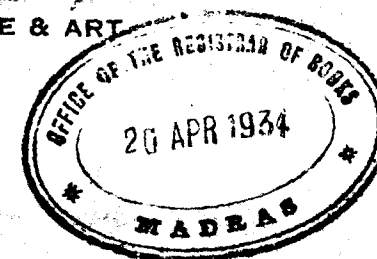


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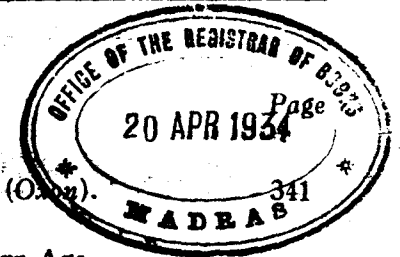
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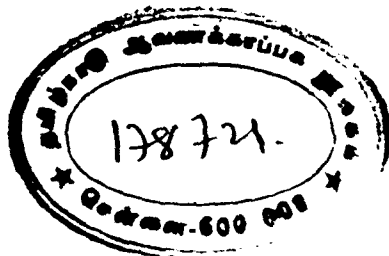


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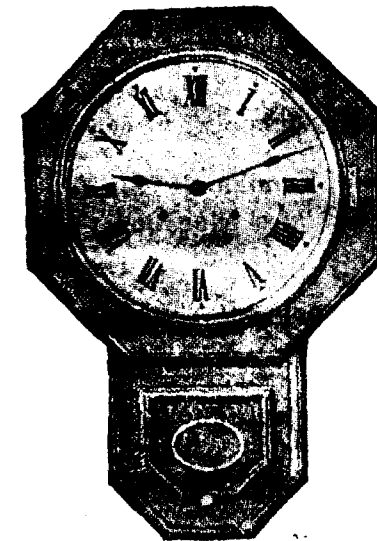
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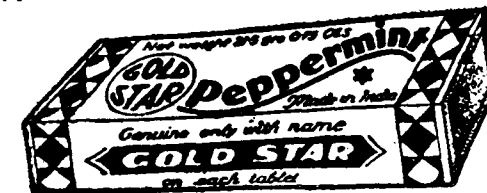
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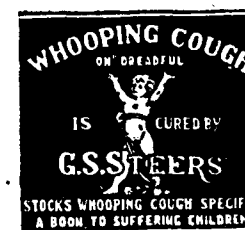
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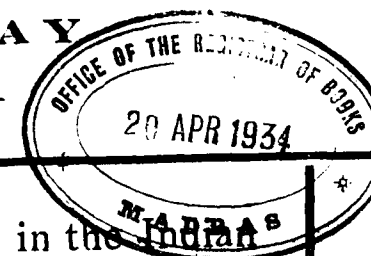
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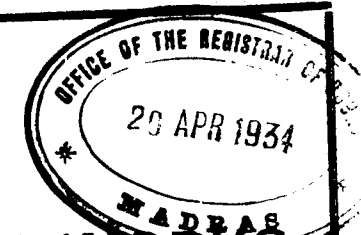
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VOL. IX

MARCH 1934

No. 6

Sabarmati Ashram.*

3 THE LAST SIX MONTHS

IN the last great European War we lost the services of nearly all our best men, for they were taken for the Army. The second-best took their places, and somehow did the necessary work at home. So during the Indian political struggle the Ashram lost its finest workers and truest members: they went from its shelter to battle through the storms outside. Thus my visit there showed me an Ashram in no way normal,—not at its best. Young men and boys came there from gaol or from orphaned homes, not drawn by the ideals of the Ashram but by their contacts with Congressmen in the "field". The guiding star, Mahatma Gandhi, for three years had been absent in the body, and even the generous permission to write a weekly budget of letters to his spiritual family could not wholly bring him into touch with the daily life of many whom he had never seen.

Thus I should deceive if I pretended we were all the saints the rules would fain have made us. We were ordinary young folk, sincerely earnest for the greater part, but in forgetfulness often violating rules. That is inevitable, for as Bapu says, so long as we are in the flesh perfect truth, perfect following of the Ideal, of our vows, is impossible. Ceaseless honest effort is all that he requires. And there is no one in the world for whom that is impossible.

The honour paid by India, and now increasingly by the educated world, was not to us, not even to our Mahatma, but to the

* See January and February issues for the earlier parts of this series.

Ideal. Pilgrims came to Sabarmati as they go to Kashi and Rameshvaram, their eyes shining with joyous faith as entering a temple of their God. Superstitious? Yes, but leading gently step by step through darkness to the light of realised Ideals. One could not but be moved by the love the poor had for this place. "Gandhiji"—they adore the very name, not that they know what he has done or understand his dreams, but they have blindly felt the love and greatness of the man whose simplicity and service in Sabarmati found a home.

It is no work of mine to write the story of the Ashram, to tell in detail of the last few months before the glorious sacrifice. I can only sketch a few incidents, month by month, and share a few impressions that I gathered there. Others, later, may give their stories too, and from them all the truth may be compiled.

FEBRUARY—Arriving in the second half of this cold and dreary month, I was at once struck by the warm and kindly welcome all extended to the guest. From the Secretary even to the youngest child, every little chance of service seemed eagerly to be taken. Even the birds shared in that welcome; *mainas*, said to have been tamed by Mira Ben, came every morning to my room for crumbs, their little heads perked cheerily, and soft throats warbling in an ecstasy of friendliness. So, too, the dogs, unkempt and dirty, clambering on my bed left footprints enough for any Sherlock Holmes. The Ashram C. I. D., who daily wandered round with puzzled eye and noted in his book the names of those who came and went,—he too gave friendly welcome. The utter absence of secrecy made his work easy, for all gave gladly every fact he wanted; reserve and enmity could find no resting place within the Ashram.

During the month two other guests came to stay with us a day or so. One was a Christian Englishman, bicycling to his distant home, the other was a graduate, gentle and loving, clad in the yellow robe. But all day long in the week-ends, sightseers came from the City and strolled around, chattering noisily and peering through the open windows, seeking the Mahatma's room. One came from Madura in the Tamil South, and one from Andhradesh, who would not go until he took away as gift and souvenir a little book in Hindi, Gospel as it was.

Gandhiji's weekly letters were the great event to which we all looked forward, and they became, perhaps, most treasured of possessions. His frank speech and gentle understanding have endeared him as teacher to all who meet and know him. He did not expect newcomers to adopt the many rules at once, but one by one, as strength grew and the Ideal permeated the mind. The old monastic law of poverty was slowly inculcated by the rule to

deposit all moneys in the Office; as in gaol, one learns to live without money or planning expense from day to day, and to receive thankfully, or otherwise, what comes from the human providence. So also with our labour; we were left to volunteer when the inner urge called us into service. The atmosphere of trust in our sincerity prevailed, and few cared to be idle long in such a busy place.

MARCH—The daily routine was broken once a week, on Fridays, and again on certain holidays, and then the Ashram Stores were opened, and we could satisfy our weekly needs. Godrej washing soap was there, and kerosene, lamp-shades and grain for the Married Quarters. That same afternoon the Library opened for an hour that we might change the books which we had read,—and a busy hour it was for the Librarian.

Sickness for the Ashram guest was indeed a blessing, for it revealed the love and tenderness inspiring those around. It is not easy to forget the eager service given by one and all at such a time; the dirtiest work was shouldered joyously, in the spirit of a Christ or a Saint Francis. A father could not show greater care than the Manager and the other Ashramites, night after night. Not only is an Ashram a place of spiritual learning, it is an organisation in the outer world; to guide it well, it needs one to combine his saintliness with business qualities and tact and gentleness. Mahatmaji was wise or lucky in his choice of Narandas.

Some evenings, the little boys and girls of Harijan homes used to come to prayers with us, and splendidly did they behave. Shining with cleanliness in little white garments, their eyes sparkled with eager affection for their teacher and friendliness for everyone, and radiant with that intelligence which belongs to all divine humanity. None who have lived in real contact with those of every caste can be misled by the surface differences priestly craft has turned into "untouchability".

Lakshmi's marriage was the month's outstanding event. Harijan by birth, and Gandhiji's adopted baby, the time had come for her to wed, and the wedding was celebrated outside our Ashram at the Red Bungalow. The husband was a Maharashtra Brahman, so most of us attended this marriage, which should embrace the whole of Hindu Society, by joining "top" and "bottom" castes.

March gave us two visits from the outer world. Mr. Polak, an old friend and colleague of Gandhiji in South Africa, came for a day on his way to England, and in a little meeting on the verandah of Bapu's house gave his eager listeners the latest news from Yeravada. A few days later came a writer on comparative

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religions, a charming Jew on tour from the most modernist America with his fashionable wife. Reacting to Ashram ideas, she bravely tried to give up paint and powder, but how much can a day achieve?

It is extraordinary how a man with so many works on hand, so much world-wide responsibility, can remember weekly letters to little children he has barely seen. If all the Ashram letters he has sent could be classified and published, the book would be encyclopaedic in its size, touching every part of human life in frankest detail, with spiritual advice for striving adult and fatherly sweetness for the little ones. In these letters he reveals a side of himself but little known in public, the human side that so endears him to his intimates and yet is touched with the profoundest wisdom.

In them he also shows the greatness of the real teacher, for all our faults and failings he takes upon himself. If we have sinned or through forgetfulness transgressed, he blames himself: "Had I been pure, they would have come and asked of me; perhaps I could have saved them from this thing by timely warning." With real wisdom he invited all to judge himself by what the Ashram was in his absence, and if we found it evil we could know that evil dwelt in him.

He always tried to keep us free from domination by his greatness. He left us free to invite a leper friend to Ashram life, if we were ready for the risk; he would not make that choice for us himself. Yet it is true that so great, so beloved, is he to all who knew him, that it is impossible they should ignore what seems to be his wish or fail him when called to such a trial. There were in the Ashram some who had often tried to escape back into the ease of worldly life, but always their hearts failed them when the moment came for going out. Let him who does not want to give his life for service keep far away from Gandhiji, for once in the toils of his inspiring self it is very hard to struggle free! Could Swami Vivekananda as a boy escape his Guru's charm?

APRIL—A democratic spirit showed in discussions on the kind of bread that we should eat and the work that we should undertake. Every change was thoroughly discussed and voted on before it was adopted or rejected, and the Manager accepted the majority decision.

The swarming dogs became an even greater nuisance as the hot summer grew. One little rascal, with ears one up, one down and the wickedest grin on his vulgar face, had a tremendous taste for butter, and sometimes got away with whole packets of a pound or more. The nights in Hridayakunj, where they held their sessions and perhaps debated canine politics, were often

hideous with their snarls and yappings; from the darkness came an almost ceaseless barking, broken by shrill shrieks that died away in groans like souls in agony. Doubtless, there were parties among them which had not yet adopted Ashram rules of harmlessness. They learned from us a little, though. Sure of their inherent right to share all we had, when one was chased along the rear path, another slipped in by the front; when he was driven off, then three or more would come at once. It was like a horrid parody of Congress demonstrations.

The warm weather also prompted fasting for health, and there was quite a little epidemic of it during April. A Muslim sister continued, till on the fifteenth day the signs of health returned with clear tongue and real hunger, and several others for various reasons left their food for shorter times. Several also tried the effects of a diet wholly fruit or milk. It is natural, indeed, that, Bapu being so interested in health and diet and in nature cure, his Ashram should become to some extent a laboratory for such experiments.

At this time, also, came a Naturopathic doctor for a while, who specialised in light and colour. His stay with us was busy, for not only were we a hundred or more in number, and children curiously swarmed his room from dawn to night, but the Harijans of local villages were also to share the benefits of his skill. There is a mighty need in India for doctors who can give the best of knowledge in the cheapest kinds of treatment for the help of the poorest masses. And what remedies are cheaper than nature's own, the use of light and water, of mud and colour, fasting and deep-breathing? Western drugs are poisonous and costly, Ayurvedic medicines are little cheaper, so the poor are driven to the superstitious methods of the past. It was pathetic to see the eagerness wherewith the "Ashram doctor" was surrounded in the villages by young and old and the reverence with which they received his simplest treatments. Even one with very little knowledge, equipped with boric powder, vaseline, a little lint, bandages and warm water, can do very much to relieve the ignorant suffering of the poor, if he has the will.

There were three special occasions during the month. "Harijan Day" was celebrated by a party sweeping the village where these people lived and by a meeting in their hostel. On Ramanavami morning we gathered on Bapu's verandah for a *Harikatha* on the birth of Sri Ramachandra, and all enjoyed a holiday from the usual routine. "National Week," opened and closed by days of general fasting, was the opportunity for a special output of yarn. Two charkhas were kept spinning day and night without a pause by those who volunteered for that in

relays, and after evening prayers each inmate reported how many "rounds" he spun that day. The National Hymn was daily sung, and on the last day a new National Flag replaced the faded one upon the Chatralaya tower.

