legitimate pastime for the Chirstians! Your missionaries
go to preach God and dare not speak a word of truth for
fear of the English, who will kick them out the next
day.
All property and land granted by the previous govern-
ments for supporting education have been swallowed up,
and the present Government spends even less than Russia
in education. And what education?
The least show of originality is throttled......it is hopeless
with us, unless there really is a God, who is the father
of all, who is not afraid of the strong to protect the weak,
and who is not bribed by wealth; is there such a God?
Time will show.

_Works: Vol. VIII, Pp. 483-485._

Here Swamiji communicates to an American friend of his
what was happening in India under the aegis of British
Imperialism in India of his time.

The secret of success of the Westerners is the power of
organisation and combination. That is only possible with
mutual trust and co-operation and help.
It is all right for those who have plenty of money and
position to let the world roll on as such, but I call him
traitor who, having been educated and nursed in luxury by
the heart's blood of the down-trodden millions of the
toiling poor, never even takes a thought for them. Where,
in what period of history did your rich men and noble men,
your priests and potentates take any thought for the
poor—the grinding of whose faces is the very life-blood of
their power?
Why amongst the poor of India are so many Mohammedans?
It is nonsense to say they were converted by the
sword. It was to gain their liberty from the.....zamindars
and from the ...priests. And as a consequence you find
in Bengal there are more Mohammedans than Hindus
amongst the cultivators, because there were so many
zamindars there. Who thinks of raising these sunken
down-trodden millions? A few thousand graduates do not make a nation; a few rich men do not make a nation. Ninety per cent of our people are without education—who thinks of that?


My mission in life is to rouse a struggle in you.


...without mutual co-operation we can never make ourselves strong men.


Co-operation is the basis of as advancement as said by Lester F. Ward⁸ and Peter Kropotkin.⁹ The latter said that the interested groups have distorted C. Darwin's theory of "Struggle for existence".

Aye, my friends, I must tell you a few harsh truths. I read in the newspapers, how when one of our poor fellows is murdered or ill-treated by an Englishman, howls go up all over the country; I read and I weep, and the next moment comes to my mind the question, who is responsible for it all? As a Vedantist I cannot but put that question to myself. The Hindu is a man of introspection, he wants to see things in and through himself, through the subjective vision. I therefore ask myself who is responsible, and the answer comes every time, not the English; no, they are not responsible for all our misery and all our degradation and we alone are responsible. Our aristocratic ancestors went on treading the common masses of our country under foot, till they became helpless, till under this torment the poor, poor people nearly forgot that they were human beings. They have been compelled to be merely hewers of wood and

8. Vide: "Applied Sociology ".
9. Vide: "Mutual Aid".
drawers of water for centuries, so much so, that they are made to believe that they are born as slaves, born as hewers of wood and drawers of water. With all our boasted education of modern times, if anybody say a kind word for them, I often find our men shrink at once from the duty of lifting them up, these poor down-trodden people. Not only so, but I also find that all sorts of most demonical and brutal arguments, culled from the crude ideas of hereditary transmission, and other such gibberish from the Western world, are brought forward in order to brutalise and tyrannise over the poor, all the more.


Here SwamiJI is strongly emphasizing the historical fact which our present-day politicians are apt to forget, that the degradation and the enslavement of the Indian people has been wrought by those who have been in power in Indian society, when it developed the class system. The enslavement of the Indian people did not begin with the Battle of Tirouri and the Battle of Plassey, but the day when through class-struggle the people went down and the aristocratic class established a class state. Later on, the State and the Church by making a coalition began the exploitation of the Indian people which has resulted in the debasement of the people which SwamiJI laments. SwamiJI himself has come to the same conclusion when he analysed the ancient Indian history.

Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your
name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.


And that is what we want, no privilege for any one, equal chances for all; let every one be taught that the Divine is within, and every one will work out his own salvation.


Here Swamiji wants democracy in social State.

Aye, in this country of ours, the very birthplace of the Vedanta, our masses have been hypnotised for ages......To touch them is pollution, to sit with them is pollution! Hopeless they were born, hopeless they must remain! And the result is that they have been sinking, sinking, sinking, and have come to the last stage to which a human being can come. For what country is there in the world where man has to sleep with the cattle? And for this, blame nobody else, do not commit the mistake of the ignorant. The effect is here and the cause is here too. We are to blame. Stand up, be bold, and take the blame on your own shoulders: Do not go about throwing mud at others; for all the faults you suffer from, you are the sole and only cause.


