

Our Home Magazine

JULY 1928

187



SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS.

OUR HOME MAGAZINE

'Come unto Me, all Ye, Children of Immortal Bliss'

—Sri Ramakrishna

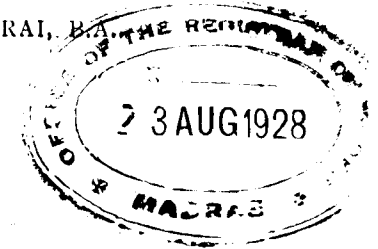
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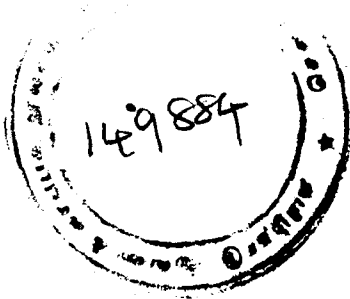
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PRAYER

ध्येयं वदन्ति शिवमेवहि केचिदन्ये
शक्तिं गणेशमपरेतु दिवाकरं वै ।
रूपैस्तु तेरपि विभासितस्त्वमेव
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

नो सोदरो न जनको जननी न जाया
नैवात्मजो न च कुलविपुलं धनं वा ।
संदृश्यते न किलकोऽपि सहायको मे
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

नोपासिता मदमपास्य मया महान्तः
तीर्थानिचास्तिकाधिया नहि सेवितानि ।
देवार्चनं च विधिवन्नक्तं कदापि
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

दुर्वासना मम सदा परिकर्षयन्ति
चित्तंशरीरमपि रोगगणा दहन्ति ।
संजीवनं च परहस्तगतं सदैव
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

पूर्वं कृतानि दुरितानि मयातुयानि
स्मृत्वाऽखिलानि हृदयं परिकल्पते मे ।
ख्याता च ते पतितपावनतातु यस्मात्
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

दुःखं जराजननजं विविधाश्च रोगाः
काकश्चमूकरजानि निरयेचपातः ।
तेविस्मृतेः फलमिदं विततं हिलोके
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

नोचोऽपि पापवर्लितोऽपि विनिन्दितोऽपि
ब्रूयात्तवाऽहमिति यस्तुकिलैकवारम् ।
तं यच्छसीश निजलोकमिति व्रतते
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

वेदेषु धर्मवचनेषु तथाऽगमेषु
रामायणेपि च पुराण कदंबके वा ।
सर्वत्र सर्व विधिना गदितस्त्वमेव
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं मम शंखपाणे ॥

इति श्रीमच्छंकराचार्य विरचित हरिशरणापूकम्.

PRAYER

(A free Translation)

HARI SARANASHTAKAM OF SRI SANKARACHARYA.

"I hear the clarion call of thy conch (Sankha) O Sankhapani !
And I hasten to meet thee, through many a winding path."

1. Siva alone is worthy of contemplation, say some ;
While others say ' Sakti, Ganesa and Surya ' variously.
But Thou, the One, sittest there smiling and shining through all
forms,
And therefore, Thou art my only refuge.
2. Neither father nor mother, neither brother nor sister,
Neither wife nor son, neither pride of birth nor wealth,
None of these seems to me to be truly helpful.
Therefore, Thou art my only refuge.
3. I have never revered the great ones, as my mind was full of delusion
I have never visited (with a heart full of faith) the holy places.
I have never worshipped the gods, as enjoined by the Shastras.
Therefore, Thou art my only refuge.
4. As for my mind, it is constantly being dragged by evil tendencies.
As for my body, it is being slowly consumed by many diseases.
As for my livelihood, it has ever to be wrenched out of others' hands
Therefore, Thou art my only refuge.
5. When I think of the load of my past sins,
My heart quakes in fear.
But art thou not famous as the saviour of sinners ?
Therefore, Thou art my only refuge.
6. The sorrow of birth and death, disease and decrepitude,
The trouble of being a crow, a dog or a swine, and then being h
into hell,
All this, my Lord ! is truly the result of forgetting Thee.
Therefore, Thou art my only refuge.
7. The poorest, the lowliest or the lost,
Let him say but once, ' I am thine own,'
And, O Lord ! Thou assurest him of a seat in Thy blessed Abode.
Therefore, Thou art my only refuge.
8. In the Vedas, the Shastras and the Agamas,
In the Ramayana and all the Puranas, and in all places and in all wa
Thou, the One, art alone proclaimed.
Therefore, Thou art my only refuge.

Manana Mala

OR

Thoughts for Meditation

First is God and then comes the world. If you know One, you know all. If you put fifty zeroes after one, it makes a big sum. Omit the one and its value is nothing. It is the one that makes many. First is one, then many. First comes God, then His creatures and then the world.

—Sri Ramakrishna

* * * * *

God of all Gods,
Higher than the Highest,
Feeder and food that sustains all creation,
Is the overlord;
The Supreme Witness,
The Dancer behind the Sun,
The Hand that raises the spears of the peaks;

Fasten thy mind on Him
As a tiger its claws on a hind!

—The Quran

* * * * *

I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty. You do not see that the real is in your Home and you wander from forest to forest listlessly.

—Kabir

* * * * *

I say therefore to the unmarried and the widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

—St. Paul

* * * * *

See here—we shall all die. Bear this in mind always and then the spirit within will

wake up. Then only, meanness will vanish from you, practicality in work will come, you will get new vigour in mind and body and those who come in contact with you will also feel that they have really got something uplifting from you.

—Swami Vivekananda

* * * * *

The sword did not ask to be made; nor does it resist the user, nor lament when it is broken. There is a joy of being made and a joy of being used and a joy of being put aside and a joy too of being broken. That equal joy discover.

—Arabindo Ghose

* * * * *

That light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That beauty in which all things work and move,

That benediction which the eclipsing curse of birth can quench not,

That sustaining love which, through the web of being blindly wove,

By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns light or dim as each are mirrors of,

The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me

Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

—Shelley

* * * * *

Whatever else education may bring, it must bring willingness to endure pain, to practise meditation, to keep silence.

—E. T. Campagnac.

Reminiscences

BY RAO SAHIB C. RAMASWAMI AYYANGAR,
Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras.

The First Beginnings of the Home—Cont.

IV

I shall now try to recount some of the thoughts, as they occur to me in connection with the Home during the period of five years from 1905 to 1910.

Looking back, it appears to me rather strange that the inception of an institution of this kind should have been so very uncalculated. It had no influential friends; it had no rich persons to back it up in times of need. And day after day, no one knew where the money would come from, for providing the boys their next meal. What then was the sustaining power? It is his unseen hand that has been guiding and shaping everything, it is his grace whose name the institution bears.

During a whole year after the start, it was with the greatest difficulty that a sum of Rs. 430 was collected. The next year, the subscriptions rose to Rs. 1,050; but the year after, there was a decrease of about Rs. 250. In that year's report, the Committee observed, "Now that the Home has entered upon the fourth year of its existence, a more organised effort should be made for enlisting the sympathy and liberality of the public, both of Madras and the mofussil. It is desirable to establish the Home on a more secure basis, as it has become known generally and applications for aid are numerous. It would be

unsafe to start a new year without funds enough on hand to meet the current expenses of the twelve months at least, irrespective of subsequent collections. It may be premature to talk of a reserve fund, but the Committee feel confident that future years will show marked improvement in the collections, and that gradually contributions will reach so large a sum, that a great number of poor and intelligent students may obtain valuable instruction, literary as well as technical, and thereby become useful citizens and centres of influence to others."

These expectations were slowly realised. Before 1910 the annual subscriptions increased to Rs. 1,300 and the number of boarders rose from 7 to 16. Towards the end of 1905, the residence was shifted to a house in Kesavaperumal Sannadhi Street, on a monthly rent of Rs. 7; and a year later, to a more spacious house near by, on Rs. 17; while, in 1910, it was changed to a building in Pelatope on Rs. 20 a month.

The regular subscribers then were not more than fifty; but the Home may well be proud of them, for they have all continued their help in an increasing measure to this day. And even those, who were naturally halting and unwilling to extend aid at first, have proved the staunchest of supporters as years went by.

I have already narrated the poor success that I met with in my first attempt to enlist the sympathy of

Mr. V. Krishnaswami Iyer. My joy and surprise therefore knew no bounds when he voluntarily sent me a cheque for Rs. 100, with his love and good wishes on the Sankharanthi day in 1906. Afterwards every year his cheque was regularly received on the day of that festival. And he used also to request many of his well-to-do friends to help the cause.

