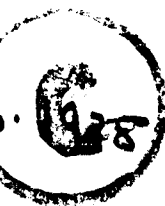


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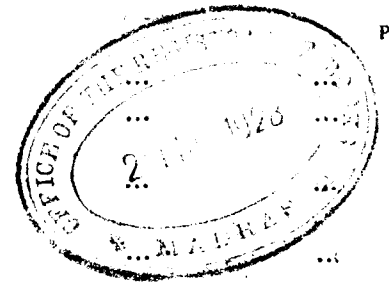
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The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman'."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XIV]

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NUMBER 10

PRAYER

ॐ

यो योनिं योनिमाधितिष्ठत्येको
विश्वानि रूपाणि योनीश्च सर्वाः ।
ऋषिं प्रसूतं कपिलं यस्तमग्रे
ज्ञानैर्बिभर्ति जायमानं च पश्येत् ॥

य एकोऽवर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगाद्
वर्णानिनेकाभिहितार्थो दधाति ।
विचैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ स देवः
स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुज्जु ॥

He Who is without a second, Who rules over all causes, over all forms and germs ; Who rears the first-born and wise Hiranyagarbha with knowledge, and whom He sees while he is born ;

Himself formless but Who by His power makes different forms, and Whose motive no body knows ; from Whom comes the world in the beginning and Whither it goes in the end—may He endow us with good thoughts.

SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD.

Q. Sir, how can we turn our mind to God ?

A. By keeping company with the wise and good, by observing their daily performances and living them in your own life can you turn your mind to God. You are to imitate the ways and manners of those who have their minds turned towards Him. The great barrier that obstructs your correct vision of God is the doubts and confusions of your mind. Their nature is to haunt the mind and swing it to and fro running it after diverse objects. Remove them with the sharp sword of discrimination. If you are not able to do so by your own strength, seek the aid of those who are adept in it—the Sadhus. A beginner should sit beside holy men and listen to them with profound attention and retain their words of advice in his memory. But it does not end there; he must try to realise what he learns from them. Bear in mind that neither talk, nor learning, nor study will lead you to realisation unless they are practised in life. And their practice in life is not at all possible without Brahmacharya or absolute continence. Hence Brahmacharya is very necessary. Many attempt to realise God by studying the scriptures; but they do not know that without Brahmacharya none can decipher the spirit of the scriptures,—what to speak of realising God. For various reasons Brahmacharya is most necessary. If you have a desire to turn your mind to God and realise Him, perform spiritual practices supported on Brahmacharya. And if you are willing to read any books I would recommend to

(To a devotee.). Do you know what Nag Mahashaya used to say? : "It is easier," said he, "to earn fame than to renounce it. And he who can renounce it is a really great man." He also said : "An anchored boat does not move forward by rowing." The meaning is this, a man whose mind is deep rooted in lust and gold cannot proceed God-ward unless he can free himself from their deluding influences through austere Sadhana. God and enjoyment cannot go together. If you want the one you are to banish the other and vice versa. Human birth is a rare privilege, and having had this, if you do not strive after God, surely you are the most unfortunate creature on earth. Your human birth then will have been in vain. Sri Sankara has said : "Human birth, desire for salvation and the company of holy men are rare things on earth. Those who are endowed with all these three are verily the most fortunate amongst men."

Both are true and both are to be followed. In the primary stage all on a sudden a man should not

retire into solitude. Because it involves great danger. It has been noticed that many in their effort to cut off all human associations have gone mad. Therefore the restriction. But it is only when he has made some progress in the spiritual path that he can retire into solitude without much trouble. But you know for certain that true solitude you can find nowhere in this world. Time space and causation are but too insignificant to hold it. It is beyond mind, beyond intellect. It can be felt only in Samadhi (mystic trance). It is identical with The Most Tranquil.

THE PROBLEM OF HINDU SOCIAL REFORM

Concluded from p. 344

By Swami Iswarananda

Now to take up the question of caste to take another example. The reformer wants equalization of all castes and the orthodox are dead against it. For the method of the reform party is the destruction of the caste system by a free jumbling of all castes through inter-marriage and inter-dining. But this is not new problem to the Hindus. It was as old as the Aryan culture and civilization and the solution of the problem was known for thousands of years. The Aryan culture when it began to spread through out the land met with communities of various types and standards of culture. Either they had to be completely destroyed as the Europeans did in Australia and America in the case of the aborigines or they had to be freely admitted into the Aryan fold without any restriction. In the first case it would have been a cruelty even if it were possible, in the second alternative there was the danger of the purity of the Aryan culture itself being lost. In this dilemma the leaders of the Aryan society struck out a *via media* method known as the system of Varnas, which made room for the inclusion of all the various communities living in India and all those aliens who came pouring into the land during the later Buddhist period. As all these could not be jumbled up into one community, each was persuaded to live apart, but at the same time they were to assimilate the best of

Aryan culture in course of time, by getting enrolled into one or other of the Varnas, but not mixing up freely with other communities of the same Varna or other Varnas. Thus hundreds of these communities, coming within the fold of Hinduism, have become Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras. Along with this process distinctions also naturally arose. The man of culture and ethical conduct is bound to be honoured and respected by another who has none of these. The weak bow down to the strong and the poor to the wealthy. These natural forces working in society brought about tremendous inequalities between the privileged and the not privileged. And the effort of the later Acharyas have been to bridge the gulf and bring about an equalization of all castes, but not through inter-marriage and inter-dining, but through the appropriation of the culture of the higher castes by the lower castes. The highest man in the land was the man of spiritual and ethical culture and the social standing of a community was judged by this standard and so the solution of the Acharyas was to bring up all castes to the highest level by extending to them the best Hindu culture and thus equalize them. If the Brahmin is the highest caste and represent the highest ideal, let all become Brahmans, they said: "By birth a man is a Sudra, by culture he becomes a Dwija, by study of the Vedas a Vipra and by Brahma-Jnana a Brahmana". In the Mahabharata it is held that in the beginning all were Brahmans and that by Karma and Guna was humanity split up into various Varnas and that all should again go back to the Brahman caste and the injunction is there that all should appropriate the highest ethical, spiritual and social virtues. There is no necessity for giving up any one's profession for that purpose, for in the *Gita*, Bhagawan says: "By doing one's own Dharma one attains to the highest goal". And many castes have gone up by dint of culture from a lower social status to a higher. These could not get at first chances for inter-marriage, that is why in Hindu society a Brahman, a Kshatriya, or a Vaishya of one denomination does not inter-marry or inter-dine with other communities of the same Varna. Later on these objections disappeared in many cases and by the force and virtue of culture, communities of equal standing inter-married. Prohibition of inter-marriage and inter-dining were only for such period as equality in Acharas and culture had not been established and once this was achieved the Acharyas knew that other things will come of themselves. Thus the great teachers and law givers

like Ramanuja and others worked at the basis and threw the highest ideals of the race broadcast down to the Chandalas. By this they avoided conflict and hatred between communities, while all had a chance to rise to substantial equality through Acharas and education. And this line of work will be the path of least resistance. So long as the other communities are left undisturbed any section has full liberty to adopt any measures for its self-improvement. And when real equality by education, culture, and wealth come into existence inter-marriage, inter-dining and all other things are bound to come. In the heat of the present controversy let us remember that the Vedanta, the religion proper of the Hindus, declares the innate and potential equality of all men, for in one and all is lodged the omnipresent, omnipotent, Atman, the ever pure, the ever free. Differences whether between communities or individuals are only in the manifestation; and all are bound to manifest the highest divinity in course of time. And so the Chandal of this moment is to become the Brahman of the future. Vedanta therefore advocates all measures inaugurated for raising the lowest to the highest and strikes off all fetters from the oppressed and the downtrodden. The present state of the depressed classes is due to want of sufficient application of these high ideals of religion and Sanathana Dharma and the progress of all communities will be marvellously quickened if these ideas are applied in a larger measure. The Vedantin asks: "I am a shoe maker, you may be a king. I do not know how to govern the country you do not know to make a pair of shoes. How are you superior to me? I have got the same God in me as in you. What right have you to say that all comforts and opportunities of life must be yours and none for me?" Thus Vedanta will be the greatest equalizing agency in the future scheme of society.

How is it then you may ask, that in spite of this Vedanta so much of inhuman cruelties and inequalities were perpetrated in the name of religion? The reply is that in spite of the noble intentions of the Rishis and Acharyas, there have been diabolical men, demons in the past as there are now, who have tampered with the works of these great souled ones, in the days when Sanskrit with its prestige and authority was a sealed book to the vast majority. Such rules as that molten lead should be poured into the ear of a Sudra if he hears Sanskrit could not have come from the lips of these holy men who realized the divine in all

beings. These are clearly interpolations; nay whole books have been fathered upon these men of authority, in order to gain currency and therefore such things as do harm to social life must be ruthlessly rejected. Leaving out these we have to take up the frame work, the method and the goal of their labour and fill them with details as changed circumstances demand. At the same time in order to avoid future pitfalls all attempts at laying down rules to the minutest details must be avoided. Then was an attempt in India and it is not entirely out of currency, to bind society by rules and regulations from the cradle to the grave. Every minute detail of life must be lived through rules and the laws guiding the life of the *Nioritti Marga* were imposed on men who had scarcely seen the path of *Pravritti* even. Because an ideal is great it does not mean that it is for all, without reference to his *Adhikara* or ability. Therefore society must be educated to grasp the principles which should guide their life and conduct, rather than kill it with exact formulas. Let the conduct, customs and manners adjust themselves as occasion requires and as society advances.

