

MISCELLANEOUS.

CURRENTS OF THOUGHT IN THE ORIENT.

BY B. K. ROY.

The Vitality of Hindu Civilization.

Are the ancient spiritual ideals of the East worth preserving? Are the modern material ideals of the West worth continuing? Are there any basic differences in the ideals of both? These are the questions that are agitating the minds of the thoughtful thinkers of both the East and the West.

Promotho Nath Bose, the noted author of *Hindu Civilization under British Rule*, has just come out with a new volume on the *Epochs of Civilisation*, in which he tries to analyze some of these ideals. The book has not reached us yet, but we find a synopsis of its salient parts in an article on "The Vitality of Hindu Civilization" by "A Bengali Brahmin," in the November *Modern Review* of Calcutta.

The Brahmin in summarizing the divisions of epochs as given by Mr. Bose writes:

"The history of human progress may be divided into three epochs. The first epoch (B. C. 6000 to 2000) comprises the history of the earlier civilizations of Egypt, Babylonia and China. The second epoch (about B. C. 2000 to 700 A. D.) comprises the later civilizations of Egypt and China, and the civilizations of India, Greece, Rome, Assyria, Phenicia and Persia. We are living in the third epoch, which commenced about 700 A. D. The most important fact of this third epoch is the rise and progress of Western civilization. Every epoch of civilization may be divided into three stages. In the first stage matter dominates the spirit, military prowess calls forth the greatest admiration, culture being related to the gratification of the senses, takes the form of the fine arts. The second stage is characterized by intellectual development. It is the age of reason, of science and philosophy, and militarism is on the decline. The third or final stage is the stage of spiritual development. Then 'the society is characterized more by harmony than by mobility.'"

As a rejoinder to the short-sighted supporters of the supposed superiority of the West, Mr. Bose is quoted as saying:

"It may be urged by an observer whose vision is not bedimmed by the glamour of western civilization, that if the ancient sages counseled retirement from strife and stress of material advancement, so far as practicable, to those who were particularly desirous of spiritual progress, especially at an advanced age, it was because the greater and the more arduous battle of such progress

might be fought more energetically and more efficiently, because they held with Buddha that—

“One may conquer a thousand men in battle
But he who conquers himself is the greatest victor.’

“The western nations are ‘playing the man,’ ‘to strive, to seek, to find.’ But the question naturally obtrudes itself, to find what? A spectator from the Oriental point of view may well ask: Of what avail is the victory of the western ‘grown man,’ which is achieved not by love, mercy or self-sacrifice, but the path to which lies over the misery of countless fellow creatures in all quarters of the globe, and which does not secure the tranquility and beatitude begotten of righteousness and concord, but brings in Sisyphean misery and disquiet engendered by unsatisfied desire, insatiable greed, and perpetual discord?”

To substantiate this argument of Mr. Bose, the modern Brahmin quotes passages from Tolstoy, Guizot, Browning, Spencer and Kidd. He might add here a few sentences from the recent utterances of Ex-President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard.

But Mr. Bose has a heroic hope in the future of western civilization, and believes that the third stage is bound to come to the West, but is afraid that it will not come before the very close of the present century and “When that consummation takes place, the evil tendencies of western industrialism would be repressed, but the foundation of international amity it has laid by bringing together all the races of the world would be strengthened, and there would arise, broad-based upon it, a fabric of civilization grander and more majestic than any the world has witnessed as yet.”

“The Hindus,” says Mr. Bose, “survived the loss of their political independence; and the survival is attributable to their moral and spiritual culture, which inspired them with sufficient courage to resist their conversion either by the sword or the allurements of material advancement. Hindu culture not only presented an impenetrable front of opposition to the disintegrating influences of Mohammedan invasion, but also in the course of time captured the Moslem mind and largely influenced Moslem culture and Moslem administration.”

The reason, to speak in the words of Mr. Jayaswal, is that “The Hindu is not a fossil. . . . The golden age of his polity lies not in the past but in the future. His modern history begins in the sixteenth century when Vaishnavism preached the equality of all men, when the Sudra—the helot of the ancient Hindu—preached shoulder to shoulder with the Brahmin who welcomed and encouraged it, when the God of the Hindu was for the first time worshiped with hymns composed by a Mohammedan, when Ramdas declared that man is free and he cannot be subjected by force, and when the Brahmin accepted the leadership of the Sudra in attempting to found a Hindu state. The Reformation of the Hindu has come. But a force which is greater still is also coming.”

Gleanings from “The Gardener.”

Mr. Rabindranath Tagore has just been awarded the Nobel prize for idealistic literature. He deserves it and ought to have received it long before. But Tagore was not known. He translated his *Gitanjali* in 1912; and he receives this international honor in 1913. That is what knowledge does with impartial tribunals.

