. *Poetry and Truth*, autobiography, prose.
 1812. *Poems in the name of the Citizens of Carlsbad* (7).
 1812. *The Wager*, comedy.
 1814. *Political Poems* (54).
 1814. *The Awakening of Epimenides*, poem.
 1815-28. *Art and Antiquity*, journal.
 1817. *Travel in Italy*, prose.
 1819. *Poems on pictures* (21).
 1819. *West-Eastern Divan*, poems in twelve books.
 1821. *The Pariah*, ballad.
 1821. *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderings Part I*, romance.
 1822. *Marienbad Elegies*, poems.
 1822. *French Campaign*, prose.
 1825. *Annals*, prose, autobiography.
 1827. *Chinese-German Poems* (14).
 1827. *Lines on Seeing Schiller's Skull*, poem.
 1828. *Correspondence with Schiller*, prose.
 1829. *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderings*, romance, concluded.
 1829. *The Siege of Mainz*, prose.
 1830. *Annals*, prose, concluded.
 1832. *Death*.
 1833. *On the Divan*, poem.
 1833. *Faust Part II*, published (finished 1831).
- Goethe wrote at least fifty dramas, some two hundred poems on individuals, nearly a dozen theatrical prologues and epilogues, a large number of

novels and romances, numerous translations, criticisms and essays, and of course thousands of songs, ballads, odes, sonnets, epigrams as well as other poems, long, medium and short.

GOETHE AND ASIA

Now that we are offering our homage to Goethe on the occasion of his death centenary it would be appropriate to call attention to the fact that this *Goettlicher Dichter*, divine or God-gifted poet of Germany, the father of modern literature, was profoundly influenced by Indian thought. There is hardly any Eur-American survey of Indian philosophy which does justice as much to its materialism and positive achievements as to its other-worldly and transcendental elements. It is the great humanist Goethe who discovered the fundamental and universal qualities in the contributions of our ancient thinkers. On February 17, 1829 Goethe said to Eckermann as follows: "Indian philosophy has nothing foreign, but, on the contrary, the epochs through which we all pass are repeated in it. When we are children, we are sensualists; idealists when we love, and attribute to the beloved object qualities which she does not naturally possess. Love wavers; we doubt her fidelity, and are sceptics before we think of it. The rest of life is indifferent; we let it go as it will, and end, like the Indian philosophers, with quietism."

These are the words of an octogenarian. This statement was made about three years before his death, at a time when he was discussing Guizot, Cousin, Kant and Hegel in the same breath.

But long before he paid this tribute to the comprehensive humanism of the Hindus his imagination had been captured by the romantic elements in

Hindu poetry.* In 1792 Goethe wrote of *Shakuntala* as follows:—

"Wouldst thou the blossoms of spring,
as well as the fruits of the autumn,
Wouldst thou what charms and delights,
wouldst thou what plenteously feeds,
Wouldst thou include both Heaven and
earth in one designation,
All that is needed is done, when I
Shakuntala name."

Shakuntala was not a mere "Oriental Curio" to Goethe. It became a part of his life, and as I have indicated elsewhere, furnished him with a hint in regard to the composition of the prologue to his *Faust*. This *Shakuntala* cult has been described by the poet himself in 1880, i.e., as late as two years before his death in a letter to Chezy* while acknowledging the receipt of the latter's French translation of the Sanskrit drama. Goethe wrote as follows: "When I first became acquainted with this unfathomable work, it aroused such enthusiasm in me; * * * I even felt impelled to the impossible task of acquiring it for the German stage. * * * I became so intimately familiar with this most precious work, it has marked such an epoch in my life, it has become so entirely my own that I have not once looked either at the English or at the German text these thirty-years. * * * It is only now that I realize the overwhelming impression that this work has made on me at an earlier age. Here the poet appears in

* See the section entitled "Indian in der deutschen Kultur" in Sarkar: *Die Lebensanschauung des Inders* (Leipzig, 1928), first published in the *Deutsche Rundschau* (Berlin 1922).

*Meyer-Benfey: "Goethe and India" in *The Golden Book of Tagore* (Calcutta 1931). On "*Shakuntala* and the romantic movement" see Sarkar; "The Influence of India on Modern Western Civilization" in the *Journal of Race Development* (Clark University, U.S.A., 1918) also *The Futurism of Young Asia* (Leipzig, 1922), pp. 147-148.

his highest function as the representative of the most natural state, of the most refined form of life, of the purest moral striving, of the worthiest majesty and the most solemn contemplation of God; at the same time he is lord and master of his creation to so great an extent that he may venture vulgar and ludicrous contrasts which yet must be regarded as necessary links of the whole organization." Even without this autobiographical self-explanation one could feel from the verse alone to what a great extent Indian Kalidas had become a formative force in the romanticism of Goethe and his circle. But this letter leaves no doubt in regard to one of my contentions that the ideology of the father and other makers of the romantic movement in European literature was considerably nurtured on the art ideals and achievements of the great masters of our Gupta India.

It is not India alone of the Asian countries that inspired Goethe to such idealistic raptures. For, some of his finest lyrics the Germans owe to his appreciation of Persian poetry. There are some two hundred poems in Goethe's *Divan*, of which the following verses composed in 1815 are taken from the section entitled *Suleika-Nameh* :

"Zephyr, for thy humid wing,
Oh, how much I envy thee!
Thou to him canst tidings bring,
How our parting saddens me!

"Yet thy mild wing gives relief,
Soothes the aching eyelid's pain;
Ah, I else had died for grief,
Him never hoped to see again.

"To my love, then, quick repair,
Whisper softly to his heart;
Yet, to give him pain, beware,
Nor my bosom's pangs impart."

In the section entitled *Morganni Nameh* (Book of the Minstrel) Goethe's

Divan introduces the German literary world to a much higher strain of thinking. It is from Goethe, as inspired by Asia, that Europe learns:—

"God is of the East possessed
God is ruler of the West;
North and South alike each land
Rests within His gentle hand.

"He, the only righteous one,
Wills that right to each be done.
'Mongst His hundred titles, then,
Highest praised be this!—Amen."

GOETHE ON THE EAST AND THE WEST

This was Goethe's theology, so to say. Lest this faith might remain a mere idea he made a social creed out of it. In 1833, the year following his death, were published two verses, entitled *On the Divan*. The new ethics established by him runs thus:—

"He who knows himself and others
Here will also see
That the East and the West, like
brothers
Parted ne'er shall be.

"Thoughtfully to float for ever
'Tween two worlds, be man's
endeavour!
So between the East and West
To revolve, be my behest,"

The *rapprochement* between the East and the West as an ideal of positive internationalism may then be regarded as belonging to the last will and testament of Goethe's to Germany and the world.

Goethe wrote on Chinese themes also. His *German-Chinese Poems* were published in 1827. The same year on June 31 he said as follows to Eckermann about a Chinese novel which he was reading at the time:—"The Chinamen think, act and feel almost exactly

like us : and we soon find that we are perfectly like them, excepting that all they do is more clear, more pure, and decorous than with us. With them all is orderly, citizen-like, without great passion or poetic flight; and there is a strong resemblance to my *Hermann and Dorothea* as well as to the English novels of Richardson."

It is the discussion on Chinese literature that called forth the following remarks from Goethe : "I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times, in hundreds and hundreds of men. * * * Herr von Matthisson must not think he is the man nor must I think that I am the man."

The appreciation of China, Persia and India by Goethe was thus born of an innate respect he felt for the creative genius itself, no matter wherever it might be discovered. He was therefore no friend of those who indulged in nationalistic chauvinism in this regard. "But, really," said he, "We Germans are very likely to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, when we do not look beyond the narrow circle which surrounds us. I, therefore, like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise every one to do the same. National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of world-literature is at hand, and every one must strive to hasten its approach." In and through the recognition of the humanistic elements in the Hindu, Persian and Chinese cultures Goethe was thus serving his fatherland,—indeed helping forward the expansion of Germany.

With Goethe internationalism was not a mantle to be donned on holidays. It was a spiritual necessity of his life. By inviting Asia into the German literary household he was but strengthening the foundations and enriching the treasure

of German *Kultur* itself. The world to-day has not yet outgrown this Goethean message of universalism and cosmopolitan approach to the things of beauty, truth and joy. And the budding internationalism of Young Asia cannot choose a better guide, philosopher and friend than Goethe who, be it observed once more, was the first among the Modern Westerns to treat the East on terms of equality with the West.

GOETHE'S CHALLENGE TO THE GODS

Goethe is essentially the poet of "human feelings." He is not like Robert Browning who sings : "God is in His Heaven ! All's well on earth !" To Goethe there are the things that are man's and there are the things that are God's. In 1815 when he was six and sixty years old he was bold enough to declare the separation of man's sphere from that of the gods. The formulation of this independence of the earth from the regime of the heavens finds expression in the following lines :—

"Ah, ye gods ! ye great immortals
In the spacious heavens above us !
Would ye on this earth but give us
Steadfast minds and dauntless courage
We, oh kindly ones, would leave you
All your spacious heavens above us !"

It is indeed possible to detect other veins in the spiritual quarry of Goethe's. Nay, the very earliest piece of his that is preserved, namely, *Thoughts on Jesus Christ's Descent into Hell*, conveys nothing of this spirit of human self-determination and mutual "let-alone" between man and the gods. In that poem composed in 1765 when Goethe was a young man of sixteen we do not trace any revolt against religion and church. Nor do we feel that this poet

would some day be the exponent of a "pact" according to which mankind would learn to "render unto man the things that are man's and unto the gods the things that are theirs." In that piece Goethe voices the sentiment of the orthodox folk when he sings :

"I see Him in His victor-car,
On fiery axles borne afar,
Who on the cross for us expired.
The triumph to yon realm He
shows.—
Remote from earth, where star ne'er
glows,
The triumph He for us acquired."

This is the triumphant manner in which Jesus descends into Hell. And Hell is left in the following manner :

"The God-man closeth Hell's sad
doors,
In all His majesty He soars
From those dark regions back to
light.
He sitteth at the Father's side;
Oh, friends, what joy doth this
betide!
For us, for us He still will fight!"