The underlying idea of all reform must be to make the race strong and pure by educating the people in the spiritual, ethical, and social ideals of the race, not reform of the externals and titbits of details. What is wanted is a root and branch reform. What is the use of pruning all the dried up branches in a flower garden, if you do not water it? Day after day more and more of these get dry and the plants die out. But if the plants are watered at the root we can prevent further dying up of the branches. Society too is a plant which must be nourished by the waters of pure, strong and great ideals, by positive ideas which shall nourish and invigorate it. All real reform should be therefore a feeding of the national life with the fuel it wants. Let the nation grow in its own way—who can dictate its growth to it? Therefore "growth", "evolution" rather than reform must be our watch-word. Progress can never be an isolated change, without reference to the past. Isolated changes, changes for the sake of change, are meaningless and life is too precious to be cast away in the mire of sensation. Every new change must have a unity with the past and must be rooted in the past history of the race, in order that it might be "progress" and an expression of the life within along new channels and new ways. As the Swami Vivekananda says: "All healthy changes are

the manifestations of the spiritual forces within and if these are strong and well adjusted society will arrange itself accordingly.

Fanatical reforms have only defeated their own ends and retarded progress. Before the Negroes of America were liberated by a violent cutting of the knot in the American civil war, they were somebody's property and they were looked after by their owners at least for their selfish purposes. Now they are nobody's and any white man in America is free to lynch a Negro for the slightest offence without being punished by the magisterial authorities who are his own kith and kin. In India the complaint is often heard that the free mingling of the sexes under the civilized regime has very often given opportunities for license. That is danger of fanaticism and unless we avoid it we will while escaping from one evil fall into another.

Evils exist in all societies in one form or another. "If in India the earth is soaked with the widows' tears, in the West the sky is rent with the signs of the unmarried." Here there is the oppression of the caste of culture over the uncultured masses, in the West the poor are ground by the rich. Social evils are chronic, they are never completely cured. If it is solved in one form, it manifests in another form. It is good not to forget that as long as good exists so long there will be evil as well. The hope of millineium might be a good driving power for working against evils, but after all history teaches that the world is not a bit happier in spite of all the reform of evils. Therefore nothing is to be gained by being fanatic over forms and externals. If real remedy is to come it can come only by the reform of the whole mass.

And lastly we have to remember that the leaders of the Hindu society in the past were Rishis, men who having realized the goal of life themselves, were fully qualified to guide society along safe paths. They knew the end and purpose of human evolution and the laws of this evolution and so they had definite aims and ideals in their scheme of reforms, whereas the present day reforms are mostly guided by men whose judgments are based on the likes and dislikes of the Westerner, whose approval and patronage are of greater value to them, than the abiding interest of their own race. And further the Rishis were men of character, purity, truthfulness, sincerity, unselfishness, and love as are fit to lead society in any age or clime and we too if we want to reform society and make any abiding influence on it will have to be like them.

STORY OF SRI SANKARACHARYA'S LIFE

(CHILDHOOD)

By Swami Atulananda

Some twelve centuries after the advent of Lord Buddha the spiritual condition in India, the land of his birth, was deplorable, indeed. The country was still under the sway of Buddhism, but it was Buddhism far removed from the pure Dharma taught by the Lord himself. The country had become thoroughly corrupted. The masses were ignorant and superstitious; the priests under the garb of religion, were given to heinous practices. It came to such a pass that the gods in heaven wept for humanity. They approached Mahadeva, the Lord of gods, and implored him to take human birth once again to save the world from destruction.

Mahadeva, the merciful, heard their supplications. As a current of air he entered into the womb of Vishistha, a pure and pious Brahmin woman, then at prayer before his image in a temple in South India. In course of time the lady Vishistha was delivered of a beautiful boy. She named him Sankara.

About the same time, in different parts of India, lesser gods also took human birth to assist Mahadeva in his great undertaking of restoring truth and righteousness on earth. These gods we will meet later on as Sankara's chosen disciples.

When he was three years old Sankara lost his father, and it was left to Vishistha to raise the child. This she did with great love and wisdom.

Marvellous stories are told about the precocious boy. When only a year old he knew the letters of the alphabet; in his second year he learned to read; and when he was three years old he knew parts of the scriptures by heart. Now he would sometimes utter words far beyond the comprehension of the simple village folk. And when his mother pondered over the significance of of these utterances others would laugh and tell her not to heed the prattle of a little child.

Miracles are related from even an early date in the child's life. It happened one day—Sankara was then seven years old—that his mother, already advanced in years and feeble, on her

way to the river for her daily bath, fainted from weakness. The child found her, and called for assistance. With great difficulty the old lady was brought to her home. But now she felt very unhappy, indeed, for no longer was she able to go to the distance and take her ceremonial bath in the sacred stream.

Sankara could not bear to see his mother grieved. Drawing very close he tried to console her. But it was of no avail. Then he prayed fervently that the Lord might comfort her, and behold! The Lord being pleased with the boy's earnestness and faith, and his great love for his mother, spoke in a whispering voice, "Go, and call the river to follow you to your home."

The boy obeyed, and stretching out his little hands, called as loud as he could, "Oh Mother Ganges," follow me and come to our house, that mother may bathe in your holy waters!" At once the river left her bed and running up the bank, followed the boy. From that day the river flowed by the house, and the lady Vishistha could again take her sanctifying baths. With palms joined she could pray again, "Oh Mother! Holy Current! Merciful One! Make me pure, wash away my sins with your immortal waters."

Now it is written that the boy Sankara secretly came to know, that wise men had examined his horoscope, and that according to their reading two paths were open to him. Should he choose to live a worldly life he would pass away before he reached maturity, but should he decide to renounce the world, even in childhood, and devote himself to the service of God and humanity, his life would be prolonged, and he would do great good to the world.

Strange to relate, when he was only eight years old, this exceptional child was possessed with an irresistible urge to leave the world and live a godly life. He knew it would pain his mother, but he had to choose between her and God. So on different occasions, to her utter consternation, he would plead with his mother to allow him to depart from the house and become a Sannyasin, or wandering monk.

But which mother can give up her only boy and allow him to wander away from her, especially at such a tender age? She

* Sacred streams in India, though they bear different names, are often addressed as "Mother Ganga."

would not hear of it, and she met his repeated requests with tears and lamentations. "When you grow up," she said, "you may become a monk."

"But, mother, it has been thus ordained from above," was all the boy could plead. "It is God's will." As her only reply, Vishistha wept. Sankara confounded by his mother's attitude sought refuge in the Lord. "Oh Lord," was now his constant prayer, "make it possible for me to do Thy work."

One day, seated on the bank of the river, the boy thought, "If I want to become a Sannyasin I must get rid of worldly desires". And at once he ordered these desires to leave him. The desires, thus commanded, fled and entered into the body of a crocodile near by, in the river. Then Sankara himself plunged into the stream. Now he began to cry out loudly, "Help! Help! a crocodile is chasing me!"

Old Vishistha hearing the cry came hurrying towards the river, and seeing her son in danger, was about to jump into the water, when Sankara called to her, "Don't come, mother! Save me by allowing me to take Sannyasa! Save me! The crocodile is coming! Give your consent! If you allow me to become a monk the crocodile will go away!"

Vishistha intent on saving her son, cried, "Come my child; I consent; Come to your mother!" Immediately the crocodile disappeared, and the boy was saved.

Shortly after, Sankara set out on his wanderings. First he went in search of a Guru who would initiate him in the holy order of Sannyasa. He came to the Narmada river, and on the bank of the stream he saw a beautiful Ashrama. Everything looked quiet and serene. The trees were laden with fruits, and flowers bloomed in abundance.

Entering the place he saw a Yogi in deep meditation. Struck with admiration for the holy man, he softly and reverently approached him. Watching the silent figure, seated upright features serene, eyes closed, the body steady like a rock, Sankara thought that the noise of the river tumbling over rocks and boulders might disturb the Yogi's meditation. So he ran to the river, and in a loud voice commanded her to stop her noise. But the river danced along, as merrily and noisy as ever. Then, Sankara with his whole mind fixed on the Yogi, ordered the river to enter into his Kamandalu (water pot). Thus the entire stream was caught in a little water pot, and there was perfect silence.

When the Yogi at last opened his eyes, Sankara approaching him with folded hands, said, "Holy sir, long have I searched for one who could show me the way to freedom. At last I have found you. Be kind to me and accept me as your disciple." The Yogi asked, "Who are you? You seem very young to apply for initiation." Then Sankara replied with a clear voice, full of conviction, "I am neither a boy nor a man, neither a girl nor a woman. I am not the body. I am the Atman, the Spirit Divine." The Yogi (Govindapada was his name) pleased with the reply, blessed Sankara, and accepted him as his disciple.