Several visits were paid us in this month, besides the Sunday sightseers. Their great variety will be understood when it is known that they included a party of M. A. students from Baroda, a European lady missionary now in a National School, a Malabari from Tagore's Shantiniketan, a Rajputana banker prince said to possess a crore but none the happier for it, and a young Englishman on his way home from Australia, who showed great scepticism of the value in spinning for the Indian villager, which he thought he could well assess after a few days in Indian cities. Once came in the noon a group of five or six simple peasants from far Allahabad; without a word they spread their beds on the verandah and went to sleep. So truly do the masses feel themselves at home in Gandhi's home; they know that he is one of them,—"weaver by trade," as he declared in Court.

MAY—The whole world was shaken by one event of this glorious month, and as it centred round the Ashram Head, it is only natural we too felt some of its vibrations. The sudden news that the Mahatma had decided on a three weeks' fast, to purify the Movement of which the Ashram was a part, travelled swiftly from one to other of us. But even while thoughts thundered in their minds, all went calmly about their own work. Where Ashram folk had a chance, at work, fierce arguments raged between those who believed in fasting and those who did not believe. But nearly every discussion ended with the common view, "Bapu is nearly always right; I do not understand this Fast, but that is not his fault but mine." At least, the well-meaning efforts of some to turn him from the Light that he had seen found little Ashram sympathy, for we all knew how utterly futile such must be.

The sacred 8th. dawned; and many were happy at noon to be in the Poona Gaol for the beautiful little service which began the Great One's intercession. As each took leave for what human want of faith imagined might be the last time on earth from the beloved Bapu, his hand came down smack upon her shoulder, as his cheery voice showed all his confidence that he was under guidance. It was a scene no witness will forget. The bare courtyard, the sympathetic quiet warders standing by, the Ashram group, a few reporters, and in the midst, the little man whose faith in God has stirred an Empire and amazed a faithless world,—when has another gaol seen the like?

Over all of India the message ran that he who loved Mahatmaji should give him spiritual food by service to the Harijan. From every side came the response. The Ashram, too, turned its main attention to the oppressed in villages around. Every morning, the four villages in turn were visited by bands with basket, broom and shovel. Streets became as clean as drawing-rooms, while the astonished villagers gazed in wonder at the sight. Sometimes the caste quarters, too, must be cleaned, for they were dirtier than the Harijan; the proud residents relied upon their caste to cover their uncleanness. Sometimes the workers found their example so infectious that the villagers, their protests proving fruitless, joined in the merry work, till no dirt remained to clear away but the rubbish heaps themselves. Not only sweeping, but there were drains to dig for wells, that the water might not foul the whole with seepage. There were the "Criminal Tribes" to visit, removing their piles of refuse further from their pitiful shanties built of kerosene tins and rags. Another little group explored the foul conditions in which the City sweepers had to live, and reported on their discoveries to those responsible.

One day we were taken into the little temple of the Vaghras, ~~people outcasted from the Rajputs centuries ago, because a single ancestor married out of caste.~~ Their simple reverence and deeply-moving devotion proved that in their hearts they are even now equal to the best. Nor are their habits dirtier than many of the highest caste of all. There was the evening when a score of us joined twice as many Harijans in their village for songs and speeches, and prayers for Gandhiji. And while the nuts and raisins were passing round, half of the crowd ran off to see a dancing girl's performance. This is what we have done to them!

The long and anxious days passed slowly by. Each day a glance at the papers was enough to spread the news that all was well in Yeravada, and all turned quietly again to carry out their normal work. None fasted in sympathy, save on the opening and closing days, but a few found it helpful to observe silence for all or part of the time, that they might think and try to understand. The Gita, and vernacular copies of Bapu's book, *From Yertala Mandir*, were in many hands, and many studied these as textbooks in their classes. During the Fast, we all agreed on giving up refreshments in the early morning, and gladly entered the day's work without. A new rule also was brought in, on Bapu's wish, that from 8. 30 p. m. till 4 next morning before the prayers, there should be silence in the compound.

Then one day, very near the end, we gathered at Kailashbhavan as the weavers' guests, and passed the evening very happily in music. In the midst a procession of the children from

our special Harijan village, Old Wadaj, joined us with songs and songs. The day's leading singer was he who marched in 1930, singing the songs that lightened the marchers and keyed them to the note of dedication.

The day of rejoicing came at last. As the hour drew near when our Teacher far away would break his Fast, returning to the life of ordinary men, we met there upon his Hridayakunj verandah, where as the rainy season approached we often gathered for our prayers. Beginning with his favourite song, *Vaishnava Jan*, whose sweet melody and soul-stirring words drew tears to many eyes on that Resurrection Day, his favourite Scripture, the *Gita*, was then recited by all who could read the Sanskrit, each group of chapters being followed by a song of *bhajan*. And so, while its rhythmic phrases yet echoed in the beams of Bapu's room, a crowd of 50 or 60 children from the Harijan village came and joined us there, and later in a sort of feast together. And even after that, many also had to take a little token food with our Harijan co-members in *Kailashbavan*. The afternoon brought news from Poona, and many little notes of gladness must have gone to Gandhiji that day from his Ashram family.

The unhappy publicity, inevitable in everything that Bapu does, drew crowds of curious people to the Ashram in those days, they seemed to be always there; and Pressmen, too, came in eager search of statements or of rumours from unwary sources. Several visitors came also; some to stay two weeks or three, and some only for a few hours. We met the gracious old lady known to Ashramites as "Ba," whose life has so long been closely knit with Bapu's, and we met her son Ramadas as well. A Japanese Buddhist priest came with his drum and strange chantings in the night, and worked among the villagers with tireless energy. Then came Mahadev Desai, straight from gaol. His stay of several days caused the first of rumours that some great plan for future work was coming out of Parnakuti. Then "Thakker Baba" came, to scold us of Gujarat for backwardness in service to the Harijan, and to inspire us all to future efforts worthier of the Cause.

JUNE—June, too, was an anxious month, for few doctors really know how to build up strength after a prolonged fast, and Bapu's full recovery was delayed. For several weeks few notes could come from him, and most of these were only signed to another's typing, but our joy was all the greater when he at last resumed his normal work again, restored to health.

The crowds of visitors seemed almost endless; every day they came, at almost every hour, walking round and staring, sitting here and there or trying to talk with us. Among the most prominent were the Registrar of a University, two Chinese

gentlemen, a Hindu *sadhu* who seemed to be in *samadhic* bliss the whole time he was with us, and a Congressman just out of gaol and eager to return. One day a party came to Bapu's room, and seeing someone spinning there offered worship to the *charkha*, the Mahatma's truest *murti*, with fruit and flowers, incense-sticks and *kumkum*.

The rainy season now was fully on us, and the sandy river-bed had changed into a brown and foaming stream that dashed from Mount Abu to merge into the sea. Few cared to bathe in it, for it looked like liquid mud, but the coolness that the very vision brought was welcome after a summer that made the sandy paths as hot as ashes to the feet. The biggest change in Ashram life was the opening of a tiny Montessori class for the youngest children, and a very happy *Balamandir* it proved to be.

JULY—The last month came, unknown, despite the warning as early as the 6th., that we must prepare for some very big test, —rumour whispered, "Confiscation". This was the great topic in those middle weeks, and each seemed to have his own belief on the nature of the coming test. All tried instinctively to fit the Ashram more and more for anything to come, and even while those who had their treasures began to send them out for safety, they themselves got ready to face the future bravely. The shadow of nearing separation fell upon us all and warmed our comradeship to something more like love for one another, while it wholly failed to take away our cheerfulness.

We had several visitors from outside, beside the usual crowds which on Bapu's coming swelled to multitudes. A professor came from Bihar, with the brother of Sjt. Subhash Chandra Bose of Bengal, a worker among the poor of Bangalore, a teacher in Karnataka, a Karachi grocer, and Father Verrier Elwyn of the *Gond Seva Mandal* in the Central Provinces, were among those I met, together with a number of political workers from every part. One of the most interesting was an old enthusiast from the Panjab, who wanted us to leave all and follow him, and he would "make one Church of all the World". Indeed, that is what Gandhiji himself was doing there in Sabarmati. Almost every Indian province was represented among our visitors, and every caste and community among our members, besides a little group from foreign lands, —Japan and Africa, Europe and America. In the middle of one night came a large band of scouting school-boys, who for a very little time added gaiety to the quiet of Hridayakunj.

The Manager was called to Poona; but before he left came news to the pressmen in the City, "Bapu has left Poona for

Ahmedabad." Lightning never flashed much faster than that news among us. Joy lit every face. "Bapu is coming home, and we shall have him in our midst!" Next day he was in his Ashram, a father surrounded by his children, anxious over every one. Day by precious day he came to us from the City,—still bound by his vow to live outside his Ashram till Swaraj is won,—giving precious interviews, explaining the sacrifice to which his oldest workers all agreed, and sometimes even taking his food with us. And all the while, ceaselessly, relentlessly, the hands of Time pointed ever nearer to the final hour, and statement after statement, letter after letter, hurried India and her Mahatma along the road of destiny. Wagons came and went those last few days, taking many to their homes, while the ordinary work went on unshaken to the very closing day.

The record of those days cannot be given here; they are too near, too dear, for the cold black and white of print. The diaries kept by all of us as Ashram duty perhaps will some day come before the world, and then the beauty of that great oblation of a life-work, dearer than life itself, may be a little better known.

Press correspondents crowded round or rushed off gladly to the wires with the smallest news or gossip. Crowds from the City daily came; when Gandhiji was in his home, we could barely move along the paths or wash our plates, they gathered so to watch the dying hours of what India had come to feel her very own.

When the last evening prayers, in the thronged Chhatralaya court came to an end and Gandhiji told what he had done to this child of his heart, there were stirring cries of *Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!* that tore the air, as the Flag of India waved in silence on the tower. The Ashramites enthusiastically answered his appeal, and that evening, before he went to his room for the inevitable arrest, he himself saw from the Ashram doors into the bus the last of those who were not dedicated to the gaol. Void of its human occupants, left as a gift to Government, the Sabarmati Ashram died, to live again. The sacrifice of all to Truth was consummated, and the great Ascetic took to the roads on pilgrimage once more.

Sri Ramakrishna and the Modern Age.

BY R. RAMACHANDRAN, M. A.



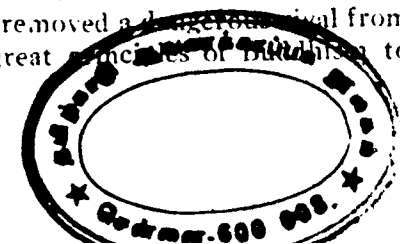
AGAINST the inevitable decay that must overtake them with the passing of centuries, all religions have in them some mysterious vitality of renovating themselves and vindicating their intrinsic value. They might accomplish this end of self-preservation either by virtue of a strong religious organisation as Christianity has in its Church, or they might achieve this end by generating great prophets at critical periods and thus establish their stability once more.

Hinduism employs the latter of the two methods. In spite of the most complex and elaborate ritual that seems to hem it in, Hinduism really offers the greatest freedom for the individual to pursue his own course of thought. And since its vast boundaries defy analysis by the ordinary man, we find very few who have emerged out of the thousand sub-sects into which Hinduism has been divided. Few have attained that eminence whence their gaze could embrace the whole of Hinduism with its myriad complications at one sweep.

Yet even during the darkest periods the land of Arya Varta has not failed to generate prophets to exhibit the perennial greenness of her spiritual core. And broadly generalising, the successive prophets have been more and more progressive and one has fulfilled and complemented the other.

Without questioning the greatness or realisation of Sri Chaitanya or Ramanuja, and a host of other spiritual luminaries, one somehow feels that their importance has been circumscribed to embrace only a particular section of people, their teachings have not, at any rate, been given an interpretation which could satisfy people of differing temperament.

Buddha, no doubt, by his unique life and teachings, had offered something that had an irresistible appeal to the whole of humanity, and hence during the first few centuries after his passing away Buddhism had flourished as no other religion ever did and outshone Hinduism at all points. But it was only a hectic brilliance, at any rate, in India. It had not a self-perpetuating vitality, and Hinduism with its rare assimilative power made short work of it under Sankara. Sankara thus not only removed a dangerous rival from off his path, but grafting the great principles of Buddhism to



Hinduism, he was enabled to set the latter on a stronger basis than ever.

But even Sankara was not able to establish an all-satisfying ideal. As Swami Vivekananda says, with all his mighty head, Sankara had not as large a heart—at least not large enough. Only a heart like that of the Buddha could have successfully appealed to the masses. No doubt Sankara's primary mission was not with the masses; it was more an aggressive and combative one. And not only did he most wonderfully accomplish his end of resuscitating Hinduism, but left the world the superb spiritual legacy of the doctrine of Advaita, the last word in Vedanta. To do all this within the age of thirty-two was achievement enough even for one like Sankara.

The role of a prophet involves the discharge of a double function. He has to remain true to the ancient ideals of the religion he has come to stabilise, and at the same time, he has to be an innovator, giving the necessary reshuffling and readjustment to suit the times. These two sides of a prophet's mission are mutually complementary. And India needed such a prophet during the time of Sri Ramakrishna.

India during the eighteen fifties was in an ugly transition period spiritually. The youth of the country had not only lost its balance at the first impact of Western forces, but had totally succumbed to and been enslaved by them. This was the most subtle and ruinous blow that had been dealt against Hinduism and, therefore, the Indian Mother hastened to save the children of the sages. And it was at this time and on such troubled waters that the star of Ramakrishna appeared.