Shortly after the *Gitanjali* appears *The Gardener*, a volume containing eighty-five lyrics of love and life—written in his younger days. Instead of mysticism, as in *Gitanjali*, here we find romanticism. Here Byron, Shelley and Omar Khayyam have combined, as it were, to make this volume romantic indeed:

LOVE AS SIMPLE AS A SONG.

“Hands cling to hands and eyes linger on eyes: thus begins the record of our hearts.

It is the moon-lit night of March; the sweet smell of *henna* is in the air; my flute lies on the earth neglected and your garland of flowers is unfinished. This love between you and me is simple as a song.

“Your veil of saffron color makes my eyes drunk.

The jasmine wreath that you wove me thrills to my heart like praise.

It is a game of giving and withholding, revealing and screening again; some smiles and some little shyness, and some sweet useless struggles.

This love between you and me is simple as a song.

“No mystery beyond the present; no striving for the impossible; no shadow behind the charm; no groping in the depth of the dark.

This love between you and me is simple as a song.

“We do not stray out of all words into the ever silent; we do not raise our hands to the void for things beyond hope.

It is enough that we give and we get.

We have not crushed the joy to the utmost to wring from it the wine of pain.

This love between you and me is simple as a song.”

GET DRUNK AND GO TO THE DOGS.

“O mad, superbly drunk;

If you kick open your doors and play the fool in public;

If you empty your bag in a night and snap your fingers at prudence;

If you walk in curious paths and play with useless things;

Reck not rhyme or reason;

If unfurling your sails before the storm you snap the rudder in two,

Then I will follow you, comrade, and be drunken and go to the dogs.

“I have wasted my days and nights in the company of steady wise neighbors.

Much knowing has turned my hair gray, and much watching has made my sight dim.

For years I have gathered and heaped up scraps and fragments of things: Crush them and dance upon them, and scatter them all to the winds.

For I know it is the height of wisdom to be drunken and go to the dogs.

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“I swear to surrender this moment all claims to the ranks of the decent.

I let go my pride of learning and judgment of right and of wrong.

I will shatter memory's vessel, scattering the last drop of tears.

With the foam of the berry-red wine I will bathe and brighten my laughter.
 The badge of the cavil and staid I will tear into shreds for the nonce.
 I will take the holy vow to be worthless, to be drunken and go to the dogs."

AN APPEAL TO THE BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF DR. W. B. SMITH.

BY A. KAMPMEIER.

Dr. Smith appeals (*Open Court*, 1913, p. 699) to "the open-minded reader to consider carefully" the accounts from Hegesippus and Clemens Alexandrinus in Eusebius on James the Just. All "open-minded" readers, on the contrary, will appeal to the better knowledge of Dr. Smith, that the church-fathers in the interest of the perpetual virginity of Mary, and to do away with the hard facts of the Synoptics, that she had other children besides Jesus, quite early declared the brothers of Jesus to be either sons of Joseph by a former marriage or cousins of Jesus, sons of Alphaeus and a sister of Mary, the latter on the basis of a very equivocal passage (xix. 25) of the Fourth Gospel. For while Matthew and Mark represent the three women, Mary the Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less, and Salome, as viewing the crucified Jesus from *afar*, the unhistorical speculative Fourth Gospel in flat contradiction says: "There stood *beside* the cross Mary the mother of Jesus and her sister, Mary the wife of Clopas (i. e., Alphaeus) and Mary the Magdalene." This passage has been understood in two ways, the one assuming that four women are meant, the other that "Mary wife of Clopas" stands in apposition to "her sister." The early Syrian translation of the New Testament already understood it in the first way.

Even if the church-fathers with their dogmatical and otherwise very doubtful basis were right in their assumptions, they would not help Dr. Smith a whit unless he insists that the assumed half-brothers and cousins of Jesus must be taken symbolically also in this case, spiritual half-brothers, what that may mean, and spiritual cousins. If Dr. Smith is right here also, let us be thankful that after an ignorance lasting from the composition of the New Testament in regard to the brothers, whether half-brothers or cousins of Jesus, till up to our times, we have finally come to the right insight through the labors of Dr. Smith.

LAOTOPATI'S SACRIFICE.

[NOTE.—The following version of a legend from the "Classic of the Thousand Buddhas" is offered as a slight but interesting contribution to the story of Chinese Buddhism. The thousand kings, profiting by the lesson of Laotopati, repented of their want of faith, and after due penance performed for a kalpa or two were promised Buddhahood in their turn. The account is of course legendary, and in view of the modern rehabilitation of Buddhism, involving the recognition therein of much that is fine, much that is wholesome and logical and truly spiritual, it may as well be recorded that the story is not accepted as other than imaginative either by *The Open Court* or by the translator. The latter must however confess to a good deal of appreciation for the wonderful idea of self-sacrifice that runs through the poem, finding expression in a great act, which, if it arouses horror in many, will not fail to awaken in some minds a measure of admiration. The concept in itself