Now when Sankara had imprisoned the river in his Kamandalu, the water creatures left in the dry river bed, were in great distress. They wept and cried for the river. Govindapada hearing their cries, called Sankara, and said, "My boy, I do not hear the sweet music of the Narmada river, I hear only the cries of fishes and other creatures. Go, and release the river, that all may be happy again." Then Sankara opening his Kamandalu let the river flow out. And the Narmada danced and sang as before and the fishes were happy and silent.

Govindapada observing all that had happened, was elated. "My son," he addressed Sankara, "you have come at last. Long have I waited, and as I was advancing in years, sometimes I feared that the words of the Devas would prove false. For it was told me that a boy would come to me who would imprison the river in his Kamandalu, and that that boy would become my disciple and would restore religion to its former purity. That boy you are. You are enlightened, you are free. But a slight covering of Maya obscures your vision. Otherwise, how could you live in this world and fulfil your mission? God, Himself, has placed it there. Come, I will now properly initiate you, and then we will together go to Benares. In that sacred place I will give up my body. In Samadhi my soul will enter the One Great Existence and you will begin your mission. You will expound the holy Vedas, and you will write their commentaries. The world will marvel at the power of your intellect. Take this staff, and with it travel all over India. As Mahavakya (The great Mantram) I give you 'Tatwamasi,' 'Thou art That.' With it always in mind conquer the world for religion."

While at Benares, Sankara, one day remembering his high birth as a Brahmin, allowed pride to enter his heart. Then the Lord, to protect His devotee, taught him a lesson. So when

Sankara the following morning returned from his purifying bath in the Ganges, the Lord Himself, in the guise of a low-caste man, stepped in his way.

Sankara, the high-caste Brahmin, told the low-caste to get out of his way, and to be careful not to defile him with his touch, for should he touch him, Sankara would have to purify himself again by another bath in the sacred river. At this, the low-caste laughed, and calling his dogs, (also impure creatures), obstructed Sankara's way. Sankara was furious. But the low-caste makes fun of him, and then says to his dogs, "You have more brains than that proud Brahmin. He sees only the body. He does not seem to know that the soul is beyond caste, and is one and the same in all beings. He utters the highest teachings of Vedanta, but in his life he does not demonstrate these truths. I spit on his Brahminhood and learning."

Sankara, hearing this, marvels, "What does it mean? These are not the words of an ignorant low-caste man. Such words can come only from a knower of Brahman, from one who knows the true nature of the Soul. Surely, this lowly form conceals a great being." Prostrating, he prays, "Oh Lord, do not deceive me. Reveal Thyself to me."

Then his eyes are opened. The low-caste has vanished, and before him stands a Being of celestial glory. And the dogs are transformed to Devas. And a voice speaks softly, "My child, never be proud of birth or learning. He who with heart and soul humbly worships Me, he is My beloved devotee." It was a lesson that Sankara never forgot.

At Benares, Sankara met his first disciple. A youth, named Sanandan, travelling far and wide in search of a Guru, at last came to the Holy City. There, day and night, in a loud voice, he called on Viswanath, the Lord of the Universe, to lead him to a Guru who would liberate him from the bondage of this world, and help him towards God-realization.

Sankara saw the youth, and struck with his sincerity, halted and spoke to him. Then, in a flash, the youth's past, present and future states of mind were revealed to him. Sanandan, he saw, would be one of his most faithful followers. He embraced the boy and said, "Come, the world needs us. Follow me, I accept you as my disciple."

The youth was wonder-struck. He jumped to his feet. No doubt, the Lord had heard his prayer. His Guru had come.

Falling at Sankara's feet he offered himself heart and soul to his new master.

The life of this first disciple makes a wonderful story. He was Guru-Bhakti personified. In his life was actually seen that true love for the Guru is a means to liberation. In the scriptures it is written that "Without reading even a single Veda the Guru-Bhakta will know all Vedas." In Sanandan's life this was shown to be true. It was his greatest delight to serve his Guru. This he considered his highest duty, his religion.

Sankara was highly pleased with Sanandan, and showed him many favours. This, the other disciples could not understand. They called Sanandan an ignorant fellow because he did not study as they did. They wondered why Sankara loved him so much, for he did not even perform the religious duties which they themselves so carefully observed. Sanandan was only serving and slaving for his master. How could he learn anything that way? But Sankara understood the nature of his disciple.

Once it happened that Sankara being in need of something, as usual, called for Sanandan. The youth, however, did not come. Sankara was surprised. He asked the other disciples where Sanandan might be. They replied that he had gone to the other side of the river to perform some duty, and that probably he had not yet been able to secure a boat to take him back.

Sankara went to the river, and called loudly. This time Sanandan heard the call, and he ran towards the river. But there was no boat to take him across, and the current was swift. What to do? His beloved master was calling, he must be in need of him. He must go at once. Then he thought, "He who is able to take me safely across the rough ocean of life, would he not be able to take me across this river?" Placing his feet upon the water he found that he did not sink down. The river supported him. Wherever he put his feet, lotus flowers appeared to hold him up. Thus he reached his master.

Sankara blessed him, and said, "Sanandan, from this day I name you Padmapada, the lotus-footed." The other disciples seeing all this, now understood the greatness of this unread unsophisticated, hard working fellow-disciple. They saw the power of Guru-Bhakti.

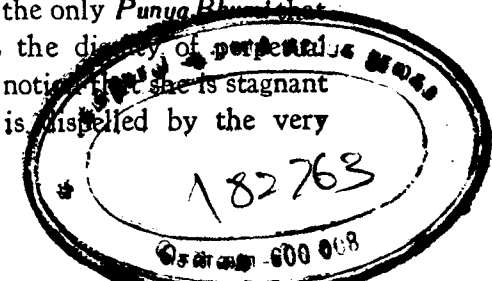
(To be Continued)

THE SOUL OF INDIA

By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, M. A.

The soul of a nation is its inner life and genius expressing itself in its manifold activities, and imparting its peculiar meaning to them. Each nation develops a *Svadharmā* along the lines of its individuality, and contributes its share to the soul of the universe, like a facet in a precious gem. A cultural hothouse is opposed to the laws of continuity. India is the symbol of soul power and *Santi*. She stands for spiritual unity and synthetic vision. Brute force works by terrorism and cowardice, and breeds bitterness, but India knows the art of transmuting such force into a beneficent and redemptive activity. The heart of India lies in her capacity for harmonizing differences. In assimilating alien cultures and absorbing whatever is true and good in them, India is as free and fresh to day, as she was in the beginningless dawn of her civilization. She has suffered from infinite hazards and hardships, and still her staying and sustaining power is amazing; she stands deathless, and soars to the Heavens with her Himalayan serenity, and vivifies the world with her Gange-tic goodness and love.

It is the innate aspiration of India to realize the unity of things. The bewildering variety presented by Modern India in all aspects of life sometimes fills the best of us with doubt and despair. But the infinity of the details and the differences that divide us is the very argument that suggests their underlying unity. Other countries are interested in standardizing life and establishing uniformity. But such a course is neither possible, nor practicable in India. She has a magical power of her own, by which she converts mechanism into spirituality, and machine guns into messengers of peace. The soul of India is eternal. India feels, wills, and thinks, and is really spiritual. This five-fold truth is enshrined respectively in her science, art, ethics, philosophy, and religion and illustrated in the lives of her heroes. If the permanency of a civilization is to be tested by its inherent capacity to produce poets and philosophers, and sages and saints from all ranks of society, then India is the only *Punya Bhumi* that satisfies this condition, and maintains the dignity of perpetual youth and motherhood. It is a false notion that she is stagnant and sterile in the present age, and it is dispelled by the very



mention of her five typical sons, J. C. Bose, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Ramakrishna. The spirit of her synthetic vision is incarnate in their respective messages of the five noble principles, viz, the unity of life, beauty, love, truth and religion. We may state their messages more or less in their own inimitable words.

Mr. Bose brings out the ultimate unity of all scientific endeavour. Science seeks the one in the many, and sees the same truth in Physics, Physiology, and Psychology. There is the same march of law in the living and the non-living. There is really no barrier or boundary line between the realms of life and matter. The metals, the plants, and the animals give the same answers to the same questions. Their responses and reactions are similar, and they exhibit the same phenomena of fatigue and exaltation under stimulants. Drugs and other irritants depress or facilitate their growth. In these mute companions there is the same tremulousness and death spasm, like the thrills of life, there is such a thing as the throb of things. Nature is as much awake in the lowest things, as she is in the highest thought. The difference is only in the degree of evolution. Inorganic matter is not really inert, or indifferent to the demands of life. It has the potency and promise of inner growth. It responds to the external stimulus like the living germs and irritable like them. Metals for example may be killed by means of poison. Likewise though apparently passive, the plant responds to the stimulus like the animal. The stimuli may come from contact, gravity, temperature, or light. But in all cases it is sensitive to shocks and stimulation. Alcohol increases excitability for a while, and chloroform kills the plant. The plant has the power of movement and a beating tissue resembling the heart. The flow of the sap is its circulation of blood, and it can be depressed or stimulated by the agent. The plant is provided with a nervous tissue, and there are sensory and motor impulses to and from the executive centre. In this way it perceives changes in the environment, and executes movements in response to them. The dying plant exhibits signs of death. Thus we see the essential unity in the responsivity of the living and the non-living. Their inner life, growth, and death are governed by the same laws. In the sap and the sensations there is the same surging of life, and the seeking after the One. The tremour of plant life is not merely transmitted but gets transformed into the soul of man. Life incarnates in the metal, and gets immortal in the man. Thus India with her pecu-

liar spiritual habit sees truth face to face, and witnesses the victory of co-operation over competition.