It must be clearly understood that the age in which Ramakrishna was born was not a mentally impoverished one when he could have won his laurels cheap. All transition periods are generally characterised by an abnormal mental activity, either in the direction of a healthy renaissance or towards a rank growth of the spirit of questioning cynicism. And whatever may be said about the darker side of western influence, certainly it had enlarged our horizon of the intellect, made us keener-visioned and had roused in our usually placid and languid hearts the spirit of questioning before gulping down everything in the name of religion. And the ardent souls whom Ramakrishna gathered under his loving arms were the most volcanic ones of the age, who questioned the very fundamentals and started almost from rank atheism, because of their very intensity to realise God. Further, they had drunk deep of the fountain of Western learning, and so were not likely to be easily taken in by this half-mad

Brahmin priest of Dakshineswar. Again, Ramakrishna was not the single lone figure among the great. The same time had brought forth Dayananda, Devendranath and Keshub Sen.

The utter thoroughness with which Ramakrishna set out to answer the needs of the time may be understood by seeing the interesting contrast he provided in relation to the youths over whose hearts he later came to have such a potent sway.

Ramakrishna's life shows that to work by contrast is the most effective way of working, and in every move of his life we find him offering a challenge to the forces dominant in the day, with almost a calculated and premeditated precision. At a time when materialistic glamour and the pride of intellectual acquirements of the West were monopolising the homage of the youth of India, we find this prophet of the age born in the most pitiful obscurity. Further, born of the poorest Brahmin family whose heritage was only spiritual and himself almost illiterate, Ramakrishna scarcely had any claims on the approbation of the masses. He came utterly bereft of all that could make him the cynosure of other eyes. And to crown all, the walk of life he chose as his profession was that of a temple priest at a time when the very sanctity and purpose of temples were violently questioned and idol worship was condemned as a relic of barbarism. And yet it was to this idol of the Mother that Ramakrishna clung to like a mad man. It was a colossal irony against modern priggishness that though he realised the supreme goal of life, beyond the stage of idol worship, he did not leave to the last his chanting and weeping, and singing the praises of the Mother.

Again, when money had become a basic synonym for the primary necessities of life, Ramakrishna not only chose to live without it, but his renunciation of all 'gold,' as he called it, became such a marvellously acute physical phenomenon that a coin deep under the mattresses of his bed would inflict on him the most excruciating spasms of agony. And finally as regards woman and her all-potent sway, he chose to marry and yet live a Brahmacharin.

Thus in whatever way we look at his life, we find him providing what would seem an almost futile challenge against the forces that had overrun the land. And yet such turbulent spirits like Vivekananda danced to his merest will. Why? It was simply the astounding intensity and the utter thoroughness of his God-realisation.

The ascendancy over Vivekananda was not only a triumphant vindication of Hinduism; not only did it show that Hinduism could stand any amount of questioning and yet hold its own, but it also made clear that for the redemption of the West, its

submission to spiritual ideals was essential. The complexity of modern life, whatever its outward glamour may be and the lopsided progress in man's intellect at the expense of the deeper cravings of his heart can land humanity only in disaster. And a return to the simplicity of old days, and the dominance of the spiritual life alone will work man's redemption at any time.

To come upon the life story of Sri Ramakrishna in the present days is to come unexpectedly upon a surpassingly beautiful oasis in the midst of an arid expanse of desert. To read his life is to dive deep hundreds of years into the hoary past and to catch a glimpse of the life of the ancient sages in India. It reads like a mediaeval tale with the charm of the dim past on it. And yet Ramakrishna is no mythical figure about whom legend has woven its fanciful web, for the modernist to look askance at.

It was this thoroughness of realisation that made a disciple of Vivekananda. We can faintly imagine the shock of surprise it would have given to this eager ardent spirit weary of asking the same unanswered question, 'Sir! Have you seen God?' to be directly answered by a half-witted Brahmin priest, 'Yes! I have seen him just as I see this fan, or see you, only in a much more intense manner.'

Having thus seen Ramakrishna's fulfilment of the first mission of a prophet—viz, the vindication of the old Ideals, let us now consider him as an innovator.

In the modern day most of us glibly use the words, 'the harmony of religions' etc., without meaning anything serious; but in the days of Ramakrishna people were at least more honest and candid as they coolly ignored such a truth. And it was left once again to this Saint of Dakshineswar to realise this great truth. With a startling rapidity we find Ramakrishna, born and bred of the most orthodox family, nullifying his Brahmin existence, and in the ardour to realise for himself the oneness of religions, becoming a Mohamedan and a Christian in turn. Similarly again, to demonstrate the truth, that all the several paths of Yoga ultimately lead to the same goal, we find him following each of the paths in turn and after arriving at the goal, slipping back once more to the position he so much loved—that of being the humble devotee of the Mother.

Apart from this, Ramakrishna in his life loosened considerably the bonds of an all too rigorous caste system that, in its arrogant march, trampled heedlessly on millions of the poorest and the lowliest. To erase the pride that mere birth in a Brahmin family might have implanted into him and to teach himself the requisite humility for God-realisation, we find him stealing at

dead of night to the quarters of the lowliest class of people, and unknown to them sweep the floors with his long flowing hair. Such a work as this he did not regard as something merely humanitarian, the outcome of a condescending kindness to others. On the other hand, he regarded this as *Jeeva-Seva*, the highest form of worship of the living soul. And it was this aspect of Ramakrishna, of considering such uplift work as a rare privilege and not a mere deed of kindness, that Vivekananda later so brilliantly expounded in his *Daridranarayana Seva*.

Next it is interesting to analyse his attitude to women. To him renunciation of both gold and woman was essential for any spiritual progress, and by the two he meant to cover all worldly attraction. And to show that even in married life, perfect chastity and continence were possible, he married and yet lived a Brahmachari. And those who question the justice of such a step as regards his wife, have only to be convinced of the fact that she not only remained an ideal *Sahadhamachari* but later became as great as Sri Ramakrishna himself.

And he held a twin message both for men and women, and it was not for nothing that he remained all his life the child of the Mother. From man's point of view, instead of regarding woman as was too commonly done in India as a mere household adornment, to vent one's desires upon, Ramakrishna widened the woman's sphere, and lent an inherent dignity and holiness to womanhood by insisting that man should look on woman only as a mother. To steer clear of women in life is impossible, and hence the easiest way by which the spiritual aspirant can rid himself of the unhealthy passion that attaches to the name of woman was this holy conception of her as the mother. And secondly, this was a supreme assertion of the widened sphere of women's activity, in no way less vast than that of man and of their freedom to pursue their own methods to achieve the great end of life.

In these days, submerged under the onslaught of mundane forces, we are apt to think of religion and realisation as something that have no great hold on reality, but something hazy, elusive and shadowy. In utter contrast to such a view, it is refreshing to see how Ramakrishna's greatest claim on the modern age rests on the way he showed every moment of his life that religion and realisation were not the mere concoction of a few hair-brained idealists, words full of sound and fury signifying nothing, or at best something reserved for the chosen few, but that they are something tangible, intensely practical and realisable, within the reach of even the lowliest, and that being an affair

of the heart they hold equal chances for one and all. 'Men are prepared to weep a jugful of tears for their wives and children. But who weeps for the love of the Lord? Cry unto him with a yearning heart, with the desire of the drowning man for breath and He will come unto you.' It need not involve elaborate rituals and ceremonies or body-famishing austerities. All it needs is a good and a pure heart and the requisite yearning after God. This bringing of religion to the doors of one and all was not the least of the achievements even of a Ramakrishna.

No study of Ramakrishna can ever be complete without an adequate recognition of the position of Swami Vivekananda. Here also Ramakrishna's life illustrates an interesting point. Having throughout his life offered a challenge to the modern age and having provided an ideal for the world to live up to, Ramakrishna did not perhaps want to sully the purity of the ideal by contact with the world. He lived and passed away in the same pristine state of purity as ever, without allowing the dust of the world to settle on him. This aloofness from the world, though in the midst of it with a mission and a message, is something absolutely unique in Ramakrishna. He knew the greatest spirits of the age and lived near the largest city in India. He did not fly into the woods or seek mountain caves; he was in the world but was not of it.

But he had his great message and mission for the people; and to broadcast these required no less a giant than Swami Vivekananda. And the most satisfying solution to look upon the relation of this master and his disciple is to view both of them as the two parts of a mighty soul as Sister Nivedita does. It fell on the Atlantean shoulders of this marvellous disciple to sow far and wide the teachings of his Master. With what volcanic power and clarion utterances, he executed his task in his all too short a life is a common tale on the lips of every Indian child.

Routinism.

By P. V. AGHORAM AIYAR



ROUTINISM seems to be one of the unescapable evils of present-day life. It has affected nearly every kind of human activity. It is drudgery. It exists partly because of the rush most of us make through life, and partly because of that feature of our institutions which desires to produce, and insists upon producing, certain results on a quantity basis at stated intervals of time. It is a sort of industrialisation of the brain function of man. In the field of pure industry you cannot be always creative. Once you have produced your creative work, you pass on the heritage of your knowledge and work to a lot of workmen and to captains of industry, and thereafter you have merely to stereotype the creative product. When the same stereotyping takes place with reference to the brain function of man, you fall into the peril of routinism.

When you observe it in the thought and work of a public official you may well imagine it to be allied with red-tapism; but not merely is a public official guilty of routinism. Practically every learned profession exhibits striking traces of it. In the school mastery line it exists abundantly. It dwarfs the intelligence of the teacher and the taught. It makes the teacher devoid of intellectual aspiration, and the taught think that his work and progress in school are a matter of a few set lessons. It suppresses the spirit of intelligent inquiry both in the teacher and the taught. It makes both go through the school discipline with the least disturbance to their minds and with a profound apathetic satisfaction. In law, routinism is worse. The strait-lace of convention binds us round. We may get ever new cases, and ever new points for investigation. Here, of all provinces of human enquiry, is pure independent and original thinking ruled out. Your best thought is rigged round by tradition and authority, and here is the best field for routinism. You may give proof of ingenuity. You may make the worse appear the better reason. But sustained, independent, dispassionate thinking, you seldom shall do in those august halls of justice, hemmed in as you are between the client who has hired you for producing particular results and the weight of tradition and authority. The pure reaches of intellect are very often denied to the busy lawyer. He may come by a good deal of fortune. But he generally has not as fine thoughts as things. The employment of leisure, when he gets it, is least profitable from the point of view of the good of society or the

betterment of his mind. Sometimes it takes the form of a pursuit of extra-professional but personal ambition. He gets into an interminable net-work of intrigues, and sometimes plays the devil's part therein, and woe unto the society when a lawyer or a politician intrigues in public affairs as he often does; things get putrid in no time; and affairs get into the sorriest mess on account of their intermeddling.

Go into the field of medicine, and you will find even disastrous routinism. The use of Ergot, Digitalis and Quinine on an extensive scale and with reference to the particular class of cases which are supposed to call for their use, is illustrative of the routinism rampant in medicine. Perhaps the routinistic use of Morphine, which amounts to its abuse, has done more injury to the human race than any other. We cannot forget the great harm and disservice done by Mercury. More cases have been spoiled than helped and healed by the insensate routinistic use of Mercury.

Let there be the least little disturbance in the internal economy of man, and he is run down by a purgative, as if the alimentary canal should not be helped to be a self-cleaning institution, and the patient and the physician go on the belief that the severities of a forthcoming ailment have been mitigated by a timely purge. Here is medical routinism in excelsis! I would leave medicine behind and observe the workings of routinism in the oldest province of human activity, namely, Religion.

In Religion, routinism has brought the human race to utter soullessness. Church-going, temple-going, mosque-going, prayer, worship, ablutions, rituals and liturgies are all a matter of routine. The abuse of the symbol, as against the wise use of the thing signified, is the most noticeable feature of popular religion everywhere. One feels tempted to accuse the Hindu race of a greater addition to routinism than the followers of other faiths. On closer analysis, we should revise the above view. The popular mind everywhere gets entangled in routinism; the Hindu religious activity being more predominant than other people's this feature appears to be more characteristic of the Hindu race. Even the educated mind everywhere is very much engrossed in routinism. Every routinist makes God the means and the world the end. He thinks that he of all people is somehow God's favourite, and that God will give him the best of things on earth, and the smoothest passage to Heaven. The whole of this scheme is arrant nonsense, and all the energy and devotion of mankind are needed to combat it, to rid the world of it, and make moral life possible among mankind, if possible without *deus ex machina* intervention, and certainly without superstition. Amidst the

heavy weightage of routinism original thought nevertheless progresses, and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made their own contribution to the growth of independent thought in this line. If routinism in religion is the first to perish, it would be a thing to be happy about. It became firmly established first in religion and then invaded other provinces of human action. It would be well, therefore, for the world to do away first with routinism in religion. God when appealed to by man for help and refuge would then be a more engaging companion for man, also a more dependable being. When we get rid of routinism in religion, we should be able to go far enough in getting rid of routinism in social practice, because social practice is largely mixed up with religion for mankind. When Gandhiji attributed the terrible happenings in Bihar to the delinquencies of man he was falling into perilous routinism. But I observe one of the worst aspects of routinism in religion when the evil conditions that prevail about us are attributed to the other side of God, I mean the Devil.