This jubilant appreciation of Divine help in the affairs of man would do justice to the pious feelings of the most renowned *bhakti-yogi* of Christendom. And yet in another few years,—in 1778 the spirit of co-operation with the gods or rather of appreciation of their services entirely disappears. In *Prometheus* written in that year, when Goethe was twenty-four, his challenge is embodied in such mighty lines as these :—

"Cover thy spacious heavens, Zeus,
With clouds of mist,
And, like the boy who laps
The thistles' heads,
Disport with oaks and mountain
peaks;
Yet thou must leave
My earth still standing;

My cottage too, which was not raised
by thee;
Leave me my hearth,
Whose kindly glow
By thee is envied."

The humanism of "my cottage too which was not raised by thee" is a new note in the world's poetry. It breathes the paeon of human energy at war with the All-mighty. While pondering over these lines we cannot be oblivious of the fact that Europe was heading towards the "ideas of 1789." Goethe's poetry was pioneering a new world.

The *mores* of the old world Goethe tore to pieces and trampled under feet as he declared :—

"I know nought poorer
Under the sun, than ye gods!
Ye nourish painfully,
With sacrifices
And votive prayers,
Your Majesty;
Ye would e'en starve,
If children and beggars
Were not trusting fools."

The baselessness of the Almighty's pretensions was never more sarcastically portrayed. And what are his contributions to the world that he should expect recognition from men? Zeus is nothing but despicable, devoid as he is, of

"An ear to hear my wailings,
A heart, like mine,
To feel compassion for distress."

Why should such a heartless inhuman creature deserve honour? Goethe answers :—

"I honour thee! and why?
Hast thou e'er lighten'd the sorrows
Of the heavy laden?
Hast thou e'er dried up the tears
Of the anguish-stricken?"

There is nothing humane nor divine in Zeus. He does not deserve any special treatment at the hands of man. Nay, he is but a creature like man,—of the same status as human beings. The Bastille of traditional theology was shattered as Goethe asked:—

“Was I not fashioned to be a man
By omnipotent Time
And by eternal Fate,
Masters of me and Thee?”

So the poet of “human feelings” formulated his creative plan as follows:—

“Here sit I, forming mortals
After my image;
A race resembling me,
To suffer, to weep,
To enjoy, to be glad,
And thee to scorn
As I!”

Goethe’s poetry is interested in the race of Prometheuses,—of God scorning mortals, and in the joys and sorrows of human beings of flesh and blood. It is the new religion of humanity and the new morality of “a heart like mine to feel compassion for distress” of which Goethe is the first prophet.

It is significant to observe that the new idealism of *Prometheus* was forged almost on the same anvil on which was brought into being Goethe’s revolutionary drama *Goetz von Berlichingen*. This dramatic piece, composed in 1771 but published two years later, the same year as the poem on the Greek theme, narrates the heroic adventures and experiences of Goetz, the medieval German robber-knight. There we are furnished with some other phases of idealism, and these were directly at variance with the conventional morals, manners, politics and laws of the times.

In *Goetz* Goethe introduced the literary world to “The great round-headed

peasant lads and the pretty brown girls, the sturdy hinds, and the venerable old men,—a crowd of happy faces, all as merry as if they rejoiced in the splendour of their master, which he shared with them under God’s free sky.” There for the first time, again, mankind heard the cry of “freedom for ever.” *Goetz* is indeed the fountain-head of “romanticism” in literary art. With the message of emancipation from the gods on the one hand and that of deliverance from the shackles of social and political tradition on the other Goethe is by all means the father of modernism in literature.

AN INDIAN MESSAGE OF REVOLT IN GOETHE’S POETRY

It is in Indian legends that Goethe found the artistic material for some fine social messages. In 1797 he wrote *The God and the Bayadere*. The theme was used as another instance of the inhumanity of “priests’ commands” against which Goethe had been in revolt ever since his early years. The Bayadere’s love for God was too deep to be severed at the death of the lover.

When German readers found towards the end of the eighteenth century such lines as follow:—

“Then she sinks beside his bier,
And her screams through air
resound:
‘I must seek my spouse so dear,
E’en if in the grave he’s bound.
“Shall those limbs of grace divine
Fall to ashes in my sight?
Mine he was! Yes, only mine!
Ah, one single blissful night!’ ”

There was generated among Goethe’s contemporaries a new phase in idealism, the sense of a new spirituality in the relations between man and woman. In Hindu poetry Europe succeeded in dis-

covering through Goethe the gospel of a new love. And this agreed quite well with the spirit of those times when every day during the decade of the French Revolution was bringing something new into the world.

The readers did not fail to find the stereotyped contrast between the new and the *status quo*, between the urges of the heart and the despotism of custom. To the demand of love the conventional reply from the priests was of course as expected, namely :

“To thy priests’ commands give
ear!
 This one was thy husband ne’er;
 Live still as a Bayadere
 And no Duty thou need’st share.
 “To death’s silent realms from life,
 None but shades attend man’s
frame,
 With the husband, none but wife,—
 That is duty, that is fame.”

But the Bastille of priestcraft fell to pieces in the social imagination of Goethe’s countrymen as they saw the next scene.

“Thus increased her torments
are
 By the cruel heartless quire;
 And with arms outstretching
far
 Leaps she on the glowing
pyre.”

For a woman to “leap on the glowing pyre” of her lover was a revolutionary incident admirably in keeping with the thousand and one incidents of that revolutionary epoch. The *Zeitgeist* was thus enriched with a message of revolt and individualistic self-assertion as contributed by Hindu poetry.

In this contribution of far-off India to the ideals of Goethe’s times in Europe there was nothing in common with the ancient regime. The departure from the beaten track was Rousseauesque in its originality and emotionalism. The climax of romanticism and idealistic fervour in sex relations was reached when Goethe called up the following picture :—

“But the youth divine out-
springs
 From the flame with heavenly
grace,
 And on high his flight he wings,
 While his arms his love embrace.”

This is a transcendental touch of the loftiest significance. It served to lift the entire man-woman complex to a super-social and super-moral plane, and was just calculated to fire the imagination of the boldest speculators of the epoch in the field of social freedom.

Goethe did not leave the moral to be guessed by his readers. The ballad closes with the following lines :

“In the sinner repentant the
Godhead feels joy;
 Immortals delight thus their
might to employ
 Lost children to raise to a heavenly
place.”

It is questionable if it was necessary for the poet in the interest of art to indulge in moralizing in such a direct manner. For, the theme as well as the treatment left no doubt in the minds of readers that the authors of ancient India were thorough-going humanists and quite adept in the art of administering poetic justice.

(To be concluded)

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AS PAINTER

BY NANALAL C. MEHTA, I.C.S.

It was only recently that I had the occasion to see some of the original pictures of Rabindranath Tagore at the Lucknow Art Exhibition. Rabindranath is nothing if not a genius even in a field which he has only recently entered in the evening of his life. His pictures are marvellous in more sense than one. At one bound he has transcended the mannerisms of what passes as Eastern or Western style. He is unique. He is the first Indian artist who has painted not for India, but for the world at large. The effect produced by his pictures is sometimes overwhelming. What amazing versatility and variety of creation for one who appears to have only accidentally strayed away from his proper *métier* to subjects which always presuppose a prolonged period of apprenticeship and the possession of a certain amount of technique and craftsmanship? Every manner of subject-matter is handled in his own peculiar way by this magician of rhythm. The singular freedom from all accepted standards of professional or academic painting was of course to be accepted. But the outstanding feature of some of Tagore's pictures is the amazing technique and plastic quality exhibited by them. Line and colour are combined in quite an original way to complete a picture at once alive and haunting. I have rarely seen such effortless ease in conveying and imparting to the on-lookers some of the unspoken thoughts of the artist's mind as in some of the figure drawings by Tagore. It is but appropriate and in keeping with his poetic imagination that his pictures are nameless, and it is perhaps this, more

than anything else, which baffles and bewilders people who have been in the habit of looking for a definite subject or a tale in a picture, who have never been worried by what really constitutes a painting and who have never made an effort to go beyond the label of a picture and get to the spirit which animated the artist and was responsible for the production of a work of art. Unfortunately for the average onlooker who wants to see something pretty which he can easily assimilate, identify or relate to his individual experience, there is practically nothing in the graphic works of Tagore. They all raise the fundamental issue as to what constitutes a picture. If inspired expression through line, colour and rhythm makes a picture, then surely some of the work of Tagore will have to be classed with that of the world's immortals. For it must be remembered that Tagore unlike his gifted nephews—Abanindranath and Gaganendranath is not an "Indian" painter but a cosmopolitan artist, whose technique is unique in the same sense as is his achievement. His control of the palette—he rarely makes use of anything but simple colour schemes, is often uncanny. The colours sometime appear as if they were shot with sunlight; such is the transparency of his tints. One has to see the originals to realize the boldness of his tinted drawings. His bright hues not infrequently impart a rare quality of 'texture' to the pictures, which are no amateur productions of an ambitious and imaginative poet intent on exhibiting his versatility to an admiring multitude, but his superb emanations of the subconscious self of a master-musician

who, unable to weave them into verbal harmonies, unconsciously translated them into subtle harmonies of line and colour. Tagore is undoubtedly the first artist from Asia who, breaking away from his traditional and geographical moorings, belongs to that small, frater-

nity of creative spirits, who are fashioning the culture of the new world. A genius like his cannot be explained; it has to be accepted. In him India has undoubtedly given to the world an artist of rare susceptibility and astonishing originality.

THE NEW METHOD IN EDUCATION

BY DR. MARIA MONTESSORI, M.D. (Rome), D.LITT. (Durham)

In other methods, and especially in modern methods, educators are concerned with a matter they consider fundamental—the study of the characteristics of the child mind, one might say of the psychic laws in general which they consider should guide them in teaching. The principle followed is that one must *know* in order to educate, that in teaching we must learn the psychic laws of the child as the old psychology stated them.