The poetic spirit of Modern India finds its fullest expression in the life and message of Rabindranath. The poet does not infer truth, but has a direct intuition of the wholeness and harmony of things. He has the 'vision and faculty Divine', by which he reaches the soul of goodness in things evil. Art releases us from the routine of life, and reveals the inner joy of creation. Western thought reduces man to a machine, and dissects spiritual unity to mere physical units. It is no profit to triumph over external nature, and be tyrannised by the passions that rage from within. Mechanism and mammon-worship only end in compartmental views and cut-throat competition. Culture is opposed to Krupp guns. The world is not a dead machine, but a living whole. But all this does mean that India should return to the past, or take to other worldliness. A slavish clinging to the past is as fatal to growth as the spirit of modernizing. Free nationalism should be expansive and not exclusive. Indian culture was born in the forest, and is expansive, but western culture was born in the city, and therefore exclusive. Nature is not hostile, or alien to the aspirations of man. Separating man and nature is like dividing the bud and the blossom. The poet seizes the beauty that is in nature internal and external, and loses himself in the rapture of that communion. The same spirit shines in the stars above and the soul within. God is not a Being who is beyond the universe, but is immanent in it as the life of its life. The Infinite is realised in the finite. The world is a witness to His living presence. It vibrates with the joy of sharing in the Eternal and becoming one with it. The world song cannot be separated from the Eternal Singer. Other worldliness is as harmful to spiritual growth as sense enjoyment. The body is not to be starved and slain; it is really a gateway to God. The flower that comes from the dust is offered to the Deity. Life is to be spiritualised, and dedicated to love and service. To the seer, death belongs to life as much as birth. The child cries out when the mother takes it away from the right breast, but in the next moment it has its consolation in the left. Death is but a renewal of life. Sorrow and suffering have a purifying effect on the soul. True blessedness consists in shifting the centre from the self to God, and being lost in the bliss of Divine communion.

Mahatma Gandhi is the embodiment of the moral purity and power of modern India. He is a *tapasvin* who has an immortal

faith in self-purification and love, and a *karma yogin* that seeks salvation through incessant toil in the service of humanity. To him politics and economics without a religious motive is like a death-trap that kills the soul. The meaning of moral genius is summed up in the word *t-a-p-a-s-v-i-n*, which may be regarded as the *astakshara* of morality. (1) Truth is no expediency; it has intrinsic and absolute value. (2) *Ahimsa* is self-suffering even unto death, and consists in the conquest of tyranny by love. (3) In the process of self-purification the control of the Palate and the Passion is indispensable. (4) *Abhaya* or fearlessness arises from the sense of identifying oneself with the eternal Self that is the rock of ages and courting even imprisonment and death in the pursuit of truth. (5) Swadhesism is the practice of Svadharma in the economic life. There is a vital relation between the supreme Good and the economic goods. Economics that hurts morality is unmoral and sinful. The spinning wheel is the left lung of India and having lost it we suffer from galloping consumption. Mills cannot grow like mushrooms. Khaddar has a soul about it, which the mill has not. The spinning wheel sings the joy of freedom and spells an equitable distribution of wealth. It is the only solution of the chronic poverty of the millions of India's Daridranarayanans. (6) Vernacularization does justice to the unity of Indian thought and language, and Hindi alone can be the *Lingua franca* of India without in any way affecting the growth of other languages. (7) Non-thieving is the practice of simplicity and contentment. It is immoral for a man to own more than what is needed for his life.

Ahimsa is the key to conduct and universal harmony, and sums up the moral code of the Mahatma. Violence is the law of the brute. It starts with blind fury, and ends in retaliation. Evil is sterile and self-destructive. It maintains itself by the implication of good that it contains. Evil is never overcome through evil; ceases only through good. Self-purification comes through suffering woes and forgetting wrongs. It is by self-suffering that we wean the wicked man from his career of crime, and thus release the forces of peace and good-will. Non-violence is no passive acquiescence or harmlessness, but a positive resistance of evil, in which the whole soul ranges itself against wickedness. The *Gita* is the gospel of fight between good and evil, and symbolises the duel that goes on in our hearts. But in resisting the evil we do not hate the evil-doer. By doing good to him, we redeem him, and efface the evil itself. Non-violence is solid but

silent self-sacrifice, and is no bluff or bluster. It is thus the basic truth of Hinduism. It is the reliance on God who is the rock of ages with a humble and contrite heart, and it insists on the absolute absence of ill-will against all that lives including the sub-human species. The cow is a poem of pity, and by protecting the cow we protect the whole dump creation of God, of which it is the symbol. Untouchability is the excrescence of Hinduism and the device of Satan. It is an age-long curse, a crime against humanity and the greatest blot on Hinduism, for which there is no Sastraic sanction at all. Its nemesis is seen in our being treated as social lepers in western society. The Daridranarayanans are really our blood brothers. The Mahatma justifies the principle of *Varnashrama* as a social order based on self-restraint and division of duties, but is entirely opposed to its modern practice rooted in prestige and privilege. He proclaims the all-inclusive character of Hinduism.

Swami Vivekananda, the apostle of modern Hindu thought, accepts the challenge of the west, establishes the universality of *Vedanta*, and invites the world to share in its innate hospitality. The *Vedas* embody the eternal truths of spiritual life, and form the fountain from which the founders of religions draw their inspiration. The sacred books of the world are but pages in the reading of the Infinite, and God's book is not yet finished. The theme of the *Vedanta* is the discovery of the One without a second, which exists by itself, and explains all things. It recognises the play of the Infinite in the finite, and insists on the solidarity of human life. The Infinite is not in the muscle or the machine, but is the eternal *Atman* by knowing which everything else is known. Religion is not in dogma or doctrines but in the realisation of the *Atman*. The *Vedanta* begins with the external and the personal, and ends with the internal and the impersonal. It is a progress from truth to higher truth, till the highest is realised. To the Swami the *Adwaita* is the highest reading of the absolute. The *Vedanta* teaches the infinity of man. Men are not weaklings born in sin and suffering, but are the children of immortal bliss. The oneness of *Atman* is the eternal sanction of morality, and provides for true brotherhood and love. The theory of *Ishtam* affords the fullest and freest scope for the choice of one's religion. The idea of renunciation is the very basis of *Vedantic* experience. The West tries to solve the problem of 'on how much a man can live' but the East 'on how little a man can live'. India really lives in the cottages and the Daridranara-

yanas. Don't-touchism must go, and the down-trodden masses should be rescued from poverty and illiteracy, and become alive to their Vedantic strength. India should preserve the Hindu soul and the Mahomedan body. The central truth of Hinduism is the ancient teaching that what exists is One, though the sages call it variously. It comes down through the ages, and is mingled in our blood. Philosophies are not contradictory, but only complementary, and *Dwaita* is as much a part and parcel of the Vedanta as *Advaita*. Sects may multiply, but sectarianism should go. Hinduism as an all-comprehensive religion based on rationality and synthetic insight accepts and absorbs whatever is good in other religions, and has the highest claim to universality.

The religious spirit of Modern India becomes fully alive in Sri Ramakrishna. His life affords the most inspiring illustration in modern times of the manifold ways, in which the mystic experiences God. He summed up in his life the strivings of every sect and religion, and discovered, by his synthetic intuitions their underlying harmony. He was like a honey bee, gathering and drinking the Divine nectar that is concealed in the creeds of the world. Religion is one, but religions are the varied expressions of the same truth. Like the radii of a circle, all religions radiate from and converge to the same spiritual centre. Religion is the science of specializing in God. Sri Ramakrishna had an irrepressible craving for God in all His manifold forms, and his varied *Sadhanas* reveal the intensity to his spiritual yearning. His whole being hungered for God, and those who are mystically inclined can alone have a glimpse of his spiritual restlessness and agony. When the spiritual storm raged over his body, even the senses would swoon away, and stop functioning. To abolish the idea of sex he would actually worship all women as the manifestations of the Divine Mother. His body would recoil from contact with sense values, as naturally as it would respond to the Divine call. To get rid of the idea of status he would wash unclean places like a sweeper. For days together he would sit like a statue absorbed in *Samadhi*. As the result of his unique *Sadhanas* he was blessed with a variety of Divine visions including Islamic and Christian experiences. To Sri Ramakrishna God is both personal and impersonal, and the founder of every religion is an incarnation of the same Universal spirit. Religion is not in the realm of rituals and books, but is a direct experience of God. The four *yogas* are different roads to the same goal. The starting points

may vary. The *gnani* has an intellectual bent, but the *Bhakta* is drawn by emotion; the *karma yogin* has an active temperament, and the Yogi is for self-control and *Samadhi*, but the goal of all is the same; it is God-realisation. There is no need for criticism, conversion, and cruelty. The Allah of Islam and the Father in Heaven of Christianity are the same as Brahman.