In social practice our routinism is a growing weed. There is hardly any felicitation function which could be held under present day auspices by any class of people without exhibiting the characteristics of routinism. The culinary side of it may even be free and original, but the compliment-distribution side of it is frankly routinistic. The hearer and the speaker know that the compliments bestowed are not to be taken seriously. The recipient of the compliments generally knows the game and sees to it that it is played according to convention. Nowhere are the words in human language scattered with such prodigality as in the bestowal of compliments. Nowhere are personal references so inappropriate, so untrue and so ill-adapted to the subject under reference. Courtesy requires you shall not speak disparagingly of a man who is honoured, to his face, except when any principle he has advocated is the subject of criticism. But no code of good conduct requires us to attribute to a man qualities and virtues, we are sure, he is not possessed of. We would cease to have these felicitation functions, if we drop routinism from our programme.

Come to the field of literature and see if nine tenths of the good for nothing fiction writing which we are constantly getting in volumes, is not pure routinism. Constructive thought is not much in evidence. Most stories would do ill without a Jack for a hero and a Jane for a heroine, and a love affair between them, interrupted by enemies, as the basis; and the course of true love never runs smooth, but the redoubtable lover and the devoted fiancée brave the trials, and are restored to each other in the

purest bonds of affection; on the momentous questions of the hour or of the day, few be the writers who take long views, deep views, and really instruct and edify. With most writers, the object is to produce literature in a hurry; which of necessity becomes routinistic. On the questions which divide countries from one another, most current writings are routinistic and affected by a partialist's view. This kind of occupation often falls into the hands of journalists, and it is needless to say how routinistic and soulless they are. I can no more forgive a surgeon for lopping of a portion of the body, because in his view, it is medically required, than I can forgive a journalist for lopping off portions of a work of thought, because in his view, editorial considerations require it. In the promulgation of doctored opinions at which the journalist ably plays the game, you see the exhibition of routinism in very fine order.

Routinism is not essentially a modern evil. Whenever creative work stopped, or whenever in the nature of things endless production of creative work, became impossible, or whenever it became necessary to popularise creative work, by production on a quantitative basis, routinism became unescapable. The trouble of the present time seems to be that routinism has become very much more organised, has become more stoutly allied with untruth, has overspread very many more provinces of human action than in the past. In no previous age did people rush through life with so much haste, in no previous age did people prefer to live with so great zest for the things of the moment, and to hate so heartily life's depths. The day of routinism is, therefore, not done.

The Synthesis of Education.

BY JAMES H. COUSINS, D. Lit.

[We are indebted to Dr. J. H. Cousins for giving us permission to print the following from his monumental work *A Study in Synthesis* to be published on St. Patrick's Day (March 17, 1934) simultaneously with his second book of poems, *A Bardic Pilgrimage*.—
—Editor.]



THE burden of the foregoing pages is the necessity for the liberation of youth into full possession and use of its powers by an education that is complete in its knowledge of the nature of the student, and equally complete in its provision of the informative material and expressional opportunity that the student requires as a creative entity using and being used by its universe; an education which, being complete, enables youth to realize its own powers and natural sanctions, and to develop its own natural controls without external imposition and without exaggeration.

In various parts of the world efforts are being made to respond to this ideal, and to discard the timidity that is induced by the apparent multiplicity and complexity of detail in educational psychology, technique and paraphernalia. Education must take cognizance of the successive solutions of psychological problems; but it cannot afford to wait on them. It has to help the student, for example, into the possession of speech even though, according to a recent writer in an American psychological journal, the whole question of the logic of language has to be begun all over again. Valuable as all enquiry is, there is always a danger of losing sight of the ocean in concentration on the currents. We may become so interested in laboratory analysis that we may forget that the student is a living and growing synthesis, and that the first and last work of the educator is to educate.

Happily there are encouraging signs of advance towards a synthesis of educational vision and process. In America, for example, a movement is noted by the authors of "The Child in America" (222) in the direction of transforming the school "into a behaviour-training organization rather than an institution for learning," by taking over the whole child, including his delinquent phases, and developing his entire personality. The movement favours also the use of the public schools for the detection and early treatment of defectives. Such a movement recognizes, though not explicitly, the truth that a defective system of education is

the sure producer of the necessity of education for defectives, and that, when education becomes normal in its complete recognition of the whole student, and in complete fulfilment of that recognition, the children of the world will get a chance to attain normality.

In the development of the mechanical era of human history, the group occupations that absorbed the attention and activities of pioneering and agricultural people, and kept them busy and healthy and sane, were deflected by the growth of organized industrial specialization; and this led to unbalancings in the social organization and in the physical and mental health of the people that necessitated the pathological expedients of welfare agencies and children's clinics and courts.

The new movement in education is now beginning to call these health agencies into the sphere of the school; and the result of this synthetical movement will be the rapid reduction of the pathological agencies towards elimination, provided that the principle of educating the whole student is followed without wavering, and that the soul of the student is brought to school along with the mind and the body.

A still larger synthesis now appears on the horizon. The divisions and overlappings in educational organization have drained away much of the substance and energy of the nations into the desert sand of the ineffective. The need of simplification by unification is becoming felt. The election programme of the British Labour Party in 1929 foreshadowed such unification in its envisaging of a "democratic system of education.....organized as a continuous whole from the nursery school to the university.....". But the educational inadequacy, already referred to, of the Labour Party's view of the nature of the student (as an entity producing "brains for the industrial state") does not inspire enthusiasm for a nation-wide organization for the production of merely cognitive and articulate slaves of mechanism to join in the struggle of one national group of industrial producers against other national groups.

What is wanted is the world-application of a true educational synthesis; a complete co-ordination of complete educational wisdom, technique and organization. Differences in detail are inevitable, nay, highly desirable and serviceable, in a world whose form and movement as a rotating sphere tilted from the plumb have set up all sorts of variations in the environment of humanity and all sorts of reactions in the outer and inner nature of individuals. But there is an irreducible minimum of necessity that is common to all humanity, a fundamental pattern and octave of

human capacity that could, nay, must, form the basis of a world education whose operation, *mutatis mutandis*, would set up a community of interest and activity capable of drawing humanity into a true spiritual unity.

THE EDUCATION SYNTHESIS

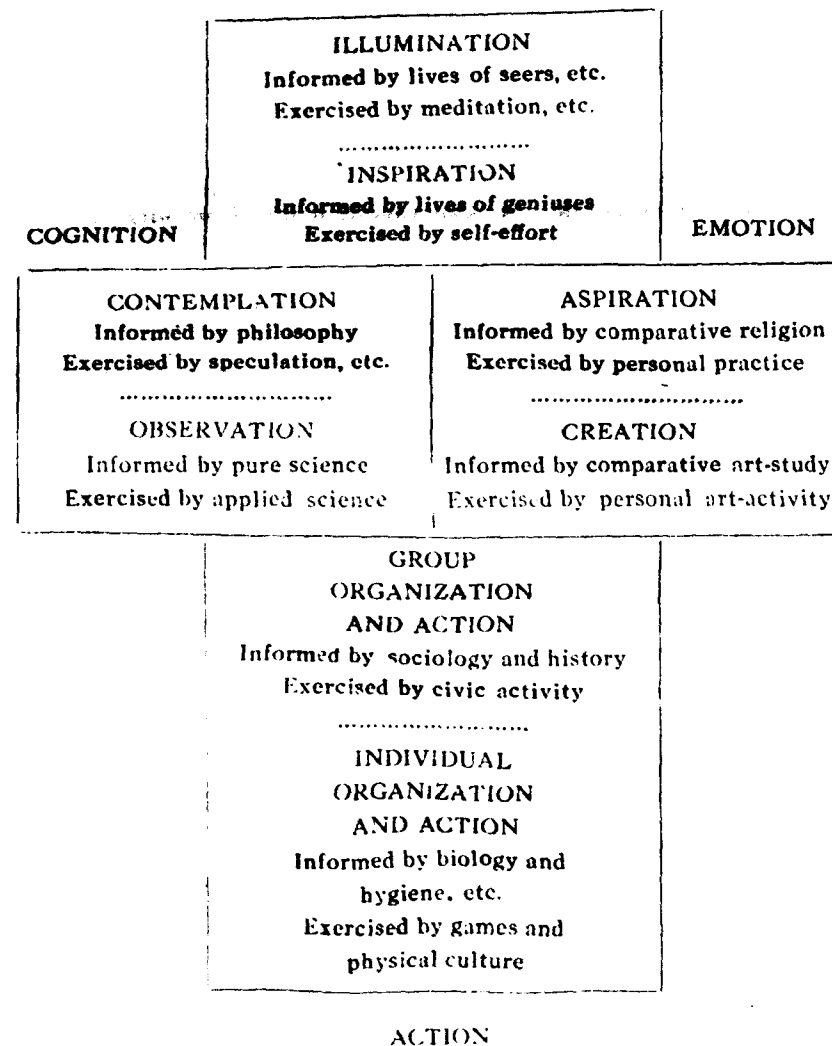
of

Educable capacity

Informative study

Expressional exercise

INTUITION



As a conclusion to this study we shall now put the essentials of the matter into a series of declarations constituting A Charter for the Liberation of Youth through Education. The author knows well that his thesis is a counsel of perfection; but he knows also that it has only been through the glimpsing and uttering of some aspects of perfection that humanity has been provoked to some degree out of its imperfections. Beyond the inertia, the predilections, the inhibitions, the disabilities that stand between education to-day and its future possibilities, he sees a time of stupendous promise whose date depends on whether humanity has the wisdom to listen to the growing chorus in which this book is one voice, telling the truth of education, and acts accordingly, or whether it waits until catastrophe compels it towards reality.

A CHARTER OF EDUCATION

1. The complete work of education is the development of all the powers of the individual—intuitive, affective, cognitive, active—to their highest capacity, and the setting of the developing individual in intelligent and creative relationship with his and her environment, mundane and extra-mundane.

2. Every individual born into a community has a claim on that community to be well educated. For good education the community receives, in good citizenship, more than it gives in good education, as the cultivator receives more than he sows. Education shall, therefore, be universal and free.

3. Education, in order to be effective, that is, to produce good citizens, must have good human material to work on. Every individual born into a community has a claim on that community to be well born in order to be well educated. The parents of students shall be educated *qua* parents so as to transmit the highest possible potentialities to their children. Good birth and good education will incalculably enrich the community. There shall, therefore, also be universal and free adult education.

4. Every individual thus well born and well educated has a claim on the community for adequate opportunity to use his and her developed powers. These powers, released according to the students' endowments and tastes into the vocations of the community, are its greatest asset. Their full and beneficent use is the source of the community's truest wealth and the individual's truest happiness. Every individual shall therefore be well employed.

5. There are, therefore, three fundamental *rights* of the individual:

(1) The right to be well born, (2) the right to be well educated, (3) the right to be well employed. These three fundamental rights imply for the individual three fundamental duties: (1) The duty to take advantage of available knowledge of the laws of good birth; (2) the duty to take advantage of available opportunities of education; (3) the duty to render the best possible service to the community. When the rights are granted by the community, the duties will be automatically fulfilled by the individuals.

6. There are consequently three fundamental *duties* of the community:

(1) the duty to provide its citizens with the conditions for being well born; (2) the duty to provide its citizens with the means to be well educated; (3) the duty to provide its citizens with the opportunity to be well employed.

These three fundamental duties imply three fundamental rights:

(1) the right to expect from its citizens good material; (2) the right to expect from its citizens good development; (3) the right to expect from its citizens good service. When the duties are fulfilled by the community the rights will automatically be satisfied by the individuals. The duty lies first with the community, for while its citizens come and go, it remains.

7. These rights and duties do not apply to any special section of the community or any special faculty of the individual. They apply as between the community as a whole and the whole individual.

8. The organization which shall be the means of conferring these rights and fulfilling these duties as between the community and the citizen shall itself be responsive to both. It shall not serve any special section of the community, or any special faculty of the student, save in the adjustment of each in their highest and most beneficent operation by the best possible means. It shall be a true university, not a sectarian school.

9. The World-University thus constituted shall undertake the whole of education from birth to death. It shall assure the well-being of its future students through the education, health and employment of the parents. It shall assure the well being of its future parents through the good education of its present students.

All separate and overlapping educational organizations shall become members of the World-University, attuning themselves to one mental conception, one emotional attitude, one method of service.

10. The mental conception of the World-University is *unity*. The conception of unity is based on the truth (felt in world-religion, created in world-art, expounded in world-philosophy, demonstrated by world-science, exemplified by world-commerce) that the nature and process of the universe, the community and the individual are the same; that each is endowed with substance, form and vitality, and has the capacity of acting, thinking, feeling, creating, aspiring, and of responding to inspiration and attaining illumination.

11. The emotional attitude of the World-University is *love*. The attitude of love is based on the truth that universal communal or individual integrity can only be maintained by the predominance of the principle of cohesion and affinity over such activities as make for antagonism and disruption.