My own attitude, and the educational method I have evolved after many years of work among little children, is directly opposed to these ideas. I have no intention of guessing at, no desire to probe the thoughts of the children I am educating.

A child's intelligence, and the laws of that intelligence are mysterious and difficult to decipher; on this point all educators agree, but I would go one step further and say that not only is the nature of intelligence a mystery hard to penetrate, but that we should renounce the intention of doing so.

I consider that what happens within the child is the child's secret, a secret which we must respect. The principle underlying the new method is here, and those who have not gone into the matter

are strangely struck by it, for it seems to them I am setting an obstacle to knowledge by the statement that here is a secret which has to be let alone, and that what we have to learn is how to respect this secret.

Perhaps I can make my meaning clearer if I ask you to consider this problem of the child's intelligence symbolically in terms of a circle. The centre is the intimate part which is the very essence of the individual himself, and we have no concern with what happens there. At the outer edge, the individual comes into touch with the outside world, through senses and movement: the outside world stimulates him by means of his senses and he in turn directs his activity towards it.

Thus we see that the periphery of the circle is accessible, since we can see it. We can see the child choose and express himself by means of activity directed towards the outer world. Upon this concrete material then we can base our educational efforts.

I am convinced through my experience of children, that it is thus we must deal with the child in process of growing, that the real way of mental work for the child is to gather in by means of his sensations and express himself by tran-

slating these into activity, perpetually, like the ceaseless throb of a heart. In this way he constructs his own mentality, and creates for himself an organized personality. All that we can perceive of this process of learning, one and indivisible, is the peripheric part, with its revelation to us of the work being carried on within.

Whether or not the child reveals to us this inner work must be a matter of indifference; if he does, we can accept the manifestations, but our attitude as teachers will not be altered thereby since our task is confined to one thing and one alone—to helping, at the periphery, the work of growth.

This explains why the new method consists of objects that are continually handled. They constitute a material of use in peripheric work, whereas the ordinary methods aim at penetrating within the periphery, introducing knowledge, and therefore to this end simplifying the things taught. Many still believe that if the unfolding mind is to understand something great, that something should be presented to it in a very small form, easy to grasp according to our ideas. They forget, or perhaps have never realized that the child is not interested in understanding things through the medium of others, but has within him an uncontrollable motor force that urges him to grasp them for himself, and that only when his mind is allowed to work in its own way can it develop naturally.

These material objects which we offer to the periphery are therefore of tremendous importance, since by them, instead of furnishing an idea or the comprehension of something, we furnish the material embodiment of the idea—an extension of this idea over a wide surface so that the child may have the possibility of work upon it.

Thus, for example, if we are teaching something referring to sensations, we

give a series of graded stimuli. If we want to give something which seems like a common multiplication table, we give a deconomial, geometrical, painted, and then expressed in digits so that the mind may work upon it alone. Underlying this educational apparatus is the fundamental principle, that we must offer to the child ideas in a form capable of being extended, making them both clear and vast so that he may carry on prolonged work upon them.

Through almost universal repetition, the saying that curiosity stimulates a child in his search for things, has almost come to be regarded as a truism. I have discovered however, that *it is not* curiosity which urges the child to take in on his own account from the outside world, since a child who has already understood something and is therefore no longer curious, simply because he possesses that knowledge, begins real expansive activity. Such a child is not acting in order to find out something, but is carrying on prolonged activity by which to strengthen and enlarge his mind.

It is essentially some spontaneous inner urge which causes a child to act, and it is upon the discovery of this principle that the new method is based. After curiosity has been satisfied, a form of placid activity starts, and the child becomes a discoverer. All these are manifestations that have been made to us by the child. He gives and we receive them, and I am convinced by them that the new method is on the right track in aiding the child's peripheric activity through external means.

This idea that the periphery is the only part of the child's being that is really clear to us and to which we can address ourselves distinguishes the attitude of our teachers radically from those of other methods, for the teachers become servants, not illuminators of the

spirit, inasmuch as they are not teachers but helpers, and when they have helped the child in the way described, respecting the mystery which lies at the centre of his being, their work is done. They have given the child what he needs to perform his own part.

This is the liberty of the individual. The mystery of the child's inner being is his secret, and we have to guide him while leaving him free. This is the culminating point of liberty. I believe that if the child continues to act on the lines of this method, he will develop into a man who has built up in liberty, an inner world of his own. The child's secret makes for the liberty of the man.

What the mistress has then to learn

is to withdraw in all humility, still remaining passionately, closely and minutely attached to all those external rules and material that can help the child. From this training emerges a new type of teacher who can honestly say, "We have discovered what seems a humble path, but which has yielded great fruits; for no one had ever found in children such powers and capacities as have been seen and verified contrary to all expectation, in our children."

All say, in fact, that our children are precocious, intelligent, sweet-natured. This is due to the fact that they have been allowed to work according to their own nature without any superfluous urging.

HINDUISM : WHAT IT IS NOT

BY PROF. AKSHOY KUMAR BANERJEE, M.A.

HINDUISM A LIVING AND GROWING ORGANISM

Hinduism is a living organism. Its present form is the product of a long and continuous course of evolution through countless centuries. New ideas and beliefs, new sentiments and aspirations, new customs and practices, new standards of values, have been evolved within or incorporated into it in the different stages of its development, sometimes by the natural operations of the spirit working itself out within it and sometimes by its impact with external forces, friendly as well as hostile. Occasionally it has been found to be attacked by fatal internal diseases, its whole body has appeared to be poisoned and has shown signs of decay and imminent death; but it has always come out of

these trials with invigorated health. Age after age, it has had to face formidable rebellions of powerful spirits born out of its body; but they have always proved to be nothing but violent commotions created at transitional periods naturally by the process of the emergence of some higher, nobler and more glorious aspects of its inner life. It has had to struggle hard with various political, social, cultural and spiritual forces which made their way into it and sometimes attempted to take possession of it; but its unique vital power has not only endowed it with a wonderful staying capacity to survive all such struggles, but also with a still more wonderful capacity for absorption and assimilation so as to swallow those apparently destructive forces into its own system and convert them into good materials

for self-reconstruction, self-development, self-expansion and self-fulfilment.

The history of Hinduism from time immemorial to the present day points out how bewilderingly diverse were the circumstances through which it passed and how unmistakable were the proofs of its unique power of self-adjustment in the midst of all those various kinds of circumstances. In the process of its self-adaptation in relation to various forces of reaction and its progressive realization of the infinite potentialities of its inner nature, Hinduism has evolved from within itself numberless branches and sections and sub-sections in different periods of its life and has originated a multitude of apparently conflicting ideals and standards of value, religious faiths and philosophical doctrines, social customs and rules of life. But it is most amazing to find that in spite of all these conflicts among the different forms and branches of this polymorphous organism, the unity of the organism itself has never been destroyed or even lost sight of. All the diverse forms that have evolved out of it have remained and grown as the organs of the same organism,—as the branches and leaves and flowers and fruits of the same living tree. The tree may have apparently grown into a vast forest, in which the root and the trunk may have sometimes become almost invisible to superficial observers from outside. But a little investigation reveals the truth that all its parts were pervaded and enlivened by the same life-spirit,—that the same spirit operates in and unveils itself through all these diverse forms, each of which represents a particular aspect and serves a particular purpose in the life of that all-pervading spirit of Hinduism. The conflicts which are found to arise among the different forms or sects—the different self-expressions of Hinduism,—generally

owe their origin to the pretensions of any one of them to represent the whole and its attempts to show the rest as false appearances. These conflicts also are not un-mixed evils. They are found to be steps in the process of self-development of each particular form. In the attempts to demonstrate its superiority to others, each form rises to higher and higher stages of development, becomes more and more comprehensive in its outlook, enters deeper and deeper into the essential truth of the whole system, and becomes a more and more complete expression of the self of the whole.

DIFFICULTY IN DEFINING IT

Now, the question is, what is the essential character of this great organism? What is the logical definition of Hinduism? The question has baffled the attempts of many great thinkers. The conclusion to which they have generally been led is that it does not admit of any satisfactory logical definition. You can form a very poor conception of Hinduism if you try to define it in terms of the main characteristics found common in all the diverse forms or sects or systems which have evolved out of it in the different periods of its growth in different localities, under the influence of different social, political and cultural circumstances. The essential character of a living and growing and self-realizing organic body reveals itself in its partial aspects in the different stages of its career and through the different forms of its self-expression. All these branches emerge and live and grow within it and in course of their development also draw their inspiration and vitality from the life of the whole. The truth which constitutes the real life of the body goes on revealing itself progressively till the highest stage of progress is reached; but the highest stage

also cannot claim to represent the whole truth by itself, ignoring the lower stages of development and the partial aspects of the truth revealed in them. Hence an adequate definition of an entity of this nature, capable of giving a comprehensive conception of it, appears impracticable. If we have a penetrating insight—a power of intuition and sympathy—we can sometimes feel within ourselves what it really is, but we fail to explain it in terms of the categories of the understanding. However, a thoughtful study of the course of the unfolding of its character in the past and of the direction in which it is moving onward at present may enable our understanding to make a grasp, more or less comprehensive, of its general nature. If it is true that the seed contains the tree, it is no less true that the comprehension of the real nature of the seed also depends upon the knowledge of the tree with its branches and leaves and flowers and fruits.

Before we direct our attention to the study of the general features exhibited in all the different forms in which the spirit of Hinduism has expressed itself and to the understanding of the essential nature of the spirit as pointed to by them, it is deemed more convenient to adopt the indirect method in the beginning so as to approach the real point at issue by freeing our mind from several misconceptions about it.