Mr. P. R. Sundara Ayyar's help followed his. Messrs. C. P. Rama-

paid Rs. 1,000 in his life-time; and his dutiful son, S. Aravamuda Iyengar has kindly undertaken to pay the balance. Mr. G. A. Natesan has founded a scholarship in the name of his mother. Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, who began with Rs. 12, now gives Rs. 100 a year; and Mr. V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar has raised his contribution from Rs. 25 to Rs. 120. Mr. C. V. Kumaraswami Sastriar, whom I saw in Ootacamund in 1907, asked



The Home in Arisikara Street.

swami Ayyar, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, V. C. Seshachariar and others have, besides paying their annual subscriptions, helped substantially by contributing to the building fund; and their names can be seen to-day on the brass tablets over the rooms of the main building. Mr. M. Ramachandra Ayya's fine library was presented to the Home after his passing away. Mr. K. Srinivasa Iyengar contributed Rs. 60 a year, and later on, subscribed Rs. 5,000 for the building fund, of which he

me, "What is the average cost of maintaining a boy in the Home?" The previous year it had worked out at Rs. 66 and I mentioned that figure. He then said, "I shall contribute Rs. 60 a year," which he keeps up. His brother, Dewan Bahadur C. V. Viswanatha Sastriar, began in 1906 with an annual contribution of Rs. 30 and used to send it in two instalments during Sankharanthi and Dipavali. He contributed Rs. 2,000 to the building

fund and has assigned a Life Insurance Policy for Rs. 10,000 (fully paid up) to the Home as a permanent endowment. In an account of his "Rambles in the West" published recently, speaking of an orphanage he visited in Scotland, he says, "We were shown the Home for 800 helpless orphans, where they were all fed and educated and taught to earn a living. I then recalled to my mind our Ramakrishna Students' Home . . . I hoped that the day would soon come when this institution would also accommodate 800 orphans."

Many others there are, who have liberally helped the cause in subsequent years; and we shall speak of them later on. Here I have mentioned a few only of the prominent early supporters of the Home, to show the great love and regard in which they held the infant institution.

Besides those who helped financially, there were others who contributed not a little to the success of the undertaking. Mention must be made of the late Mr. A. S. Balasubrahmanya Iyer, the late Professor T. Rajagopalachariar, and Messrs. A. Varadaraja Iyengar and S. Vasudevachariar, who helped largely in the work of management and supervision. In particular, I must refer to Mr. S. Vasudevachariar, who has served the Home in several capacities—as moral and religious instructor, as warden and accountant, and is now continuing as treasurer. The value of his services is inestimable, and I have always found in him a silent and most unostentatious worker, an ideal for others to follow. He commands my love and reverence, and I always address him as 'Master'; for he is truly

master of any business he undertakes, as much as he possesses the hearts of his friends.

Dr. M. Subrahmanya Iyer and Dr. T. G. Pillai were exceedingly kind to the boarders, paid frequent visits to the Home, to look after the health of the inmates; and gave advice and medicine, free of charge, for several years. It is on the sure foundation of such acts of kindness and such heartfelt sympathy that the Home has been built.

"Little acts of kindness, little words of love,
Make this earth an Eden, like the Heaven above."

V

These reminiscences would be incomplete without a reference to some of the early visitors also. In the Home one sees now scores of visitors daily, but in those days when it was located in little unpretentious houses in lanes and corners, it attracted the notice of very few people. However, among them were great ones who realised its potentiality, whose appreciation assured the management that the work was progressing in the right direction and whose suggestions and advice helped largely in shaping its activities.

Swami Premanandaji came to South India by the end of 1906, accompanying his mother on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram. He stayed in Madras till the celebration of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, a few weeks after his arrival. One day he came to the Home with Swami Ramakrishnanandaji and was delighted to see it. He sat down and meditated for a while. Before he left, he

untied from a corner of his cloth a ten-rupee note and slipped it into my hand saying, "This is from my mother, for your Home." That expression of loving smile which played on his lips, as he gave it, is indescribable. That was characteristic of him. One should have seen him, to know really in what attitude one ought to make gifts.

Whenever he walked out into the street, he would tie up a few pice in a corner of his cloth, expecting

assistant private secretary, Mr. Raghavendra Rao, and inviting him to visit the Home. Mr. (now Sir) P. S. Sivaswami Iyer gave me a note introducing me to him. The gentleman made a surprise visit. The Home was then located in Kesava-perumal South Mada Street; and when he came, the boys were engaged in removing cobwebs and cleaning the building. The visitor was much impressed, and he said, "This is what we want to-day. Our boys



The Home in Pelatope.

to meet beggars; and when he saw them, he would walk over to them, silently slip the pice into their hands, and move on. Once when I accompanied him, I offered to take the pice and give it to the beggars, but he did not allow me; he insisted on giving it himself. Such was one of the first visitors who came to give us a silent message.

Once in the year 1907, I heard that His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore had come over to Madras. I lost no time in calling upon his

must learn to regard all forms of manual work as noble and sacred. Without it, they are becoming soft and feminine. I am very pleased with the training you give the boys here." Soon after the visit, a donation of Rs. 100 was received in the name of His Highness the Maharajah.

Swami Brahmanandaji visited the Home for the first time in the year 1908, though he had been, as the President of the Mission, closely watching all our activities from the

ery beginning. As Swami Ramarishnanandaji used to say, whatever Swami Brahmanandaji touched not only became pure but also got the purifying power. It is not possible for us therefore to estimate what the Home owes to him.

One morning in January 1909, when I consulted Swami Ramarishnanandaji about the admission of some boys into the Home, he said, "Bring them before Maharajji." Accordingly, I took the boys to the mutt, and asked them to offer their salutations to Maharajji. He looked up and said, "They are all good-looking boys." Swamiji then said to me, "Ramu, Maharajji has approved. The boys have his blessings. What need is there of anything else? Take them." And all those boys proved really good.

In the subsequent history of the Home, we shall have many occasions to speak of this towering personality. For, from this time onwards, the life-giving impulse to carry the institution in its onward march came unfailingly from him at every step.

The same year, the Home had also the honour of a visit from the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

Mr. (then Justice) V. Krishnaswami Iyer visited the Home in 1910, when it was situated in Pelatope. He came from his bungalow walking and was accompanied by a Pandit from the Mylapore Sanskrit College, and Mr. Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer. The latter was then a junior vakil under Mr. P. R. Sundara Iyer, and of his services to the Home, we shall have opportunities to speak later on. Mr. V. Krishnaswami Iyer scrutinised all

the arrangements and expressed himself pleased in particular with the attention that was paid to religious instruction. Hearing the boys chanting their Sandhya-vandana mantras in his presence with proper intonation, he turned to the Pandit that was with him and said, "See how these boys receive an all-round education. They assimilate the best elements of our ancient culture along with their English education."

About the same time, Mrs. Besant paid a visit to the Home. She first arrived at the Mutt on the Brodies Road, mistaking it for the Home. Swamiji usually got nervous whenever he had to meet a lady. He was ordinarily very indifferent to his personal appearance. But when he had to appear before a lady, he would put on a *jibba* and carefully cover his body with a *chaddar*. He did so then, and accompanied her to the Home. He alighted from the carriage first and led her in, holding the umbrella to protect her from the sun. Mrs. Besant spent half an hour in the Home. Swamiji asked the boys to chant a portion of the Taittiriya Upanishad, and after it was over, he asked her, "Do you follow the meaning?" She replied, "Yes, I do," and added, "I much admire the way in which these boys are brought up. I shall help the cause in my own humble way." Since then, she has been one of our regular subscribers.

A few days later, Professor M. Rangachariar of the Presidency College paid a visit. At the end of it, he wrote in the visitors' book:—"Institutions of this kind are largely wanted in all important centres of modern education, so that the moral

discipline of the ancient religion of the Hindus may well be combined with the improved intellectual power acquired through Western education. I wish the institution every success."

VI

All these activities apart, it is the living touch with Swami Ramakrishnanandaji that really moulded the life and ideals of the Home.

During the years 1905 and 1906 Swami Ramakrishnanandaji continued in the Ice House in Triplicane and he was then attending to all the work in the Mutt by himself, cooking food, conducting the worship, answering visitors and holding classes in several parts of the City. With all this, he undertook to go to the Students' Home almost every week, to give religious instruction to the boys. After the Mutt moved in November 1907 to the new building in Mylapore on the Brodies Road, the boys went to the Mutt every Wednesday. The Swamiji used to tell them stories from the Bhagavatha and talk to them on divine incarnations, on the lives of saints and sages and such other topics, and always ended by earnestly exhorting them to put the teachings into practice. One of the points on which he laid emphasis, as an essential of practical religion, was the understanding of the dignity of labour. He was a living example of that ideal. To him nothing was small, no work was mean. Whenever a novice came for spiritual instruction and wanted to stay in the Mutt, he would test his fitness by asking him to sweep the floor or do something seemingly insignificant. He would say, "One who can sweep the floor well can also

meditate well." Herein lies the great value of his teaching, and this ideal of work, it has been our effort all along to realise in the actual life of the Home.