The abiding faith of India in synthetic unity is thus realised in the deeper life of her great heroes. A Bose sees the whole universe pulsating with the life of God. The art genius of India discovers the underlying harmony and wholeness of things. Her moral spirit incarnates in a Gandhi, and restates her gospel of enthroning love in the heart of all beings. Her Swamis proclaim to the ends of the world her message of God in all faiths and philosophies. But it is in her sages and saints that the spirit of India finds its highest fulfilment. Thus we see that synthesis and *santi* are the soul of India. The Indian inherits 'the idea of the ultimate and the universal that is behind the particulars'. The threads of different cultures and creeds are woven into a fabric, and worn by the Mother. The details furnished by experience form the food of the synthetic mind. The Indian mind is cultural and not credal. True culture is neither insular nor exclusive, but it is expansive and international. Indian genius is not confined to the country, but it really belongs to the world. The best Indians are the most impersonal, and yet they do not sacrifice their individuality. India has faith not in conquest and conversion, but in peaceful invasion into the domain of alien cultures, and absorbing them by her aggressive love. Her Asokas, Akbars, and Shivajis were interested more in cultural appreciation than in mere militant annexation, and their faith was rooted in unity and not in uniformity. India is today the battle ground of the creeds, the cultures, and the communal feelings of the world and India alone has the power to harmonise these differences. She alone of all the nations has the tradition and opportunity of realising the ideals of the solidarity of man and the fraternity of faiths.*

* From the Pachaiyappa's College Magazine, Madras.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Neglect of the Masses

An impartial observer of the various meetings and conferences that are being held in the country from time to time, cannot but feel that the interests of the masses have not received the attention they deserve. To the humble worker toiling in the remote village farm, as well as to the ordinary labourer on the streets of the city, such gatherings seem to have very little meaning. When told of these, the poor ryot asks vacantly how they are going to help him to solve the momentous problems that face him most grimly. He has in fact not much enthusiasm for these activities of the educated classes. The city-bred intellectual again, does not feel any enthusiasm even for the many things which the illiterate country folk value and revere. The village fairs and pilgrimages, rural feasts and sports eagerly looked forward to by our so-called rustic brethren have lost all meaning to our present-day educated classes. The writer, had the chance of witnessing recently a local festival in a mofussil town. On that occasion thousands of labourers and farmers gathered together, forming numerous parties and processions, to bid farewell to the Goddess of Cholera, and the roads were impassable even for pedestrians. But strange to say, the town hall, the tennis courts and other resorts of the intellectual people looked quite busy and active. Even many of the upper class men did not seem to be aware of the significance of the festival, and those who knew could scarcely disguise their contempt for the feelings and sentiments that drew the vast gathering. Hence it is that our upper classes have not as yet succeeded in touching the hearts of the vast majority of the labouring masses, who even sometimes look upon them with suspicion.

Need for Active Sympathy

It is impossible to emphasise too strongly this want of sympathy and co-operation on the part of the people who are comparatively better off in society. Some of our national and communal movements have begun to approach the masses. But they do this not so much for taking interest in questions vital to the people as for securing votes for the party candidates. The poor labourer in rural areas, however, is quite unconcerned as to the success or failure of any particular candidate's contesting

seats in the Legislative Council or local bodies. Previously he might have entertained some hopes for a better prospect from the "vote seekers" and their agents, who were profuse in their promises. But now after his repeated disillusionments, he has come to know that whoever might succeed, he will have all the same to toil day and night without being able to earn a living wage to feed himself and his family. The masses cannot be blamed for this mentality for except Mahatma Gandhi's khadi movement no constructive programme has been taken up to mitigate the grinding poverty of the teeming millions of India. However little might have been the actual work done, the need for bettering the condition of the poor seems to be gradually engaging the attention of the political and social workers in the land. By way of illustration we may refer to the speech of the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the last Congress held in Madras—"There is the most urgent need for the propagation of higher economic ideals in the country. The workers of the Congress should carry to the ryots not only a political but also an economic message. The cultivator should be familiarised with the modern methods of agriculture and with the immense usefulness of the co-operative movement. Vast tracts of land may be cultivated, and the wealth of the country enormously increased if only our ryots will understand and use the modern methods of agriculture." We are not aware if any definite action has been taken up on the lines suggested above.

The Condition of the Masses

The indifferent attitude of the higher classes towards the common people is slowly undergoing a welcome change. This is further borne out by the fact that the president of the Indian National Congress also did not fail to make a reference to the miserable lot of our toiling masses in his address—"The general economic condition of the workers in the fields and factories, who between themselves constitute more than three-fourths of the total population of the country, is such that it is with difficulty that they can keep body and soul together. They are over-worked and under-paid, ill-fed, ill-clothed and badly-housed. Their power of resistance to disease is so low that they fall easy victims to the ravages of epidemics. Cholera plague, influenza, small-pox and malaria claim their heavy toll of millions year after year." Indeed, the condition of the poor in

the village is pitiable. The vast majority of the poor classes in India do not get a square meal a day. Ill-fed and ill-clad the poor has, besides, to live in an atmosphere of constant fear. The village priest, the evil-spirits, the landlord, the police, the money lender—all these threaten him at every step. The fear does not kill him, if it did there would have been some solace. It paralyses, brutalises, takes humanity out of him. Before we talk of rural sanitation, Co-operative societies, improved methods of agriculture, village schools and the like—these are the usual remedies suggested for rural re-construction—we have to see that this demon of fear is exercised, and the people are made to feel that they too are men in the midst of men. Speaking of the problem of the masses says Swami Vivekananda, "The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help; they cannot rise try however they may. They sink lower and lower every day, they feel the blows showering upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men and the result is slavery. * * * * No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for. * * * * Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, 'You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies and we love you and never hate you.' If they receive this sympathy from you their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundred fold." The first thing to do then is to awaken the best individuality ruthlessly suppressed by poverty, oppression and fear.

The Plan of Work

Although this message was delivered to the people of India more than thirty years ago, so far it has not sufficiently attracted the notice and attention of those for whom it was meant. It is a truism that man cannot be made virtuous by an Act of Parliament; similarly we cannot make our masses manly and self-reliant by paper schemes and resolutions. It appears to us that the work among the masses should not be mixed up with party politics. It is not necessary that every village worker should become a Sannyasin; but it is highly essential that he should be a man of true self-sacrifice, and should not be subject to the shifting and exciting influence of party ambitions and schisms. In our opinion the most practical and beneficial khaddar movement might have had greater success if only it had begun free from all political bias and associations. The same is true of the

question of temperance or elevation of the depressed classes. In spite of some laudable attempt in the direction of focussing public opinion regarding the methods of work for village reconstruction and economic improvement of the masses, we have not yet succeeded in rousing sufficient interest in ourselves and our countrymen as to any comprehensive and practical scheme of work. The various Social Service Leagues, the Depressed Classes' Missions, The Servants of India Society, The Young Men's Christian Association, The Salvation Army, The Ramakrishna Mission and other associations have all to their credit, some notable achievements, and what is still more valuable, practical experience gained in the course of their actual work. It strikes us as a very desirable step towards the solution of the problem, if all the organizations could upon a common platform, free from all bias and controversial atmosphere, exchange their thoughts and experiences, and help to evolve a common and concerted plan of action.

Immensity of the Task

The picture of the poor villagers is really staggering. The toiler is not only too poor in his material resources but his health also is very miserable and vitality, very low. His ignorance of the most elementary principles of sanitation and hygiene is simply abysmal. Further he does not even get employment for many months in the year. He sells his produce, if he has anything to sell in the cheapest market, and purchases even his necessities in the dearest market. It is no exaggeration to say he is on all sides mercilessly exploited by others. The benefits of co-operative movement do not reach him. The improved methods of agriculture also are of no avail to the vast majority of our landless and helpless labourers. The existing organizations for moral improvement even if multiplied a hundredfold, would be inadequate and unequal to the task. We have so much unemployment in our land especially among the educated middle classes. Is it not for our political leaders and social workers to devise ways and means of utilising them and put them to some practical work of village improvement?

The Thing Needed

What we want is an All-India organization, which will have nothing to do with either political or communal quarrels, and will confine its activities purely to educational, economic and sanitary problems. It must be capable of getting the active

sympathy and support of the State and of all philanthropic organizations in the land. It is not possible for any single individual or society to lay out a cut and dry plan of work for the whole country. All the various associations already engaged in such a work can alone devise some definite scheme as suggested above. If they could work in co-operation with the local bodies in some branches of the village work and get substantial support from the State, great progress could be made within a comparatively short time. But in the present unsettled atmosphere it is not possible to expect any such happy consummation. Still serious attempts should be made by all well-wishers of the country to explore the possible means of co-operating with one another for the achievement of common ends.