HINDUISM NOT A PARTICULAR RELIGION

First of all, it is necessary to perceive that Hinduism, though aptly described as Dharma, is not a religion in the sense in which Christianity or Mohammedanism is a religion. 'Dharma' is not religion as it is generally understood; but religion is an aspect—it may be an essential aspect—of it. It is one of the

forms of self-expression of 'Dharma,' though it may rightly claim to be regarded as the best and brightest form. I am not going to discuss here the denotation and connotation of 'Dharma,' which would be a very complicated affair and would require an elaborate treatment in a separate paper. But it is obvious that when we speak of Kula-dharma (Dharma of a family), Jâti-dharma (of the nation), Varna-dharma (of the caste), Ashrama-dharma (of the stage of life), Apad-dharma (Dharma in adversities), Râja-dharma (of the King), etc., we do not mean what is strictly implied by religion. 'Dharma,' taken in the sense in which all Hindus understand it, comprises all the aspects of the culture of a man,—intellectual, æsthetic, moral and religious,—personal, domestic, communal, national and universal—as well as the whole sphere of duties at every stage of life in relation to the family, the society, the nation, the human race, the animal and the physical worlds, in relation to those that are dead and gone as well as to those that will be born afterwards, in relation to God, the gods and the cherished ideals of human life. The different departments of culture and duty, though distinguishable from one another, are not considered by any Hindu as isolated from one another, with distinct standards of value for each. They are all linked together by an underlying bond of unity and are the different spheres of application of the same Dharma, which pertains to the essential nature of man as man. The fundamental character of that all-comprehensive and all-unifying Dharma may not admit of being clearly defined and may be beyond the comprehension of the vast majority of the Hindus; but that has never stood in the way of the great spirit working itself out and the intuitive apprehension of that spirit even by the common folk.

Hinduism has evolved out of itself a multitude of religions, which bear perfect analogy to Christianity and Mohammedanism so far as the application of this term is concerned. Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Ramayatism, etc., are all distinct religions born and brought up within Hinduism. Each of them has a set of doctrines and beliefs, a distinct conception of God and His relation to man and the world, a particular line of worship and a course of disciplinary practices, a definite idea of the highest destiny of the human soul, implicit faith in some prophet or prophets and in some scripture or scriptures regarded as infallible. These are the characteristics of every religious system. Hinduism as a whole does not possess any such distinct feature to distinguish it from other systems of religion. We commit an obvious logical fallacy when we put Hinduism by the side of Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, etc., to signify that it is one of the sectarian religions of the world. The Hindus do not constitute a religious sect or community, for Hinduism is not a sectarian or communal religion. It is the mother and nurse of many sectarian or communal religions of India. The mother and nurse is free from all such kinds of limitations, as distinguish and set apart the particular sects or communities from each other and not unoften lead them to quarrel with one another.

So far as the idea of Divinity is concerned, we find within the fold of Hinduism numerous doctrines and beliefs, which have for many centuries been exercising potent influence upon the religious life of different sections of Hindus,—such as Polytheism, Henotheism, Tritheism, Ditheism, Monotheism, Pantheism, Theism, Absolute Monism, etc. Similarly we find different conceptions about the essential nature of the soul and its ultimate destiny. The

soul is regarded by some as having pleasure and pain, knowledge and desire and change of conditions, and by others as pure changeless consciousness; by some it is held to be infinitely large and all-pervading, by others it is held to be infinitely small; by some it is conceived as different from God, by others as identical with God, by others still as having identity-in-difference with God; and so on. The ultimate goal of religious culture is regarded by some sects as the attainment of endless happiness in heaven, by others as the realization of unity with God, by others again as the complete freedom from all kinds of pain and bondage, by still others as the perfect self-surrender in love and service to God, and so on. Forms of Sadhana or Upasana also are of varied kinds, such as Jnana-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, Mantra-Yoga, Japa-Yoga, Hatha-Yoga, Vedic sacrifices, Tantric worship, image-worship, Nature-worship, etc. Hinduism has evolved and preserved even such religious communities as feel no necessity for faith in God or in the soul or in both, but have systematic courses of moral and religious discipline for the attainment of high spiritual ends. Hinduism has got no particular Church-organization, though there are many organized churches within the fold of Hinduism.

Then again, like the particular religious systems, Hinduism has never depended upon the authority of any particular prophet or Messiah or Avatar, or upon that of any single scripture. The original teachers of Dharma are called Rishis or seers of moral and spiritual truths, which stand on their own intrinsic value and are regarded as eternal. If any personal authority is demanded, it is to be found in God Himself who communicates His truths to mankind through suitably equipped

persons. The doctrine of Avatarhood is not universally accepted by all sects of Hindus and the Avatars also cannot have any doctrine accepted by all merely on their own authority. Scepticism about or even denial of the historical existence of all the Rishis, Avatars and saints cannot affect the spirit of Hinduism to any considerable extent.

The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Smritis, the Darshanas, the Puranas, the Tantras,—all these are respected as Shastras or scriptures by the Hindus in general, irrespective of the particular sects they belong to. They are different books of different natures, revealed or composed at different times under different circumstances at different stages of the development of the Hindu Society. None of them are really accepted by all Hindus as having absolute authority. The Vedas including the Upanishads are no doubt proclaimed as having the highest authority by their own right. But the Vedas do not constitute one single scripture like the Koran or the Geeta, but a compilation of various moral and religious truths, laws and commandments revealed to different Rishis, and this compilation also is not taken as exhaustive. They are divided into numerous branches and sub-branches. Attempts by subsequent thinkers to reconcile those apparently unconnected sayings of different seers with one another and to form a consistent system out of them have virtually reduced them into a storehouse of inexhaustible wisdom from which materials may be collected and authorities may be cited for any system of thought and discipline at which philosophers or religious teachers or social reformers may arrive at any time by their practically independent thinking. When such materials also have not been available in the present compilation, they have not abandoned their own independent

thinking, but have shown their reverence to the Vedas by proclaiming that there must have been other parts of the Vedas relevant to what they now want to preach, but these have been lost. Further, if we study the Vedas together with the Upanishads as a whole organic system, we find that all stages of the development of social, moral and religious ideas of the human mind—from the earliest state of search to the highest state of perfect realization of Truth—are represented therein. Hence men of all kinds of mentality and all stages of development can rely upon particular portions of the Vedas and the Upanishads as the basis of their moral, intellectual, social and spiritual culture. Moreover, the truths as well as the injunctions are expressed there with such force and beauty and grandeur as to inspire the head and heart at once and to carry conviction of their divine origin. Thus the authoritativeness of the Vedas and the Upanishads is due not so much to the reliableness of the persons from whom they have been obtained, but it is due to the appreciation of their intrinsic value by all the greatest thinkers of the country, their power of capturing the emotion and carrying conviction to the intellect, as well as their remote antiquity.

The Vedas with the Upanishads may be recognized as the basis or the root of this vast forest-like tree of Hinduism but they do not make up the constitution of the whole organism. Its development has never been obstructed by any undue adherence to the root. The tree has branched off in diverse directions and has proved itself ever-growing. After the Vedas and the Upanishads many Shastras have come into being and established their dominions—some having universal application and some sectarian. The established truths, the inspiring ideals and

the noble traditions of all the preceding ages have been looked upon with great veneration by the teachers of the succeeding ages, but this regard for the past has never stood in the way of their onward march and freedom of thought and action. Thus the best religious, moral, social, political, scientific and philosophical productions of the best minds of the polymorphous society throughout the creative periods of its life extending over many thousands of years are respected by all Hindus as Shastras with varying degrees of authority and regarded as self-expressions of one harmonious system. The sectarian religions within the fold of Hinduism of the present day are mostly based upon the Puranas and Tantras, and some upon the teachings of the great saints of the middle ages; but they all owe their allegiance to the Vedas. The domestic and social life is generally governed by Smritis which give laws and injunctions differing for different ages and stages and localities. Thus there is ample scope everywhere for freedom of thinking, freedom of choice, freedom of activity, divergence of views and modes of life. Whenever any great man comes forward with the suggestion of a system of social laws or spiritual ideals or religious disciplines as best suited to the present conditions of the people and can convince them by force of arguments and magnetic power of personality, of the efficacy of his suggested scheme and the necessity of the proposed changes for the good of the society, he feels little difficulty in affiliating his ideas to the recognized Shastras by means of suitable quotations and intelligent interpretations and thus giving a new turn to the thoughts and modes of life of the people without snatching them away from the main-body of Hinduism. Many such revolutions in thought and life have occurred

within Hinduism in different ages and different parts of the country according to the exigencies of the time and place and it has been distinctly laid down for the good of the society (श्रीकृष्ण युष्मद्भ्यः) in Shastric works that the decisions of the best men of the age are to be considered as authoritative as the vedas (सनयश्चापि साधूनां वेदवत् प्रमाणं भवेत्).

From the above it is evident that Hinduism is not a particular religious system, but it has infinite capacity to give birth and nourishment to all possible system of religion suited to all kinds of temperaments and all stages of development of the human spirit. Not only this, it has also the wonderful power to receive with open arms any new religious sect that may like to enter into it, can assimilate it and reduce it into a part of itself organically related to other parts without destroying its essential distinctive features. In its religious aspect Hinduism is unique in its universality.

HINDUISM NOT A PARTICULAR SOCIAL SYSTEM

Now, can we say that Hinduism is a social system? If the term society is taken in its limited sense as distinguished from the religious, cultural, political and other aspects of the self-expressions of the human spirit, it is evident that Hinduism cannot be regarded as a mere social system, since its other aspects are as prominent as the social aspect. Further, the structure of a particular society is generally determined by the essential manners and customs of the people. Hinduism can present us with such a variety of mutually incompatible manners and customs, social laws and injunctions, prevalent among and prescribed for different grades of people in the same locality and even similar grades of people in different localities,

and they have undergone such changes ages after ages, that it is difficult to find out which of them have any fundamental value for the whole society. In this respect also, instead of regarding Hinduism as one social system, we may more appropriately conceive of it as an organization of many social systems, or as a social organism evolving from within itself and sustaining within its body a variety of apparently conflicting social systems. The most cherished social ideals of one age are abandoned in another, the most highly valued manners and customs of one place or one section are prohibited in another; laws about marriage, inheritance, social rights and duties, etc., differ in different times and places and sections. But they are all Hindu systems. Even if we can trace some fundamental points of agreement among all the Hindu social organizations, they will give us only a very general abstract idea of a particular aspect of Hinduism. No concrete conception of Hinduism can be formed in terms of these common social features.