Swamiji's instruction was supplemented by a course of Vedic chanting taught by a pandit. He would often tell me, "This mode of chanting with the correct intonation is fast dying out from the land. How grand it is! Nowadays it is difficult to come across such beautiful and rhythmic chanting in other parts of India. It was Swami Vivekananda's idea to establish a school of Vedic learning in the north and to take pandits over there from the south to serve as teachers. So, you must always regard this as an important item of the culture imparted in our Home."

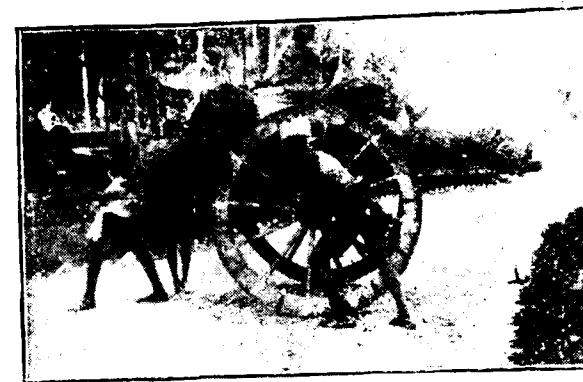
Swamiji's early training had been of the most orthodox type; so at all times he was careful in observing scriptural customs and injunctions. He would never begin any piece of important work without consulting the almanac. He would never commence a journey on certain *thithis* and on certain days of the week. He looked out for signs and omens when he began a new work. Though his mind was soaring high above these things and he himself was not bound by these prognostications, he observed the traditional ways, just to show the great regard in which he held them.

In 1910 before the Home was removed to the building in Pelatope, Swamiji once came to inspect it and I went with him. After we had gone round the place, Swamiji came to the side of the well situated in the compound, and placing both his hands on the parapet wall,

looked about. His eyes fell on a *gajjika* plant that grew near by, and he exclaimed, "Ramu, look here! This plant is a bad sign. Its presence forebodes quarrel." At that time I did not think seriously of it, though I had it pulled out by the root some weeks later. We occupied the house. Not long after, there *did arise* a quarrel over the property and the owner locked up the mantapam that was in our use and created a lot of trouble. Then I sought the advice of Mr. Justice V. Krishnaswami Iyer, who was

gods. When I presented to him the draft of the first annual report of the Home, he added in his own words, "It has been named the Ramakrishna Students' Home, in honour of the revered saint *Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, of whose intense love for the poor this institution is intended to be an humble memorial.*"

As conceived by him, therefore, the Home stands not only to help poor boys to better positions in life, but so to train them, that in their turn every one of them might extend



Feeding the Poor: Provisions being carried to the market.

ever ready to give us a helping hand. He was a most generous soul, and he would even compromise with his position or go out of the way to help a good cause out of a difficult situation. He said, "Don't you worry. Take a *vakil* with you, go and open the mantapam and use it as you have been doing till now. No wrong can come out of it." Then everything was settled in a way. I mention the incident only to show how Swamiji's prediction was but too true.

Swamiji, like his great Master, had an overflowing love for the poor and worshipped them like veritable

the same help to others in need and spread the message of sympathy and service for the poor, the afflicted, and the down-trodden.

Among the many opportunities given to the inmates of the Home for putting into practice this ideal, the Birth-day festivals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have always been two of the most important, and have served as glorious object-lessons. Swami Ramakrishnanandaji attached the greatest importance to the feeding of the poor on these occasions, and those who have seen him can never forget the frenzy of love and

enthusiasm in which he then lost himself. He took the leading part in serving the poor, and his enthusiasm was contagious, so that all those who came into contact with him were easily drawn in the current. Even now, long after his passing away, I feel it coming upon me with irresistible force, whenever the festival approaches. Last year and the year before that, I was not able to move out, on account of ill-health; and yet, I could not rest in peace, till I drove to the market-



Feeding the Poor: Cooked rice ready to be served in baskets.

place and had a peep inside, when the feeding of the poor was in progress.

Sister Devamatha, who was an eye-witness at the feeding of the poor in 1909, writes:—"The boys from the Students' Home came to the monastery to prepare the vegetables. They peeled and sliced hour after hour until long rows of big baskets were filled. Swami Ramakrishnananda had begged the rice, and I remember that the first year five hundred pounds were contributed.

"About ten o'clock when the road was comparatively free and the quiet of night had fallen on the community, all the provisions were carried to the market half a mile away. Here a long trough had been dug, dry logs of wood laid in it and huge copper cauldrons placed on its two edges. By the time everything was in readiness to begin, it was long past midnight. There are special cooks whose business it is to prepare these mammoth feasts. They arrived at

about one o'clock. A little later, Swami Ramakrishnananda, who with his fervour had been the impelling spirit, conducted a short religious service, after which the fires in the trench were lighted and the cooking began with the blessing of the Lord upon it."

In the morning of the festival, Swamiji used to be in the midst of a large gathering of devotees of all sects and creeds and all classes of society. In his ardour of devotion, he would rise up and dance wildly absorbed in God, like a young boy,

clapping his hands and singing hymns in praise of the Lord. He would continue like this for hours together, oblivious of all fatigue, until sweat poured in torrents from his massive frame. There was a divine radiance in his face and a rosy nimbus of glory about his person.

But when all is said, there was still something in him which no words can adequately describe. If that also is grasped by the mind, the incidents mentioned above will help the reader to have a dim glimpse of the magnetic personality who has been, from the beginning, the soul of the Home.

Nachiketas

or

THE SECRET OF LIFE AND DEATH

I

Long, long ago, in the remote past there was a rich man. His name was Gautama. His forefathers had performed many great sacrifices and were far-famed. He wanted to keep up the traditions of the family and vowed to perform the sacrifice known as *Visvajit*. It required the performer to make a gift of all his possessions to fit persons. And Gautama resolved to do so, desirous of name and glory. But when the time came for making gifts, he was not quite sincere in fulfilling his vow. He gave away only such things as were of no further use to him—e.g., old cows, barren, blind and lame.

He had a boy called Nachiketas. Though young, this boy was intelligent and learned. He had an incomparable faith in the injunctions of the scriptures. He was watching the actions of his father, and began to feel that he was doing what was not right, that he was breaking his vow. His unsullied mind rebelled against it, but he did not know what

to do. At last, he thought, "It is my duty, as a son, to save my father from this terrible sin of lying. The vow requires that my father shall give away all his possessions. Being his son, I am also to be counted among his possessions. Strictly, therefore, I should be given away to a worthy priest. And by this act, my father will attain great merit."

With this thought, Nachiketas approached his father with the greatest respect and said, "Father, to whom are you going to give me? For the sacrifice requires, you should give away everything that you call yours."

The father was vexed at this question and turned away from him, pretending not to hear him. The boy repeated the question but the father still paid no attention. When he again pressed, Gautama was put out and exclaimed, "I shall give you to Yama." He meant it merely as a rebuke.

The boy retired from the place, in dejection, and went into deep thought. He said to himself, "I see no reason why my father should be so angry with me. I have done nothing wrong. I have always served him faithfully and have been second to none in carrying out his commands. I have probably offended him now by pressing my question. But what is said is said, and a word once given out cannot be retracted. What then shall I do now? . . . But my course is clear; I must face Death."

Having so resolved, he again approached his father, prostrated before him, and said, "Father! Grant me leave that I may go to the abode of death. What matters it? I am prepared to go there, and thereby, you will be fulfilling your vow. You have taught me the way of the great ones. Our forefathers never swerved from truth under any circumstance. Do not be sorry for me. Man is but like a weed which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven. Knowing that death is certain, sooner or later, why fear?"

The son was wiser than the father. The old man could not speak. He felt the truth of the boy's words, but he could not bring himself to think in the same way. He was much attached to things of the earth. He kept silent and Nachikéas took his silence to mean assent, *though half hearted it might be*. He prostrated again and slowly walked away.

II

Nachikéas found his way to the abode of Death. When he arrived there, Yama was not at home. The people of the household asked him

to come into the house, to partake of food and to have rest. But Nachikéas said, "I cannot enter the house, in the absence of the master. I shall wait till he arrives."

