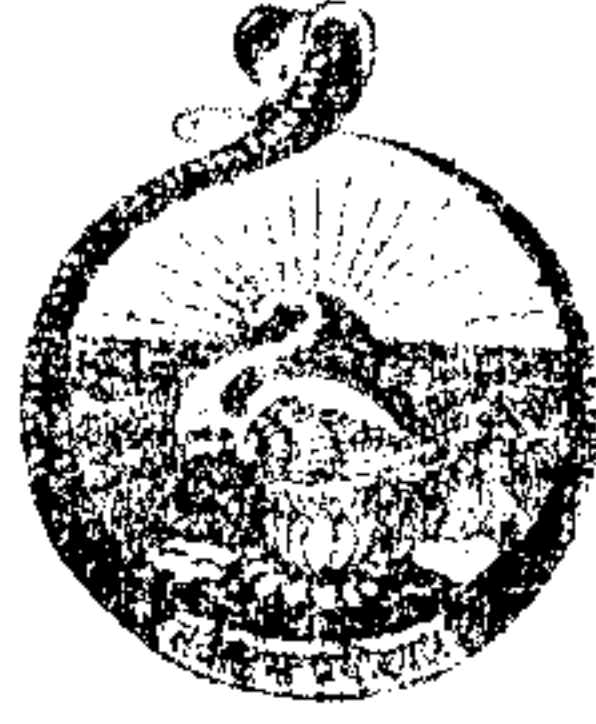


# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्सिद्धत जाग्रत



प्राप्य धरान्निर्बोधत ।

*Katha Upan. I. iii. 4*

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

Vol. XXVI ]

FEBRUARY 1921

[ No. 295

## THE BENGALI LANGUAGE.

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

( *Translated from Bengali.* )

**A**S all learning in our country from ancient times have been confined in the Sanskrit language, a wide gulf has been created between the learned and the common people. From Buddha to Ramakrishna, all who came on earth for the "general good of many people," taught the common people in the popular language. Scholarship and learning are, of course, excellent; but do they consist in nothing else but in stiff language and an unnatural and wild imagination? Can there be no art in the common and spoken language? What is to be gained by building an artificial language, leaving aside the natural language of speech? You think in your mind about all your scholarly investigations in the language in which you talk at home,—why, then, at the time of writing do you bring out a monstrous and unnatural language? The langu-

age in which you think in your mind about science and philosophy, hold discussion among yourselves—is that not fit for writing on science, on philosophy? If it is not so, then how in that language do you in your mind or among yourselves discuss about these subjects? There can be no language fitter than the one in which we express the feelings of our mind, our love, sorrow, and anger. That mode of feeling and turn of expression have to be employed. That force of language, that terseness capable of expressing much in little, that flexibility, capable of being turned in any direction, can never be obtained in any artificial made-up language. Language has to be made like steel; you can bend it to any shape, yet it does not lose its suppleness. With one stroke it can cut through a rock, yet its edge does not get blunt. Our

language, by imitating the ponderous movement of Sanskrit, has become unnatural. Language is the principal instrument of cultural advance, as also its principal indication.

You may say it is well to say that but different dialects prevail in different parts of Bengal,—which should I accept? That which by a natural way is getting strong and spreading is to be accepted—that is to say, the language of the metropolis, Calcutta. When people from any direction East or West once coming to breathe the atmosphere of Calcutta speak that language, then Nature herself is indicating which language is to be accepted in writing. As there will be more facility of communication, the difference between East and West will vanish and from Chittagong to Badyanath, the one language of Calcutta will be accepted. When I find that the dialect of Calcutta will in a few days be the language of the whole of Bengal, and if the spoken language and written language are to be made one, the wise must accept the Calcutta dialect as the base. In this parochial jealousy has to be allowed to drift away in the current. In a matter constituting the good of the whole country, the supremacy of one's own district or village has to be forgotten.

Language is the vehicle of thought. Thought and feeling are primary, language comes afterwards. Does it look well if you seat a monkey on a horse decked with jewels and diamonds? Look at the Sanskrit language. See the Sanskrit of the Brahmanas, the Mimamsa Bhasya of Sabar Swami, the Mahabhasya of Patanjali, and last, see the Mahabhasya of Sankaracharya; and compare with the Sanskrit of the recent times. You will at once understand that when men are alive, they speak a vital language: when life is dead,

they speak a language with the breath of life gone out. The more is the national death imminent, and original thinking gets diminished, the more is the tendency to cover a few hackneyed worn-out thoughts in a mass of flowers and incense. What a great high-flown effort in that direction! After a long string of adjectives, extending over ten pages, comes of a sudden the finis, “राजा आसीत्” (the king lived)! O! what beauty of involved adjectives, of compounds in forming words, what biting sarcasm!—these are signs of death. When the country was going into decline, these symptoms appeared. This is not confined to language merely, but in all the arts. In buildings, there is neither any expression of idea or a grace of form and the pillars are endlessly carved to no purpose. Ornaments piercing the nose, the neck, dress the wearer into the form of an ogress,—yet how much of carving of leaf and creepers and profuse ornamentation in them! In music, it is difficult to make out whether the singer is weeping or quarrelling; and what the idea, the feeling expressed is, even the Rishi Bharat fails to understand. And how much of involution, laboured complexity in that song! The mass of curves and intricacies in the singing bring out into play the thirty-six nerves of the body.—And add to that, in imitation of the Mahomedan expert singer, the music comes into being by singing through the nose and the teeth pressed close to one other. Now an effort is being made to rectify them and people will understand that that which is without idea, without life—that language, art, or music is, of no use as a mode of human expression. Now people will understand that as strength will come into national life, language, art and music will of themselves be filled with

spirit and sincere feeling. Then the amount of ideas which will be expressed in two spoken words will far exceed what is expressed in two thousand set adjectives. Then the very sight of the form of Gods

will awaken *bhakti* in us, the sight of a woman decked with ornaments will appear as a Goddess, and houses, furniture, everything will be overflowing with the pulsations of life.

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### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

**T**HE controversy is very often carried on that between the Vedanta and modern Christianity there is this irreconcilable difference, that while the former preaches an abstract Absolute, imperturbable and impersonal, incapable of movement and individuality, the God of Christianity is a Personal one, who has created this world as a real creation. This supposed anti-thesis involves a misconception of the two systems of thought and religion. While the modern interpreters of Christianity have failed to carry the implications of the real Christianity as preached by Christ and as recorded in the Gospels to its proper lengths; on the other side, they have kept themselves blind to the immanent aspect of the Brahman. Christianity, according to them, does not preach a transcendent Being, who dissolves into Himself all the realities of the Creation in their real ground in His impersonal world exceeding Being; Vedanta, according to them, preaches an impersonal imperturbable Absolute, incapable of personality, and having no creative aspect of world-manifestation. Christianity cannot be said to glorify and idealise the world only for are there not statements in the Bible which speak of the impermanence of the world, and the greater bliss and reality of God, than of the world? The waters of the life of the Spirit should be deemed worthier by a devout

Christian of the Bible than the waters of the worldly life; the Kingdom of Heaven than the kingdom of earth. Why is this anti-thesis and opposition, if Christianity is supposed, according to some of its modern professors, to preach only a human, personal, world-affirming religion? Indeed, if one goes through the Gospels, the impression of a negation of the world, the life a repentance for the getting ready for the kingdom of God is borne in upon him as much as any world-negating book of the Hindus, the Vairagya Shataka of Bhartrihari, for instance.

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The real truth is that both the Vedanta and Christianity have a world-negating and a world-affirming aspect, and according to different standpoints these two attitudes are assumed, with reference to the division of the spiritual being of man in creation—man, the divine being fallen into ignorance. Instead of avoiding one side, and trying to condemn statements regarding renunciation as due to a false theory, we should whole-heartedly throw ourselves into the spirit of both and see the wholeness of the truth and being of God manifesting through them. If during one period of human progress one side of the truth e. g. the positive is accepted and turned to account, this does not render the negative side nugatory, for that is still acting for a fruitful action of the

other, otherwise the positive, the affirmative would degenerate into ignorance, the action of the darkened ego, not the action of the Spirit. Individual beings, also, according to the prominent bend of their mind and by inclination, attach themselves to one of the aspects, affirmative or negative, to the exclusion of the other. We contend that such an exclusive division and partition of truth does not exist really, but that these are the two ways in which the whole truth presents itself to man's condition in creation, a separation between the Self and the Ego, the Paramatman and the Jivatman, between the Infinite and the Finite, the Impersonal and the Personal. And we go one step further and say that so long as man will remain in creation these two elements will remain, for the whole mystic phenomena of the universe is the play of these two. But there will be this difference that whereas in ignorance the centre of being was placed in the Finite, the Personal, and the limited Self, it is changed to the Infinite, the Impersonal, and the Universal Self and the other element takes the form of thin demarcation (and not prison-wall) for the play of the Divine Lila.