Swamiji is strongly pleading the case of the "submerged tenth" of the society. His is a strong rebuke to the Nationalists who lay the blame of India's degradation on the shoulders of others, yet turn a deaf ear to the cause of the sunken masses, and to whom patriotism means safeguarding the interests of their own class.

But since independence things are getting better.

But above all, let me once more remind you that here is
need of practical work, and the first part of that is that you should go to the sinking millions of India, and take them by the hand.


You, young men of Bengal, do not look up to the rich and great men who have money. The poor did all the great and gigantic work of the world. Many will follow your example, poor though you are. Be steady, and, above all, be pure and sincere to the back-bone. Have faith in your destiny. You, young men of Bengal, are to work out the salvation of India. Mark that whether you believe it or not, do not think that it will be done today or to-morrow. I believe in it as I believe in my own body and my own soul. Therefore, my heart goes to you —young men of Bengal. It depends upon you who have no money; because you are poor, therefore you will work. Because you have nothing, therefore you will be sincere. Because you are sincere, you will be ready to renounce all. That is what I am just now telling you. Once more I repeat this to you. This is your mission in life, this is my mission in life. I do not care what philosophy you take up; only I am ready to prove here that throughout the whole of India, there runs a mutual and cordial string of eternal faith in the perfection of humanity, and I believe in it myself. And let that faith be spread over the whole land.


Swamiji's advice to the young men of Bengal should be carefully considered by all Indian youth. He strongly urges them to wean themselves away from their petty-bourgeois mentality which makes them always look up to rich and great men for help and money. The finding of the youth in the history of Bengal is that the rich men did not open their purses when the former offered their lives at the altar of their motherland. It is the poor youth which did any work. This is the experience of history all over the world.
It is right for you that you should serve your millions of brothers rather than aggrandise this little self. You must feel for the millions of beings around you.


And to the Brahmmins I say: "Vain is your pride of birth and ancestry. Shake it off. If you are not bold enough to do that, then admit your weakness and stretch forth a helping hand and open the gates of knowledge to one and all, and give the down-trodden masses once more their just and legitimate rights and privileges".


Swamiji is urging the youth of India to declass themselves by identifying with the downtrodden masses, and to restore to the latter their just and legitimate rights and privileges by leaving aside class-interest of their own.

Do you not see—taking up this plea of Sattva, the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of Tamas, or dark ignorance? Where the most dull want to hide their stupidity by covering it with a false desire for the Highest Knowledge, which is beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one, born and bred in lifelong laziness, wants to throw the veil of renunciation over his own unfitness for work; where the most diabolical try to make their cruelty appear under the cloak of austerity, as a part of religion; where no one has an eye upon his own incapacity, but everyone is ready to lay the whole blame on others; where knowledge consists only in getting some books by heart, genius consists in chewing the cud of others' thoughts, and the highest glory consists in taking the name of ancestors: do we require any other proof to show that that country is being day by day drowned in utter Tamas?

Works: Vol. IV, P. 338.
Swamiji criticises the slave-character of our people which we regard by mistake, as Sattva, ergo, as the highest embodiment of human virtue. He says that Tamas is slave-mentality; passivity of slave-mentality is not Sattva! Obeisant pettifogging and listless character of a slave do not come from Sattva. The defects and weakness of our character do not generate from Sattva and Raja gunas, but from the mentality of a hereditary slave!

And where are they through whose physical labour only are possible, the influence of the Brahman, the prowess of the Kshatriya and the fortune of the Vaisya? What is their history, who, being the real body of society, are designated, at all times, in all countries, as “base-born”? For whom kind India prescribed the mild punishments, “Cut out his tongue, chop off his flesh”, and others of like nature, for such a grave offence as any attempt on their part to gain a share of the knowledge and wisdom monopolised by her higher classes—those “moving corpses” of India, and the “beasts of burden” of other countries—the Sudras, what is their lot in life? What shall I say of India? Let alone her Sudra class, her Brahmans, to whom belonged the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, are now the foreign professors, her Kshatriyas the ruling Englishman, and Vaisyas too, the English, in whose bone and marrow is the instinct of trade, so that, only the Sudra-ness—the-beast-of-burdenness—is now left with the Indians themselves.