Training and Organization

We are living in an age of technical skill and organization. Many of our natural ills may be traced to a lack of co-ordination of our wills. So long as we remain in the "disunion stage" no unanimity is possible. For there are and could be as many opinions as there are men; but descending to the field of action, there are only a few ways of doing it, and perhaps only in some one particular way the desired end could be achieved. Let us begin to do something in some way. There cannot be two opinions about the need of actual work. But enthusiasm alone cannot carry us far. We must have the proper training for the work. For this we want a training organization that should be above all parties and politics and its first duty must be to provide courses of training for the village workers in the various directions. Even immediately if some means could be found for popularising village life and village work something could be achieved. What we mean is that if the teachers, lawyers, and others who have a regular vacation for some months in the year could only think it worth while to spend their leisure in the villages, they could not only study the various problems at first hand but also could do much to educate the people in many directions by their work and examples. Notwithstanding all the poetic praise over the charms of village life and rural simplicity the city-bred does not feel at home in the villages, for there are no cinemas, no clubs, not even the inevitable restaurants. It is nevertheless true until men of culture and leisure make the villages their home there is no chance of improving the lot of our villages. Everything turns ultimately

upon the question of men. In the memorable words of the Patriot-Saint of India—the Swami Vivekananda what is wanted is, "A hundred thousand men and women, fired with zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the down-trodden, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up—the gospel of equality."

NOTES AND COMMENTS

WHERE TO IS AMERICA DRIFTING ?

That America is drifting towards a most deplorable future is amply evinced from Mr. A. Huxley's article in a recent issue of the Harper's magazine. "Nothing is more remarkable", says this writer, "than the recent American tendency to exalt the ordinary man, occupied with ordinary worldly affairs, at the expense of the exceptional man who takes no such interest in such affairs". In fact almighty Dollar has become the adorable God of that Nation and man's eminence has come to be judged not by his high moral nature, his selfless love of God and his fellow-being but "by virtue solely of his material position in the world". "Success," Mr. Huxley declares, "is the test of social eminence" now and "in spiritual matters disinterestedness is no longer the sign of superiority". He has heard it boldly stated by "American Spiritual leaders" that "Business is religion". This identification of business with service," he observes, "permits the worldling, to identify himself with the Christian saints". And it will lead on to the next step 'which will be "to exalt him (the ordinary worldling) above the extraordinary man", with the result that he "will be condemned and persecuted on principle because he is not ordinary—for not to be ordinary will be regarded as a crime."

To what a pass is America drifting! Yet we have reason to be hopeful - hopeful as it augurs the advent of a new era, grander and nobler than the present. But before she attains to that stage she may have to pass through a crisis and untold persecution will be the lot of those who do not believe in her "Dollar Supremacy." That period of transition is sure to witness the notorious vending of irreligion in the name of religion and the like. And what we are witnessing today is only

a powerful expression of the same eternal battle going on in this earth—the battle between Matter and Spirit. Is America going to submit to 'Matter' or to 'Spirit'. Is she going to participate in the life eternal or preparing herself to enter the broad gate of destruction? The bitter lessons of the Great War ought to be an eye opener for all who have eyes to see.

THE WAY TO HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"In my Kingdom there are Indians living in peace and amity with Afghans. There are Hindus enjoying the same rights as Muslims and living like brethren," said the enlightened Amir of Afghanistan, Amanullah, the other day at Bombay in a reply to one of the many addresses presented to His Majesty before he left for Europe. This gives us food for reflection. Tolerant India has been in a turmoil for the last half a century and more over this vexed question and the Hindu-Muslim tension has shown a tendency to increase and not decrease under the civilised administration of Pax Britannica. It is something sad yet interesting to observe that under a Muslim Ruler, the Amir, the Hindu and the Muslim live in peace and amity while under a "Christian Government" which has no particular interest in the religion of one or the other of the vast religious communities it governs, it has not yet been able to bring about a better understanding between these two great religious bodies. One salient point put forward by the Britisher for his claim to Trusteeship of young India has been that left to themselves, Indians will not be able to keep peace in their own borders because of this great conflict that they are witnessing everyday between the Mussalmans and the Hindus. Could the same Government which with a stroke of its pen stopped the practice of Sati, put down Thuggy, under the pretext of "religious neutrality," allow the hundreds of disturbances that are going on in the country, allow the raking up of questions, customs and manners, unheard of half a century before, we ask in all sincerity? We opine that a great deal of this trouble amongst the governed undoubtedly is due to lack of a truly religious back ground in the system of Government that is over us. In common with all modern systems of Western government, the British too is unchristian and simply materialistic. And that is one of the main reasons why India in transition has become a hot bed of so-called religious fights. We do say this after serious reflexion. For no Government other than one materialistic could

voice through its selected representative—no less than a governor, to wit—Lord Eliphenstone, "Divide et impera was the old Roman motto, and that it should be ours" as early as 1850, and 75 years after, one of that same Government's responsible officials, Lord Oliver, the Secretary of State, writing in the *Times* thus: "On the whole there is a predominant bias in British officialdom in favour of the Muslim Community, partly on a ground of closer sympathy but more largely as a make-weight against Hindu Nationalism." The Materialistic unchristian culture of the West has by its puissance drawn India into its vortex and what we see before us is the result of the battle going on between the different cultures. In this great cultural battle Religion has been brought into prominence by a small body of Hindus and Mussalmans who have swallowed the bait of the loaves and fishes which the powers that be have thrown amongst them diplomatically. The same materialistic culture has devised a history of the country and tried to poison the growing minds by emphasising the darker side and weaknesses of the two communities that inhabit the motherland. During this half a century the village Toles which imparted culture to the vast mass of India's population ceased to exist and with it the vast population lost touch with India's ancient culture. The new generation of school folk are being brought up along the path of the West, learning A. B. C. at school, and with it a perverted history of the country. The history for those school folk could not be said to have been written without bias, for through and through these books a thoughtful reader could note the crusader's hand in picturing the rule of the crescent in India and an attempt to purposely overcolour the powerful arm's of the West to hypnotise the young and tender minds—these seekers of truth, and instil into them their utter incapacity and worthlessness as a nation. We need not be supposed to speak in this strain without enough authority to fall back upon. To take but a few instances of this thrusting of falsehood into the younger minds we need not go far; and how this sort of education has undermined Indian progress one cannot lay too much stress. But how long can one suppress the Truth. Truth has to come to light one day or another. In his "The Other side of the medal"—a history of the Indian Mutiny—Mr. Thompson its author has opened the eyes of the hypnotised, young Indian minds and there reasons out for exposing the lies and half truths of that page in Indian history

on the ground that "Truth has an eternal title to our confession though we are sure to be sufferers by it." Truly did the Rev. Andrews once remark about the history that is written for the younger generation in India that there is hardly any trace of impartiality or of perspective or of breadth of outlook and vision. "There is no fairness of moral judgment when a great issue has to be forced and a complete refusal to criticise or condemn any action done by an Englishman". The School boy is not even now shown the true picture fearing it may rouse in his mind feelings of aversion for all the West has to say to him. The black lie of a Black Hole is yet in the histories prepared for schools. How can the eager, tender heart be turned to look to the West for light if Indian History printed the bright side of Indian character too? How could materialistic culture conquer the Eastern world without adopting such methods? For this cultural conquest the Mussalman had to be painted black to the Hindu and vice versa. Hence we note, in the Western historian a tendency to impress at length in text books, Mohammadan writers speaking of Hindus as "black crows", the Mussalmans massacring the Hindus and laying too much stress on Mussalman ferocity and bigotry. They have not told their readers that the fanatic Alamgir, the Emperor Aurangzeb was one of the foremost patrons of Bhasha. They have always tried to make differences rather than harmony and to make the rift wider. Mr. Mahomed Yakub is not wrong when he writes about the "Mussalmans and the Hindu Literature" in the December number of the *Indian Review* thus. "Owing to the changed political situation on account of the British sway over the country, the education programme of India also underwent radical changes along with other political and social conditions and both the Hindus and the Mussalmans now derive their knowledge of the other, only through the exaggerated and misleading accounts contained in the histories compiled by Anglo-Indian historians which create a deep rooted hatred of one community against another." Typoo has been depicted as a bigot of the first water but why this bigot allowed Hindus to have their ways in his own capital city and other parts of his kingdom—the writer of the history of this bitter enemy of the Company has never told his readers. Materialistic culture of the West with Might as its Right—emphasising the animal nature in man, using its god-given intellect for satanic and diabolical purposes, proclaiming nothing

is mean in love and war has tried to penetrate India and not a little of these Hindu Muslim troubles that darken the history of this unfortunate country has been undoubtedly due to this penetration of a strange culture. This sad spectacle is again rousing up the people and we often hear what a writer opines in the *Patna Times* "knowledge which is aggressive, science which slays and culture which comes to kill are dangerous forces which break down civilization and set up Babel instead. We don't want such a culture and civilization."