12. The method of service of the World-University is *liberation*. The method of liberation is based on the truth that all the endowments and capacities of the individual are for the service of the universal purpose, the communal good and individual happiness. Incomplete liberation has heretofore led to individual and collective disorder. Complete liberation will ultimately produce complete order through the guidance of action by reason and love to creative ends.

13. The environment with which the World-University will place its graduates in beneficent relationship is a world-environment; but it will be approached by natural stages—family, local, cultural, religious, national, international, super-national. The restrictions of outlook which may be natural to one stage will be corrected by the broader outlook of the next stage.

14. The teaching staff of the World-University will consist both of such individuals as are specially endowed as educators and those specially qualified for the impartation of knowledge of particular subjects, and also

of its students, the seniors of whom will, as an essential part of their own education, serve the juniors in such manner as their attainments allow.

15. The curriculum of the World-University, which will embody the principles expressed and implied in this charter, will be applied in four stages:

(a) the school stage, in which the complete capacities of the student will be educated; (b) the college stage, in which the special capacities and predilections of the student, which have revealed themselves in the school stage, will be given special attention with a view to the future service of the community in vocation; (c) the post-graduate stage, in which the student will acquire a broad synthetical culture before entering on his and her vocation; (d) the adult stage of continued acquisition of knowledge and development of faculty.

Such complete education must ultimately be available for every human being everywhere. It embraces religion not for the production of theologians or fanatics, but as a means for the expression of the inherent aspirations and reverence of the race. It embraces art not for the production of artists in the specialized sense of the term, but to enable normal and average human beings to live artistically, as their free inner nature always presses them to do. It embraces philosophy not for the production of dialecticians, but to allow all men and women to find the way to full, clear, accurate and happy thinking. It embraces feeling not for the production of dilettantes but of men and women of taste and quick sympathy. It embraces physique not for the development of selfish force but of helpful power. Out of the liberation and elevation of humanity inherent in such education, genius will arise with an appreciation and inspiration never before granted to it; and from this basis of complete education the specializations that the varied activities of mankind will always demand will move to their attainment with much greater ease and effectiveness than is possible to-day.

Such education has been visioned with varying degrees of clarity in the pedagogics of the past: its various phases are active here and there in the educational practice of the present. What the future demands—if education is to render its full possibility of service in the progressive liberation of human capacity into individual and corporate achievement that brings poise and peace—is the co-ordination of educational vision and practice in a scheme at once simple, complete and universally applicable,—a synthesis infinite of principle and practice based on the synthesis of human endowment to the understanding of which this body has been consecrated.

Manjeri S. Rama Aiyar.

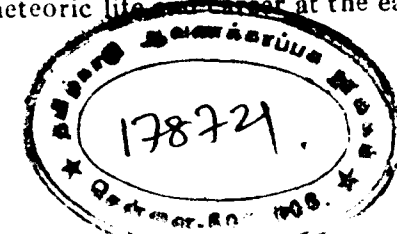
BY P. M. HARI



MANJERI S. Rama Iyer: the name calls to my mind the picture of the jolly old squirrel that with upturned, bushy tail and arched, slender frame, nutmeg head and beady eyes chirps in the cool hours of March morning its rustic notes of freshness, freedom, and joy; and wantonly skips and plays amongst the merry, humming boughs of a luxurious country orchard glowing with the unstinted dowers of tropical summer. How light and gay, fair and free, unbent by the weight of years or cares, unfettered by bonds of family or friends, unruffled by the struggles and tribulations of life, taking everything readily and easily as it comes and seeing only a high ordinance in every happening, he spends his days like a sportive little child! How small! yet how capable of any game, from the smallest to the largest! Truly was it observed by Dr. Annie Besant that he had 'the simplicity, courage and intelligence of a true brahmin.' And we should now add: non-attachment' also to that beautiful string of epithets.

A fairly tall, thin, dark figure, slightly bent forward, a bright face with a broad brow and more or less aquiline nose, a symmetrical head adorned with snow-white hair: a neat, simple man, plainly dressed in a clean dhoti and shirt, with a little, rascally smile playing about his lips, bearing a tint of gold in it, and a quaint ray of light gleaming out of his narrowing eyes: such in appearance is the child of the sweet sunny woodland home of pepper and ginger, spices and honey. He is full of good cheer and spirits, and carries himself easily and brightly with a nonchalant dash and intelligent quickness characteristic of his native soil, which bursts incontinently into a rhapsody of green and gold and purple at the first touch of the impetuous south-west monsoon. Malabar has made her impress deeply upon him. From the wave of his hand to the whisk of his wit and the wink of his eyes he is all Malabar, and its neatness, freshness and animation.

From both sides of his parentage Mr. Rama Aiyar derived the blood and brain of a lawyer. His mother was the sister of the reputed Manjeri Subramania Aiyar, the lion of Calicut Bar, and the last of a long family of able legal practitioners. His father was a notable lawyer of Manjeri. Raman is the third of the four sons of Manjeri Sundaram Pattar, who built up a roaring practice, an enviable name, and a remarkable fortune in a few years at the bar, and suddenly closed his meteoric life and career at the early age of 42.



Young Raman had a distinguished academic career and carried off the Jaghirdar of Arni Gold Medal for Physics in the B. A. Degree Examination of the University of Madras. But at about the age of twenty-one all the glowing hopes and brilliant promises of his youth were in imminent danger of being swallowed up by that nameless negation of dyspepsia. People feared that his days on earth had been numbered. But his embrace of Theosophy redeemed him from the clutches of the fell disease and started him on a vigorous course of life and career.

Mr. Rama Aiyar is a Theosophist, and may be taken as a fair specimen of the product of that Society. To him Theosophy has been a living, moving entity, and Dr. Annie Besant its 'Ego'. It moulded his life, inspired his bosom, and still operates as its motive power. Mr. Rama Aiyar thinks that with the passing away of Dr. Annie Besant one great Age of Theosophy has come to an end. Theosophy is, in his eyes, progressive wisdom. It is not confined within the four walls of the few articles of faith or foundation of the organisation; and Mr. Rama Aiyar's philosophy is ever expanding. He is always an eager and alert student, interested in all forms of knowledge, especially what reveals the Highest Truth. He always keeps an open door to the new rays of Truth that leap to light from day to day.

Some might opine that he is a little eccentric. But the apparent capriciousness is only the exuberance of his spirit. His worldly life and career restrict the flow of his spiritual and intellectual energy; and the pent-up forces often spring out in apparently odd ways. There was no genius but proved singular in some ways of life; and Mr. Rama Aiyar's behaviour only confirms the general law.

As a lawyer Mr. Rama Aiyar rightly chose the court of Criminal Justice as his forum. It is doubtful if he would ever have thriven as a bullock cart lumbering with burdensome civil litigation. He is a lithesome racer with an itch for adventure. Had he been harnessed to massive civil suits, he would have kicked the load-waggon to pieces and scampered off to browse in the broad fields of philosophy and religion. But he is at home in the Criminal Sessions. By nature and equipment he is exceptionally fit to be a Defence Counsel in criminal cases. And the sound training he received at the unerring hands of his beloved veteran uncle, Manjeri Subramania Aiyar, has its appropriate fruition in his eminent success as a Criminal lawyer.

Mr. Rama Aiyar has a close understanding of the world and human nature and a large fund of general knowledge and learning at his back. His ready wit, quick conception, and constant resourcefulness enable him to cope successfully with any situation

arising in the course of a trial. His conduct of Criminal Defence is a feast to the gallery and a fortune to the accused. His provoking dally and reckless fencing with the clever, common visitor of the witness-box and the sudden running him through at the most unexpected moment is really spectacular. He would remorselessly tear the proud somebody in the box to tatters and bring down the cunning and obstinate liar with a crash. His advocacy always keeps pace with his skill in cross-examination. He has an agile and unfaltering tongue. His wide knowledge and versatility make his arguments interspersed with agreeable anecdotes and apt quotations, enlightening observations on human nature and cogent explanations of human conduct. They are also made attractive by his natural wit and humour. His acute intelligence would sometimes startle the judge and the jury by exposing the hidden falsity of a case and carry the day unexpectedly.

As a senior Counsel, his criticisms of the junior are never depressing. He has a knack of whipping up the courage and intelligence of the junior, with his lively and good-humoured admonitions. A junior would be ashamed to approach him without mastering his case. It can be said of him with much truth, as it was said of Elder Pitt, that no man entered his presence but left it a new man and a better man.

Mr. Rama Aiyar is remarkable alike on the platform and in the parlour. He is an impressive speaker and an entertaining conversationalist. His talks are genial and leavening. His humour, though sometimes stinging, is, on the whole, innocuous. His gift of humour and perennial smile can hold the attention of his audience for long hours. His powers of repartee are also high. He is a clever debator and overthrows his adversary with an easy air and ingenious smile.

He is a true disciple of Dr. Annie Besant and is in his element in fighting the cause of the injured and the helpless. His sympathies are catholic; and in battling against any kind of injustice his soul is on fire. He simply loves the forlorn and the downtrodden. He would gladly fetch or forego anything for them. His withering exposure of the high-handedness of the police and of the callousness of the Railway officials that led to the Railway Tragedy at the time of the Malabar Rebellion testifies to his relentless sense of duty, intense love of the distressed, and undaunted courage. He would disarm the tyrant and unmask the hypocrite; but how unassumingly and disinterestedly he would do them!

Perhaps there is not another on the West Coast who is so widely known or so much loved and trusted as this light-hearted hero of a hundred deadly forensic battles. But he never aspired to the dignified place of the so-called accredited representative of any constituency in any Council Chamber. He cannot brook any encumbrance or dry-as-dust duties; and hates being lionised. He does not seem to have much of a stomach for politics either. If once he dabbled in it he simply obeyed the orders of his Master. He is above all the plain commoner and loves the amble of an unburdened life. He enjoys the company of the unsophisticated country folk, with their primitive pastimes, crude fears, amusing ways, small weaknesses, and harmless perversities; and would gladly live amongst them and give a forward move to their unambitious life. His great regard for the feelings and sentiments of the man of honest faith, however crude and unreasonable they be, evokes in people a sincere love and respect for the man and his views.

Despite his rationalistic outlook, Mr. Rama Aiyar has great reverence for things ancient. He has also a predilection for the idyllic life and experience. He would prefer to sit in a quiet, cool, country corner and assiduously study the history of the past from the indelible writs made by the hand of time on the face of earth. One can note that but for some sporadic excursions into lime light at inevitable moments, he has been content to live a simple and quiet life of study and contemplation in his modest, vernal nest, furnished with some odd volumes and auspicious photographs, and to emit the light of his intellect and spirit on the souls that approach him.

I have almost said a poor home; and that takes me to another aspect of his life. Mr. Rama Aiyar inherited all the intellectual capacity of his father, but nothing of the astute businessman in the parent descended to him. As a financier he is no superior to his improvident uncle. He can be ranked as the first lawyer both in ability and in professional income on the West Coast. Although he would get in a year what his father earned in the twenty years of his career, yet he does not possess to-day, after nearly 35 years of busy professional life, a quarter of what the latter was able to bequeath to his children. Money passes through his hands as water flows under a bridge. But not a pie is mis-used or mis-spent. He leads a plain simple life. His only luxury is his clean shave; and his sole comfort his travelling bed. But he is generous to a fault. He is a friend of the poor and the needy. He would reverently empty his purse in the beggar's bowl or the hands of a distressed kin or friend. He is dead to

his own needs. No thought of the morrow disturbs his mind. He is concerned only with the present; and what he has he must share with those who are in want and those that are about him.

If Mr. Rama Aiyar's fellow-feeling is uncommon, his filial affection is unique. It is ever growing. He knows no God superior to his mother; and he carries her full-throated blessings on his head. It is hardly possible for the gentleman to reflect on motherhood without tears blinding his eyes. One often hears him recite the good old hymn:

*Mathur Devo Bhava,
Pithur Devo Bhava;
Acharya Devo Bhava,
Athithi Devo Bhava*

with an exalting thrill. His deep love and reverence of his parents is a precious lesson to the young and the old.

The great forte of this grey old child is his refreshing optimism and bubbling vivacity. He is never discontented, disappointed or discouraged. Courage and enthusiasm are his watchwords. Life to him is a schooling, every experience is an asset, and every failure a success. And this spirit of his is contagious.

Of late Mr. Rama Aiyar has been more and more retiring and meditative. He is only just over 55 years. It is not perhaps too early for him to think of turning his attention wholly to matters spiritual. But we hope that he will not totally deny his countrymen the benefits of his mature intelligence and spirit.

The Hygienic Life.