A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally enveloped us all. Now there is neither firmness of purpose nor boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart, nor strength of mind, neither aversion to maltreatments by others, nor dislike for slavery, neither love in the heart, nor hope, nor manliness; but what we have in India are only deep-rooted envy and strong antipathy against one another, morbid desire to ruin by hook or by crook the weak, and dog-like to lick the feet of the
strong. Now the highest satisfaction consists in the display of wealth and power, devotion in self-gratification, wisdom in the accumulation of transitory objects; Yoga in hideous diabolical practices, work in the slavery of others; civilisation in base imitation of foreign nations, eloquence in the use of abusive language, the merit of literature in extravagant flatteries of the rich, or in the diffusion of ghastly obscenities! What to speak separately of the distinct Sudra class of such a land, where the whole population has virtually come down to the level of the Sudra? The Sudras of countries other than India have become, it seems, a little awake; but they are wanting in proper education, and have only the mutual hatred of men of their own class—a trait common to Sudras. What avails it if they greatly out-number the other classes? That unity, by which ten men collect the strength of a million, is yet far away from the Sudra; hence, according to the law of nature, the Sudras invariably form the subject race.


Swamiji strongly pleads the case of the Sudra, now-a-days known as the Proletariate. He says that in ancient India, the laboring classes have been exploited and oppressed but as the result of this class-domination, nemesis has overtaken the upper classes. To-day the whole Indian people have been turned into Sudras! And as such, we have imbibed the character of the slaves and have developed slave mentality. In this page, he strongly depicts our slavish character and gives an analysis of it. As a result of slave-mentality, he says, we are given to extravagant flatteries of the rich! The evil effects of capitalism is to be discerned in our slave-mentality, yet we regard it as the normal condition of our life.

In the latter part, he speaks of the condition of the Proletariate of other lands as it existed when he was alive.
Yet, a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, with their Sudrahood; that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits,—not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Sudras,—will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to slowly break upon the Western world, and the thoughtful are at their wits’ end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon. Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism and other like sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow.


Swamiji prophesises the uprise of the lowly—the rise of the world Proletariate. He clearly says that the Proletariate will come to power in every country. That has been the attempt of Karl Marx and his party ever since the Proletariate movement has been set on foot. Of course the Marxists say that the Proletariate in coming into power will not remain as Sudras, but by establishing a casteless and classless society will develop the higher nature of man in everybody. Swamiji here foreshadows the “Dictatorship of the Proletariate”.

By reading the latter part of the pages it is clear that Swamiji was acquainted with the movement and literature of the Social-Revolutionaries of the West and he understood to which end the “Proletariate Movement” of the Occidental world was drifting, and the reaction made by it in the mind of the Capitalist class. Therefore he foretold the installation of the Proletariate in “Absolute Supremacy in every Society”.

We have been slaves for ever, i.e., it has never been given to the masses in India to express the inner light which is their inheritance. The Occident has been rapidly advanc-
ing towards freedom for the last few centuries. In India, it was the king who used to prescribe everything, from Kulinism down to what one should eat and one should not. In Western countries, the people do everything themselves.

The king now has nothing to say to any social matter; on the other hand, the Indian people have not yet even the least faith in themselves, what to say of self-reliance. The faith in one's own self, which is the basis of Vedanta, has not yet been even slightly carried into practice.

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 414.*

Swamiji emphasises the fact that has been said in the commentary of 'Anthropological Sayings' above, that the people of India have always been slaves i.e., they have been down-trodden, oppressed and exploited in every way. This historical fact is lost sight of by our political and social patriots. This has turned the Indian masses into human automaton to do the drudgery of slaves' works!

A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor, the fallen and the down-trodden, should go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up,—the gospel of equality.

Trust not to the rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful......

I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed......Vow then to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day.

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 180.*

In these epistles Swamiji is strongly appealing to the youth of the country to work for the salvation of the fallen masses.
He warns the youth again and again not to look towards vested interests for support. He is pointing out the need of preaching the gospel of the social equality and of upliftment of the masses as a historical necessity. He says that a band of devoted young men with clear vision and with zeal for the realization of their ideal will work wonder.

In India there is a howling cry that we are very poor, but how many charitable associations are there for the well-being of the poor? How many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of millions of the poor in India? Are we men? What are we doing for their livelihood, for their improvement? We do not touch them, we avoid their company! Are we men? Those thousands of Brahmans—what are they doing for the low, downtrodden masses of India?


Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring the religion."
Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathiser in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the condition of the masses. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature?

* * * * * * *

Can you put life into this dead mass—dead to almost all moral aspiration, dead to all future possibilities—and always ready to spring upon those that would try to do good to them?

* * * * * * *

Work among those young men who can devote heart and soul to this one duty—the duty of raising the masses of
India. Awake them, unite them, and inspire them with this spirit of renunciation; it depends wholly on the young people of India.