Therefore the play of the Infinite and the Finite, the Formless and the Formed, the Changeless and Changeful, which constitutes, according to the poet, the whole spiritual significance of the creation, has a spiritual meaning different to their emotional and poetic significance. The difference shows itself clearly when the poet avers that the Absolute in its uncreate, unmanifest aspect is a thin bloodless entity, an abstract without any stuff of reality. Instead of being considered the plenitude, the concentrated essence of reality, it is merely regarded as almost non-existent, showing

that a mere poetic interest in the Absolute disregards the unified homogeneous Illumination, in which all the forms, modes, features of its manifestation is swallowed up in culmination as an oceanic universality of Existence, Bliss and Consciousness. While a poetic interest in the world takes its stand on the finite, draws down the Infinite and Impersonal to relieve, enlarge and uplift the finite significances in the world; it does not penetrate through the deepest folds of the mind to the centre and core of consciousness and look with undazzled eyes into the ocean of Effulgence, where the being is dissolved and words and mind stop, because of being carried to the highest plenitude. This is the state about which the Upanishads say, "There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars, what to speak of the mortal fire!" But because of this nobody thinks of It as dark and devoid of effulgence, but as the Supreme Light which puts out the lower lights of the sun and the moon, for when they reach the source can their separate existences remain? They are heightened and resumed back into their source, without losing their light, but, on the contrary, by heightening it. Not having reached this unified and homogeneous Illumination, devoid of manifestation in forms and features, and not being accustomed to look at It face to face with undazzled eyes, the poet looks at It in the reflections in the finite and changeful objects, where the dazzle is much diminished to suit the poetic vision. But reaching to the plane of *bhavarajya*, he still brings down the light drenching the mental medium through which It passes, and therefore he is able to uplift his vision of the finite and personal with the universal significance of the Infinite and Impersonal. But still this vision is not central

but near to the heart of existence and truth; there is still a certain exiguity of significance, a flaw of externality as not proceeding from the heart of Reality. The flaw shows itself clearly in that the poet needs external stimulus, the moved feeling worked by suggestion of the outward Nature. Else, in its absence, he is apt to feel dubious about existence of the Reality. His experiences do not spring up from the fountain of existence in some deep cavern of the heart and then tinge with their significance the visible forms of Nature; but they are always dependent on the suggestion, the stimulation of the outward Nature and consequently he comes to recognise a Being which has also such a dependent stipendiary existence on the outward, manifested creation.

The vision of the Seer, on the other hand, starts from the opposite side of our being. His sense of the Infinite, the Universal and Impersonal is true, as he has seen It in Its own source, and as his vision proceeds from the native fountain of Existence he is under no compelling necessity to relate it to the outward, finite objects and changeable aspects of Nature, in order to feel Its existence. He does not confine the Soul in the manifestation but It exists antecedently to all manifestations. The Seer sees from the highest ground of the Self, down on the life, mind and Nature, bathing them with the light of the Spirit; the mere poet sees from the level of the mind, not of the intellectual, but of the psychic, on the light of the Spirit scattered and diffused on the mental level and in the manifestations of Nature. Therefore in the latter there is not the same sweep and concentration of the vision; therefore his vision although on the way

does not reach to the absolute certitude and security of a spiritual realisation.

Then, if it be said that if the Seer's vision antedates and precedes the visible manifestation it need not relate itself to the visible forms and this mood may develop into an other-worldly intolerance, a world-negating formula.—To this the answer is that although the Seer's vision is not dependent on the outward vision, but comes from the fountain of being, still it is not incapable of taking forms, or finding expression in the visible aspects of manifestation. And because it antedates, and is independent of the latter, it is secure from their limitations and filled with the wholeness of Truth. What, then, it may be asked, is the necessity of its world-manifestations, seeing that it is not dependent on them and contains all their significance within Itself? To this no intellectual answer can be formulated, corresponding to human motives and springs of action. It must be some peculiar variance of Bliss which the Supreme must feel in the world-manifestation, without anything new being added to it from outside, but simply in the form of its self-sundering, without its infinitude being abridged, पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते । The reconciliation between Infinite and Finite, between the One and the Many, this Changeless and Changeable, can only be done in spiritual experience, and no philosophy can bridge this metaphysical gulf. This is truly done when after resuming the whole manifestation into the Being of the transcendent Reality, the creation is seen to proceed from It. This is what is called the *lila*, not in the sense of a whim and a caprice, but in the sense of the variation of a full, Self-possessed, Self-satisfied and an Independent Being,

in the form of its infinite manifestations in the creation, without any of its infinitude and independence diminished. What pleasure a King, possessed of all wealth and honour, feels in personating a beggar and playing in bliss is known only to the King?

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## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

RENDERED FROM SWAMI SARADANANDA'S  
"LILAPRASANGA."

Continued from page 10.

AS a result of long years of renunciation and *tapas*, Ramakrishna's little ego completely vanished and united in being with the Universal Mind, the First cause of the world; he was naturally feeling all work for the good of the world as his own. Influenced by it, he realised that it was the will of the Divine to fulfil the needs of religion of the age through the instrumentality of his mind and body. Again, as a result of that, he understood that Srijiut Narendra was not born to fulfil his little selfish ends in life but in great love of the Lord came on earth to help him in the above work for the welfare of the world. Therefore it is no wonder that he should feel the ever-free and self-less Narendra as very near and dear to him and be greatly attracted to him. Thus, though at first sight wonder rises in the mind at seeing the powerful attraction of Sri Ramakrishna towards Sji. Narendra, still on a little reflection it looks very natural and inevitable.

We feel it is impossible to give even a glimpse of the nearness and depth with which Sri Ramakrishna felt Sri Narendranath to be near and dear to him and loved

him with full absorption of the mind. None of the reasons for which a man of the world feels another person to be dear to him and offers him the love of his heart was present here, but yet on meeting with and separation from Sji. Narendranath Sri Ramakrishna felt such deep elation and distress of the heart, that the least trace of it we have not found anywhere else. We did not know before that it was possible for one to love another with such depth and intensity and without any reason. Seeing the wonderful love of Sri Ramakrishna for Narendranath we understood that the day would come when man feeling the presence of the Divine in man would be blessed by loving him with such unselfishness.

Some time after Narendra came to Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Premananda visited Dakshineswar for the first time. At this time Sji. Narendranath having not visited Dakshineswar for sometime, he (Swami Premananda) was wonder-struck and charmed to observe the great longing with which Sri Ramakrishna was passing his time in order to meet Sji. Narendra. He related to us many times about it thus:

"While boarding the boat at Hatkhola ghat for going to Dakshineswar, with Swami Brahmananda, we met Sji. Ramdayal Babu there. Knowing that he also was going to Dakshineswar, we boarded the same boat together, and about evening reached the Kali Temple of Rani Rashmoni. Reaching Sri Ramakrishna's room, we learnt that he had gone to the temple to see the Image of the Divine Mother. Swami Brahmananda, asking us to stay there, went to the Temple to bring him back. After some time had passed we found him bringing Sri Ramakrishna, holding him carefully and leading him along the way, saying, 'here there are steps to

ascend," "here to descend" etc. Already we had heard of his losing the external consciousness in full absorption in the Divine consciousness. Therefore observing him coming like one intoxicated, with unsteady steps, we understood that he was filled with Divine feelings. Entering the room and sitting on his low bed, he soon came to an easy and natural mood and enquiring about my relations, examined the signs of my hands and feet. Weighing my hand from the elbow to the fingers, and holding it for some time he said, 'good.' What he understood by that way he only knew. Afterwards he enquired of Ramdayal Babu about the welfare of Narendranath and learning he was well said, "He has not come here for a long time, and I have a great desire to see him; please tell him to come one day.

Some hours passed in great joy in talks on religious subjects. When it was 10 o'clock in the night, we sat down to meals, after which we slept in the verandah to the east of Sri Ramakrishna's room and north of the court-yard. Swami Brahmananda slept in the same room with Sri Ramakrishna. Before an hour passed in sleeping, Sri Ramakrishna came out to where we were sleeping outside and addressing Ramdayal Babu said, 'Well, have you slept?' Both of us hurriedly getting up and sitting on our bed said, 'No, Sir.' Hearing it, he said, again, 'See, I am feeling a wringing of my inner being for the sake of Narendranath, like the wringing of a wet towel. Please tell him to come and see me. He is a pure form of the *Sattva-guna*, a veritable Narayana, I cannot remain without seeing him now and then.' Ramdayal Babu had been visiting Dakshineswar from some time before, and therefore he was acquainted with the child-like behaviour of Sri Rama-

krishna. Seeing Sri Ramakrishna in that state of mind, he understood that he was in a half-trance, filled with a divine mood. Saying that as soon as it was morning, he would see Narendranath and ask him to meet him, he began to console him. That mood of his did not abate that night. Finding that we were being disturbed in sleep, he went away from us to sleep in his bed, but in the next moment forgetting all about it, he came again to us and speaking of the great qualities of Narendranath, expressed the great pain he was feeling at not seeing him. Astonished at finding his great distress, we began to think of his wonderful love, and how hard must be he for whom he was suffering so much. That night passed away. Afterwards when the day broke, we saw the Image in the Temple, and then prostrating at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, took leave of him and returned to Calcutta."