It is the ancient custom that a guest who comes to the door of a householder should be treated with great respect. He should be given water to wash his feet, and then should be led into the house. He should be offered a seat and worshipped with an oblation of flowers and water. Then he should be sumptuously fed and afterwards asked to take rest. The guest is like a blazing fire. In the case of that foolish man, from whose house a guest goes without a meal, his hopes and expectations, the fruit of all his good actions, the merits of his sweet speech, his children and property, all go to destruction.

Knowing this, the people of the household felt anxious and troubled, when Nachiketas stayed out without accepting their hospitality. Yama arrived after three days. His attendants hastened to meet him and said, "O! Lord! Here is a worthy guest. A young Brahmacharin, whose face shines with the light of knowledge, has been waiting for you, these three days, without food or water. It behoves you to receive him duly and gladden his heart. Here is water to wash his feet."

Yama welcomed Nachiketas and said, "O learned one, Salutations to thee! Be pleased to vouchsafe welfare unto me. I am very sorry, I was not at home. But, for that I will make amends. Ask three boons, one for each day."

And the boy asked, "My first boon is that . . ."

against me should pass away, that he should be kind to me, and recognise me when you allow me to depart." Thus the boy sought to extricate himself from the jaws of death, and please his father whom he had offended. Yama granted this fully. He said, "So be it. Your father shall be able to welcome you again. He must have been spending sleepless nights. Let him be free from anxiety and anger, and sleep once again peacefully."

Then Nachiketas began. "In the world of the Devas, I have heard, there is no fear of death or old age. There they rejoice, having crossed both hunger and thirst and getting beyond all sorrow. I have also heard that thou knowest the secret of the Sacrifice which leads to that happy world. Be pleased to teach it to me. This, I choose for my second boon."

Yama told him all about it, how the sacrificial altar should be built, how the fire should be lit, and what hymns should be chanted. He added, "I am well pleased with you. Henceforth, this form of sacrifice shall be known in the world by your name. Now choose your third boon."

The boy reflected for a while and said, "There is much doubt and discussion in the world over the state of man after death. When a man dies, some say he is, others that he is not. Instructed by you, I desire to understand the whole truth about this difficult question."

Yama looked apparently perplexed. He had been very glad to grant the other two boons. But now he said, "Even the gods in ancient times were puzzled on this

point. This subtle truth is not easy to understand. Please do not press me; release me from this and choose some other boon, O Nachiketas!"

The boy was determined. He said, "What thou hast spoken is true, O Yama! It is no easy matter, and even the gods could not grasp it. That is why I wish to learn it from you. I can never hope to meet another teacher like you. And there is no other boon equal to this."

Yama proposed again, "Ask for sons and grandsons who will live one hundred years; ask for cattle and elephants; gold and silver. Ask for a vast empire on this earth and live as many years as you like. Or choose any other boon which you consider equal to these—wealth and long life. Or be a king, O Nachiketas! on the wide earth. I will make you the enjoyer of all desires. Ask for all those things which are difficult to obtain in the world. These heavenly maidens with chariots and music, which are not to be obtained by man, shall be yours. Let them serve you, O Nachiketas! Don't worry about what comes after death."

Nachiketas stood firm. He replied, "These are merely things of a day, O Yama! They consume the energy of the sense organs and sap all vitality. Even the longest life is of little worth. These horses and chariots, dances and songs, let them remain with thee. Man cannot be satisfied with wealth. Can we retain wealth, when we behold thee? We shall live only as long as thou desirest. I want only that boon which I have chosen."

III

Yama was pleased with the boy's faith and wisdom and praised his firmness. He said:—"The good is one thing; the pleasant is altogether different. The wise man, having examined both, chooses the good and becomes truly great; the foolish one chooses the pleasant to please his senses and misses the true end. You have wisely chosen, my boy. I consider you as a fit aspirant for higher knowledge, as even such prospects of pleasure could not allure you.

"Fools who dwell in the midst of ignorance, puffed up with vain knowledge, thinking themselves very wise, go round and round, like blind men led by the blind. The truth never shines in the minds of these moustached babies, who are deluded by the folly of riches. They say, there is nothing beyond this world, and fall again and again into my clutches.

"To understand this truth is very difficult. Many, even hearing it continually, do not grasp it, for the speaker must be wonderful, so must be the hearer. It bears no fruit, if taught by an inferior person. Unless it is given by one who has realised and lived it, there is no way to it. It can never be attained by vain argumentation.

"My dear boy, you are of true resolve. It is a pleasure to teach you. May we have many more disciples like you! You are even greater than myself, for even knowing the highest truth, I have sought the pleasures of this Yama state."

With these words of praise, Yama proceeded to answer the question of Nachiketas. He declared, "The

Self of Man is Unborn, Eternal, Everlasting. This Ancient One can never be destroyed with the destruction of the body. Infinitely smaller than the smallest, infinitely larger than the largest, this Lord of all is present in the depths of every human heart. Knowing such to be the Soul, the sages are never miserable. This is the truth to be realised, O Nachiketas!"

IV

Nachiketas then asked Yama, "Sir, please teach me the means of attaining it."

Yama replied:—"This Atman is not to be realised by the study of the Vedas, nor by a profound intellect, nor by much hearing of the Scriptures. It expresses itself to him with whom this Atman is pleased.

"Those who have not turned away from wickedness, who are not meditative and peaceful, can never see the light. It is only to those who are pure in thought, word and deed, that this Self manifests Itself.

"This is the way. Picture the Self to be the rider and this body to be the chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, the mind as the reins, and the senses as the horses. He, whose horses are well-broken and whose reins are strongly held, reaches the goal. But the man whose horses (senses) are not controlled, nor the reins (mind) well-managed, goes to destruction.

"Beware! the path is very difficult to tread. It is long and perilous. It is, as it were, like walking on the edge of a razor. But struggle on, do not despair. We are born to struggle. Arise!

Awake! Approach the great ones and stop not till the Goal is reached.

This is to be realised here and now. Here and hereafter are not two different things. What is here, is there; and what is there, the same is here. He who sees difference goes from death to death.

He who knows the Atman, ever near to himself, the Sustainer of life, and the Lord of the past and the future, never fears any more.

As rain falling upon a mountain, flows in various streams down the sides, so all the energy that you see manifest here, is from that One. It is the sun in the heavens, the air in the sky, the fire on the altar and the guest in the house. It is in man, in God, in the sacrifice, in the sky. It fills the universe. It is the true, the Great.

As the one fire coming into this world assumes various forms according to circumstances, even so, the One Soul of the Universe is manifesting Itself in all forms and remains also outside these forms unmanifested. As the sun that illumines the whole world, is not affected by the defects in our eyes, even so, the Self of all is not affected by the miseries of the world. It is the One, the Creator of all, the Ruler of all, the Inmost Soul of every being, that makes Its oneness manifest.

None sees It with these eyes. It cannot be illumined even by the sun, moon, stars or lightning. That alone shining, everything else shines after. It is the effulgence of the Atman that illumines all.

Those sages who realise the truth thus in their heart of hearts,

gain immortality. Unto them belongs eternal peace and bliss. Unto none else, unto none else.

V

This Atman is the root of the huge Aswatha tree of the world, whose outspread branches we see here down below. This Atman rules the whole universe. It is out of fear of that One, the fire burns, the sun shines, and Indra, Vayu and Yama fulfil their respective functions.

If before the fall of this body, one does not realise this truth, then one has to take body again and again in the world of creation, as man or animal or plant, according to one's previous karma and gnana.

And it should be borne in mind, that this human state is the best suited for the realisation of the truth. Here it can be seen clearly as in a mirror, whereas even in the highest Brahmaloaka, it appears as in a shadow thrown by the sun; in the world of the Gandharvas it is like a reflection seen in a pool of water, and in the world of the pitrus it becomes indistinct as in a dream. So be up and doing. There is no time to be lost.

When all vain desires have been given up, when all the knots of the heart have been cut asunder, then this very mortal becomes immortal, becomes one with God even here on this earth.

The Inner Soul dwells in your heart of hearts. Separate It from the body as you pull off the stalk from the grass, knowing It to be the pure, the Immortal.

VI

Nachiketas, instructed by the Lord of Death in this knowledge and in the whole process of Yoga, became free from all impurities and death, and realised Brahman.

The path is open to all and any one who knows the inner self thus will attain to the same state of Bliss.

—Retold from the *Katha*

Upanishad,
KAUNDINYA.

Holiday Time in the Home

(Extracts from a letter which was certainly not intended for publication)

MY DEAR A——,

Life here is interesting. No teachers except Ratnaswami and Swamiji. The boys are having a jolly time. The mango trees are yielding. In Ambikapathi's drawer you can see pickles of mangoes. Early in the morning you see a number of urchins at the foot of the mango trees collecting the mangoes which the trees have rejected in favour of the boys.