HINDUISM NOT A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OR A PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM

That Hinduism is not a political or national organization is obvious to

everybody and requires no demonstration. It is also evident that it is not a particular system of philosophical doctrines. This point has been briefly argued in connection with religion. There are various philosophical systems which have grown among the different sections of the Hindus. They agree in this that to none of them philosophy is a matter of purely intellectual pursuit, but to all the sections it has from time immemorial been a matter of great practical interest. Dr. Jacks, a well-known philosopher of the present day, says, "Much of my life has been spent in the study of philosophy, . . . but it was not until comparatively late in these studies that I made a discovery, . . . that it flashed upon me with the force of a revelation that all philosophies and sciences were injunctions to live in a certain way and avoid living in other ways." It is from this practical point of view that the Hindus have all along directed their energy to the quest of philosophical and scientific truths. In this quest they arrived at different conclusions and experimented with them in their life. In this manner various systems of philosophy and various ideals and ways of life have appeared among the Hindus and divided them into a large number of schools and sects.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

BY SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

*Seoni Sub-Jail,
Seoni, C. P.,
6/5/32.*

What you have written about Shri Samartha Swami and Swami Vivekananda is very interesting. Yes, the private letters and the private conver-

sations of the latter which have been chronicled are not only interesting but illuminating and much more so than his

*Extracts from a letter written to Mr. A. R. Bhat, M. Com., a member of the *Mahratta* staff and quoted from the same paper.

public speeches or his written books. I cannot write about Vivekananda without going into raptures. Few indeed could comprehend or fathom him—even among those who had the privilege of becoming intimate with him. His personality was rich, profound and complex and it was this personality—as distinct from his teachings and writings—which accounts for the wonderful influence he has exerted on his countrymen and particularly on Bengalees. This is the type of manhood which appeals to the Bengalee as probably none other. Reckless in his sacrifice, unceasing in his activity, boundless in his love, profound and versatile in his wisdom, exuberant in his emotions, merciless in his attacks but yet simple as a child—he was a rare personality in this world of ours. And as Sister Nivedita has said in her book—*The master as I saw him*, “The queen of his adoration was his Motherland.” Have you read his tirade against the priests, the upper castes and the richer classes in his Epistles? It would do credit to the most radical socialist.

Swamiji was entirely free from the slightest trace of what you may call spiritual cant. He could not stand even the sight of it. To the pseudo-religious he would say, “Salvation will come through football and not through the *Gita*.” Though a Vedantin he was a great devotee of the Lord Buddha. One day he was speaking so enthusiastically of Buddha that somebody said, “Swamiji—are you a Buddhist?” At once his emotions bubbled forth and in a choked voice he said, “What? I a Buddhist! I am the servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha!” Before Buddha he would humble himself to the dust. Swamiji frequently used to say, “The intellect of Shamkara-charya with the heart of Buddha”—that is what we should aim at.

Similarly he was one day lecturing about Jesus Christ when somebody put a question. At once he grew grave and serious and in sonorous notes said, “If I had been present at the time of Jesus of Nazareth, I would have washed his feet not with my tears but with my heart’s blood.”

And his love for his down-trodden people! That was ocean-like. Do you remember that message of his, “Say brothers! ‘The naked Indian, the illiterate Indian, the pariah Indian is my brother.’ Say brothers at the top of your voice!—‘India’s God and Goddesses are my Gods. India’s good is my good,’—And pray day and night, Oh, Thou Lord of Gowri, Oh Thou mother of strength!—take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness and make me a man”?

Swamiji was a full-blooded masculine personality—and a fighter to the core of his being. He was consequently a worshipper of Shakti and gave a practical interpretation to the Vedanta for the uplift of his countrymen. “Strength, strength is what the Upanishads say”—that was a frequent cry of his. He laid the greatest stress on character-building.

I can go on for hours and yet fail to do the slightest justice to that great man. He was so great, so profound, so complex. A Yogi of the highest spiritual level in direct communion with the truth who had for the time being consecrated his whole life to the moral and spiritual uplift of his nation and of humanity, that is how I would describe him. If he had been alive, I would have been at his feet. Modern Bengal is his creation—if I err not.

Swamiji did not desire or attempt organisational work in the way Swami Dayananda or the Arya Samajists did. That may be a failing, but he used to say of himself, “Man-making is my mission.” He knew that if the country

could grow up really great men—then organisation could be completed in no time. He took great pains to train his disciples and never attempted to cripple their individuality or curb their free-thinking. To this end he would not keep a disciple near him for a long period. He used to say that under the

shadow of one big tree—another big tree could not possibly grow. What a contrast with some of our latter-day great men who cannot tolerate independent thinking and who desire that we should mortgage our intellect at their feet and permit them to do all the thinking for us!

RAMASWAMI IYENGAR

As we are passing through the Press news has come to us of another great bereavement. That calamities do not come single seems to be so true. The Ramakrishna Order had hardly recovered from a profound grief at the passing away of Mahendra Nath Gupta, better known as M., before it had to face another in the passing away on the 17th June, of Rao Saheb C. Ramaswami Iyengar, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras Branch, to whose lifelong, untiring and disinterested work the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, stands as monument, an institution which, started penniless, now commands several lakhs of rupees as its assets and has become a household word in the whole of the Southern India for its great utility.

When Swami Vivekananda returned to India after his great triumph in the West he visited Madras also. His presence there created a great enthusiasm in the city and especially among the college students who stayed over even after their summer vacation had begun, just to see the Swami and came in numbers to pay their respects to him. And young Ramu was one of them. We went along with a few others to see the Swami. As groups after groups of people came to see the Swami he had not much time to

devote to them and when Ramu's group went to see the Swami he had little talk with the other members of the group, but singled out Ramu, though he had kept himself in the background, and exchanged a few words with him. Probably the Swami foresaw that this young man was to be a great help in furthering his Master's cause in days to come and hence perhaps this special favour even in those crowded moments.

Later on Swamiji sent one of his Gurubhâis, Swami Ramakrishnananda, at the request of the public of Madras, to start a centre there. Swami Ramakrishnananda carried on the work preaching the Gospel in Madras and in various other cities of South India single-handed. One day after years of hard labour he complained to Sri Ramakrishna, as devotees are wont to do with their Beloved, of his having to work hard without any one to help him. Sri Ramakrishna made him understand that a young man would come to him that day who would help him greatly in all his works. And this young man was C. Ramaswami Iyengar or Ramu, as the Swami called him endearingly and by which name he has ever since been known to all devotees, both lay and monastic, young and old, of the Ramakrishna Order.

Ramu became very much attached to Swami Ramakrishnananda and he in turn took the greatest pains to train up the young man by instilling into his young mind the ideals of love, purity, service and sacrifice. When the Swami started a Students' Home in Madras in 1905, coming to know of the hard lot of poor students, to give them free board and lodging, he gave its management to the hands of his Ramu, who took it up as a command from his Guru, for Ramu looked upon the Swami as such. He made this Home and its development the one aim of his life. He was at the time a clerk in the Government Railway Offices. Had he so desired he could have prospered in his official career. But he preferred to be the petty clerk, for that gave him ample time and opportunities to look after the Home. Thus in the interest of the Home and the poor boys of the Presidency he closed the gates to all his future worldly prosperity.

Though he made the Students' Home the special work of his life, yet it was not that he did not take interest in other activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in the South. He was Secretary of the Madras Branch throughout his life and all its activities found a staunch supporter in him, nay, he himself gave the initiative to many of its activities in the city as well as in the Province during famine and flood. His love for Sri Ramakrishna made him attached to the Sannyasins of the Order and he made the Math at Mylapore almost his home and the monks were dearer to him than his own blood relations. He was ever anxious for their welfare and no member or devotee of the Order who has visited the South can ever forget his love for him.

Due to hard work for several years his health was failing during the latter part

of 1925, and in 1926 he had a stroke of paralysis which made him an invalid for the rest of his life. But even then he preferred to remain in the Home and forgot his ailments in looking to the comfort of the students and progress of the institution. Even in his ailment he was a source of inspiration to all those who were connected with the institution. Writes a visitor about him, "His enthusiasm and fervour for the work so near to his heart is infectious, and I came away full of admiration and a desire to do all I can for the Home."

Though he was ailing all these years no body expected the end to be so near; for he was quite active and guided the institution till his last day. In fact, many of his letters written to friends reached them even later than the wire that carried the sad news of his passing away. He was now fifty-nine. He has left a large circle of friends, many of whom admit that they have been the better for coming in touch with him. He never alienated anyone in his life, he was always sweet to all. That was the behest of his Guru and he lived up to it most admirably. He has shown what a single life of disinterested service, burdened though it was with official work and family responsibilities, can do. For the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home with its various branches, the residential school, the industrial school, and the new branch at Mambalan, opened last month, stands as a tangible proof of it. He has in his life inspired many young men who will carry on the tradition of the Home and its work. His passing away has left his friends and the Ramakrishna Order in deep mourning. May God grant them and his bereaved family strength and solace in their bereavement and may the departed soul rest in peace!

ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA.

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

न सुखी न च वा दुःखी न विरक्तो न सङ्गवान् ।
न मुमुक्षुर्न वा मुक्तो न किञ्चिन्न च किञ्चन ॥ ६६ ॥

(सः He) सुखी happy न not दुःखी miserable न not च and विरक्तः unattached न not सङ्गवान् attached न not वा or मुमुक्षुः aspirant for liberation न not मुक्तः liberated न not वा or किञ्चित् something न not किञ्चन anything न not च and.

96. He is neither¹ happy nor miserable, neither attached nor unattached, neither liberated nor an aspirant for liberation, neither this nor that.

[¹ Neither etc.—Happiness or misery, liberation or bondage, etc.,—none of these can ever be predicated of the Self which is eternally free.]