BY REIMA CRISNON

IT was rather late in life that I decided on a perfectly hygienic existence. And the event followed my father's demise. My father was a *purohit*, and like all *purohits*, always clad himself in oil-soaked clothes. He was a 'three-fourths naked fakir'. The cloth that he wore round his waist was long enough to reach down to his feet, but he rolled it up to his thigh, perhaps according to scriptural injunctions or hoary conventions. He tied his *dhoti* too round his waist, like a belt. After his morning bath he put a small knot at the end of his hair and then threw over the spread-out and hanging locks on to his head, and the hair functioned as a hat for him protecting him from the sun. He was clever in earning, and at a time when *purohits* were not much respected, was able to amass a fortune. He left at his death a decent house, and lands worth Rs. 10,000. Of course, my mother too contributed her mite to the swelling up of the family fortune, by selling 'milk poured in water,' and ghee mixed with cocoanut oil. My father did not want me to take up the 'cursed' *purohit* work, and so sent me up for English education. But as I cropped my hair, or forgot to perform the *Sandhya*, or omitted the encircling of the leaf-plate with water just before eating, or failed to paint my forehead with the caste-mark after bath, he regretted why he sent me to an 'English school'. But he loved me much. So long as my father lived I was indeed far away from hygiene. Our house had practically no windows; my father's theory was that windows were an invitation to burglars; and my mother's love of her buffalo was so great that every night she converted the inner courtyard into a buffalo-shed. Mosquitoes and flies, white ants and mysterious insects had their homes in our dwelling. Vegetables grew in our back-yard, and there was a dungheap just behind the kitchen, at which my mother used to be employed for ten hours in a day, though on *Ekadasi* days when my parents observed a complete fast, and I was kept on cold rice three nights old, she spent fifteen hours in the manufacture of cowdung-cakes. I may also tell you that living in what you would call eminently unhygienic surroundings my father died at eighty, and my mother, who is now eighty-six, still goes to the river without anybody's help, and persists in enjoying the privilege of giving me and my wife oil-baths with her own hand. When I was at the high school you would have vomitted at the very sight of me. My hands were full of itches;

my shirt was thick with the dirt of ages; my cloth had the brownish tinge of hoary unwashing; my head was a victim to numerous insects of prey. I did not improve much at college. My shirts still continued to be made out of country cloths presented to my father during *shraddha* ceremonies.

Three years before my father died I was married to the daughter of a *Tahsildar*. You may wonder why a *Tahsildar* should ever have thought of making a *purohit*'s son his son-in-law. The reason was simple; he had eight daughters. A month before my father died, my wife *Rajam* joined me, which means that the very first thing she did after setting foot in my house was to despatch my father to heaven, and my mother's beautiful locks of hair to the barber.

After graduation I had taken up a clerk's work in a local firm, and when my father passed away, I was drawing Rs. 40 a month. I also inherited the whole of my father's property. Unfortunately, the period of my mourning over my father's demise coincided with my honeymoon. But really one cannot afford to miss the pleasures of early wifely company even for the sake of the loved and lost parent. My wife, having come from a *Tahsildar*'s home, often found fault with the unhygienic surroundings of our dwelling and the general absence of healthy principles in the mode of our lives. In her whispered lectures to me in nightly solitude she told me about a hundred trifles of hygiene, and I promised to follow her advice.

Having drawn the inspiration from *Rajam*, I immediately wrote for some health literature, and for costly books on hygiene, maternity, married life etc. The first change that landed me in the field of hygienic living was in the matter of tooth-cleaning. Ever since I was born I had used for the purpose the burnt husk of paddy, but *Rajam* laughed at me for being so very behind the times. On her advice I purchased a costly foreign tooth-brush, a tongue-scraper, and a tube of foreign tooth-paste. Next week *Rajam* also got these articles. My aged mother protested vehemently against raising a brush used once. And when she saw the brushes hung up on the walls she cried out that evil days had fallen on the house. I had imagined that a tooth-brush would last for life, but *Rajam* told me that the brushes should be renewed every fortnight.

I then purchased a shaving set, because *Rajam* told me that to trust to the barber's 'promiscuous razor' was to invite skin diseases. I demolished the walls and made them more windows than walls. I sold away my father's buffalo, as *Rajam* opined that the animal was a nuisance and led to the growth of mosquitoes. Several other changes followed. In our village it was not

the custom to build latrines. Evidently the villagers adored Mother Earth so much that to set apart a portion of hers as a latrine seemed to them a great sin. Generally the accommodative banks of the rives and canal served as latrines, but you cannot expect a Tahsildar's daughter to degrade to that level. Rajam induced me to erect a latrine in the house, but she said that Dr. Oampeyrly had conclusively proved that flush-out latrines alone were harmless. We erected a costly flush-out latrine, and as the flushing out had to be done by ourselves, my mother (who, by the way, first mistook the latrine for a study) broadcasted to the gossips of the village that we had descended to the level of scavengers. Hair oils from France replaced coconut-oil and soaps replaced soapnut-powder. My wife said that to walk on the road with country sandals on was the surest way to get eye diseases, and I got a pair of American shoes for winter and another for summer. My wife was content with velvet slippers which she used to wear when she brought water from the well to the kitchen.

To prepare coffee urgently I bought a stove. One day Rajam came to me with a newspaper cutting which read that Miss Benju, M. Sc., opined that the shortening of the life of Hindu women was directly to be traced to their spending a great portion of the day near the fire in the kitchen. Next morning a first class cooker arrived in my house.

One evening Rajam sat in a corner of the house in a rather dejected mood. As such a mood was unusual in her, I requested her to explain the reason for her sorrow. 'Oh! Dear!' she exclaimed, 'modern civilised opinion says with one voice that mere food and drink cannot give health to mortals, but that recreation too is a necessary factor to health. How dull and soul-killing it is to remain in the home day in and day out without a moment's true recreation!'

'What are you driving at?' I said, laughing.

'Let us have some indoor games. Get home at least a carrom board,' she answered.

In a week I had fixed up a ping-pong table and also provided a carrom board. All the games played on them were 'mixed singles'.

Rajam's next demand was a gramophone machine. 'Music is the only antidote to human misery,' she told me one day, and it is sheer backwardness to be without one. How cheery will it be if as I cook or bathe or take rest, sweet strains of music fall on my ears!' Of course, I got home the machine.

Rajam consulted a food specialist and vitamin expert one day, and set about making some dietetic experiments in the home.

She sat at the table eight or nine times a day, and her dishes consisted of costly patented food-stuffs and foreign biscuits, jam and butter. Every week she gave me a list of the articles required for urgent use at home; the list was always long; and contained the names of health-preserving drugs, uterine tonics, pain balms, foreign dried fruits, etc.

And every day she used to say: 'I do not want the smallest tinge of luxury. I want only a decent, civilised existence. I aim only at plain living and high thinking.'

* * * *

A half-year passed away. Almost the whole of my ancestral property had evaporated by that time into the hands of usurious money-lenders. What with the complete reorganisation of the structure of my house, what with the fitting up of electric lights, what with the endless renewals of tooth-paste, brushes, etc. and with the frequent purchase of articles indispensable for hygienic existence, it was no wonder that my property decreased almost to nothing. And in these six months my wife had three abortions; she put on spectacles to prevent the weakening of the eyes; she complained of unceasing pain in the stomach; a male doctor said that she developed symptoms of consumption, while a lady surgeon advised an immediate operation on her for appendicitis; her teeth decayed for what reason we did not know, and she had a set of golden teeth in her mouth. In proportion as my young wife grew worse, my old mother improved in health.

What with an ailing wife, a decreased fortune and an aged mother always complaining that all the misfortunes of the family were the outcome of the revolutionary changes brought in by her daughter-in-law, I became convinced of the fact that the so-called indispensable essentials of hygienic living were incompatible even with middle-class fortunes (not to speak of the poorer people). I understood that if long life and unfailing health and strength were alone the test of true hygienic living, the good old ways were after all the best. And then I threw away my brush and paste, and changed to the time-honoured burnt husk of paddy. My wife is gradually accustoming herself to 'cold rice' in the place of her morning drinks. She takes castor oil in preference to 'salts'. Her health has improved, and I am glad to say she no longer suffers from abortions. In fact, 'vomiting' is her only complaint now, and we eagerly look forward to the advent of a cherub in our home.

Democracy vs. Dictatorship.

BY P. R. VENKITAKRISHNAN, B. A.



HE Queen of the bees sat on the top of the hive and watched her subjects working. The more she watched them, the more she was convinced that so perfect an organisation could never be found in any part of the world. All on a sudden she asked, "what are you looking at?"

"Ants, your highness, that are moving in a line below," the Drone replied.

"Oh! they are democrats," said the Queen, "and unlike us they do not recognise a head. Every one of them is the master of oneself. They think a society can be worked best by allowing equality. But they are not aware of its danger. Nature expects advancement, and there is a possibility of progress only in splitting a society into various sects and asking each sect to perform certain tasks. But as they have none to command them and distribute different kinds of work they all will be doing the same monotonous work and in course of time tardiness will so overwhelm them that they will always have to be satisfied by remaining in the lowest rung. Therefore, how can the ants' organisation be in conformity with nature?"

"All the same, they do manage to live together without any rub and store food for the winter, which ought to be the prime aims of a society?" suggested the Drone.

"But our government alone can provide a satisfactory explanation with regard to its rational bases," asserted the Queen.

"Not so, your highness," said the Drone. "By allowing liberty to all, the ants are making every one bolder and thus giving full scope for each ant's individuality. All of them work according to each one's capacity and the benefits are shared equally among them. Therefore, how can an organisation be devoid of worth, in which each one's right to live happily is universally accepted?"

"You lazy people," protested the Queen, "will find fault with us, for, you can have no place among us. You want to get food and at the same time not work, and naturally you will support a government, where your voices can have weight. But our dictatorship cannot allow idleness to grow. Where drowsiness is least, perfection in the administration is the most. In our government the most active and intelligent head comes into power and then that head ever makes the subjects work and the

administration gains in value. But in the government of the ants, as they have no head to command them, they all will have to be equally active—which is an impossibility in nature—or the government must tumble down to pieces in no time."

"Ever since the world began the ants existed and they are still the envy of the world," the Drone argued. "It shows that the ants had perfected from the very beginning their organisation by giving each ant liberty of thought and action. They do not think that one ant is superior to another, for they know that all of them are equally necessary if any society should exist. They are fully aware that all have not the same capacity. But if some are given an upper hand and others find that they cannot come up to their level, there is a likelihood that they might lose hope of themselves and get disgusted. On the other hand, if every one is given an equal right and taught about the honour of working for the common good and contribute his might to the society, then all will try to do their utmost in their power and not shirk work. They discovered this truth before any being in the world and hence the success of their administration. In our government there is one drawback from which they are free. I know your highness is the most perfect Queen, but for the sake of argument let us suppose that the most important figure loses its head; then what happens to the government of your highness?"

"Ah! You are a fool," the Queen laughed. "If there is a chance for the biggest brains to lose their balance, then what do you think of the smaller ones? You are now supporting my point. Rule by the best head is far superior to that by a battalion of small brains. Don't think the ants' democracy can in any way compare with our government. Because a thing existed for a long time, it is no reason why it should be the best?"

"Your highness knows a government is for the common good," reminded the Drone, "and not for the benefit of a selected few. We work together, store our food together and enjoy in the winter. So do the ants. But their methods differ. We have a common head that makes us work and the ants work without following a dictator, collect in a safe place and live. So whether it is democracy or dictatorship the aim of a government must be to make all live together without confusion and provide convenience for all equally. But among the bees if the Queen dies all the others lose their balance, for, here your highness dictates and others work like machines, and when the source of instruction fails confusion should follow. But has your highness ever witnessed a confused group of ants except when they were disturbed by external circumstances? No. Because each works for the common good without awaiting for instructions from another and

no one's lack of work is criticised. And the non-working ants feel ashamed of themselves for keeping quiet and living on another's labour, and thus working has become an instinct among them. Hence they are ever serene and their organisation demands praise from whatever aspect it is considered."

"So you prefer the government of the ants?" asked the Queen.

"No, your highness," replied the Drone slyly, "so long as I am a bee how can I find fault with my species? No. Not for all the world."

"But look at the work we do!" said the dissatisfied Queen; "some bring honey, some pollen, some wax and some build the hive and thus different types of work are done at the same time. The honey-bringing bee cannot wait for the convenience of the builder. Naturally some one is needed who knows all these kinds of work and at the same time capable of apportioning work for all simultaneously. So you see, a head is needed in a society. Again, if the wax-bringing bee goes on bringing wax and if the builder refuses to work confusion must follow. So if there are too many heads with different ideas to judge the action of the builder, it would take a long time to arrive at a proper decision and the delay must mean chaos and starvation. As such the head must be invested with dictatorial powers. Therefore, nature demands a head, that can command and make others work if any society should exist and thrive. So such a government alone can have any meaning in nature and hence ours should be the best."

"But your highness does not think about the other side of the question," persisted the Drone. "Nature wants every one to work and enjoy. There will be enjoyment in the work only if the worker feels within himself its necessity. A society in which every member feels this obligation and works and enjoys should be far superior to that where the subjects are made to work, whether they relish it or not, with the pretension of giving them future happiness. Such a perfect organisation, where every one recognises one's own responsibility, can be found only among the ants. Their government may be given any name, but no other being so works and enjoys as an ant. I can't say how they perfected their society to such an extent. Any how, your highness must not get angry with me. I gave only an instance of perfect organisation, which my narrow mind instructed me. But your highness has more experience of the world than myself, who am only a lay subject, and if I gave your highness what I understood about a perfect society, it was only because I was afraid your highness may mistake my silence."