The tops are having a very hard time of it. They have no rest at all. At all odd hours, before dinner or just after play, in brief intervals snatched in the midst of work, at all imaginable times, you see a number of boys playing hard with their tops. There is an endless running about; and unable to bear the blows, the tops get into drains, below flower-plants and all inconceivable places. But our boys are heartless. They will unearth them, bring them back from *patala-loka* if necessary, and put them again in the wheel of *samsara*.

The strength of the Home is just now fifty: they are all urchins, but all of them are mischievous.

The gardener has been stopped. But the garden-work goes on as

before. Elaborate irrigation-schemes are planned. Project after project comes up before the irrigation engineer. There are plans for bridges and overbridges; for tunnels and tanks; for drainages and reservoirs. They are all seriously discussed; and vigorous attempts are made to make water available at every corner.

Nobody in the hospital except Ambikapathi. Slight belly-ache—the work of mangoes, I assure you. Doctor R—has a holiday, mind you, now more than ever.

Ratnaswami is the guardian spirit of the Home. He is in the store-room, in the kitchen, in the garden, in the workshop—in fact everywhere. He is the trusted lieutenant of the Swamiji now.

Repairs are being done—white-washing, though it does not bring us anywhere near our ideal of the complete destruction of bugs! But evidently you are not interested in it.

All told, life is monotonous, without *life*. No time to write further—already late for the post.

Yours etc,

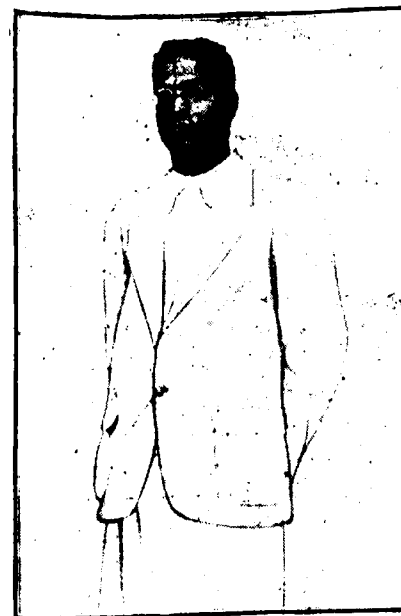
Who is it?

Our Sastras

BY T. R. SESHADRI, M.A.,

(Government of India Scholar, University of Manchester)

The greatness of our ancient civilisation and the glory of our past were the themes of almost every public speech in India some years ago, and there was comparatively little thought about the present or the future. This seems to have given occasion to the remark of a traveller from the West that the national mind was in a morbid



T. R. Seshadri.

state of fixation and regression. The explanation of these terms given below has been taken from a book on analytical psychology:—

“The term fixation is used to denote the mental state which occurs when an individual refuses to take the step forward in life which normal development demands . . . Just as the infant

tends to resist the physical process of weaning, so the growing child or youth tends to demand or accept mental and spiritual sustenance and support from the parent long after the need should have been outgrown . . . Regression, on the other hand, indicates the retreat of the personality which occurs when a person is unable to face a given situation . . .

“The young man who refuses to interest himself in anything but cricket-scores, and evades the choice of a profession, is regressing into boyhood, because manhood seems to him difficult. Such a man is regarded as an unsatisfactory member of society, but if regression goes farther as in the case of Mr. Dick in *David Copperfield*, who went back permanently to the kite flying stage, it is regarded as insanity.”

How far the Western traveller was just in his diagnosis of our national mind some years back, and how far it has undergone a change since then are questions best left to individual experience and opinion. But few can deny the fact that even at the present moment, the great majority of our countrymen depend entirely on our ancient sastras and on the wisdom and foresight of our hoary sages for doing every little thing in our social, religious and economic life. Little importance is given to personal conviction, individual discrimination or experience, and little scope offered for sweet reasonableness. Those who have had the benefit of being brought

up in very orthodox surroundings could easily recall any number of occasions wherein they have noticed the authority of the sastras brought under requisition for sanctioning apparently trivial acts. At one time or other, they must have felt that there was no justification for making such a fetish of the sastras.

For, let us ask the question "What are the Sastras?" Translated into English, the word 'sastras' means 'sciences.' It is only in India that we find such high regard being paid to the sciences, material or spiritual, these being considered as valuable adjuncts to religion. If only they realise the true import of our sastras, then this attitude of mind will be slowly but surely changed.

All sastras relate to objects that can be perceived, and they consist of two main parts:—(1) the experimental facts that can be demonstrated and verified under proper conditions; and (2) the theories which deal with the correlation of these observed facts explaining several isolated phenomena in a coherent manner. The first remains true for all times; it is eternal truth, unless the experiments have been done inaccurately or by unreliable people. On the other hand, theories are usually short-lived: they have to be extended and enlarged or sometimes completely thrown out, as new facts are discovered and old errors corrected. That light is a form of energy and that it has several properties such as reflection, refraction and radiation—these are experimental discoveries which are made use of in every day life. But the original theory that light radiation consisted of small corpuscles shot out at great speed is now a

back number. Later discoveries have rendered it untenable and the modern conception of light propagation in waves and ripples has gained credence. Even here, a few years back, light radiation was considered to be a continuous flow; now it is generally accepted that it takes place in intermittent impulses of definite quanta of energy.

If we have a correct conception of *Sastras*, then there can be no occasion to distinguish between Indian, European and American Sastras; or between ancient and modern sastras. Science is true for all times and in all places; and knowledge of the facts of science and respect paid to the laws of nature are recognised as important factors which contribute to national health and well-being. It becomes then essential for every man and woman with scientific education in India to analyse our sastras, to sift out the science from the non-science and bring them up-to-date with the most recent discoveries. But unfortunately, there are many educated men who read all traditional superstitions into the sastras and support them against proved facts; who maintain that there can be no progress in our knowledge of Chemistry beyond that contained in Charaka and Susruta; and who try to prove that the electronic theory with all its intricacies was formulated thousands of years back by our rishis, and that the credit of first making an aeroplane should be given to the ancient Hindus.

Man has been known to be a conservative animal: he is generally averse to change, and he will persist in a tottering house until it actually falls down upon his head. Analytical psychology has discovered that

this arises from his fear of the unknown, which induces him to use all arguments of customs, traditions, scriptures and sastras, just to support his own unreasonable positions. For instance, who could now appreciate the several arguments used against the introduction of railways a century back? The Railway was considered to be the spoiling of the countryside, the blasphemy of God's glory, and in fact, the surest instrument of Satan for the seduction of mankind. But the world keeps moving on and humanity is being carried forward by the irresistible march of time. Consequently, inevitable changes arise in our ideas of life and in our social and economic outlook. There is a healthy way of meeting these changes and there is also an unhealthy and wasteful one too. Banishing the fear of the unknown and lifting on high the banner of reason we can meet them half way, thus increasing our national strength, happiness and prosperity. If on the other hand our sastras are considered to be the last word on

every subject, and if the national mind is bent on going back to the past, then there will be a deplorable waste of strength which must result in widespread national misery.

Is our glorious past to stand in our way of progress? And are we to look back to the good old days of prosperity as an act of regression? No; there is a different purpose in view. I believe it is to encourage us in our forward march; it is to show that we are a race of vast potentialities; and it is to stir us up to greater and more glorious action. Poets sing of past glory only in order to welcome a future glory. And has not the bard sung,

"Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert land of dead habit,

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action,

Into that haven of freedom, my Father,

Let my country awake."

Educational Finance

It was a pleasant thing to read in the papers that on the 11th July their Majesties opened the new buildings of England's latest university at Nottingham which had been erected at a cost of a million sterling, subscribed by the citizens of Nottingham. It was even of greater interest to note that the subscription list was headed by Sir Jessie Boot who is a permanent cripple and who paid over £ 130,000 to the Building Fund.

This announcement set me a thinking about the way in which English Universities are being financed. To realise the magnitude of the gift, let us first of all reduce the figures to Indian currency. The total cost of the University has been 150 lakhs of rupees and one individual subscriber has been able to pay 19½ lakhs of that amount!

Of course, various inferences may be drawn from it. We may wonder at the wealth of the country which

can boast of such institutions in the *mofussil*, Nottingham being a comparatively small town. Or, we may admire the munificence of Sir Jessie Boot who has given a princely endowment to the university of his own shire. Or, we may note with satisfaction the sympathy of their Majesties towards every kind of educational effort made in their land, as was borne testimony to, by their having come personally to declare the new buildings open. But what struck me most was the idea of 'Self Help' which has been dominating the mind of the Englishmen whenever they want to get anything done. They plan carefully beforehand, they study the situation accurately, and once they are convinced that a thing is necessary, they are prepared to finance it, of their own accord, without any kind of dependence on others. In that respect we have really a great deal to learn from them.