विक्षेपेऽपि न विक्षिप्तः समाधौ न समाधिमान्
जाड्येऽपि न जडो धन्यः पाण्डित्येऽपि न पण्डितः ॥ ६७ ॥

धन्यः The blessed one विक्षेपे in distraction अपि even विक्षिप्तः distracted न not समाधौ in meditation (अपि even) समाधिमान् meditative न not जाड्ये in dullness अपि even जडः dull न not पाण्डित्ये in learning अपि even पण्डितः learned न not.

97. The blessed one is¹ not distracted even in distraction, is not meditative even in meditation, is not dull even in a state of dullness, and is not learned even though possessed of learning.

[¹ Is etc.—The man of Knowledge is other than what he appears to be. He realises the Self as distinct from body and mind, and stands aloof as Pure Spirit. He is unconcerned with all mental operations, not to speak of the physical.]

मुक्तो यथास्थितिस्वस्थः कृतकर्त्तव्यनिवृत्तः ।
समः सर्वत्र वैतृष्यायाञ्च स्मरत्यकृतं कृतम् ॥ ६८ ॥

यथास्थितिस्वस्थः Abiding in Self in all conditions कृतकर्त्तव्यनिवृत्तः free from the idea of action and of duty सर्वत्र everywhere समः same मुक्तः liberated one वैतृष्यात् owing to desirelessness अकृतं what has not been done कृतं what has been done न not स्मरति reflects upon.

98. The liberated one who rests in the Self under all conditions, who is free from the idea of action and of duty, and who is the same everywhere, does¹ not, owing to desirelessness, reflect upon what he has or has not done.

[¹ Does etc.—The ego and its offspring, desire, precede all sense of action and duty. Being completely free from them, the liberated soul remains ever unconcerned with all his apparent actions, past, present and future.]

न प्रीयते वन्द्यमानो निन्द्यामानो न कुप्यति ।
नैवोद्विजति मरणे जीवने नाभिनन्दति ॥ ६९ ॥

(सः He) वन्द्यमानः praised न not प्रीयते is pleased निन्द्यमानः blamed न not कुप्यति is annoyed मरणे at death न not उद्विजति fears एव surely जीवने at life न not अभिनन्दति rejoices.

99. Praise¹ does not please him, and blame does not annoy him. He neither rejoices in life nor fears death.

[¹ Praise etc.—Being ever identified with the Absolute Self, One without a second, there can be for him no praiser or praise, blamer or blame ; nor life or death.]

न धावति जनाकीर्णं नारण्यमुपशान्तधीः ।

यथातथा यत्रतत्र सम एवावतिष्ठते ॥ १०० ॥

उपशान्तधीः The man whose mind is calm जनाकीर्णं crowded place न not धावति runs after अरण्यं forest (अपि even) न not (धावति runs after सः he) यथातथा in any way यत्रतत्र anywhere समः same एव verily अवतिष्ठते lives.

100. The tranquil-minded one runs neither after the crowded place nor after the wilderness. He remains the same in any condition and in any place whatsoever.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

While all India is sorrowing over the death of Bepin Chandra Pal, it may be mentioned for the information of our foreign readers that Mr. Pal was widely known as a great orator, author, journalist and thinker. In the field of politics, there was a time when he was the idol of Bengal and his voice prevailed in all other provinces also. His interest in religion was no less. Early in life he was not frightened to leave the parental protection of a rich father and face poverty for the sake of his religious conviction. He became a Brahmo and for a time threw himself heart and soul into the cause of the Brahmo Samaj. Towards the end of his life he was more of a Vaishnava Swami Devatmananda is now in charge of the Vedanta Society at Portland, an account of which is published in this issue. . . .

Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar is one of those who were instrumental in organizing the Bengali Goethe Memorial Society. He was its secretary. . . . Nanalal C. Mehta, I.C.S. is a keen student of art and is the distinguished author of 'STUDIES IN INDIAN PAINTING,' a book which has been highly praised by all, who are fit to pass any opinion on the subject. . . . The next article by Dr. Montessori will be on IDEALS AND FACTS IN EDUCATION. . . . The writer of *Hinduism: What it is not* is the professor of Philosophy in a College under the Calcutta University. The article will clearly show that he has deeply studied the subject. Next month he will write on HINDUISM: WHAT IT IS. . . . We acknowledge our indebtedness to the *Mahratta* for the article on Vivekananda by Subhash Chandra Bose.

“NON-FLIGHT FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD”

In the Gita Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that one of the characteristic virtues of the Kshatriya is “non-flight from battle-field.” Stripped of metaphor this means that a heroic spirit never gets daunted in life by any difficulty however great. A brave navigator does not get frightened by seeing a rough sea; on the contrary, he welcomes it; he rejoices most, when the storm rages fiercest and the waves roll greatest. In the same way, a man with genuine Kshatriya spirit rather enjoys a life which is beset with dangers and difficulties. This characteristic, though normal amongst the people of the West, has been more prominently visible amongst a section of them in the face of the economic crisis that has befallen many countries at present. Some time back an American wrote that the present crisis of the world represents the change from the old order of things to the new and “It is up to us to die with the old civilization or participate in the creation of the new. It is not given to every generation to have that alternative.” In the *Atlantic Monthly*, a few months back, a writer gave the following as his creed, and also as a creed for the individual who has the capacity to help himself :

“(1) I believe in myself.

(2) I believe in my own power to act to eliminate depression from the world by removing its causes

(a) from my private life;

(b) from my own business or profession;

(c) from the group with which I am in contact, whether it be my friends, my business associates, my clients or my customers, or my competitors.

(8) I will, myself, begin now to use my power to this end.

(4) I will undertake to bring about action to eliminate depression on the part of those who are within my control of influence.”

Last January the Prince of Wales in a stirring address to the Youths of England said with reference to the long-continued economic crisis: “It has been said that the most hopeless hour in English history has always been the most hopeful, because it is precisely the moment which calls forth the best and the bravest in the soul of our-nation.” He also emphasized “that depression and apathy are the devil’s own—they are not English, so away with them.”

What a sad contrast with things in India! In our country very few people really put forth the best of their energy to action. And with the first failure they meet with, they are given to despair and despair makes them say ‘words of wisdom,’ just as through the intoxication of drink a man talks high-sounding things. In the West they will share the view with Ulysses :

“How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish’d, not to shine in use!
As tho’ to breathe were life.”

And in India, the people will say with the Lotus-eaters :

“Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?”

Truly one of the effects of Tamasik mind is to see things in a perverted light, to consider that as Dharma, which is really Adharma. For do we not consider ourselves as widely awake while we are deeply immersed in sleep—in inertia?

PERILS OF WAR IN TIMES OF PEACE

It is strange that war has got such a strong appeal to human emotion that in times of war people show many virtues, which, if only could be applied

in times of peace, would do untold good to the world. In the name of a war, people are ready to undergo any amount of sufferings and sacrifices, they at once compose their differences and show a united front. It was for this reason perhaps that some Christian organizations have their programme of work chalked out on a military plan. General Booth has given the name of an "army" to his Mission. Very often military terms are used in works of peace to evoke enthusiasm amongst people. The Sister Nivedita used to say that India wants an *army* of teachers to *fight* out the ignorance in the country.

Principal L. P. Jack of the *Hibbert Journal* says that war creates disciplined courage amongst the general populace, which is found absent in times of peace, and so he wants that steps should be taken to foster it amongst Englishmen to fight the grave economic problems with which England is now faced.

In India there are so many problems, the solution of which requires discipline, courage, fortitude, and other virtues demanded of soldiers in an army. And even in the absence of war there are no less sufferings and distress in the country. It is said that the tolls of human lives from Malaria only in Bengal will be, per year, greater than the casualties in the last Great War. Yet we are not alive to the gravity of the situation. How much is illiteracy undermining the growth of the nation? How many social abuses are eating into the vitals of the country and causing harm no less appalling than the devastating effects of a war? In war time there is conscription. Cannot our every young man be expected to take upon himself the self-imposed obligation of giving a few years of service to the country in any shape he likes or finds suitable? There are so many problems

which call for attention. Sufferings of the war appear more visible to us than the perils that exist in the peace time. What is required is always to emphasize upon oneself that the service to the country in times of peace is no less—if not more—important than when the calamity of war betakes a nation.

HOW POOR THE RESULT!

While discussing the aim of education a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly* says that the greatest aids to success and happiness in life are

- (1) A sound and vigorous body.
- (2) Ability to think clearly.
- (3) Ability to speak and to write one's own language clearly and forcibly.
- (4) Character.

And as such the principal aim of educational institutions should be to furnish training in the above directions.

To judge by these tests how sad has been the failure of education in India! Here the boys come out of the university as physical wrecks. The increasing deterioration in the health of our students has been the cause of great alarm to all well-wishers of the country. And how many of our educated youths can think independently? Throughout their educational career, their energy is directed in memorizing notes or swallowing ready-made education-pills for examination supplied by the teachers. If asked, how they like a particular play of Shakespeare or what is their opinion of a character in any classical drama, the majority of them will not be able to say anything more than what they have read in prints or heard in class-rooms. This is true of all subjects—history, economics, etc. If you ask a boy, 'What is the cause of agricultural indebtedness in India,' though he might belong to an agricultural area, his

thoughts will be roaming in the pages of text-books on economics.

As regards the ability of our young men to speak and write in *one's own language*, the less said the better. How few of them can utter a single sentence without bringing in some English words! How fewer will be the number of those who can write a letter in vernaculars without much difficulty! In many universities outside Bengal vernaculars are even now treated as "pariah" or given a scant respect and attention.

And as far as 'character' is concerned, well, it is no concern of the universities to bother themselves with. At least they have not shown by their action that the development of character is of much greater importance than the training of the mind.

It is no wonder, then, that the contribution of the English education to the well-being of the nation has been poor, indeed, if not positively harmful and that the people are developing greater and greater dislike for our universities.