To bring about a better understanding the first and foremost essential is to strike the axe at the root of the tree—the education that has fostered this disruption—and letting the younger generation know that Hindus and Mussalmans have lived in this vast country for centuries in peace; and concord was not a thing unknown in the past as historians have tried to depict, and that the recent manifestation of intercommunal hatred, blood shed, incendiarism are matters of recent history. In short, the education imparted should be in the interest of the nation and not of a communal character. Second but equally important is the humanising education of the masses. In 1835 a distinguished member of the General Committee of Public Instruction is said to have calculated that there was a village School for 400 persons in Bengal and Behar or on an average, a school for every 32 boys. This is not from any imagination of the Hindu mind. This is what the well known missionary Mr. Adams speaks of his own experience—"As regards Hindu and Moslem Schools in the Bengal Presidency there were Toles and Madrasahs in all the larger villages as well as in towns." Where are they gone today? The crass ignorance prevalent in the villages undoubtedly have helped the so-called educated Hindu and Mussalman brought up in this nasty system of education to incite them for their selfish purposes. And as religion touches them to the quick these so-called educated men having swallowed the bait of communal electorates, and communal schools have helped to work up the passions of the populace.

By trying to keep the cultures apart one shall not be able to fuse them. Youngmen should be given the opportunity to come in contact, study and understand the great ideals that lie at the back of these two civilizations. For this purpose we should have a system of education suited to our needs. Education has been only for lucrative employment, and creating an air of false

superiority in the so-called educated classes. It has been avowedly built for bringing about a "Strictly commercial union between the first manufacturing and the first producing country in the world." What has it been given for? Said Macaulay in 1835—that under this scheme 'The Educated Indian would be English in taste, opinion, morals, and intellect and the English connection with India would thereby be firmly and for ever established'. If better understanding is to dawn this study of Western culture at the cost of Islamic and Hindu cultures by the younger generation will have to be given up. We perfectly agree with the sentiment expressed by Dr. Ansari at the recent Congress "With greater knowledge of each other's deep-rooted sentiments and sympathy for each others ideal, questions of separate representation, cow slaughter, and music before mosques will become matters of the past". We say education first, education second, education last—a proper system of education alone can bring lasting peace and good will between these two great bodies of Indian Society.

The A. B. C. of India's Regeneration

"India from times of yore has been famous for its village communities" writes Mr. V. N. Mehta in an interesting article on Grama Sangathan or Rural Reconstruction in a recent issue of *the Benares Hindu University Magazine*. "Outram and Maine have left eloquent pictures of their history, their efficiency and their decay. They have always been represented as self sufficient republics, where the individual toiler of the soil found full scope for the development of his powers and remained happy in spite of the vicissitudes of fortune to which Ruling dynasties were subject. It is the one contribution that India has to make to the history of the world culture, just as Greece had her city state viz. her village community. Let us visualise the administrative structure of the Indian middle ages. There is the Desh or Province with its Danda Nayak or Governor. Its main subdivision is the Bhukti or district with its Rashtrapati or district officer; its second division is the Vishaya or Tashil with its Vishaya Pati or Tashildar and lastly its Grama or village with its Gramika or Akshapatalika, Mukhia or village Patel. The village at the bottom with its body of officials, Gramika or Karanika formed the unit, and multiples of such Gramas and Vishayas worked up to the Bhukti.

Manu says :—ग्रामस्याधिपतिं कुर्याद्ग्रामपतिं तथा

विंशतीनां गतेषां च सहस्रपतिमेव च—in Chap 115

"There should be a chieftain for ten villages, for twenty, for one hundred and for one thousand. Thus was the administrative hierarchy arranged. Each unit complete in itself and yet grouped under a higher administrative unit."

"The first signs of self consciousness that a Grama or village exhibits is the obtainment by it of a copperplate grant rendering it exempt from the payment of taxes and secure from the entry of soldiers. It secures freedom from the payment of the cess on the increase of cattle—wealth or contribution in milk and flowers or hides. Lastly it obtains freedom from the salt tax and retains its own treasure trove. The reading of these copperplates reminds students of European History of the liberties wrested by the Burghers in the Middle ages from their feudal lords, lay and spiritual. Not only was the village economy brought up to the full level efficiency which a Megasthenes admired, not only were the villages self sufficient, but they became assertive units and claimed the possession of certain liberties (not the singular liberty but the plural liberties) which meant "hands off" in all important matters from the side of the central Authority. The grant of privileges have been secured from all powerful rulers and not usurped from feeble hands"—If this is the rosy picture of the Northern Indian villages neither were the South Indian villages less self sufficient or less self governing as a cursory glance into the pages of that well written History of South India from the pen of Mr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar will show. But when we turn to the pages of any Governmental record or book written on the village life and economy of India to-day, we can only see a dismal picture of hunger and despair on the face of these village communities—these toiling millions of India.

Modern students of Indian economics have attributed this appalling poverty and degradation of the Indian Masses to the lack of industries, in this country, the conservative habits of the Indian people, their inability to adopt themselves to the varying times, and hence their incapacity to compete in the world's market. But the academic discussions and the 'ways-out' have not as yet brought forward a clear cut solution for this grave problem which has day by day been growing worse and is now beginning to threaten the safety of the Hindu system of a well-ordained Society. Many a time it has been pointed out to us that through Industry lay the salvation of these toiling

people and not through agriculture and that transformation of agricultural India into an Industrial India would soon bring her the millennium. Ape Europe and the masses will be happy was the sum and substance of this cry. The supporters of that system never for a moment gave their thought to the great factory problems, the serious unemployment question, the struggle between labor and capital, and many an akin question which have demanded solution in Europe today. Europe took to industry, exploited other lands with her money and her army, and rose to great national prosperity and India should follow suit was the contention of these students of Indian economics. But bloodshed and Bolshevism have come in the wake of Europe's prosperity ought to be an awakener for a people who have an eye upon building a more stable and lasting civilization. We are glad to hear a change in the cry now—the cry of "Back to the land". Already India has suffered enough in her attempt to change with the moving times. Her village system which Mr. Metha has beautifully described is gone—There has already come to the forefront the question of unemployment. Millions of Indian children drawn from the villages into the towns and cities, having spent their all for a system of education which can bring neither food nor happiness have raised a problem which is threatening the very peace of India today. They are the products of an ill-adapted education. They have to "get on" but they have not the physique to go back to the plough nor have they the money to start an independent industry and for them who have the money they cannot get the education they want in this country.

So we welcome the present cry "Back to the land." We agree with them who say that industry does help to make a country rich and prosperous. But first food and food means agriculture—and we believe that improvement in agriculture—with supplementary cottage industry is the best suited for the freedom and happiness of the vast village communities of India if we do not wish to have Bolshevism in this country. When we remember that 22 crores in India live upon agriculture and that in this vast country over 11 crores of acres of land still remain waste our contention is strengthened that India's welfare lies in the path of the development of agriculture and rural industry. In short instead of laying too much stress on town planning and city improvement we have to find the ways and means of village reorganization.

Now that village has lost much of its ancient traditions and its brain power, it has become the duty of a well organized Government to place such people in charge of village affairs as would bring about the wished for end if they do not desire in the near future a wave of Bolshevism in the land. We agree with Mr. Mehta when he says that at present "we have imposed on the Grama (village) everything from outside" "only maintaining forms of self Government" and keeping only a show of reality. At present he says, "all that local District Board generally does for them in return for the Abwab is to provide a hedge School for the boys—none for the girls"—"It does nothing effective for the health of the villager nor for his cattle. Little care is taken to provide him with facilities of communication with the outside world."

And what is all this due to? Mr. Mehta points out rightly that this is due to a wrong type of education. "The type of education too we have thought fit to give to our rural masses is suited to the needs of the city bred clerk". Nor is this all. "Children from industrial and agricultural families had been fully admitted to colleges, but only to be drawn from the industries into the learned professions" Thus in a way Mr. Mehta recognizes the wisdom of the ancients in keeping to their hereditary profession.

We also agree with Mr. Mehta that improvement in agriculture, organization of cottage industry and above all a proper system of education—these three alone can bring about the regeneration of India's National and economic life.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Gandhiji in the Indian villages. By Mahadev Desai. Publisher, S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. Page 349. Price Rs. 2.

We hear these days so much about village re-construction and village re-organization. The importance of this subject can never be too much emphasised when we know that the majority in India are farmers and peasants and live their life in the seven hundred thousand and odd villages spread out in this vast country. Therefore for any man whose heart pulsates with sympathy for his fellowmen village reconstruction remains more important than town-planning.

We congratulate the enterprising Publisher Mr. S. Ganesan of the *Current Thought*, for bringing out an interesting and readable book on a very closely related subject entitled "Gandhiji in the Indian villages." This volume is by Mahadev Desai, Mr. Gandhi's private secretary and describes Mr. Gandhi's experiences in the villages he toured during the year, 1925. It gives us glimpses of the poor and down-trodden and reveals many of the problems such as drink, untouchability, poverty, etc. that demand solution at the hands of India's cultured classes. Perhaps no man living in India to-day had opportunities to come across rural India than Mahatma Gandhi and his pen pictures of Travancore, United Provinces and Behar completes what Mr. Mahadev Desai has written on his master's experiences in Rural Kathiawad, Gujarat, Bengal, Cutch and Wardha in this volume.

The Three World Movements. By the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

The book entitled "The Three World Movements" consists of a series of Theosophical lectures delivered in December, 1925, during the Society's Jubilee Convention at its Fiftieth Anniversary and comprises the lectures of a half a dozen well known Adyar Theosophists. Dr. Besant in her lecture on, "The activities of the coming half century" prepares her hearers for the "world teacher" whom she has recently put forward amongst the Theosophists of the West.