In 1883, one of our friends arriving at Dakshineswar found Sri Ramakrishna very depressed and wistful on account of the absence of Narendranath for a long time. He says, "That day his mind was full of Narendranath and only words in praise of Narendranath's great qualities were on his lips. Addressing me, he said, 'See, Narendranath is full of *Sattva-guna*, I have seen that he is one of the four Rishis on the plane of Akhanda Sachchidananda, and one of the Saptarshis (group of seven great Rishis). His great qualities are unfathomable,'—speaking in this strain he became in a manner impatient to see him, and as the mother weeps for her absent son, so he began to shed tears. Afterwards not being able to control himself in any way and feeling we might think it rather unseemly, he hastily went out towards the northern verandah and we heard him weep-

ing in stifled sobs, saying 'O Mother Divine, I cannot remain without seeing him.' After some time, controlling himself he again came into the room and sat beside us and in plaintive tones began to say, 'I wept so much, still Narendra did not come. I feel very great pain at not seeing him once, as if it is wringing my heart, but he understands nothing of this love for him.' Saying thus he again became impatient and went out of the room. Returning again, he began to rebuke himself, saying, 'Old man! you have become so impatient and are weeping for him,—what will people think of it?' (Addressing us), 'You are my own people and therefore I do not feel any shame before you. But what will others think of it? I am unable to control myself.' Seeing his great love for Narendra we were astounded and thought that surely Narendra was a God-like personality, otherwise why should Sri Ramakrishna feel such attraction for him? Then consoling Sri Ramakrishna, we said, 'Yes, Sir, it is very wrong of him, that even knowing that you feel such pain in his absence, he does not come.' Some time after this incident one day he introduced us to Sj. Narendra. As we found Sri Ramakrishna impatient at not seeing Narendra so we saw him equally elated on meeting him. Some time after the above event we arrived at Dakshineswar on the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. The devotees adorned his body beautifully that day with new cloth and garlands and flowers. The *kirtan* song was going on in the northern verandah of the garden. Sri Ramakrishna was sitting surrounded by devotees, listening to the song and becoming filled with religious emotion, sometimes adding lines to the song to make the singing successful and expressive. But on account of the non arrival of

Narendranath, he was feeling disturbed in his enjoyment of the song. Now and again he was looking round to see if Narendra arrived and was saying, 'Well, Narendra has not come.' When it was mid-day, Narendra arrived and prostrated at his feet in the midst of the assembly. On seeing him his heart leapt up in joy and leaning on him he became overpowered with religious emotions and absorbed in trance. Afterwards regaining his natural mood he engaged himself in talking to and feeding him. So for that day his listening to *kirtan* song was abandoned."

It fills one with wonder to think of the divine love which Sj. Narendra received from Sri Ramakrishna. Unmoved by it, that he still advanced to test Sri Ramakrishna's life for the sake of the real truth, indicates what great passion for truth he had. On the other side, not at all taking offence at that examination, Sri Ramakrishna gladly offered himself for scrutiny for the welfare of the disciple and endeavoured to make him realise the high spiritual truths. Thinking of this great humility of spirit and nobility of mind on his part we feel no less wonder-struck. Thus the more we shall study the relation of Sri Ramakrishna and Sj. Narendranath, the more shall we find, on the one hand, the earnest desire to examine for truth's sake and on the other the readiness in offering his life for the scrutiny of the other and the endeavour to make him realise the truths of spirituality. We will understand moreover, how the real Teacher, respecting the feelings and ways of the worthy disciple advances to teach him in his way and finally ends in commanding for ever the place of reverence and worship in the heart of the disciple.

(To be continued).



## IS THE HINDU PESSIMISTIC?

An orthodox Hindu, immediately after rising from his bed, has to utter the following Sloka :—

इत्याद्येन्याय बोद्धव्य महद्भयमुपस्थितम् ।

मरणव्याधिशोकानां किमद्य सम्मविष्यति ॥

—Oh, to-day a great cause for fear has arisen—out of death, disease or grief, which is to happen to-day!

The robust civilised man here winks with a smile and says—“Oh, the Hindu is pessimistic. Why dwell continually on the dark side of life and be morose and miserable? Look at the progress, look at the bright prospects of life and march on—‘heart within and God overhead’ Continually dwelling on these dark pictures, the Hindus, as a nation, have become unprogressive, fatalistic and unfit for the struggle for existence—which is the sole law of progress! A robust optimism is the only medicine that can be prescribed for this curious malady of the Hindu heart. Society, civilisation and everything that is good and noble in humanity will perish, if one indulges in this sort of meditation every day—and asceticism and all its concomitant evils will be the only result.’

Let us see if the Hindu has any answer to these reproaches levelled at his head by his so-called progressive neighbour, or not.

Says the Hindu to his progressive friend in reply :—Brother, what is progress? Though modern science is conquering every day newer and newer domains of nature, and is acquiring more and more powers, can you still say conscientiously that you have made yourself any the happier than in the previous ages? You have discovered the means of more and more rapid locomotion, you can send to the world news by the help of electricity in an incredibly short period, you can by your knowledge and its consequent power command more

comforts and more luxuries than your forefathers, but say sincerely, do you enjoy more and more peace of mind? The fact is, that increase of power increases also the thirst for more and more powers, and these powers can be used in either good or evil ways. For this reason, though your so-called civilisation advances day by day, we are witnessing more and more horrible wars and famines, newer diseases and the social problems getting more and more complicated every day. You charge me with pessimism. But what is your so-called optimism? Is it not wilfully shutting your eyes to the grim realities of life? You say that we are continually dwelling on the gloomy side of life, but do you know that we are only trying to see the world as it is, with its pains and pleasures, its life and death, its beauty and ugliness?

Yes, but if this be the reality of life, is no escape possible? Is it the fate of man to be happy one moment, and the next to be engulfed in a mass of misery? Is there any possibility of permanent happiness in the world?

Not in the world of relativity—not in the world as it is—answers the Hindu. But says he, “There is no cause for despair. This relative, phenomenal world—this chain of pairs of opposites—does not represent our whole existence—our real nature. For the next Sloka to be also uttered along with the former says :—

अहं देवो न चान्योऽस्मि ब्रह्मैवाहं न शोकभाक् ।

सच्चिदानन्दरूपोऽहं नित्यमुक्तस्वभाववान् ॥

—I am the Shining One, I am no other, I am Brahman, I cannot suffer grief, I am Existence, Knowledge, Bliss, my nature is ever free.’

Now, do you call this a gospel of despair? Do you dare to call this pessimism in a disparaging sense? A fact is a fact, by whatever name you may choose to call it.”

If one analyses all the different religions and philosophies and sects on this earth, he will find that every one of them agrees on the point that the state in which we find ourselves at present is something which is not desirable and that a better state is what is needed. Each one may express it differently, but the inner significance of all of them is the same. Does not an orthodox Christian believe that he is born in sin? Does not an advocate of modern science believe that compared to the vast possibilities of knowledge, his present state of knowledge is most insignificant? We would rather say, that the position of the scientific agnostic is pessimistic in its worst sense, for he, by his attitude towards life in general, entirely shuts out the possibility of a higher life for man? Does not also modern science, by positing natural selection and its necessary corollary, the survival of the fittest, as the only laws of life and evolution, tend to create a most pessimistic attitude of mind? Does it not also by denying or expressing grave doubts about the survival of the human personality after death, open a most dismal prospect for the future—namely annihilation? For, if annihilation be our only future destiny, what becomes of the meaning of our life—however joyous and pleasant it may seem at present? Is it not like asking a man condemned to death to taste the dainty dishes?

In reality, the Hindu is neither pessimistic, nor optimistic in the ordinary sense of these words. He wants to face the reality of life—and he says that it is both pain and pleasure—pleasure and pain—coming in continuous succession, like a wheel—

चक्रवत्परिवर्तन्ते दुःखानि च सुखानि च ।

—and he wants to get out of the wheel, and his Scriptures say, that really he is never in the wheel, he is in reality always out of it, if he only desires to know the Truth.

All the teachings contained in his books, all his religious practices, are intended for

the purification of the mind, so that not being tossed hither and thither by a wave of desires, he may look at the absolute truth with a calm and balanced mind, and at last finding the truth, go beyond both pain and pleasure and proclaim to the world with gladness the comforting gospel of the divinity of man—that he is no other than the eternal Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

SWAMI SUDDHANANDA.

EPISTLES OF  
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

( *Translated from Bengali* )

CLXXVIII.

Glory to Ramakrishna!

Baidyanath.

21th December, 1889.

Dear Sir,

I have been staying for the last few days at Baidyanath in Purna Babu's Lodge. It is not so cold, and my health, too, is indifferent. I am suffering from indigestion, probably due to excess of iron in the water. I found nothing agreeable—neither the place, nor the season, nor the company. I leave for Benares to-morrow. At Deoghar A—stopped at —'s place, and the latter, as soon as he got news of us, earnestly insisted on our becoming his guests. Finally, he met us once again and prevailed on us to accede to his request. The man is a great worker, but has a number of women with him—old women most of them, of the ordinary Vaishnava type. \* \* His clerks too revere us much; some of them are very much ill-disposed towards him, and they spoke of his mis-deeds. Incidentally, I raised the topic of —. You have many wrong ideas or doubts about her, hence I write all this after particular investigation. Even the aged

clerks of this establishment highly respect and revere her. She came to stop with — while she was a mere child, and ever lived as his wife. \* \* \* Everyone admits in one voice that her character was spotless. She was all along a perfectly chaste woman and never behaved with — in any but the relation of wife to husband, and she was absolutely faithful. She came at too early an age, to have incurred any moral taint. After she had separated from —, she wrote to him to say that she had never treated him as anything but her husband, but it was impossible for her to live with a man with a loose character. His old office-bearers, too, believe him to be satanic in character but they consider—a Devi (angel), and remark that it was following her departure that — lost all sense of shame.

My object in writing all this is, that formerly I was not a believer in the tale of the lady's early life. The idea that there might be such purity in midst of a relation which society does not recognise I used to consider as romance. But after thorough investigation I have come to know that it is all right. She is very pure, pure from her infancy,—I have not the least doubt about it. For entertaining those doubts, I and you and everyone are guilty to her; I make repeated salutations to her, and ask her pardon for my guilt. She is not a liar.