In the history of education (as in that of Literature), we find that in the earliest periods, the whole expenses were met by broad-minded kings. At a later stage, when the nobility came to power, they began to build Schools and Colleges and endow them liberally. But in recent times, thanks to the advent of Democracy, it is the *People* that have got to do the financing of educational institutions. This gradual change has had its inevitable effects on the quality of the education imparted in the different types and grades of Schools. It is a well-known maxim, "He who calls the tune must also pay for the piper." And its converse is equally true, that he who pays the piper will also call *for the tune which he wants*. It is but a slight variation of the

political principle, "No taxation, no representation" and its converse "No representation, no taxation."

When a School, College or academy is founded and supported by a king, it follows naturally that loyalty to him in particular, and the institution of monarchy in general, will be emphasized; when the patrons are lords and ladies, there will be a tendency to revere the aristocracy of the land—the aristocracy, we mean, of wealth and of high descent; when the *demos* is the patron, the opinion of the public will be surely reflected in the education imparted—the law of equality and fraternity will eclipse all the others.

But we can anticipate the critics who turn up their noses and say, "This is all wrong. It should not be so. Whoever be the patron, the body of students and teachers who constitute the essence of a School or College must be entirely free to choose what they are to learn. And there should be done nothing whatever to interfere with their freedom."

This is, no doubt, the ideal, but however much we may talk of 'academic freedom,' we are not likely to get it soon. The donor lays down certain conditions, and we have to accept them, if we are in need of money. And so, we have got to fulfil those conditions. For example, in India the cry has not been infrequently heard that the type of education imparted in our schools and colleges is helpful only in manufacturing clerks, and in producing a kind of "slave mentality" in the minds of students. The real solution of the problem is very easy to get at. "If you are dissatisfied with this type of education, finance

a new scheme and get it well under way; but remember the financial responsibility is *yours* and should not be shifted on to others."

In India, generally speaking, criticism on the educational policy has so far contented itself with merely pointing out defects in the existing scheme *without helping in the creation of new efforts and experiments*. And in far too many cases, where such ventures have seen the light of day, they have failed on account of want of 'finance.' The public (or any section of it), which wants reforms or which likes to have a new type of school, must be prepared to *pay for it also*. The weakest point in many of our national Schools and Colleges is *inadequate finance*. In a moment of enthusiasm, a new institution is opened, but later on, it is found to be very poorly supported, and so, after a brief career of prosperity, it has to be the ghost of its former self, or it has to be utterly closed. The fate of the Bengal National Council of Education is an instance in point.

To maintain an efficient High School, the *net expenditure* (after deducting school fees from boys, etc.) for the management will be Rs. 25,000 *per annum*; and therefore, if it is to remain on a stable basis, we require a funded capital of at least Rs. 4,00,000. For a college

teaching up to the Honours standard in all subjects, the net expenditure is nearly two lakhs and a half; and so the endowment must be nearly forty lakhs, if it is to continue without any outside help. And we wish that those who talk glibly about education on our platforms should ponder seriously about these facts before venturing on their pet schemes.

In the present state of our country then, he who helps educational institutions directly, or by means of his power and influence gets other people to use their money on educational efforts, is entitled to our deep gratitude. In that sense, if in no other, the Hindu Religious Endowment Bill is most welcome to educationists.

Of course, things are getting better nowadays. The steady support (by the public) of the Ramakrishna Students' Home and the Residential and Vocational Schools attached to it; and the recent statement of the Hon'ble Sir Annamalai Chettiar that he would give twenty lakhs of rupees for starting the Sri Minakshi University at Chidambaram—these are signs of the dawn of a new era; and let us hope that we shall have adequate monetary support for any kind of educational experiment that may be tried in India.

Select opinions

ON THE

FIRST NUMBER OF 'OUR HOME MAGAZINE'

I

From His Holiness Swami Suddhananda of the Belur Math:—

I am very glad to receive the complimentary copy of the first number of Our Home Magazine, containing Sri Mahapurush Maharaj's benedictions, the beautiful reminiscences of our Ramu and other very interesting matters regarding the Students' Home. The idea is a very happy one and I hope that it will be very welcome to the old students of the Home as well as to the general public interested in the Home.

II

From His Highness Ravi Varma Raja, the third Prince of Cochin:—

I am exceedingly delighted to receive the complimentary copy, you sent me, of the first issue of 'Our Home Magazine.' . . . I have no doubt the journal will play a very useful part in the future life of the Home.

A perusal of the magazine awakens in me many old memories, and let me take this opportunity of conveying to you my appreciation of the work carried on in the Home. One of the cherished objects of my own life has been to train our young men on right lines, and I know well all the difficulties in the way. As a student in the nineties of the last century, I remember what great trouble was taken to mould my character and to see me grow up under the healthiest and noblest of influences by such eminent men as

the late Sir V. Bhashyam Iyengar, Sir S. Subrahmanya Iyer, S. Srinivasaraghava Iyengar and C. Ramachandra Rao Sahib, the last of whom I regarded as my guardian during my five years' stay in Madras. To him I was as dear as, if not dearer than, his own children; and to him it is that I owe every benefit I have derived from my stay in Madras.

This left a profound impression on my mind. Soon after my return to my place, my brother, the then ruler, made me practically the guardian of the student princes, and I volunteered to serve as a teacher in the Palace School at Tirupunithura. Here I tried to put into practice some of my ideas; but it was not till I saw the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in Madras that I really understood the import of my own ideals and the way they should be realised in practice. I have now known the Home and many of its workers intimately for several years. And from my knowledge of the institution and the results achieved by it, I am satisfied that we have here a Gurukula of the old type suited to our modern conditions.

The bed-rock on which Indian Culture is based is spirituality. Take this away, and the whole structure falls down like a pack of cards. Therefore it is of the greatest importance that in the formative period of their lives the pupils should be brought up in close contact with those who have realised the ideal. This is secured in the

'Home' by the constant presence of a Sanyasin as warden, besides other teachers who live pure and simple lives as householders or Brahmancharis imbued with the spirit of service and sacrifice.

To the Gurukulas of old, sons of Emperors and even those who were reckoned as 'Avatars' were sent along with the sons of peasants. The "guru" however did not make any difference between them; he treated them all alike, irrespective of the position they occupied in life. He loved them as his own children and they in turn treated him with the utmost respect. The disciples had to do manual work (such as gathering fuel for the sacrificial fire) and this instilled into their minds the dignity of labour.

As regards instruction, religious training was given a very important place in the scheme of things; but even more than this, what was of the greatest significance in moulding their character in the right direction was their daily contact with the 'gurus' who led an ideal life. 'Plain living and high thinking' was their aim; so all luxuries were strictly avoided, and the atmosphere was one of severe discipline—which however was made tolerable on account of the loving tenderness of the 'gurus' and their wives. As these lived the religion which they preached, it was easy for the disciples to differentiate the good from the bad and to distinguish between the evanescent and the permanent in this world. Thus equipped, it was possible for them to lead an unsullied life on earth.

Some of the disciples had such strong attractions towards the spiritual life, that they began to devote their whole career to medita-

tion and religious practices. But even the others were leading a life of purity, so that they easily evolved into the next higher stage of evolution and had the satisfaction that their lives were not wasted.

For us Indians, Gurukulas of the type described above and presided over by teachers living exemplary lives can alone be expected to give the right sort of training—a training which enables us not merely to discharge cheerfully the duties we are called upon to do in the station to which Providence has called us, but also to wait with hope for the next stage.

As I believe that the 'Home' fulfils this function in an ample measure, I pray to the Lord that it should eventually grow into a University and turn out young men who would shed glory on their Motherland.

III

Congratulatory messages have also been received from the Hon'ble Dr. P. Subbaroyan, the Chief Minister to the Government of Madras, Sir T. Vijayaraghavachariar, Member of the Public Services Commission, Delhi, R. Littlehailes, Esq., M.A., Educational commissioner to the Government of India, and the Military Secretary to H.E. the Governor of Madras; besides many prominent ladies and gentlemen; as well as several 'old boys' of the Home, both in India and outside. For want of space, we are unable to print their valuable opinions; but we take this opportunity of thanking one and all of them for their sympathy and good-will which has served as a stimulus for better work in future.