NOT ONE LUNATIC ASYLUM

Shocked by the atrocious treatment of the caste Hindus towards the so-called 'untouchables,' 'unapproachables,' etc., in Malabar, Swami Vivekananda once said in anguish that Malabar was a veritable lunatic asylum. To the great misfortune of the nation there is not only one lunatic asylum in India. The following was published in the *Leader* in its issue of May 19, and we have not seen it contradicted since then:

"Stories of alleged harassment of untouchables by caste Hindus in village Navagam in Baroda State consequent on the abolition of a separate school for untouchables continue to be received. It is said caste Hindus armed with *dharias*, *lathis*, etc., raided untouch-

ables' quarters and untouchables shut themselves in their houses. Stacks of hay belonging to untouchables were set fire to. Untouchable quarters narrowly escaped from being burnt."

If the above be true, it must be a very sad thing. And the saddest thing is that it indicates that the Hindu society has not as yet come to its senses. The Hindu society is daily getting weaker and weaker because of internal dissension, lack of co-operation and co-ordination, many members of its backward community taking to other faiths in order to save themselves from many social iniquities, and for similar other reasons. At almost every communal riot also, unfortunately there has not been dearth of that in recent years, Hindus betrayed a hopeless lack of organization and unity amongst them, and had it not been for this, many of the disasters, and consequent sufferings on both sides, could have been easily averted. And need we be told that many of the Mahomedan assailants are the descendants of Hindu converts, who had to leave or could not return to the Hindu fold because of social tyranny and ostracism?

At a time when every well-wisher of the Hindu society should try his best to bring about a solidarity in it, those who continue to sow seeds of disintegration are enemies, and not custodians of its best interests as they may falsely consider themselves to be in their ignorant pride. They must be determined not to open their eyes, who, even now, instead of extending a friendly arm to the members of the backward community, show any indication of hatred or contempt for them. We have no words sufficiently to condemn the caste Hindus of Baroda, if the above report be true, as also others of their ilk, who even silently harbour any feeling of hatred for others on the ground of social position.

QUALITIES OF INDIAN PAINTING

Along with other arts, Indian painting is slowly acquiring world-wide reputation. It has already got rid of the tendency to slavishly imitate European models. The almost lost art of Indian painting has been revived. Dr. James H. Cousins compares the two leaders, Abanindranath and Gogonendranath Tagore as Hiroshige and Hokusai of Japan. In the *Cultural World*, the learned Doctor in a thorough-going article on the subject observes the qualities of Indian painting as follows :

“The technical qualities of the Indian paintings are very striking. The conquest of exquisite beauty is made through a craftsmanship which is equally admirable in its choice and juxtaposition of colours, its apparently naive but subtly expert composition, its lyrical line, its particularity of detail which yet does not disturb the general effect, its ceremonial postures and gestures which invest it with some inner liturgical reality, its delight in folded draperies, its fineness of texture; these being but the externals of an art which seeks through emotional purity, intellectual significance and spiritual dedication to fulfil the age-long ideal of Indian art,—the providing of objects which will aid the individual the better to fill his duty in life and to achieve the liberation of the powers of his higher nature from the tyrannies of the lower.” The writer refers to the Bengal School of Painting which in 1914 commanded high praise from the circle of art-critics of Paris and London. Due to the economic condition of the country, our painters, like workers

in the sphere of other fine arts, are really too handicapped to enter into a world-competition. Still we have no doubt that true merit will win its laurel in time.

THE GREATEST ENEMY

No country suffers so terribly as India, because of mass ignorance. A nation can hardly rise with its teeming millions steeped in ignorance. Unless our attention is turned very seriously towards it, our great national progress is bound to be retarded. Nowadays in all advanced countries, men of light and leading are devising ways and means as to the complete removal of mass ignorance. Recently at the County Hall, London, the Association of Directors and Secretaries for Education convened its forty-first annual meeting. There the new President, Mr. A. L. Binns, in course of his speech remarked : “In our complex modern civilisation, in the crowded conditions in which we live, in our present state of interdependence, every individual reacts on the rest of us not only as a workman, as some people seem to think, but also as a neighbour, a voter, a spender of part of the nation’s income, and very often as a parent. Every one of us is either a social debtor or a social creditor, and mass ignorance is the greatest enemy of every democratic state.” He emphasized that to-day the people have their destiny in their own hands.

Although there are many difficulties in the way of mass education in India, those who have got the good of the country at heart should never slacken their efforts towards that.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE MYSTERIOUS KUNDALINI. By V. G. Rele, F.C.P.S., L.M. & S., with a Foreword by Sir John Woodroffe, Kt. *D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Hornby Road, Bombay. Third Edition. XXVIII+81+IV pp. Price Rs. 3/8.*

PRANAYAMA (PART ONE). By Srimat Kuvalayananda. *Kaivalyadhama, Lonavala, Bombay. 16+156 pp. Price Rs. 2/8.*

Though a section of our reading public are taking greater and greater interest in the ancient scriptures, very little attempt has as yet been made to study them on a scientific basis. The present two authors—both of them are men of sound medical knowledge and experience—are trying to fulfil that need. Of the two volumes under review, one is a study of Hatha-Yoga and the other is that of Pranayama in terms of Western anatomy and physiology. *The Mysterious Kundalini* has passed through three editions in course of four years and this very fact indicates how it has supplied a great public demand. The present volume has been greatly improved and enlarged.

Swami Kuvalayananda has taken a further practical step. He has started an Institution for pursuing scientific research on the subject of Yoga. *Pranayama* is an outcome of that and is meant to be a practical guide to any student of Yoga. Though the author has spared no pains to make the book useful, yet he advises everyone to get himself trained under an expert before taking it for guidance. We commend the book to the attention of the public.

KABIR AND HIS FOLLOWERS. By F. E. Keay, D. Litt (Lond.) *Published by the Association Press, 5, Russell Street, Calcutta. 186 pp. Price paper Rs. 2/-; cloth Rs. 3/-.*

The matter contained in this book was originally presented by the author as a thesis in the University of London. It has since been revised and in parts re-written. It is based on some Hindi books as well as stray literature on the subject. The author has taken immense pains in gathering all possible information about Kabir, his sect and his teachings. He has also analysed the Kabir literature. The book is written

in a very systematic way and its style is fascinating. It is undoubtedly a valuable treatise for those who like to know something of a great devotee like Kabir and his remarkable utterances.

In the last chapter of the book dealing with Kabir and Christianity, the author, we fear, has given an unfounded hint that Kabir's teachings and his sect might have come under Christian influence. He observes, "In those days of slow travel and communication it does not seem very probable, therefore, that Kabir had any direct contact with Christian teaching; though we cannot say that it was altogether impossible." In representing the doctrines of Kabir, the author has in many places failed and it might be due to his incorrect understanding of Kabir's Hindi utterances and their proper significance. As for an example, the author remarks, "If we compare Kabir with the great Hindu philosopher, Sankaracharya, we note that although Sankaracharya was an uncompromising Monist, he nevertheless allowed a place in his scheme for the Hindu pantheon, and regarded idolatry as a help towards obtaining the knowledge and experience of the identity of the soul with God. But Kabir had no place for idolatry; for it seemed to him that, if God is one, the whole basis of idolatry perishes. He was, therefore, unsparing in his denunciation of the practice." (Page 73).

We can safely say that the author misrepresents here not only Kabir but with him Sankaracharya too. The author's estimate of Kabir, in the concluding lines of the book, as a mere "earnest seeker after truth" and not a seer of the same is what seems to be quite unintelligible to us.

SACRED MOMENTS. By Ram B. Motwani. *Lal Kachahri Lane, Larkana (Sind). 42 pp. Price As. 8.*

The brochure consists of sublime sayings from the scriptures and of master minds.

MAHATMA GANDHI. By Romain Rolland. *Published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. 98 pp. Price As. 8.*

We reviewed the book, some time ago, in its first edition. That it has fulfilled a

genuine demand of the reading public is indicated by the fact that the book has gone through another edition.

BHARATA LAKSHMI. By Motilal Roy, *Published by Pravartaka Publishing House, 61, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta. 139 pp. Price Re. 1/4.*

It dwells upon the inspiring character of some famous Indian women. It is written in a very attractive style and is full of lofty sentiments. The treatise is up-to-date in many respects and has an excellent get-up.

A HUMBLE APOLOGIA FOR MY ASTIKYA. By Ramananda Chatterjee, M.A. *120-2, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta.*

The above pamphlet of 18 pages is reprinted from the Malaviya Commemoration Volume, 1932. As the name implies, in the essay the author wants to meet some ancient and modern objections to belief in the Supreme Spirit. If religion has not been able to explain the mystery of the universe, nor has science, the modern substitute for religion, met with better success. If religion (or the so-called religion) has been a source of some evil to the world, science has done no less harm. Nationalism, patriotism, Communism, Bolshevism or any other 'ism' cannot be a substitute for religion. Why there is so much evil, iniquity in the world? The right answer cannot be found; but nevertheless that does not stand in the way of one's belief in God. For the universe cannot be explained without having a Personality behind it. These are some of the points the gifted author wants to emphasize in the short essay, written from a rational standpoint. We greatly enjoyed reading it,

and recommend it to all who suffer from disbelief in God. But the pity is, arguments will not convince a disbeliever of the existence of God, just as a man will not wait for intellectual proofs, when his soul cries for God.

BENGALI

LONDONE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. By Mahendranath Datta. *Published by Yugantar Bani Bhavan, 30, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. 183 pp. Price Rs. 1/8.*

The author, a younger brother of Swami Vivekananda, lived with him for some time in London, when the latter came there from America in 1896. In the book he has attempted to give a glimpse of the life of Swami Vivekananda in London and has succeeded in a great way. Much has been known to the world, of Swami Vivekananda as a preacher, a scholar, a patriot; but here we see him more in his private life. Incidentally the author gives a picture of social customs and manners in England. The book has become highly interesting.