I take this opportunity to record that such courage is impossible in a lying and unchaste woman. I have also been told that she had a life-long ardent faith in religion also.

Well, your disease is not leaving off yet! I don't think this is a place for patients unless one is ready to spend a good deal of money. Please think out some judicious course. Here every article will have to be procured from elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,  
Vivekananda.

CLXXIX

Ghazipur,  
30th January, 1890.

Revered Sir,

I am now stopping with Satis Babu at Ghazipur. Of the few places I have recently visited, this is the healthiest. The water of Baidyanath is very bad—it leads to indigestion. Allahabad is very congested. The few days I passed at Benares, I suffered from fever day and night—the place is so malarious! Ghazipur has a very salubrious climate—specially the quarter I am living in. I have visited Pavhari Baba's house—there are high walls all round, and it is fashioned like an English Bungalow. There is a garden inside, and big rooms and chimneys, etc. He allows nobody to enter. If he is so inclined, he comes up to the door and speaks from inside,—that is all. One day I went and waited and waited in the cold and had to return. I shall go to Benares on Sunday next. If the meeting with the Babaji takes place in the meantime, all right, otherwise I bid him good-bye. About Pramada Babu's place I shall write definitely from Benares. If Kala Bhattacharya is determined to come, let him do so after I leave for Benares on Sunday, but he should rather not. After a few days' stay at Benares, I shall start for Hrishikesh. Pramada Babu may accompany me. Please accept all of you my cordial greetings,—and blessings to R— and K— &c.

Yours affectionately,  
Vivekananda.

P. S. In my opinion, it will do you much good if you come and stay for some time at Ghazipur. Here Satis will be able to secure a Bungalow for you, and there is a gentleman, Gagan Chandra Ray by name, who is the Head of the Opium Office, and is exceedingly courteous, philanthropic and social—they will arrange for everything. The house-rent is fifteen to twenty rupees; rice is dear, and milk sells at sixteen to twenty seers a rupee all other things are very cheap. Be-

sides, under the care of these gentlemen, there is no chance of any difficulty. But it is slightly expensive—it will cost over forty or fifty rupees. Benares is horribly malarious. I have never lived in Pramadā Babu's garden, he likes to have me always in his company. The garden is indeed very beautiful, richly furnished, spacious and open. This time when I go, I shall live there and report to you.

V.

CLXXX.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna?

1894.

Dear and beloved,

\* \* Well, do you think there is any religion left in India! The paths of Knowledge, Devotion, and Yoga—all have gone, and now there remains only that of Don't touchism—'Don't touch me!' 'Don't touch me!' The whole world is impure, and I alone am pure! Lucid Brahmajnanam! Bravo! Great God! Now-a-days Brahman is neither in the recesses of the heart, nor in the highest heaven, nor in all beings—now He is in the cooking-pot. Formerly the characteristic of a noble-minded man was "त्रिभुवनमुपकारश्रेणिभिः प्रीयमानः"—"to please the whole universe by one's numerous acts of service," but now it is—I am pure and the whole world is impure,—go and get money and set it at my feet. \* \* Tell the sapient sage who writes to me to finish my preaching work here and return home, \* \* that this country is more my home—what is there in Hindusthan? Who appreciates religion? Who appreciates learning?

To return home! Where is the home? I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, "वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः"—"doing good to others' [silently] like the spring"—this is my religion. I do not want to have any connection

with lazy, hard-hearted, cruel and selfish men. He whose good fortune it is, may help in this great cause.

\* \* Please convey to all my love, I want the help of everyone. *Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning; it is character that can cleave through adamantine walls of difficulties.* Bear this in mind. \* \*

Ever yours in love,

Vivekananda.

CLXXXI.

New York  
19 West, 38th Street,  
1897

Beloved—

\* \* I am now in New York City. This city is hot in summer, exactly like Calcutta. You perspire profusely, and there is not a breath of air. I made a tour in the north for a couple of months. Please answer this letter by return of post to England, for which I shall start before this will have reached you.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

## NEO-PLATONISM AND VEDANTA.

**N**EO-PLATONISM represents the intuitional reaction against Greek Intellectualism. Plotinus stands as the foremost figure in the Neo-Platonic school and by his *ecstatic* vision overcomes the Dualism which Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics try in vain to do away with by intellect or reason.

The Original Being, according to Plotinus, is the One as opposed to the many, the Infinite as opposed to the finite. It is Pure Existence, Thought and Goodness. But, in strict propriety, even these attributes cannot be attached to It, because predication implies limitation. The Original Being, Plotinus is therefore constrained to say, is a Pure Unity, excluding all determination. It is inaccessible alike to speech and thought. To know It as an object is to fall away from It. Even

the subject-object relation included in self-consciousness must be transcended in order to reach It. "It is a flight of the Alone to the Alone." Stilling the commotion of the world without and of the soul within, one is required, in the highest tension and concentration, in silence and utter forgetfulness of all things, to be lost in and be filled with God. This blessed but indescribable state in which discursive thought with its inherent limitations melt away and the individual and the Universal become one is called *ecstasy*. Plotinus, it should be noted, does not create any unbridgeable gulf between intellect and *ecstasy*. Intellect which passes through the stages of vulgar opinion and philosophic knowledge ultimately has its fulfilment in *ecstasy*.

Now the problem of creation is a knotty question that demands solution. Unlike the Hegelian Absolute Plotinus's Original Being is self-complete and self-manifest and has no necessity for the creation of a world to realise Itself. But, as a matter of undeniable fact, the world seems to exist. Plotinus looks upon creation as a progressive degeneration of God that cannot, in any way, touch and soil the Divine Life. The world, an overflow and excrescence, must go back to the Divine Essence in the end. The *nous*, the first projection of the Divine Life, at once thought and being, idea and ideal world, is the archetype of the created world. Next, in order of perfection, comes the soul which is a product of the *nous* and occupies an intermediate position between the intelligible and the corporeal worlds. As a unit it has a soul of its own and is called the world-soul, and, as a totality, it embraces countless individual souls within itself. Last of all, comes the gross material world, inert and passive, without any sign of life and consciousness. But created things, images and reflexions of the Original Being, are subject to a law of diminishing excellence. The further the line of successive projection the less perfect and real they are.

Plotinus now considers the nature of man and his relation to God. Man is truly Divine, says he. This world is a dreary unknown land where, like a stranger, he drags a joyless, miserable existence. Inveigled and overpowered by self-chosen passions he seems to have lost his Divine Estate and comes to look upon himself as a finite

creature of flesh and blood with mean and ignoble interests. The majority of mankind are so much engrossed with material concerns that they live brutish, sensuous lives without any hankering for the spiritual ideal. There are some who, like the amphibia, waver between the spiritual and the material, sticking to none. There are also a few who live for God in constant contemplation, meditation and *ecstasy* and are the ideals of humanity. Plotinus proposes a graduated scale of virtues for the realisation of the goal of life. First of all, he speaks of civil virtues which serve only to embellish life, but do not uplift the soul. It is moral virtues that purify the soul and elevate it higher and higher. Above all, it is divine virtues—contemplation and meditation, coupled with ascetic observances—which culminate in *ecstatic* raptures and bring back man to his real self. Plotinus himself is said to have attained to this *ecstasy* four times in life.

This is the sum and substance of Neo-Platonism as expounded by Plotinus. It is, in spirit, nothing but an indistinct and faint echo of Pure Monism of the Vedanta Philosophy, the highest watermark that metaphysics can reach. In his famous commentaries on the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sutras* Shankara elaborates this position and establishes it, demolishing all arguments to the contrary by the sledge-hammer blows of his trenchant criticism.

The ultimate reality, according to Shankara, is *Brahman* that is, like Plotinus's Original Being, identical in essence with Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. It is absolutely homogeneous, one without a second. Beyond all change, It was never born and nor will It ever die. But, truly speaking, it is a contradiction to speak of *Brahman* in terms of language. As the mind, not to speak of the gross senses, staggers and fails to conceive It, Shankara, like Plotinus, proceeds by the negative process of 'this is not, this is not' (नेति नेति). Nothing phenomenal, finite and relative can be predicated of *Brahman*, for It is transcendental. Is It then, like the *Ding-an-sich* of Kant, unknown and unknowable? Where the knower and the known, along with the forms of time, space and causation, do not exist, the question of knowing and being known becomes irrelevant. It is being and becoming. It is more

than knowledge for *Brahman* is the Eternal Witness in everything. In It we live, move and have our being. Because of Its all-pervading presence the mind and the senses perform their respective functions. The cosmos, present before us with its wonderful panorama of names and forms, has no reality independent of *Brahman*.

If then nothing is truly real except *Brahman* what does this world mean and what is its relation to the Ultimate Reality? Plotinus calls it a falling away from the Divine Life. By a deeper and subtler analysis Shankara carries the conclusion arrived at by Plotinus to a height where ordinary vision and logic cannot reach. The creation, says Shankara, is a fictitious superimposition of *Maya*—the principle of nescience. Even as an expert magician produces illusory appearances, *Brahman*, associated with *Maya*, projects the phenomenon of this world. But what this *Maya* is is indescribable. So long as we are within its illusive grasp, we cannot say what it is; the moment we are free from it, the very question does not arise. It cannot be said to be real, for it vanishes before the light of *atma-jnana*; nor can it be said to be unreal, for it, at least, seems to spread the network of phenomena. It is simply a statement of fact. However, by a gradual process of evolution *Maya*, this inscrutable power of *Brahman*, seems to modify itself into a plurality of individual existences with ideas of differentiation. There spring, in due course, the cosmic intelligence, the principle of egoism, the mind with its different functionings, the senses, the subtle essences, the gross elements etc. which constitute the apparent dichotomy of the worlds of spirit and matter, self and not-self. Though transcendently unreal these individual existences have got empirical reality. In contrast with the Nihilistic Bauddhas who reduce the world to an absolute void, Shankara grants it a relative existence.