Gleanings from Books and Periodicals

Popular Custom

There is the towering temple of the Eternal Hindu Religion, and how many ways are there of approaching it! And what can you not find there? From the Absolute Brahman of the Vedantin down to Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Uncle Sun, the rat-riding Ganesha, and the minor deities such as Sashti, and Makal and so forth,—which is lacking there? And in the Vedas, in the Vedanta and the Philosophies, in the Puranas, and the Tantras, there are lots of materials, a single sentence of which is enough to break one's chain of transmigration for ever.

And oh the crowd!—Millions and millions of people are rushing towards the temple. I, too, had a curiosity to see and join in the rush. But what was this that met my eyes when I reached the spot!—Nobody was going inside the temple;—by the side of the door, there was a standing figure, with fifty heads, a hundred arms, two hundred bellies and five hundred legs, and everyone was rolling at the feet of that.

I asked one for the reason and got the reply, "Those Deities that you see in the interior, it is worship enough for them to make a short prostration or throw in a few flowers from a distance. But the real worship must be offered to him who is at the gate; and those Vedas, the Vedanta and the Philosophies, the Puranas and other Scriptures that you see,—there is no harm if you hear them read now and then, but

you must obey the mandate of this one."

Then I asked again, "Well, what is the name of this God of gods?" "He is named POPULAR CUSTOM" —came the reply. I exclaimed, "Bravo, Popular Custom! Thou hast thrashed them so well."

Swami Vivekananda.

The Gambling Epidemic

Puzzles, and Lotteries, Betting and Speculation are fast spreading amidst us like virulent epidemics, and most untutored minds succumb to them. They appear so masked and other than what they are that their true form is seldom perceived. And we know that the worst stage of a disease is that when the patient is the least aware of his perilous condition. There is great need therefore to sound a note of warning and it cannot be better done than by quoting from a recent writing of Mahatma Gandhi in Young India on the ethics of lotteries:—(Ed.)

"A correspondent draws my attention to the institution of lotteries in Goa for the purpose of supporting hospitals. The correspondent tells me that lakhs of rupees are spent by people in British India in these lotteries in the vain hope of suddenly becoming rich without effort and yet gaining heavenly merit. Here is an extract from an advertisement sent by the correspondent:—

'Behold the sick. He that giveth to the poor lends to God. Then why not help our poor by

making a rupee at this drawing? It is a comely way of exercising charity.' The advertisement contains a portrait of a hoary-headed reverend gentleman.

"It would be interesting to know the condition of the hospitals built with the monies gained from these lotteries. Meanwhile it is worth while to examine the ethics of founding charitable institutions with monies collected by an appeal to man's greed, enhancing it by a promise of merit if the purchaser of such a lottery ticket should fail to get the tempting prize or prizes as lakhs of purchasers must fail.

"As it is, the haste to be rich without working and waiting for the happy day pervades the atmosphere. Every one who spends a rupee on the race course or in a lottery ticket erects the pyramid of his hope on the foundation of the ruin of a multitude of such hopes of men and women having equal right with the few lucky (?) winners of prizes. It is difficult, however, to single out the lottery system for criticism, when the gambling spirit possesses even those who are ranked among the most respectable. The share market is nothing but a feverish gamble. And yet who is free from that fever? Every man who finds himself rich in a day by manipulating the share market knows that the sudden accession to his wealth means the desolation of many a widow's home. Only, the relatives of the widows who bought shares had no doubt almost the same kind of hope that the clever speculator of our imagination had.

"Cotton, rice and jute are, strange as it may appear, objects of such

speculation. The system of lottery is but a crude extension of the same gambling spirit. *It is no doubt good to treat the lottery as dis-respectable, but it is better to make the acquaintance of the spirit that is common to the lottery and the share market and thus deal with the root cause of the disease rather than its worst symptom. It is therefore to be wished that the worst symptom will enable us to reach the root cause and deal effectively with it.*

"But it is a far off hope. Let not my mention of the pervasive nature of the disease make a single person connected with these lotteries seek justification for his participation in the lottery system.

"And the caution is all the more necessary when the lottery is in connection with a charitable institution. *Surely it is bad enough to want to be rich without deserving, but it is positively wrong to connect charity with a gamble.* Those who throw away rupees in lotteries must not think that they gain merit even whilst they are hoping to satisfy an unlawful ambition. We may not hope to serve God and Mammon at the same time.

"And why do the Christian conductors of the Goan hospitals degrade religion by exploiting the evil tendency of human nature? Do they imagine that they please God by attempting to support a hospital by making lakhs of people morally diseased? Are they not robbing Peter to pay Paul? What will it profit them to heal a few bodies if at the same time they wound a thousand times more souls?"

There are two fools in this world. One is the millionaire who thinks that by hoarding money he can somehow accumulate real power, and the other is the penniless reformer who thinks that if only he can take the money from one class and give it to another, all the world's ills will be cured. They are both on the wrong track. (For all wealth is not money and all happiness does not arise from money at all.)

Every advance begins in a small way and with the individual. The mass can be no better than the sum of the individuals. Advancement begins within the man himself; when he advances from half-interest to strength of purpose; when he advances from hesitancy to decisive directness; when he advances from immaturity to maturity of judgment; when he advances from apprenticeship to mastery; when he advances from a mere *dilettante* at labour to a worker who finds a genuine joy in work; when he advances from an eye-server to one who can be entrusted to do his work without oversight and without prodding—why, then the world advances!

Work that amounts to anything will never be easy. And the higher

you go in the scale of responsibility, the harder becomes the job. Ease has its place, of course. Every man who works ought to have sufficient leisure. The man who works hard should have his easy chair, his comfortable fire-side, his pleasant surroundings. These are his by right. But no one deserves ease until *after* his work is done.

The opportunity to work is greater than ever it was before. The opportunity to advance is greater. It is true that the young man who enters industry to-day enters a very different system from that in which the young man of twenty-five years ago began his career. The system has been tightened up; there is less play or friction in it; fewer matters are left to the haphazard will of the individual; the modern worker finds himself part of an organisation which apparently leaves him little initiative. Yet, with all this, it is not true that "men are mere machines." It is not true that opportunity has been lost on organisation. If the young man will liberate himself from these ideas and regard the system as it is, he will find that what he thought was a barrier is really an aid.

For The Old Boys

An Appeal

It is proposed to send this journal free to all the supporters and well-wishers of the Home, the financing being done mainly by the old boys. The expenses cannot be met entire-

ly by the subscription fixed for the Magazine. It is estimated there will be a deficit of about Rs. 250 a year, at present. When the great purpose the journal will serve

is borne in mind, this amount will not seem much. In any case, there is need for a separate Magazine Fund for the efficient conduct of the journal. A start has already been made by a few old boys of the Home; amounts ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50 have been subscribed, but the donors wish to remain anonymous. It is earnestly hoped that others will also come forward with voluntary donations. Another way of helping the cause would be for every old boy to secure a fresh subscriber or to pay double subscription. Much depends on united effort and co-operation and we are sure our friends will not be lacking the proper spirit.

Contributions to the fund should be sent to the Manager, Our Home Magazine, Mylapore, Madras.

Mr. C. Ramaswami Iyenger (the Secretary) who was expected to be back in the Home by the end of June has to stay at Trichur for another three months. A second course of treatment has just now begun, and the slight improvement so far perceptible will, it is hoped, be very much enhanced by this new course. He is under the benign care of Ravi Varma Raja, the Third Prince of Cochin at Amba Nivas, Trichur.

We have received, with great pleasure and pride, a pamphlet from Mr. T. R. Seshadri (University of Manchester) containing an account of his researches on "The Reactivity of the Double Bond in Coumarins and related L. B. Unsaturated carbonyl compounds." It was originally published as an article

in the Journal of the Chemical Society of England in 1928.

Coming Events:—From the first week of August, there will be lantern lectures delivered by the Home boys on social and religious subjects (in Tamil) in the School Prayer Hall. These are intended mainly for the poor people of the neighbourhood. Last year we tried it and as the experiment was successful, we mean continuing it this year also.

Friday, August 23. Madras University Convocation. A meeting of the Home boys past and present will be held to congratulate the new graduates. All the old boys are cordially invited for the Puja at 6-30 P.M., for the Dinner at 7-15 P.M., and the Meeting at 8-30 P.M.

August 29. Rig Veda Upakarmam.
August 30. Yajur Veda Upakarmam.

September 7. Sri Krishna Jayanthi.
September 15. Sama Veda Upakarmam.

September 17. Vinayaka Chaturthi.

October 13. The Residential High School closes for Navarathri.

October 14 to 23. Navarathri celebrations. As usual a rich and varied programme will be arranged for all the ten days. There will be religious discourses and Bhajana in the morning, Sports in the evening and Harikatha and musical entertainments at night. The full programme can be had just before the beginning of the festival.

October 23. Saraswathi Puja.