BRAHMAVIDYA. By Devendra Mohan Chakravarty. *53B, Musjeed Bari Street, Calcutta. 148 pp. Price Re. 1.*

It gives the Sanskrit texts of the Katha Upanishad with adequate notes and explanations which have made the subject-matter simpler. The author is not merely a translator but in many places of interest has added his original thoughts. The book is carefully printed and in good paper. We recommend the book to the Bengali-reading public.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RE-OPENING OF VEDANTA SOCIETY AT PORTLAND, OREGON

We have received the following from an American correspondent:

This center was opened by Swami Prabhavananda in the early autumn of 1925 when upon the invitation of friends in Portland, Ore., Tacoma, Everett and Seattle,

Washington, he delivered a series of lectures in these cities. In December of that year the organization of the students in Portland was perfected and Swami Prakashananda came up from San Francisco to help open and dedicate the center. As a result of this great spiritual impetus the society grew steadily until in the year 1928 it was given legal status by incorporating it under the

laws of the State of Oregon. In the summer of the year, 1929, Swami Prabhavananda saw the need for a larger field of service at Hollywood, Calif. and Swami Vividishananda was sent from India to take charge of the work at Portland. This work continued under his guidance until early in 1930 when because of ill health of the Swami and financial difficulties the work had to be suspended.

A few of the ardent members of the society however, continued their study of the Vedanta teachings during the years 1930 and 1931 and held regular weekly study classes in the Public Library building. The interest thus shown found a response when early in 1932 assurance was given by Swami Prabhavananda that the center would be re-opened under the leadership of Swami Devatmananda, formerly of the Vedanta Society of New York City who was soon expected from the east after a round of visits and lecture engagements at Providence, R. I., Chicago, Ill., Hollywood, Cal. and San Francisco.

To assist in the work of re-organization Swami Prabhavananda came north from Hollywood, Cal., one week in advance of Swami Devatmananda while the latter visited and lectured in the Hindu Temple in San Francisco. During this week Swami Prabhavananda gave three public lectures and three open classes upon various topics dealing with the different phases of the Vedanta Philosophy which were very well attended. It was most gratifying to Swami Prabhavananda to see the former students and friends return almost one hundred per cent. strong and show much enthusiasm for the center reviving.

Swami Devatmananda arrived on February 11th, 1932 and on the following evening a reception was tendered him at the home of one of the friends of the society, thereby giving him an opportunity to meet informally the students and friends of the center. He delivered his first lecture the following Sunday evening to a large and appreciative audience. As the week progressed classes were organized under his direction, Tuesday evenings being devoted to the study of the *Gita* and Thursday evenings to discourses on *Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms*. These classes have been well attended by both new and former students.

Before Swami Prabhavananda departed for California on February 27th, a large and comfortable residence was rented in one of

the best districts of the city to serve as a home for the society and its leader. By rather strenuous efforts upon the part of Swami Devatmananda and those students who had time to devote to the project the new home was renovated and furnished in time to hold the regular Tuesday evening class on March 8th. The new headquarters now has a spacious and tastefully decorated auditorium for the Sunday services and week day classes, an office room, a library room and a beautiful meditation room for the special use of the members of the society.

On Wednesday, March 9th, the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated in the new home. After a beautiful and touching chant by Swami Devatmananda which was especially appreciated by the students a short but illuminating discourse was given upon the life of the Master. Following this, a programme of short talks, recitations, violin and organ music and devotional songs was given by the students. Refreshments were subsequently served and as all mingled informally in the quiet and harmonious atmosphere of softened lights, the odor of incense, beautiful floral offerings and the glow of the fire in the open hearth, it became apparent that the significance of the occasion was deeply impressed upon the hearts of all who were present.

As the regular activities of the society progress it is the earnest prayer of all the students that the center will be re-vivified and grow to fill a vital and permanent place in the work of the Ramakrishna Mission. We feel that under the able and devoted leadership of Swami Devatmananda nothing less will be accomplished.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVA-SHRAMA, TAMALUK, MIDNAPUR

The above institution runs a hospital with indoor and outdoor departments, a circulating library and has various other works of public utility to its credit. In 1931, the number of cases in the outdoor hospital was 5,748, while in the indoor department there were 72 patients. The circulating library has been a novel feature of the Ashrama. From it books are sent to the readers not only in the town, but also in different parts of the sub-division, free of cost. There is a free Reading Room, which remains open every day. Those who cannot avail themselves of this opportunity for want of time or any other difficulty get books sent at

their own houses. In the year under review 387 religious classes and some lantern lectures were organized by the institution.

It is in need of funds to expand the work of the hospital as also to develop the circulating library.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION TORNADO RELIEF WORK

The Secy. Ramakrishna Mission sends us the following under date 20-6-32 :

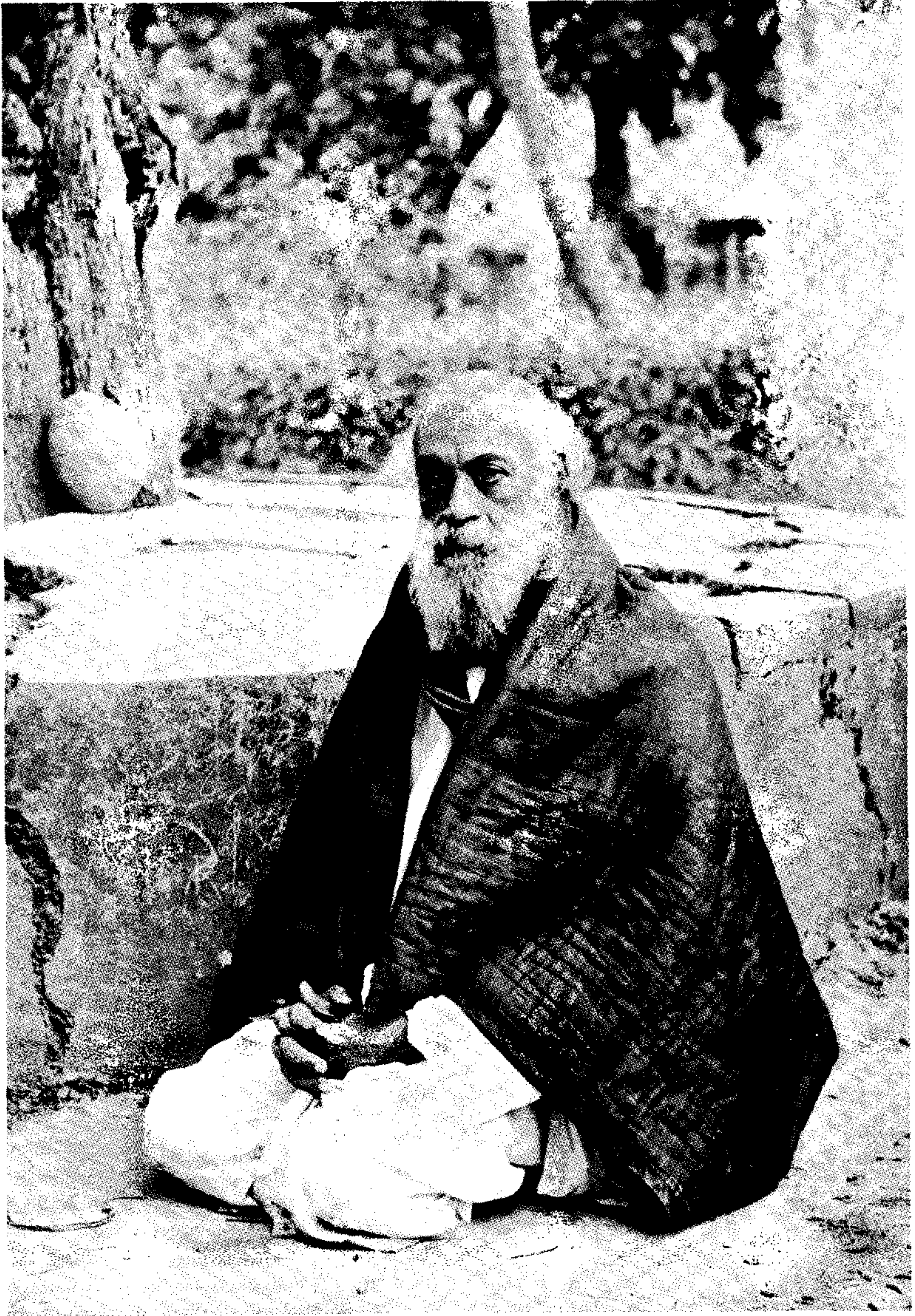
The public are aware of the terrible loss of life and property caused by the tornado that passed through a considerable area of the Mymensingh District.

The very morning following the terrible happening the Mission workers rushed to the scene of devastation and did what little was in their power to relieve the suffering of the distressed. During the first two or three days they went throughout the places of devastation and distributed 8 mds. of *Chira*, 80 srs. of *Gur* and about 100 pieces of old cloth amongst 150 families of 8 villages. In the most affected quarters we have started a relief centre at Borarchuk with 5 villages after making a thorough inspection of the whole affected area.

On the 16th May, 1932, the regular distribution began and continued up to the 15th June. We have distributed 114 mds. 26 srs. of rice amongst 508 recipients in 5 villages. Besides these, more than 16 mds. of dal, 5 mds. of salt, 20 srs. of oil, 160 earthen pitchers and plates, 37 gunny bags and 25 pieces of old cloth were distributed. Arrangements were made for supplying the patients with medicine and diet.

Our funds had been almost exhausted and in fact it would have been impossible to proceed with the relief work, were it not for the help of 66 mds. of rice, 15 mds. of dal, 160 earthen pitchers and plates as also 37 gunny bags and a few pieces of old cloth received from Sj. Upendra Nath Shaha on behalf of the Mymensingh Mahajan Relief Fund for which kind service we are specially indebted to the above institution. It will be necessary to carry on the relief work up to the middle of July and this will require at least Rs. 1,000. We therefore appeal to our generous countrymen to help us as early as possible.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses : (1) *President, R. K. Mission, Belur Math, Howrah,* (2) *Manager Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherji Lane, Calcutta,* (3) *Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.*



M. at the foot of the Bel-tree at Dakshineswar
on February 23, 1927