The sublime note that even a crawling worm, not to speak of man—the crown and glory of the creation, is identical in essence with *Brahman* is the redeeming feature of Vedanta of the pure monistic school. Divinity is the birth-right and natural heritage of every creature. But as his vision is blurred over by *avidya*—ignorance, he seems to be self-hypnotised and plays the unhappy role of a knower, enjoyer and agent, subject

to pain and suffering. Even as a rope, seen in the dark, appears to be a terrible snake and frightens the observer; similarly the one, unchangeable *Brahman*, seen through the veil of *Maya*, seems to be broken up into many with countless limitations. Plotinus also speaks of the Divine Origin of man in similar terms. But Shankara is a decided advance upon him, for he goes further and shows clearly that what, in empirical consciousness, are additional to *Brahman*, the Pure undifferentiated consciousness, are figments of nescience.

Let us now consider how far this Pure Monism of Vedanta as interpreted by Shankara is rational and how far it can be actualised in practical life.

The stock arguments, ontological, cosmological, teleological, moral or their modified forms by means of which Intellectualism proves the existence of God have been exploded as they involve defects and fallacies. They cannot stand before criticism unless we postulate a belief in God. Hence the so-called *terra firma* of reason on which the systems of such thinkers as Descartes, Maitneau, Lotze, Royce and the like are grounded, becomes insecure and slides like quicksand. Hegel may be credited with having reached the climax of Intellectualism by a skilful gymnastic of the dialectic, but still his Absolute, realising Itself through self-evolved duality of a self and not-self, is only a phenomenal God, coloured and conditioned by all the imperfections and limitations of human reason. Just as a man can never overreach his own shadow, reason, by any number of somersaults, can never transcend its own limitations. The categories of reason, constitutionally fettered to the phenomenal, finite and relative, get involved in insoluble contradictions, antinomies and paralogisms when they are applied to God, the Noumenon. God, as He really is, is therefore unknown and unknowable. Kant and Herbert Spencer stop here and end in Agnosticism whence Shankara as also Plotinus begin. In this world of relativity, says Shankara, there is no absolute standard of validity. What is true in the dream becomes false in the waking state, and what again is valid in the waking state is falsified in the sound sleep. The life of an ordinary man, alternating between these three states, is circumscribed within the four walls of the senses and dis-

cursive reason. The truth that he can attain to is therefore perceptual and inferential which is simply a shadow of the Truth Absolute. But the Vedantist gives testimony to a superconscious state where ordinary consciousness with its ensnaring limits is swallowed up and gives place to an experience of the most exalted character, revealing *Brahman*. The Vedantist accords to it the highest validity. Such experiences that have been recorded in the sacred texts of the *Śruti* furnish the ground work of Vedanta. The *Śruti* is the ultimate standard of proof and validity that does not contradict perception and inference, but rather fulfils them by carrying up their conclusions to a deeper analysis and higher synthesis. Discursive reason, well regulated and disciplined, often prepares the way for the superconscious state. So in Vedanta as in the system of Plotinus there is no insurmountable barrier separating the former from the latter. Hence the charge that Neo-Platonism and Vedanta are subterfuges of irrational mysticism is totally baseless. Besides the undeniable fact, repeated many times over in History, that the pure, sinless and selfless lives of men, realising their identity with the Godhead, have acted as important factors in moulding the loftiest destinies of mankind, belies this charge.

Of all existent systems Vedanta claims to be extremely practical. Vain and empty theorisings have no place in it. The precepts inculcated by Vedanta must be lived and acted up to. After hearing them from the lips of an illumined teacher, *Guru*, as he is called, the aspirant should reflect and meditate upon them with full faith and devotion (श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः). This means a tremendous struggle between man's higher and lower nature, entailing unflagging determination and perseverance. Desire is the centre round which is revolving without cessation the wheel of *samsara* with birth and death, happiness and misery. But with the light of higher reason the aspirant should discriminate between the real and the unreal, renounce all desires for the fleeting things and advance steadily to his goal. Vedanta speaks very highly of renunciation and emphasises its greatest necessity in spiritual life, though now-a-days it has fallen into discount and its real significance is being diluted away by self-complacent interpretations. Renunciation must be

the anvil upon which should be forged the life of one who aspires to the spiritual ideal. The senses have a tendency to peer out, but the aspirant should draw them in and meditate on the real nature of his Self. At the highest stretch of concentration and illumination the body and the external world will lose their meaning for him and he will reach the super-conscious state where all strivings have their ultimate fulfilment. This blessed and covetable state is called *ecstasy* by Plotinus and *samadhi* by the Vedantist. Any sincere and truth-loving person may rise to it if he goes through the disciplinary practices enjoined. The story is told of a *Sannyasi* who was ever so conscious of his identity with *Brahman* that even in the jaws of a terrible tiger he continued repeating 'सोहं, सोहं'—'I am That, I am That,' till he breathed his last. The neighbouring hills and dales reverberated with the divine melody of the mystic note 'सोहं', sending a thrill of unspeakable bliss all round. Thus the apodeictic certainty of the Vedantic ideal have been demonstrated over and over again in the lives of saints and sages.

In this materialistic age unconsciously swayed by a deep predilection for life with all the promises of sensuous enjoyment nations are at war with one another and individuals are divided against individuals. The result is that a feverish unrest stalks the world and humanity is gasping hard for peace in vain. Neither commerce, nor industry, nor territorial acquisition could satisfy man; but they are rather adding fuel to the fire. By the law of relativity happiness and misery, good and evil, virtue and vice are inextricably associated with each other, even as the one side of the shield implies the other. Hence the quest for unmixed happiness in this world is fruitless. There is no reason, however, for despair. Vedanta, the paragon of all monistic systems, as styled by Prof. James, has solved the problem of good and evil. भूमेव सुखं नाल्पे सुखमस्ति—The Absolute alone is Bliss Eternal, which is not, however, to be found in anything finite. By the mysterious power of *Maya* man who is, in his real nature, the Bliss Absolute, seems to be a plaything of the pairs of opposites. Arise, awake, break the hypnotic spell of self-imposed limitations and realise your inherent Divinity is the trumpet-call of Vedanta.

BRAHMACHARI BHAVACHAITANYA.

## VIVEKACHUDAMANI.

(Concluded from page 17.)

[ *Husk*: Another reading for कडङ्कर is कटाभ्र; *Kata* is a kind of straw, and the other word means cloth. ]

विलक्षणं यथा ध्वान्तं लीयते भानुतेजसि ।  
तथैव सकलं दृश्यं ब्रह्मणि प्रविलीयते ॥५६४॥

564. As darkness which is distinct (from sunshine) vanishes in the sun's radiance, so the whole objective universe is merged in Brahman.

घटे नष्टे यथा व्योम व्योमैव भवति स्फुटम् ।  
तथैवोपाधिविलयं ब्रह्मैव ब्रह्मचित्स्वयम् ॥५६५॥

565. As when a jar is broken, the space enclosed by it becomes palpably the limitless space, so when the supervening adjuncts are destroyed, the Knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman Itself.

क्षीरं क्षीरे यथा क्षिप्तं तैलं तैले जलं जले ।  
संयुक्तमेकतां याति तथाऽऽत्मन्यात्मविन्मुनिः ॥५६६॥

566. As milk poured into milk, oil into oil, and water into water, becomes united and one with it, so the sage who has realised the Atman becomes one in the Atman.

[ Compare Katha Upanishad IV. 15. Also, Mundaka III. ii. 8. ]

एवं विदेहकैवल्यं सन्मात्रत्वमखण्डितम् ।  
ब्रह्मभावं प्रपद्यैष यतिर्नावर्तते पुनः ॥५६७॥

567. Realising thus the isolation that comes of disembodiedness and becoming eternally identified with the Absolute Reality, Brahman, the sage no longer suffers transmigration.

सदात्मैकत्वविज्ञानदग्धाविद्यादिवर्षणाः ।  
अमुष्य ब्रह्मभूतत्वाद्ब्रह्मणाः कुत उद्भवः ५६८॥

568. For his bodies, consisting of Nescience etc., having been burnt by the

realisation of the identity of Jiva and Brahman, he becomes Brahman Itself, and how can the Brahman ever have rebirth?

[ *Bodies.....Nescience etc.*—The three bodies are causal, subtle and gross. The first consists of Nescience; the second of seventeen things—five sensory organs, five motor organs, five Pranas (or, according to some, five fine elements or Tanmátras), Manas and Buddhi; consisting of the gross elements, and the last, is what we see. These three bodies make up the five Koshas or sheaths from the Anandamaya down to the Annamaya. The Atman is beyond them all. ]

मायाकल्पो बन्धमोक्षौ न स्तः स्वात्मनि वस्तुतः ।  
यथा रज्जौ निष्क्रियायां सर्पाभासविनिर्गमौ ॥५६९॥

569. Bondage and liberation, which are conjured up by Maya, do not really exist in the Atman, one's Reality, as the appearance and exit of the snake do not abide in the rope which suffers no change.