The Queen looked at the Drone and thought for a moment in silence and at last ordered the soldier bees to execute him, for she said, "though he is a bee, he supports the government of the ants. Therefore, he is a revolutionary. Besides, he is the most idle fellow among us and he deserves elimination from our society."

The poor Drone wept and begged the Queen to be merciful and promised to be ever faithful towards her highness and her administration. But as the Queen remained firm he was stung to death.

Man's Position in the Scheme of the Universe.

BY E. S. PARAMESWARAN, B. A. (Hons.)



HE spacious firmament with all its countless stars has exercised the thoughts and imagination of men through all ages. At midnight, when the world is all silence, one, attracted by the twinkling stars, gazes up and loses himself in the immense depths of space and time. Who created all these, and when? Have the stars been shining like this from times immemorial? Will there be a day of deluge for them? These are questions which he puts to himself, but finds them difficult to answer.

He wonders at the majesty of things around him, which appear as bewildering and awe-inspiring to him as they would to a blind child if its eye-sight were suddenly restored. He sees the hand of God everywhere. He sees a divine personality, in many respects like himself, but incomparably more powerful, in each and every one of the heavenly bodies. No wonder that 5000 years ago the Chaldeans worshipped the sun, moon and the stars, as we still do to-day. He loves the benign forces of Nature, but is terribly frightened by storm and thunder which are the doings of evil spirits. He tries to appease the evil spirits by making sacrifices and earn the favour of the benign forces by singing their praises.

Why should man know the how and why of things around him? Why does he not rest content living his life, making the best use of the supplies of Nature? The answer is 'before he can understand himself, man must first understand the Universe of which he is a part and from which his self-perceptions are drawn'. He wishes to escape for a moment from the 'long littleness of life' and to blend himself in the sublime and the beautiful.

To the question where does man stand in the Universe, Aristotle answered 'in the centre of the Universe'. Vanity combined with ignorance made him preach that the earth is the centre of the Universe and all the heavenly bodies, nay the entire creations of God, are designed for the comfort and well-being of man. The Church gave its sanction to the theory as 'it seemed almost impious to suppose that the great drama of man's fall and redemption in which the Son of God himself had taken part, could have been enacted on any lesser stage than the very centre of the

Universe". Aristotle taught that the earth is the fixed centre of the Universe, around which the sun and all the planets revolved once a day. This theory could not satisfactorily account for all the phenomena of the heavens, but did not fall into disrepute for a long time, as it was backed by the Church which had a tremendous hold upon the people of those times.

Then came Copernicus, one of the greatest of the pioneers of science, who proclaimed that the earth is not an immovable sphere, but moves around as do many other planets around the fixed sun. This was a dose that could not be taken in so easily, as its implications were profound. Firstly, it dismissed the assumed importance of man and his earth. Secondly, it was hard to believe that the earth with all its trees, mountains and rivers goes round and round in space without making the motion felt by its inhabitants. Where was the tangible proof for such a statement? Copernicus escaped the wrath of the Church since he was himself an ecclesiast.

Galileo, aptly called the father of modern science, wrought a great revolution. In 1610 he directed his newly discovered telescope against the planet Jupiter and discovered its four satellites. When he saw them going round and round it occurred to him that what he saw might be a solar system in miniature. His belief was strengthened by observations of many other astronomical bodies. He openly preached, against the dictates of the Church, that the earth moves around the sun. The Church grew terribly angry against him and persecuted him as much as it could. It made him openly adjure his belief. Galileo's telescope did much more than discover the satellites of Jupiter and the mountains of the moon. When he directed his telescope against the vast stretch of the milky way, the whole mystery of it, got itself solved. He showed that the milky way is only a gigantic collection of faint individual stars.

From that evening on which Galileo directed his telescope towards the skies, man's assumed omnipotence began to dwindle and disappear. He no more thought that God had designed the Universe for his convenience alone. Galileo's telescope taught him that his home in space is only one of a number of small bodies revolving round a huge central sun. Later on, he came to know that there are millions of stars in the sky, just like the sun, and that each star might be surrounded by a family of planets on which life might exist. Twentieth century astronomy, however, humbled him still further. It taught him that life, as he knew it, is extremely rare in the Universe and that his earth might be a lonely passenger in a vast stretch of water.

Thus humbled down, the instinct of wonder was again aroused. He would sit down patiently for years to solve the mystery of this gigantic, but beautiful Universe. He woke up from his long drowsiness and began to realise the immense depths of space and time around him. The more he knew about them, the more humbled he became. At last he learnt that he is only a speck of dust in a vast stretch of sand and that he could have no other option than to run his feverish life, now and then returning, to marvel at the stupendous structure around him.

Let us imagine ourselves as passengers on a lonely ship which makes an endless voyage through space, and see to which all places it leads us. Before we start on our voyage we will have to magnify enormously our units of length, area and volume, so that we may conveniently measure astronomical quantities. For, we shall see presently that it is rather difficult to get a mental picture of the space around us, with the foot-rule or the mile as the standard. Our nearest neighbour in space, we all know, is the moon. It is 287,000 miles away from the earth. An express train travelling at the rate of 60 miles per hour will have to travel for about 200 days to reach the moon. As we proceed on in the direction of the sun, we encounter first the planet Venus, then Mercury, and finally we reach the Sun which is 93 million miles away from us. Rays of light emanating from the sun, travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second take about 8 minutes to reach the earth. The moon's rays travel for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ seconds before they reach us. Proceeding in the direction away from the sun we come across Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Neptune, the farthest planet, is about 29 times as much distant as the sun is from us. We say this distance is prodigious, but we have traversed only a microscopic bit along a foot-rule. The planetary distances are of the dimensions of a speck of dust in the vast ocean of space. Imagine what the dimension of the universe would be if the second nearest star, Alpha Centauri is 25,000,000 million miles from you and that you can go on adding stars after stars throughout your life-time till you reach the limits of the explored Universe! Such enormous distances, as mentioned above, fail to catch our imagination, and so we shall express them in terms of a unit called 'The light year'. The 'Light year' is the distance travelled by a ray of light in one year, travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. The distance of the star Alpha Centauri in terms of this unit would be 4.27 light years; that is to say, a ray of light proceeding from Alpha Centauri would take 4.27 years to reach us, so that as we gaze at it during the night, we see not the Alpha Centauri of the present moment, but that of 4.27 years ago. This 4.27 light years is only

the distance of the second nearest star. The giant telescope at Mount Wilson has pried through distances that are thousands of times as great. It has found that the diameter of the galactic system is 220,000 light years. Beyond the galactic system there are great nebulae, and the telescope has calculated their distances. The farthest distance yet explored is 900,000 light years. When the more powerful telescope that is being made is ready for observation, it will probably be able to see things distant twice as much.

We have now gone from man towards things that are bigger than man, and we found a Universe which is beyond our conception in magnitude. Yet another region awaits to be explored. That is the atomic world—a world which is so infinitely small that it refuses to yield its secrets even to the most powerful microscope. The diameter of the atom is of the order of $1/100$ th. millionth of a centimetre. Yet within this atom, incessant activity is going on, and within it we have a universe in many respects similar to the gigantic Universe around us. The first thing that strikes us perhaps as we gaze up above us is the appalling emptiness of space. So also within the infinitesimal atom, there is a vast ocean of emptiness and very little of matter. Modern physics has shattered the atom to pieces and made it narrate its story. We now know that there is a miniature solar system within the atom. We have a central sun called the Proton and a number of planets called electrons. The protons and the electrons occupy but very little space within the atom.

So, what is it that we see? Gazing up, a universe extending indefinitely in all directions. Gazing down, a Universe whose magnitude is so small that we cannot clearly conceive of it. A pint of water contains billions of atoms, each of this a miniature universe. So we have universe piled within universe—everywhere a prevailing harmony, order and beauty. Who can be the creator of this but omnipotent God and who are we when compared to Him?

The stars above us seem but points of light, as they are at tremendous distances from us. Imagine what their apparent brightness will be if they are placed at the distance of the moon. Each star is a big furnace having an output of energy billions of times as much as the biggest furnace on the earth. Considering our sun, the temperature in its interior has been calculated to be an integral number of millions of degrees. There, matter as we know it cannot exist. It will be reduced to the primordial elements with which probably God began his creations. The temperature of the outer surface, however, is only 6000°. Even this

temperature is so high that we are not able to produce it on our earth.

It is this sun that gives us life. But for him there would be no organism, no plant, no animal, no human being. There would be no rain or wind and as such no ocean, river or lake. His warmth and his light are very essential for us. A temperature too high reduces us to nothing. A temperature too low makes us life-less. The average temperature of the earth is 18°C and that of the interstellar space is very near absolute zero.

And our sun is only one out of the billions of billions of stars that abound in the sky. The galactic system itself contains 300,000 million stars. The Mount Wilson telescope has discovered 16 million nebulae, each containing enough matter for 200 million stars. Our earth weighs 2×10^{27} tons and the sun weighs 332,000 times as much. Imagine the enormous masses of the nebulae each of which can produce 200 million stars like our sun. Our space contains all these, and yet its appalling emptiness! So how big is the Universe?

What a tremendous transformation of energy is going on in the Universe! The stars have been shining on like this for countless ages. Astronomy teaches us that initially, probably, creation began with matter of very extreme tenuity distributed throughout the Universe. Then gravitational forces made them condense into the nebulae. Each of these nebulae later on gave out millions of stars like our sun. A star which happened to pass very near our sun pulled out portions of it which became planets like our earth. Astronomical evidences go to show that our earth was formed some 3000 million years ago as a sphere of burning gas. This later on condensed into the liquid form and then into the solid form upon which we live. Life originated in the sea 2,000 million years ago. The creatures of the sea adapting themselves to the changing circumstances, pressure and temperature became reptiles. Reptiles changed into mammals and thence came man—the rude uncivilized man some 300,000 years ago. He lived his ugly round of life, eating, drinking and sleeping, fighting for the major part of his life—never concerned with anything outside. Some 6,000 years ago his eyes began to awaken to see the things around him. He became gradually more and more refined until at last he became the type of man that we are. It was only about 300 years ago that Galileo invented his telescope and opened the vast unexplored regions of the sky.

So we see we are only creatures of yesterday. The Universe has been going on without us for a considerably long time. And it is bound to go on without us for an equally long time. Is it

not mere vanity to say that the Universe has been shaped entirely for us? As Shakespeare has said, our earth is a stage upon which we play our parts and retire. We have no other option than that. What is our period of activity on the earth when compared to the infinitude of time?

Now to summarise. We are in the midst of a great ocean of space. Wonderful things are happening around us. We live on an earth which was formed but yesterday. We came into existence many years after the creation of our globe. Like the butterfly which lives its little round of life, we pass our ephemeral existence on this globe and then melt into eternity.

Let us now dwell for a short time upon our limitations. We are but the products of circumstances. Our earth is surrounded by the life-giving air. If we go up a little, we suffer on account of the deficiency of the air, if we go down into the earth in the deep mine, we suffer due to the immense pressure of the air. A certain temperature, a certain pressure, a certain range of humidity of the air, enable us to live. Deviations from these conditions make us extinct.

Knowing all these, man thinks himself to be all-important in the Universe. Well has Shakespeare said: 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on. And our little life is rounded with a sleep.' The wise man never boasts that he is an all-important figure in the world. He will live his little round of life, usefully in harmony with the laws of nature.

Yet with all these limitations, man is a wonderful creation; since of all the creations of God he alone has the power of discrimination and can recognise the glories of this wonderful Universe around us.

The Scholar Science Corner.

By B. H. Iyer, M. Sc. (Bombay), A. I. I. Sc.

Radiography in Industry and Engineering.

The discovery of photography by the aid of visible light, i. e., light belonging to the visible portion of the spectrum, greatly helped the growth of human understanding about the superficial nature of things. The discovery of X-rays, with their great penetrating power, gave another means to human efforts to pierce into the inner nature of material things. The radiation emanating from the radio-active elements like radium, has now been used for testing materials non-destructively. The story of how this is achieved was the subject of a paper entitled, "The Radiographic Use of Radium," read by V. E. Pullin Esq., C. B. E., (Director of Radiological Research, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich), before the Royal Society of Arts, London, on 22nd November 1933.

The conventional model of an atom consists of a positively charged, massive, central nucleus surrounded by concentric circles which are the orbits of the negatively charged electrons, proper to any particular atom. The number of electrons varies from atom to atom, it being the greater, the heavier the atom. Hydrogen, the lightest atom, has only one electron, while Uranium, the heaviest has 92. Radium has 88 planetary electrons. The concentric orbits and the electrons moving along them, govern the chemical behaviour of an atom and are responsible for the emission of light. The excessive positive charge always present in the nucleus holds the surrounding electrons in position. External force has to be applied to expel any electron from its orbit, the intensity of the force increasing with the decreasing distance between the nucleus and the electron concerned. The disturbance thus forcibly produced in an atom manifests itself in the production of certain phenomena.