October 24. Vijaya Dasami : The Residential High School reopens.

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We are glad to note that the following 'old boys' have passed their L. T. Degree Examination in April 1928: — (1) Mr. A. Appadurai, M. A., who has now joined the Residential High School Staff; (2) Mr. C. Kasi Viswanathan, B.A., who is now a teacher in Coimbatore; (3) Mr. N. Krishna-swami, B. A., who is now a teacher in the Salem District; and (4) Mr. R. Mahadevan, B.A., who is now a teacher in the Tindivanam School.

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Mr. H. Nilakantan completed his B. A., in March, 1928. He is now in Northern India, undergoing apprenticeship in Leather-trade.

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We regret to record the death of Mr. A. K. Subrahmanian, an old boy of the Home who passed away at Madras after a sudden illness. He was reading in the B. A. class at the Madras Christian College, and was hale and healthy till the morning of his death. He was of

an amiable disposition and endeared himself to all his friends. He leaves behind him a young widow and a host of friends to bemoan his loss.

* * * * *

It is a matter of joy that some of our Home boys have received a regular training for relief work at the hands of His Holiness Swami Saswatananda. They worked with him during the recent Nellore cyclone relief operations and the following extracts from his letters show the part they played in the relief-work. Writing on 3rd May, 1928, the Swami says:—"It becomes possible for us to work in 3 batches, and finish the work in 45 villages of Nellore and Gudur Taluks within the short period of five days. We came back with the satisfaction of seeing the cloths reaching the poor people in their need. About 2,500 poor people received aid in this way. A. Ramanathan and T. S. Narayana Rao had a nice experience of camp life and I hope this will be useful to them in future. They did splendid work. I am sure you would have felt very happy to see them at work."

Notes and News

Swami Saswatananda, the Warden of the Home, proceeded to Northern India at the end of June on a year's leave. He proposes to spend this period on the Himalayas in Tapasya and to be back amidst us in July, 1929, with renewed vigour and strength. In addition to the strenuous work in the Home he had to organise and conduct the South India Flood Relief in 1924 and the Nellore cyclone relief work

in 1927. Until the orders of the President, Maharaj are received in respect of his successor as Warden, our Headmaster M. R. Ry. K. Vedanta Desikachariar is looking after the duties of the Warden, assisted by the other teachers of the Residential School.

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The School reopened after the summer recess on the 25th of June,

NEW ADMISSIONS IN THE HOME.



From Left to Right

FIRST ROW.—A. V. Krishnamurti, K. Srinivasan, T. M. Sundararajan, R. Somasundaram, P. R. Vedalingam, P. N. Karunakaran, B. S. Krishnamurti, R. Varadachari, V. Srinivasa Rao, R. Krishnamurti, S. R. Ramanujam.

SECOND ROW.—M. P. Vittal, G. N. Venkatachalapathi, K. Doraiswami, V. R. Subrahmanyam, V. Rajagopal, S. Vijaya Sivarman, A. R. Thanga Pandiyan, A. Dwarakanath, M. S. Parthasaradhi, A. S. Muthurama Reddi, V. Janardhanan.

THIRD ROW.—K. Bhupathi, T. S. Veeraraghavan, A. S. Ramalingam, S. Muchukrishna Reddi, M. Jogi Gowder, R. Sankaran Nair, V. N. Gopalan, S. Krishnaswami (Anamalai), M. Narayana swami Nayudu, S. Jagannathan.

FOURTH ROW.—M. Narasimhaachari, K. V. Sankara Wariyar, S. K. Ranganathan, P. N. Damodara Muthathu, G. Ramanathan, S. Krishna-swami (Tevaram).

1928. A new class in the Industrial section had to be opened, and the strength of the school had to be fixed at least, at 90. As a consequence, the strength of the Home had to be increased to 145. Forty-nine new admissions had to be made and these had to be chosen from over 300 applications. A group photo of the newly admitted boarders is given above.

The following students have since left :—

(1) M. Narayanaswami Naidu
(2) S. Krishnaswami (Anamalai)
The following students who had been admitted did not sit for the Photo :—

- (1) K. Srinivasan
- (2) V. Kumaraswami
- (3) A. Krishnaswami
- (4) A. Muthunarayana Reddi
- (5) S. Sampath
- (6) M. Natvarlal
- (7) V. V. Radhakrishnan
- (8) K. R. Mahadevan

The following students selected have not yet joined:—

- (1) V. S. Srinivasaraghavan
- (2) T. S. Vembu
- (3) T. A. Ramachandran

During the last quarter, the permanent endowment fund had an addition of Rs. 1,000, being the loving contribution of our generous friend, M.R.Ry. Rao Bahadur S. Bhaskara Aiyar. With this amount, his contribution comes up to Rs. 3,000.

M.R.Ry. Chintalapati Bapirazu Garu of Narayanapuram (West Godavari District) has kindly paid the first instalment of Rs. 1,000 towards the endowment which he hopes to found in the Home for the maintenance of a boy.

The following presents in kind have been received.

D. Sadasiva Rao ... 17 cows
Srimati Andalammal ... 15 big brass and bronze vessels
Dr. P. Chandrasekhar ... Some pieces of furniture
K. Narayana Aiyangar ... 2 brass vases

Mr. M. Krishnaswami Ayyangar a retired official of the P.W.D. had handed over 50 shares of the Equitable Land and House Property, Ltd., Calcutta, together with an Endowment of Rs. 500. The shares

were got transferred to the Home during July, 1928 and their paid up value is Rs. 400.

It is painful to record the death of Mr. T. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, Assistant Engineer in the P.W.D. His services to the Home were of great value in preparing the plans and estimates for the main building and the other blocks connected with the Home and in supervising the construction of the buildings. With his delicate health, he had devoted himself whole-heartedly to the work.

The following students passed the S.S.L.C. Examination of 1928 from our Residential High School:—

T. M. P. Mahadevan
W. S. Saravanam
C. T. Ramaswami
K. Subbarayan
N. Mahadevan
R. Subramanian
L. P. Govindan
V. Pasupathy
V. Thotheadri
T. Sadasivan
K. V. Ranganathan
C. Ramaswami

The following students passed the Intermediate Examination:—

K. V. Pattabhiraman
N. Ramaswami
A. Balasubramanian
K. Srinivasavaradan.

ADDRESSES OF SOME OLD BOYS

Old boys are requested to write to the Editor, "Our Home Magazine" their addressees and the addresses of as many old boys as they know, for publication in the Magazine.

1. Y. Subramanian, M.A.,
Assistant Comptroller,
Comptroller's Office,
Bangalore.
2. K. Subramanian, M.A.,
Asst. Registrar of Co-operative
Societies, Anantapur.
3. S. Muthuswami, B.A., B.E.,
53/2, Second Cross Road,
Basuvangudi, Bangalore.
4. K. Ramalinga Mudaliar, B.A.,
Sub-Registrar, Tiruppapuliyur,
(Cuddalore).
5. V. Arunachalam,
Supervisor, P.W.D., Nummidivaram,
(Godavari Dt.)
6. G. Rajagopal Naidu,
Supervisor, P.W.D.,
Lalgudi.
7. A. Subbiah,
Supervisor, P.W.D.,
Lower Anicut, Via Aduthurai.
8. C. V. Natesa Naicker,
State Engineer's Office,
Taiping, F.M.S.
9. A. Venkataramana Rao,
Teacher,
67, Kondamapuram St.,
Trivellore, M.S.M.,
(Chingleput Dt.)
10. V. Hanumantha Rao, B.A.,
Assistant, High School,
Tenali.
11. A. S. Ramachandra Panth,
B.A., L.T.,
Asst., Muslim High School,
5, Alangatha Pillai St., Triplicane.
12. K. Vedantadesikachariar,
B.A., L.T.,
Headmaster, Ramakrishna Mission,
Residential High School,
Mylapore.
13. C. V. Ratnaswami Iyer,
Asst., Ramakrishna Mission,
Residential High School,
Mylapore.
14. Dr. V. S. Narayanan, L.M.S.,
Andar St.,
Trichinopoly Fort.
15. K. Sriramamurthi,
Railway Apothecary,
Podanur.
16. S. Venkateswaran, B.A.,
Office of the A.D.S. & T.,
Deccan Dist., Bolarum.
17. R. Venkataraman, B.A.,
Clerk, Taluk Office,
Omalur, (Salem Dt.)
18. T. R. Bhimasena Rao, B.A.,
Rev. Divisional Office,
Cuddalore.
19. A. P. Ganesan, B.A., B.L.,
Vakil, Tuticorin.
20. V. Nagaraja Rao, B.A.,
Clerk, Collectorate,
Chittoor.