आवृतेः सदसत्त्वाभ्यां वक्तव्ये बन्धमोक्षणे ।  
नावृतिर्ब्रह्मणः काचिदन्याभावादनावृतम् ।  
यद्यस्त्यद्वैतज्ञानिः स्याद्द्वैतं नो सहते श्रुतिः ॥५७०॥

570. Bondage and liberation may be talked of when there is the presence or absence of a covering veil. But there can be no covering veil for the Brahman, which is always uncovered for want of a second thing besides Itself. If there be, the Non-duality of Brahman will be contradicted, and the Srutis can never brook duality.

[ *Srutis.....duality*—e. g. "One only without a second," (Chhándogya VI. ii. 1), "There is no duality in Brahman" (Katha IV. 11), and so on. ]

बन्धं च मोक्षञ्च मृषैव मूढा  
बुद्धिर्गुणं वस्तुनि कल्पयन्ति ।  
इगावृतिं मेधकृतां यथा रवौ  
यतोऽद्वयाऽसङ्गाच्चिदेतदक्षरम् ॥५७१॥

571. Bondage and liberation are attributes of the Buddhi which ignorant people



falsely superimpose on the Reality, as the covering of the eyes by a cloud is transferred to the sun. For this Immutable Brahman is Knowledge Absolute, the One without a second, and unattached.

अस्तीति प्रत्ययो यश्च यश्च नास्तीति वस्तुनि ।  
बुद्धेरेव गुणावेतौ न तु नित्यस्य वस्तुनः ॥५७२॥

572. The idea that bondage exists, and the idea that it does not exist, with reference to the Reality, are both attributes of the Buddhi merely, and never belong to the eternal Reality—Brahman.

अंतस्तौ माययाकल्पो बन्धमोक्षौ न चात्मनि ।  
निष्कले निष्क्रये शान्ते निरवये निरञ्जने ।  
अद्वितीये परे तच्चे ह्योमवत्कल्पना कुतः ॥५७३॥

573. Hence this bondage and liberation are created by Maya, and are not in the Atman. How can there be any idea of limitation with regard to the Supreme Truth, which is without parts, without activity, calm, unimpeachable, taintless, One and without a second, as there can be none with regard to the infinite sky?

अ निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः ।  
न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्त इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥५७४॥

574. There is neither death nor birth, neither bound nor striving for freedom, neither seeker after liberation nor liberated—this is the ultimate truth.

[ This is a verbatim quotation from the Amrita-bindu Upanishad, Sloka 10. There is not much difference between 'Sadhaka' and 'Mumukshu.' So long as there is mind, there are all these distinctions, but the mind itself is a creation of Avidya. Hence the highest truth is that in which there is no relativity. ]

सकलनिगमचूडास्वान्तसिद्धान्तरूपं  
परमिदमतिगुह्यं दर्शितं ते मयाद्य ।  
अपगतकलिदोषं कामान्मुक्तबुद्धिं  
स्वसुखदहसकृत् त्वं भाषविन्वा मुमुक्षुम् ॥५७५॥

575. I have to-day repeatedly revealed to thee, as to one's own son, this excellent and profound secret, which is the inmost purport of all Vedanta—the crest of the Vedas—considering thee an aspirant after liberation, purged of the taints of this Iron Age, and of a mind free from desires.

[ Secret—The discrimination between the Real and unreal, which is hidden from the vulgar man. The teacher's address is finished here. ]

इति श्रुत्वा गुरोर्वाक्यं प्रथयेण कृतानतिः ।  
स तेन समनुज्ञातो ययौ निर्मुक्तबन्धनः ॥५७६॥

576. Hearing these words of the Guru, the disciple out of reverence prostrated himself before him, and with his permission went his way, freed from bondage.

गुरुरेव सदानन्दसिन्धौ निर्मग्नमानसः ।  
पाषयन्वसुधां सर्वा विचचार निरन्तरः ॥५७७॥

577. And the Guru, with his mind steeped in the ocean of Existence and Bliss Absolute, roamed, verily purifying the whole world,—all differentiating ideas banished from his mind.

इत्याचार्यस्य शिष्यस्य संवादेनात्मखण्डणम् ।  
निरूपितं मुमुक्षूणां सुखबोधोपपत्तये ॥५७८॥

578. Thus by way of a dialogue between the teacher and the disciple, has the nature of the Atman been ascertained for the easy comprehension of seekers after liberation.

हितमिदमुपदेशमाद्रियन्तां  
विहितनिरस्तसमस्तचिच्छोषा ।  
मयसुखविरताः प्रयान्तचित्ताः  
श्रुतिरसिका यतयो मुमुक्षवो ये ॥५७९॥

579. May those Sannyasins who are seekers after liberation, who have purged themselves of all taints of the mind by the observance of the prescribed methods, who are averse to worldly pleasures, who are of

pacified minds, and take a delight in the Sruti, appreciate this salutary teaching.

[ *Sannyasin*—The word 'Yati' may simply mean 'one who is suffering for Realisation.' So also in Slokas 556 and 567.

*Prescribed methods*—Secondary or indirect (such as, sacrifices etc.) and primary or direct (such as, control of the senses and mind etc.). ]

संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतहाहव्यथा-  
खिन्नानां जलकांक्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या  
परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधि सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-  
त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयसे निर्वाणसंदायिनी ॥

580. For those who are afflicted, in the way of the world, by the burning pain due to the sunshine of threefold misery; who through delusion wander about in a desert in search of water;—for them here is the triumphant message of Sankara pointing out, within easy reach, the comforting ocean of nectar—the Brahman, the One without a second—to lead them on to liberation!

[ *Threefold misery*—the *adhyātmika* (those pertaining to the body and mind, such as pain, anguish etc.) the *adhidaivika* (those coming from divine visitations or scourges of Nature, such as cyclone, earthquake etc.), and the *adhibhautika* (those due to other creatures on earth).

*Wander.....water*—are lured by the prospect of happiness from transitory things, which, as in the case of a mirage, exhaust them the more.

*Easy reach*—for this Mine of Bliss is their very nature. It is no external thing to be acquired. They have simply to realise that they are already That.

*On to liberation*—by inducing them to take away their self-imposed veil.

The solemn cadence of the Sārdulavikridita metre makes a fitting termination to the prophetic discourse. ]

THE END.

## STORIES OF SAINTS.

( *Retold by G.* )

### VI.

#### HOLY DISOBEDIENCE.

**B**ROTHER LEO is known to all who are acquainted with the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. He was Francis' beloved disciple and companion, a man of wonderful simplicity and purity,—the little sheep of God, as Francis affectionately called him. Gentle and eager to serve his master, Leo followed Francis as a loving shadow. Above all things he was submissive and constant in his faithfulness. And among all the brothers Francis chose him out to care for him and bring him daily a little bread and water when he lived in seclusion on Mount Alverna where that great mystery took place, the stigmata of which afterwards Leo spoke, but in halting words. Leo nursed Francis through sickness, he cheered him and wrote down his words and songs; and when Francis left this world, fought his cause and wrote his life-story. And never does Leo tire to speak of his master's marvellous love and sanctity.

It happened once when Leo and Francis were living together among the woods on a quiet mountain side and they were without prayer-books out of which to say the office, that Francis, observing the peace of the place and withal the conceit of the human heart, felt the need of rebuke and scorn. So he be-thought himself of a holy game in which Leo was to play the part of the rebuker, and echo Francis' abuse of himself. So Francis began to lash his innocent soul with words of abuse and Leo answered him in a strange sweet manner, but contrary to holy obedience.

Said Francis Dear son, we have no

prayer-books to say office. And in order that we may spend our time in a way pleasing to God, I pray thee when I will speak thou shalt answer as I shall tell thee. And take good care, my son, not to speak other than I shall tell thee. I shall say: O Brother Francis, thou hast committed so many sins in the world that thou deservest hell; and thou, Brother Leo, shalt answer: Verily thou deservest the tortures of hell."

And brother Leo with dove-like simplicity said: "Begin, father, in the name of God."

Then said Francis: "So many sins hast thou committed, Francis, that thou deservest the torments of hell."

But Brother Leo answered: "God works through thee so much of good that surely thou meritest heaven."

Said Francis: "No, speak not thus, Brother Leo; but speak as I bid thee. When I shall have spoken, answer me thus: Verily thou art worthy of great punishment."

And Brother Leo replied: "As thou sayest, father, so shall I speak."

Then Francis sighing and weeping and beating his breast, cried out in a loud voice: "O my God of heaven and earth, I have offended Thee so repeatedly and so many are my sins, that I stand wholly accursed before Thee."

But Brother Leo answered: "O Brother Francis, God will reward thee in such a measure that thou shalt be accounted blessed above all."

And Brother Francis wondering that Brother Leo answered him contrary to his words, reproved him, saying: "Why dost thou not answer as I bid thee? I command thee by holy obedience that thou answer as I tell thee. I shall say: "O Brother Francis, vile wretch, thinkest thou that God will have mercy on thee? Thy sins are so many that no wise art thou worthy of mercy. And thou,

Brother Leo, little lamb, wilt answer: "By no means art thou worthy of mercy."

But as Brother Francis had spoken, Brother Leo replied: "God the Father, whose mercy far surpasses thy sins, will show thee great mercy and will pour upon thee many graces."