Swamijir Katha. In Bengali Published by the Udbodhan Office, Bagh bazar, Calcutta. Pp. 169. Price As. 12.

The book comprises a series of five articles in the form of reminiscences of the Great Swami Vivekananda by his friends and followers, published in the old issues of the Udbodhan. Paper, printing and get up excellent.

Dakshineswar Tirtha Jatra. In Bengali. By Tristup Mukhopadhyaya M. A. Published by Messrs B. N. Sarkar & Co. 20, Tangara Road, Calcutta. Pp. 147. Price One Rupee.

This handy book gives the readers a brief account of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings from a philosophical standpoint together with a historical account of Dakshineswar. It contains eight pictures and two genealogical tables—one of Sri Ramakrishna and the other of Rani Rashmani. The book marks the earnestness and devotion of the writer for the subject.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI SHARVANANDA'S ACTIVITIES AT DELHI

It is not yet a year since the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Delhi was founded by Swami Sharvananda, the former president of the Madras Math. After founding the Math he had been out to Simla, Bombay, Poona and Nagpur on a lecturing tour. He returned only two months back and has been taking up religious classes in the Gita, the Upanishads and other Sastras at the Math as well as in different parts of the city and occasionally delivering lectures. His masterly exposition of the Sastras from a non-sectarian stand-point has been very much appreciated by the Sanatanists and the Bengalee residents of Delhi. This statement will be fully borne out by the fact of the gradual swelling-of the attendance in his classes and lectures. The growing popularity of the Swami is also noticeable in the invitations that have come for him from Lahore and many other places.

ANANDA ASHRAMA ACTIVITY, U. S. A.

Swami Paramananda, the head of the Boston Vedanta Centre opened a Library and Reading Room as a branch of the Ananda Ashrama, the extension of the Boston Centre, in Pasadena in temporary quarters. Here every Thursday evening a weekly class is also being conducted.

A NEW VEDANTA CENTRE IN ST. LOUIS, U. S. A.

In response to an invitation from a friend in St. Louis, Mo., to give a few lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy, Swami Prabhavananda, founder and head of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon went over there, and gave a course of four public lectures on October 14th, 15th and 16th, last year. The subjects were "Vedanta and the Four Yogas", "Religion of Love", "Reincarnation and Immortality" and "The Mystic Path." These impressive lectures were well attended and greatly appreciated by large audiences. Following the four public lectures, six evenings were given over to class work, two lessons each evening. There were many people present at these meetings.

At the earnest request of the students, the Swami delivered two more public lectures. The Swami's, clear, logical discourses left a profound impression on the minds of the hearers and intense interest was shown. As a result, a Vedanta Centre was founded in St. Louis. Passage money has already been sent to the Ramakrishna Mission Head-quarters in India for sending a Swami to help him.

The Centre will be supported by free will offering; a large number of people have pledged themselves to support the same. The Swami left St. Louis on October 29th for Portland. On his return trip he stopped at San Francisco for two days to pay a visit to his brother monks and friends there.

THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama (Charitable Hospital and Dispensary) Botataung, Rangoon has send its sixth Annual Report to us. Originally started for serving the sick imported labourers for whom there was no provision in the General Hospital of Rangoon, the Sevashram has risen with the kind and sympathetic support of the City Fathers and the Public into a useful institution. The Hospital was started in 1921 with a qualified sub-assistant surgeon and a compounder. Today a number of good doctors of the city attend the Hospital and the cases attended to are sufficient to show to what proportions the work of the Sevashram has grown. The total attendance at the Sevashram was about a lakh (ie) over 83000 outdoor and 1754 indoor patients. The patients included not merely the people of East Burma but from the interior as well. Till 1925 there were only two wards. In 1925 more accomodation was required and the principal event in the history of this growing institution for 1926 was the opening of three more wards by the Governor of the Province.

As regards finance, the total maintenance charge for the year under report came to Rs. 26647-8-9 against the total receipt of Rs. 27191-7-9 leaving a small credit balance of Rs. 543-15.

The Sevashrama's activities have not merely been medical treatment and nursing of patients, but as the report says have included education of the patients in the elementary principles of the preservation of health and character as also of personal and social hygiene.

May this institution grow further still with the full support of the public and continue to play its proper role in the civic life of that growing city.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ANATHA ASHRAM, BARANAGAR

We have received a copy of the report of the Ramakrishna Mission Anatha Ashram, Baranagar for the years 1925 and 1926. Started under the title 'Baranagar Home of Service' in 1912 the institution was affiliated to the Mission in 1924 under the present name and has been ever since conducting a home for

the orphans, giving medical relief and organising relief work whenever it was necessary and possible. Its sources of income have been from collection of rice, gifts of clothes, subscriptions and donations—amounting to Rs. 9809-5-10 for the 2 years under report. The orphanage had in 1925, 25 orphans hailing from all parts of Bengal, which came down to 22 in 1926. With the moral and religious training, general and technical education of these orphans have been also attended to. Relief work as providing the indigent widows, the sick with diet and medicine—helping the cremation of the helpless, treating about 9000 patients in the out door dispensary of the orphanage have been some of the Ashram's other activities. Till recently it had no permanent location. Now it has acquired 7½ Bighas of land. Let us hope the public will come forward to put its noble work on solid foundations.

THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, COLOMBO

We are glad to note that the work of the Vivekananda Society in Colombo has been gradually expanding. The twentyfourth Annual Report tells us that its membership has increased from 399 in 1924 to 661 in 1926 and that the collections have been satisfactory. One important activity of the Society has been the conduct of the *Tamil Vivekanandam*—a monthly edited by Swami Vipulananda—with over a 1000 subscribers. It is by itself a good work for the dissemination of Hindu culture and civilisation. In March 1926 the Society started for the needy Hindu children of Colombo a Hindu school the numerical strength of which has risen from 25 to 160 at the end of the year and this shows that a long felt want has been supplied by the Society. The school is a recognised institution with regular religious and moral training of boys and girls. Other activities have been Kathaprasangams on 45 Sundays in the year besides 19 public lectures on religious and moral topics. It has been also conducting classes on *Thirukkural* and *Nannool*—two Tamil classical works—on Saturdays. Some social work for the Kataragama pilgrims has been added to the Society's activities.

It is a pity that the Hindu citizens of Ceylon have not been able to clear off the Society's debt when it is doing so much work for them. May we hope that the society will clear off its debt soon and be in a position to hold its own—and for the great object for which it was started.

THE MADRAS LABOUR UNION

We have received the Annual Report for 1926-27 and a copy of the constitution and rules of the Union. The report shows that the union served the labourer according to its capacity by trying to meet their grievances. The report also tells it received Rs. 6526-15-11; and after meeting all expenses, a balance of Rs. 3778-15-7 remained.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, BALIATI, (DACCA)

We are glad to acknowledge the receipt of the report of the above named Sevashram for 1925 & 1926. During these two years the Sevashram maintained two free schools—one for boys, the other for girls and a Sanskrit *Chatuspathi*. From the outdoor dispensary 1949 patients received medical help and some more were treated in the Ashram.

Nursing, cholera relief, Mela relief etc., were some of its other activities. The Library and the reading room have removed a great want of the villagers. The number of religious classes held during the period was about 150.

During the years under review, the total amount received was Rs. 2680-13-3. The Total expenditure was Rs. 2033-13-2 and there was a balance of Rs. 647-0-1.

The report shows a deposit of Rs. 2970-9-0, Rs. 1250 and Rs. 1911-11-6 in three other accounts—Temple fund, Reserve Fund and Utsav fund respectively.

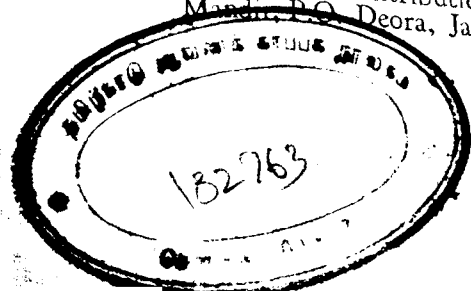
The authorities of the Sevashram appeal to the benevolent public for funds to facilitate its work. We hope, the kind hearted, public will come forward with their mite and help the Sevashram to carry out its object.

JAYRAMBATI—AN APPEAL

Most of the readers of the *Vedanta Kesari* may be aware that Jayrambati is the birth place of the Holy Mother—Sri Saradamanidevi. Just at the spot where the Holy Mother was born, a Matir Mandir has been founded. The Ramakrishna Mission has started also a charitable dispensary to relieve the distressed in the country around. The place is badly malarial. The dispensary at present provides homeopathic as also a few allopathic medicines. Funds are not sufficient to extend to all the help necessary in the malarial season.

The poverty and distress makes it impossible for the villagers to have a school. The Ashrama has started a school there for the children.

The Swami in charge therefore appeals for funds for meeting these demands at Jayarambati—which has become a place of pilgrimage in modern times. Kind donors are requested to send their contributions to Swami Parameswarananda, Matri Mandir, P.O. Deora, Jayarambati, Bankura.



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