When a high voltage electric current passes through a discharge tube containing say, neon gas, a visible light of red colour characteristic of neon, is produced. This is due to the disturbance caused inside a few of the myriad neon atoms enclosed in the tube by the passage of the current. The mechanism is explained thus: When one or more of the external electrons gets either excited or ejected out of the system, the atom, on returning to its normal state gives out visible light. The electrical energy spent to produce visible light is comparatively small.

The impinging of a strong current of electricity on a tungsten target enclosed in an evacuated glass tube, produces the invisible X-ray radiation. Here the electrical energy spent is of a very much higher order than in the previous case. The application of such a powerful current knocks out an electron from one of the orbits nearer to the nucleus and thus creates an abnormal state inside the tungsten atom. The tendency to return to normality induces an electron from the next outer orbit to drop into the vacant space in the first orbit. As a result of this change, the atom gives out its surplus energy in the form of the invisible light of great penetrating power which is called the X-rays.

The atoms of the radio-active elements like actinium, thorium, uranium and radium are peculiar in that they possess the property of spontaneously splitting themselves up. Not only that an abnormality happens to the electronic planetary system of a radio-active element but the nucleus also disintegrates, with the result that a natural transmutation of the element takes place. Atoms of helium having a double positive charge, called the *alpha particles* and fast moving negatively charged electrons called the *beta particles* continuously shoot out from the nucleus of a radio-active atom. Simultaneously, light energy called the *gamma radiation* is emitted by the nucleus. This radiation has precisely the same character as the light energy of X-rays and visible light. Its power of penetration is the greatest. Any attempt to produce this form of energy artificially will require the application of an enormously high electric voltage.

It is possible to take photographs with all these three types of light, namely, visible light, X-rays and gamma radiation, described above. This property, coupled with the penetrability of the X-rays and the gamma radiation, has enabled the application of radiography in industry and engineering work.

Gamma rays have a very powerful stimulating action on physiological tissue, and that is why extensive researches on radium treatment for cancer and allied conditions have been undertaken. Radium has the power to ionize a gas, i. e., to impart the power of conduction to a non-conducting gas. The most important property which places radium in a high pedestal in the industrial world is the ready penetrability of radium radiation through steel and other metals.

If the steel or other metal through which the radium passes is homogeneous, the rays will pass through uniformly and will emerge with uniform intensity on the other side. The intensity of the radiation will, of course, be less owing to a certain amount of absorption in the material. If however, the metal or substance irradiated is subject to variations of density, such as would be produced by holes, cavities, cracks or other flaws, differential absorption will take place, with the result that the emergent

beam of rays will vary in intensity, and if allowed to fall on a photographic plate this variation in the intensity of the emergent beam will produce shadows of different depth, indicating breaks in the homogeneity of the material through which it is passed!

One of the most important problems that confront the modern engineer is the necessity, or at any rate the desirability, of testing his materials to make quite sure that they are sound and contain no flaw. During recent years there have been several methods of non-destructive testing developed. There are sonic methods, mechanical methods, electrical methods, X-ray methods, and, now, finally, gamma ray methods.

X-rays are used to detect flaws, holes, cracks, and so on in steel structures up to a thickness of approximately 3 inches, but beyond that, for various technical reasons, their use is not practicable.

On the other hand, gamma rays can penetrate metals and other opaque materials through a thickness of ten inches. In the case of X-rays, scattering while passing through material is very considerable, and the scattered radiation emerges from the entire surface of the object. Therefore, the X-ray radiograph of a material of uneven thickness often turns out to be useless, as the contrast between thick and thin portions will not be brought out clearly. On the other hand, the gamma ray scattering, instead of spreading out through wide angles, tends to follow the path of the primary beam. Consequently, the defects mentioned above are not present in gamma radiography. Another point of contrast between these two methods of radiography are that while the X-ray equipment for the examination of steel and other materials involves heavy and cumbersome apparatus, the radium equipment consists of only a 5-inch square box. X-rays suffer very serious absorption in passing through lead, and very little in passing through steel. In the case of gamma rays, the absorption in lead is very little. They pass through lead and steel with equal ease.

A striking illustration of the application of radiography in industry is to be had in the Royal Arsenal. The Inspection Department at the Arsenal examines a very large number of articles radiographically, some of which are dangerous and others not. Amongst the dangerous ones are the fuses which are used in the shells for detonation. After they are manufactured, each one is separately placed inside a box and sealed up. Then they are safely placed in a cup-board, where each is separately radiographed and observed if it is perfect or not. (*The Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, London*).

Science as a Handmaid to Fashion.

In a short article entitled "Science Suits Fashion's Fads" Mr. L. W. Davis (*Scientific American, March 1934*) mentions how rayon and silk are delustrized to suit the taste of the consumers.

Just as all desirable but expensive materials have their cheap imitations, silk has its rival in the rayon, i. e., the artificial silk, which is a chemical product. Silk is loved by all for its lustrous appearance, soft touch and durability. The artificial product, while comparing favourably with the natural silk in the latter two qualities, excelled it in the matter of lustre. It was too gaudy. In fact, the glossiness of artificial silk was so much that it was not very often liked for this reason. In order to find out a method for delustring it, a careful microscopic study of the structure of cotton and wollen fibres, which are comparatively opaque, was undertaken. These fibres showed some lines across their length, which were responsible for their opacity. The absence of similar fissures and the presence of a long surface caused the silk and rayon fibre to be transparent. Therefore it was thought that if the long surface was lessened, there would be a diminution in transparency, which in turn would bring about a diminution in lustre. In the case of the rayon, which is a synthetic product, this has been achieved by the addition of emulsified white mineral oil or a pigment like titanium oxide to the solution of rayon material before the fibres are formed. By this method, the rayon became a little duller than the natural silk. Curiously enough, this dull beauty caught the fancy of the 'fashion-world' so much that the natural silk lost its supremacy for some time.

Now to regain the supremacy of silk its natural lustre had to be reduced. A microscopic study of the silk fibre revealed that it was not entirely smooth but had longitudinal fissures of varying length. Consequently, when silk was treated with the delustrants mentioned above after soaking it in certain liquids and then dried, it was observed that some of the delustrant was held tightly inside the fissures and the lustre was decreased permanently.

Science as a Menace to Society.

Science has emboldened the present generation to know and talk much about eugenics and other matters affecting society. Researchers in eugenics have already placed in the hands of the lay public unlicensed weapons like 'anti-birth solutions' and other 'birth-control methods', which can only do more harm than good. In an article captioned, "Babies by Scientific Selection," Mr. J. H. Caldwell (*Scientific American, March 1934*) talks about legal extra-marital babies. While birth control deals with the destructive aspect of human propagation, extra-marital impregnation deals with the creative aspect. He says: "Babies of extra-marital paternity are now being born of women who have sterile husbands, by artificial insemination with the life-giving germ from

selected men. This is one of the most significant eugenic developments in the history of man." This practice is coming into vogue in the 'wonderland' of America. As a result of an enquiry made by Mr. Caldwell, he says that 56 physicians in America received about 300 requests from patients, i. e. women with sterile husbands, for artificial inseminations with good sperm from a selected source. Many of these doctors have claimed a successful treatment of their cases. Taking a rough statistics, the author says: "The total number of requests for donated sperm in the United States cannot be closely estimated, but the data at hand are sufficient to indicate that the total of these requests must be between 1000 and 3000 per year". The author is optimistic that the human society which has begun to accept and accommodate many things like the baby show, the boy or girl health contest, clinics to teach birth-control, and artificial sterilisation of the unfit, will slowly get accustomed to this new practice also. He wonders what will be the eugenic effect on the race, if this tendency grows. Before pronouncing 'aye' or 'nay' to Caldwell's ideas one has to review the past, survey the present and visualise the future of humanity if such an unpalatable practice is started.

Perhaps the world is heading to a time when "extra-parental" babies may be had. In other words, a time may come when the incubation of the ovum and the sperm in a suitable 'Leyden Jar, for a specified length of time might lead to the production of life! Sometimes, the wonders of Science are horrible, indeed!!

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Book Reviews.

Rabindranath Tagore, His Religious, Social and Political Ideas. By Dr. Taraknath Das, M. A., Ph. D., Calcutta (Saraswathy Library) 1933. Price One Rupee.

This interesting book of 55 pages with portrait frontispiece and an introduction by Prof. Dr. M. Winternitz of the German University of Prague, is an admirable and timely study of the great modern Indian sage.

With his usual clearness and insight, Dr. Das goes to the heart of the matter, showing first the relation of Rabindranath Tagore to the spiritual, intellectual, social and political life of his native province, Bengal, then setting forth the relation of himself and family for more than a century to the general movements that have stirred India as a whole.

The chief religious ideals of Tagore, the problems of evil, of self, the individual and the universe, the realization of beauty, of the infinite etc., are discussed in relation to present day ideals of the civilization of the West, with which Dr. Das is widely familiar. He recognizes the achievements of the civilizations of Europe as wonderful, but in the light of Truth, as the end of civilization is to bring self into harmony with the infinite, not to use it for mastery of wealth, as love not greed means true conquest; thus the philosopher of the East has a most important and universal message, especially for the present age.

Intense lover of India, Tagore has not hesitated to face the facts of social injustice grown out of age-old institutions, and following in the footsteps of his father and grand-father along lines marked by them and by the great Bengali religious leader, Ram Mohan Roy, he has endeavoured to right the same, seeking always for this the inspiration of India's own spiritual ideals at their fountain head. In his University at Shantiniketan, universal and international in scope, he has followed out his philosophy and given free play to his ideas of right education of the youth of both sexes, his aim being the "constant pursuit of Truth.....dominated by a common aspiration.....the need of sharing the delights of culture.....the extension of sympathy and service" above and beyond the nationalistic prejudices.

As a patriot, Tagore is shown as a revolutionary, but not an advocate of violent revolution. Love and sacrifice are the key-notes of his ideals in this regard. He is not a democrat and believes in the rule of the wisest. He has "ever raised his voice against the injustice of foreign rule and striven by his poetry and poetic prose to rouse India to be herself and to throw off the foreign yoke.....He goes farther; he is an ardent advocate of Asian Independence". At the same time he hopes, through mutual understanding and love, "that a forward marching idealism" will in the end assimilate "the true gifts" of the East and West, until we finally come to the "unity of human spirit".

This little book, which ends with choice selections from the poems of "Rishi Rabindranath" recommends itself as a charming gift to choice friends, and will be found to be an inspiration to which its possessor will unfailingly and often return.

Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A.

Elizabeth S. Kite, Litt. D.

The Book of Life and the Book of Love. By Upton Sinclair. Published by Messrs. T. Werner Laurie Ltd., London. Price 7½ sh.

Mr. Sinclair's critical and enquiring mind and his vast reading and observation have produced a work so rare in literature that it has evoked the envious question, "Why do you always think of things first?" from no less a person than Mr H. G. Wells. *The Book of Life* is a very ambitious attempt in four parts "to give everyday beings the everyday information they need for the successful living of their lives".

The first part deals with the Mind of Man. It starts with the truth that Mind triumphs over Matter, and that Man is fast becoming the creator, and finds that Morality is a problem of continuous adjustment to new environments and new needs and that Will is the very secret and essence of Life. It delves into the wondrous depths of the human mind, and gives a comprehensive study of the subconscious and conscious in Man. The work of Dr. Freud on Psychology and Psycho-analysis is correctly estimated, and a fund of light is let into the secrets of mental magic, Pelmanism, and spiritual seances and media. It ends with the exhortation to love the highest possibilities of life, and labour diligently to foster them.

The second part is a treatise on the human body, its constitution and care. A study of dietetics leaves the question, whether vegetarianism or non-vegetarianism is better, unanswered, but points out the best food that one may take. A summary of his experiments with the fast-cure is also appended, and doctors are invited to take a cue from him. It concludes that the human body is an organic whole and has to be taken care of as such, and that rest, physical and mental, is as important as exercise, fresh air or clean food for the physical well-being of man.

In the third part, Sinclair talks of Love and matters connected with the heart. In an anxious attempt to warn young people against the pitfalls into which he almost fell in his youth, he errs on the side of caution. He wants that love should be made rational, and for that he would prescribe a course of lessons in matrimony. He argues that early marriages are good, and that birth-control is necessary, at least during the early stages of married life. His considered opinion is that abstention is no satisfactory solution of the problem. Of course, Sinclair lays himself open to the charge of trying to frame rules from the exceptional experiences of his own life, and certainly Sinclair is not the common type of man to constitute a general standard or signpost. But his ideals of a happy home are so sane and healthy that we have to agree that, on the whole, he is a good guide. An important summary of the nursery book comes as a handy guide.

It is in the last part that we find Sinclair most at home. In his attack on the crumbling institutions of capitalistic society, he unloosens all his "verbal thunderbolts" with the fury and ferocity of a Bolshevik. But he has nothing but condemnation for the violence and bloodshed that the Red Revolution entailed. He is a firm believer in peaceful propaganda. In fact, he is a strange compromise between capitalism and communism.

Thus *The Book of Life* is seen to cover the whole field of life, accepting no dogmas or doctrines and stating none, but has stood the severe test of rational criticism. It is a magnificent treat to read this book, no page of which lacks vigour or vitality. It gives in simple language what a whole library of books has failed to—a competent, honest and up-to-date summary of all that is worth knowing. It is a great book.

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