And Brother Francis marvelled and in sweet anger reproved Brother Leo saying: "Brother Leo, why dost thou disobey my command and answer me contrary to my wish?"

Replied Brother Leo with great reverence and humility: "God knows, my father, that each time I wish to speak as thou biddest me; but God makes me speak as it pleases Him and not as it pleases me."

And Francis wondering said: "My son, most lovingly do I implore thee to answer me this time as I tell thee."

Replied Brother Leo: "In the name of God, speak, father, for of a certainty will I this time answer as thou wishest."

And Francis weeping much, called out: "O Brother Francis, vile wretch, thinkest thou that God will have mercy upon thee?"

Answered Brother Leo: "Not only so, but rather shalt thou receive grace and blessings of God and He will exalt thee forever, for whosoever humbles himself shall be exalted, and naught else can I say since God speaketh through my mouth."

And thus in humility the holy strife continued with sweetness and spiritual consolation until the approach of day.



## TRUE RENUNCIATION.

THE STORY OF KING SIKHIDWAJ AND  
CHUDALA.*(Adapted from the Yoga-Vasistha Maharemayana.)*

**I**N ancient times there was a king of the name of Sikhidwaj, adorned with the moral virtues of *sama, dama* in the city of Ujjain. His father died at an early age, and after his father's death when only of sixteen years of age, by the prowess of his arms he brought the surrounding kingdoms under his overlordship and assumed the title of the Emperor. He was married to the daughter of the king of Saurashtra, Chudala, possessed of many qualities. Chudala was not like an ordinary woman, but denying the trivial pleasures of the life of the senses she engaged herself in listening to and contemplating the spiritual scriptures. She began to question herself thus: "This individual who has since childhood been designated as Chudala—what is she in reality? I am not this body driven by the vital forces and every moment going to destruction. This body is inert, and these instruments of actions are not different from the body, but only its limbs, and therefore of the same inert nature as the body of which these are parts. The organs of cognition and the vital force are parts of the body and so are equally inert. Like stones driven by the stick, the mind is also driven by the sensations of the body. The Buddhi or intelligence is also a reaction of the contact of the sense-organs with their objects, a compound, and therefore it is also inert and unconscious. The Ego is the reflex-action of the Buddhi and is also unconscious like a corpse. Alas! everything in this world is unreal, a creation of ignorance. There is only one Reality of the nature of Supreme Intelligence. This Chit is the Brahman of the Vedanta. Let me stay in blissful abidance in the Brahman, the Essence of Delight, by giving up my identification with the limiting adjuncts."

Thus Chudala day by day became introspective and by meditation on the Self realised the Blissful Atman. Her selfish longings and attachments, all the dualities of happiness and misery vanished

altogether from her. Reaching the supreme goal of the Paramatman, her inner being was filled with overflowing Bliss and all her doubts vanished. She began to find her rest and abode in the supreme state of Blissfulness.

One day the Raja Sikhidwaj, observing much grace and beauty in the form of Chudala, said: "O blessed lady, seeing you I feel as if you have drunk the nectar of immortality and are filled with the currents of Bliss. Your mind has attained control of the internal and external sense-organs and they do not run counter to your wishes now. You have acquired much serenity of mind and are living in the profoundest depths of being; you have shaken off all instability and disbalance of the mind. What divine nectar have you drunk of, what rare thing have you obtained, I desire to know. Then Chudala made answer:

"O Swami, I have given up my identification with the body natural to the ignorant and have attained identity of self with the Brahman. Therefore am I of such radiant form. Come happiness or misery, I am even-minded with regard to them, therefore is such calm and composure written on my face. Whatever objects I see with my finite senses and mind, are only limited and finite, having no independent reality. Finding all these limited objects to be unsubstantial, I observe some Infinite Reality beyond the limitations of the mind and the senses. As my mind has become pure and transparent on the use of right discrimination, I feel the existence of an unbroken Reality both inside and outside. This knowledge has imparted such a resplendence to my form."

The king Sikhidwaj could not catch the sense or drift of Chudala's words. He laughed and said: "O Chudala, what incoherent jargon have you talked? But you are not to blame. You are yet a girl of tender age, of an immature mind. Go, and giving up these insane words void of reality set your mind to the enjoyment of the pleasures of life. Smiling a laugh of ridicule the king Sikhidwaj departed from the presence of Chudala.

These words of ridicule from Sikhidwaj not having appreciated the words of Chudala roused her endeavour the more and she engaged herself in spiritual practices.

After some time, the King went out of his capital to conquer an invading enemy and Chudala obtained much opportunity for her spiritual culture. Living in solitude, placing herself in a firm posture she began to practise Yoga, restraining her Prana. The Queen Chudala thus practising Yoga, and firmly established in the practices of the restraint of Prana, became possessed of the powers of Yoga. When her husband, King Sikhidwaj, returned, she taught him many a time about the knowledge of the Atman, but he paid no heed to it and ridiculed her as an immature girl. The king plunged into an orgy of luxury, enjoyment and power. But bereft of the knowledge of the Reality all his enjoyments brought only a reaction of pain and his mind began to be burn day and night by an insatiable fire of self-enjoyment and its attendant misery. That revel of sense-pleasures cloyed his senses and jaded his mind, and it brought him no prospect of an enduring happiness. His prosperous and wealthy kingdom palled and jarred on him and he began to think of some remedy for this disease of the world—its futile round of pleasures and the world-weariness it begets bringing no permanent happiness in the end. His mind began to be attracted to solitary caves and forests, and the thought arose "Happiness or misery, adversity or prosperity cannot attack the mind of a forest-dweller and subjugate his mind. Purity and composure of the mind does not rise anywhere so much as in a solitary place." Thinking thus when the night fell and the whole city was hushed in the silence of the night and the inhabitants overpowered in sleep, leaving the sleeping Chudala in bed and saluting the Fortuna of his kingdom, he left the kingdom, to plunge into the depths of a forest. And when morning came with swift steps he passed many villages and cities, crossed many mountains and rivers and came to a thick forest situated near the Mandar mountains. This place was situated far from human habitation. He built himself a hut of leaves in the forest, in an even place abounding with fruits and flowers with a plentiful supply of water near by. The King Sikhidwaj also gathered a staff, a bowl, a flower-basket, a *Kamandalu*, a rosary of beads, a blanket, a seat of *Kusa*-grass and deer-skin and other necessaries for the performance of *Tapas*. The first quarter of the day he used to spend

absorbed in morning devotions and meditations and telling the beads, the second in gathering from the forest flowers for worship, and fruits and roots and fuel, the third quarter in bathing and performing worship, afterwards living on fruits, roots and edible creepers gathered from the forest he spent the greater part of the night absorbed in *Yajam*.

Now in the city when the King Sikhidwaj left and entered the forest, Chudala on waking did not find her husband in bed and searched for him for a while. Chudala was very intelligent and possessed of the vision of the Atman; she had already noticed the turning away of the spirit of the king from worldly pleasures and now concluded for a certainty that he had left the kingdom and entered the forest in the hope of attaining the Supreme Bliss and Peace. She collected the citizens, and addressing them said: "The king has for a certain reason left the kingdom and gone elsewhere; be you assured in your mind that in his absence I shall maintain the peace and order and safety of the kingdom." Thus eighteen years passed in Chudala's ruling the kingdom and Sikhidwaja's living in the forest. Chudala understood that by this time the king had attained steadiness in his goal and his desire for the highest truth had attained maturity. She knew from the beginning that by means of spiritual help and instructions from her, her husband would attain the Supreme Knowledge. She felt delighted in thinking that her husband would be established in the same supreme state with her on the rise of the true knowledge.

Chudala, disguised in the form of a Brahman anchorite appeared where the ascetic king Sikhidwaj was living in a hut in the forest. She found that her husband wearing a deer-skin, was living alone, looking composed and desireless; matted-hair has formed a crest on his head. Sikhidwaj on turning found that before him was standing a Brahman boy, the very embodiment of *Tapas*. His complexion was bright like molten gold, a rosary of beads was on his neck and the white holy thread was hanging from his shoulder. The mark on the forehead of the boy with an appearance of perfect self-mastery was showing beauty like the full-moon on the crest of the Sumeru mountain. The form of his body was like the abode of Bliss and Peace. Thinking some divine child had come,

Sikhidwaj rose from his seat and saluting him said, "O Divine child, whence have you come? This day is blessed to me by your sight. Accept these worships and my hospitality to-day. Chudala disguised as a Brahman boy felt much pleased at the hospitality of her husband, and addressing him said: "O Sadhu! Have you attained the Supreme Peace and Calm for which you are trying by giving up all selfish thoughts and unreal imaginings? Who are you and for what object have you come here? I am an ascetic, tell me everything truly." The King Sikhidwaj answered, "O Serene One! afflicted with fear by the way of the world and the bondages it brings to the soul, I have entered the forest. Afflicted with the thought of the eventual death of all, and hoping to find a way of immortality I have come here. I am King Sikhidwaj. In the world, man, a slave to desires, is carried helplessly round a succession of happiness and misery, birth and death and he suffers thereby. There is no abiding centre of happiness and equanimity in the world. Therefore I am performing this *Tapas*. But as ill luck would have it, as a poor man works hard but does not get proportionate return for his labours, so I even performing hard austerities, cannot get the Supreme Rest and Peace. As if all my efforts are coming to nought, I am getting no knowledge. I have now become more helpless by not getting the company of the Sadhus which I had while in my kingdom. Although I am performing the *Tapasya*, still I am passing from one unrest of the mind to another. Nectar has turned to poison in my case."

"Chudala began to say: "I have heard that only *Jnana* (knowledge) is the highest thing and takes one to the highest goal. Desires only sway the mind of the ignorant, by which they obtain limited results from their finite desires. But the wise Knower is bereft of all finite desires; and only by giving them up can one reach the imperishable state of Truth beyond birth and death. Freed from the fetters of desire, the *Jiva* (human soul) attains knowledge and reaches the highest truth. That knowledge is the Supreme Truth. This staff, that Kamandalu, that seat of deer-skin, which I find,—why are you showing such love for these? They are also a cause of evil. Why are you not thinking on the Truth? 'Who am I? Where has this world sprung from, in what is it living, to what will it return?' Follow

the path of the Knowers of truth and learn how bondage is produced and how it vanishes. Why are you spending your life in excessive endeavours after external mortification? Live in the company of the Sadhus who by knowing the Truth have attained same sightedness. Serve them, question them and all your doubts will be sundered and by the rise of knowledge of the Reality in your heart, you will attain freedom. Therefore giving up these excessive external austerities which only give pain to the body but do not conduce to the rise of knowledge of the Truth live in the company of the Sadhus."

(To be continued)

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## REVIEWS AND REPORTS.

*The Dawn Over Asia.* By Paul Richard. Translated from the French by Aurobindo Ghose. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Price Re. 1/8.

These series of essays and addresses give noble expression to the formative spiritual ideas which are at present striving and are in future destined to establish themselves in the lives of individuals and nations. The equality, unity and freedom of all peoples will be compassed only by a renewal of the spirit; "the sole possible foundation of fraternity and human harmony is the foundation of love, of the divine unity of beings, peoples, races of the world." The Vedantic truth of the Unity of the human soul and its application to the collective life of man finds noble garb in the words of cadenced prose of this book, full of much force and depth of thought. The book is well got-up.

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*Ancient Hindu Jurisprudence*, by B. Gura Rajalu, Rao B. L., Ganesh & Co., Madras. Price Rs. 2.

This is an original contribution to the subject of the ancient law of procedure of India. The writer by an extensive reading and citations from the ancient Sanskrit law books has collected his materials and given a succinct and clear account of the ancient adjective law of India which forms interesting reading.

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*Devi Ahalya Bai Holkar*, by Mukund Waman Rao Burway, Esqr., Judge, Small Cause Court, Indore. Price Rs. 2-8.

The book is an excellent and well-written biography of the devout Rani, whose name is a household word in India and evidences of whose charity and works of philanthropy, pilgrims and travellers met with in different parts of North India. The author has with great industry gone to the original sources for writing the life quoting chapter and verse in support and has succeeded in bringing out an authentic record of the life of his noble subject. By the author's pen we are presented with a noble picture of the life of the Rani, her exalted character, great piety, devotion to duty quite in keeping with her great name in India, which forms interesting and elevating reading. The book has in the frontispiece a good picture of the pious Rani.

- (1) *Urdu life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*. Pp. 220. Price Re. 1-5. (2) *Urdu life of Swami Vivekananda*. Pp. 320. Price Re. 1-15. (3) *A Review of Image Worship* (in Urdu). Pp. 70. Price 6 as. By Hari Charan Das Datta. To be had of Messrs. Ramditta Mall & Sons, Lohari Gate, Lahore.

Babu Hari Charan Das Dutta, of Sialkot, Punjab, has at much sacrifice and pains brought out a Urdu translation of the Life of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and some of their writings for the benefit of the Urdu-knowing public. The author is well versed in Urdu and his translations can claim to be well-executed. We recommend them to the Urdu-reading public who desire to know about the great life and message of the Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-saint of modern India.

*God and the Universe*, by R. Krishnaswami Aiyer, B. A. B. L., High Court, Tinnevely.

This little brochure of 21 pages is a philosophical consideration of metaphysical questions handled in an original way. It considers the problems in the light of Vedantic thought and displays much depth of thinking and originality of philosophical presentment.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

*The Heart of the Bhagavad Gita*, by Pandit Lingesh Mahabhagavat of Kurtkoti, P. H. D. (His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya of Karur Path).

*Goods and Bads; Outlines of a philosophy of life* by Alban B. Widgery. Professors of Philosophy, Baroda.

*The Call to Young India*, by Lala Lajpat Rai, Price Rs. 3. S. Ganesan & Co., Madras.

Josiah C. Wedgewood—*The Man and his Works*. Price Rs. 2. S. Ganesan & Co., Madras, S. E.

A National Calendar for 1912. S. R. Murthy, Booksellers and Publishers, Triplicane, Madras. Price as. 12.

*The Tenth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama*, Allahabad for the year 1920.

The report shows a record of useful service in alleviating suffering. The total fund of the Sevashrama during the year 1910 was Rs. 1640-11-1, and the expenditure was Rs. 1,563-0-9. During the year under review 13,603 poor were treated in the outdoor dispensary of which 6,620 were new. Of the latter 5,681 were Hindus, 598 Mahomedans, 48 Christians and 288 belonged to other denominations. The institution is a charitable one depending on the benevolence of the generous public to whom it appeals for help to carry on its work of relief.

*Ramakrishna Students' Home*, Madras. Report for the year 1920.

The rented building in the Kutcherry Road, Mylapore, continued to be the abode of the Home throughout the year. On the 1st January 1920 there were forty boarders. During the year, there were 17 new admissions while 12 left the Home; the actual strength was thus 45 at the end of the year. Eight students studied for the B. A. Honours course, nine for the Pass course; fifteen were in the Intermediate classes and nineteen in the High School classes; five were studying in the College of Engineering and one in the Medical College. The weekly religious discourses held at the Mutt and the daily classes were regularly conducted throughout the year. The total receipts during the year excluding the endowments amounted to

Rs. 9,184-2-4 as against Rs. 7,344-12-5 for last year. The expenditure amounted to Rs. 8,525-2-6. The average cost of maintaining a boarder comes to Rs. 13-12-0 per mensem. The balance at the end of the year, including endowments was Rs. 37,974-9-9. The new buildings are rapidly reaching completion. The total receipts towards the Building Fund up to now, amount to Rs. 1,62,868-7-10 and the expenditure so far incurred in the construction, to Rs. 1,56,891-0-5 leaving a balance of Rs. 5977-7-5. The Ramakrishna Students' Home has passed the sixteenth year of its useful life. Its sphere of usefulness promises to increase day by day, with the strength of the moral and material support it has gained from the generous public at large.

### NEWS AND NOTES.

THE public celebration of the 86th birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa comes off on the 13th March, 1921 and the Tithi-puja on the 11th March 1921. All centres and societies celebrating the occasion are requested to kindly send us reports of celebration for insertion in the Sri Ramakrishna number of the P. B. (April 1921).

By the enterprising endeavours of some young men, a Sevashrama has been established for the relief of the suffering and the distressed in the village of Lohaganj in Dacca district. We hope by the sympathy and help of the local public it may grow into an institution of social service.

THE report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal P. O., Shaharanpur Dt. for October and November 1920:—

Indoor patients: There were 13 old cases, 64 were admitted, 67 discharged cured, 2 died, 6 left treatment and 2 were still in the Sevashrama under treatment. Outdoor patients: There were 8424 cases of which 3170 were cured 5254 old repeated numbers.

Last month's balance	Rs.	9959	4	3
Total Receipts	"	3180	0	9
<hr/>				
Total	"	13139	5	0
Total Expenditures	"	2277	12	6
<hr/>				
Balance	"	9861	3	6

We beg to draw the kind attention of the charitable public that the Ardba-Kumbha Mela will be held at Hardwar in March 1921 when numerous Sadhus, Mahatmas and pilgrims will gather at Hardwar and Kankhal and remain for more than a month. Cholera and other cases break out on the occasion of such large gatherings and people resort to the Sevashrama for treatment as indoor patients. To meet this situation we approach the generous public for help in our service of love during the holy occasion of the Ardba-Kumbha Mela which is being held from time immemorial for the exchange of high thoughts amongst the Sadhus and for giving spiritual instruction to the pilgrims—Swami Kalyananda, Hony. Secretary.

SWAMI Paramananda, after conducting the Services on three Sundays and the intervening classes at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, again set out on a three weeks' lecture tour. He spent the first eight days in Cincinnati, delivering six public lectures at the Woman's City Club and holding several classes at the temporary home of the Cincinnati Centre. In spite of the excitement incident to the presidential election, the attendance was excellent and increased steadily until at the closing lecture the hall was crowded. From Cincinnati the Swami went to Louisville on November 9th. Here he delivered four lectures at the Truth Centre to attentive and appreciative audiences. He also spoke twice for another New Thought Centre and conducted two classes at the meeting-place of the Vedanta study group established last winter. A special devotional Service was arranged on Sunday afternoon and so great was the response that it was almost impossible to find room for all who came. The Swami returned to Cincinnati on the 15th and remained until the evening of the 18th. He lectured three times at the New Thought Temple and held two classes for the members of the local Centre. This was the longest visit which the Swami had paid to Cincinnati and it so stimulated the enthusiasm that the members are eager to secure a permanent home for the work, feeling that it is now firmly established. In response to an invitation of nearly two years' standing, the Swami stopped over in Buffalo to lecture before the Larkin Men's Club.—The Message of the East.