The only hope of India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead.


Swamiji analyses in a few words the true situation of the country, and gives the only remedy for it.

Now the question is, is it for the good of the public at large that social rules are framed, or society is formed? Many reply to this in the affirmative; some again may hold that it is not so. Some men, being comparatively powerful, slowly bring all others under their control and by stratagem, force or adroitness gain their own objects. If this be true, what can be the meaning of the statement that there is danger in giving liberty to the ignorant? What, again, is the meaning of liberty? Liberty does not certainly mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of wealth, etc., by you and me, but it is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence or wealth according to our will, without doing any harm to others; and all the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education or knowledge. The second question is, those who say that if the ignorant and the poor be given liberty, i.e., full right to their body, wealth, etc., and if their children have the same opportunity to better their condition and acquire knowledge as those of the rich and the highly situated, they would become perverse—do they say this for the good of the society, or blinded by their selfishness? In England too I have heard, "Who will serve us if the lower classes get education?"

He is giving a crushing reply to the propertied classes for their selfish attitude towards the propertyless ones. He is criticising the "nationalism" of the Bourgeoisie to whom "liberty" means liberty to further their own interests. Here, he is delineating the process by which the Bourgeoisie of a country takes its rise, and depicting their mentality towards the exploited classes. Regarding this phase of society,\(^{10}\) Swamiji is voicing the same historical fact as expressed by Prof. Veblen.

A country where millions of people live on flowers of the *modhu* plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance?


Swamiji is depicting the true facts of the society in these trenchant words. But it seems that there are more sadhus than he enumerated. Their number will go up to several millions. They are a problem with the National Government. The day is not far off when a radical tempered National Government will have to solve this problem in the same way as it is being tackled by the People’s Government of China in the matter of the shaven-headed Bhikshus, the compeers of the shaven-headed sadhus of India.

Again, in this saying Swamiji is challenging in forceful terms the opinions of those who advocate passivity of life as the highest aim of human efforts. He is denouncing the exploitations that are going on in this country in the name of religion.

What have we, several millions Sannyasins, been doing for the masses? Teaching them metaphysics! It is all

madness! It is a mockery to offer religion to a starving man. How can the millions rise, how can they be a power for good to society when they are starving?

*Life of Swami Vivekananda: Vol. IV, P. 177.*

Swamiji is again criticising the vagary of the vagrant wandering sadhus who coming from different religions must swell the number to several millions. They are busy with their efforts to attain Moksha (salvation) in the next world, while according to the old calculation of the patriot-leader Dadabhai Naoroji, the majority of the Indians on whom these drones of the society live, starve and semi-starve everyday! Again, he pleads for the starving millions. Swamiji in his wanderings over the country has seen the true state of affairs. These sayings are not political clap-trap to him.

We as a nation have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and raise the masses. The Hindu, the Mahomedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again, the force to raise them must come from inside.

*Life of Swami Vivekananda: Vol. IV, P. 177.*

Here, Swamiji clearly says that as the result of various sorts of oppressions and exploitations the soul of the Indian people have been smothered. Again, Swamiji is strongly urging the youth of India to carry on a vigorous propaganda for upliftment of the masses. His suggestions for this kind of work fall in line with the work of the Russian youth done before the rise of New Russia, and the work of the Chinese youth of the present generation.

You have been despising the lower classes of the country for a very long time and, as a result, you have now become the objects of contempt in the eyes of the world.
Don't you perceive them? It is simply due to your having despised the masses of India that you have now been living a life of slavery for the last thousand years; it is therefore that you are objects of hatred in the eyes of foreigners and are looked upon with indifference by your countrymen.


Swamiji speaks of the nemesis that overtakes a people who enslave and exploit the greater part of their members for group interest. This is the verdict of history.

Alas! nobody thinks of the poor of the country. They are the backbone of the country, who by their labour are producing food—these poor people, the sweepers and labourers, who if they stop work for one day will create a panic in the town. But there is none to sympathise with them, none to console them in their misery.


However much you may parade your descent from Aryan ancestors and sing the glories of ancient India day and night, and however much you may be strutting in the pride of your birth, you, the upper classes of India,—do you think you are alive? You are but mummies ten thousand years old! It is among those whom your ancestors despised as "walking carrions" that the little of vitality there is still in India is to be found; and it is you who are the real "walking corpses". Your houses, your furniture look like museum specimens, so lifeless and antiquated they are; and even an eye-witness of your manners and customs, your movements and modes of life, is inclined to think he is listening to a grandmother's tale! When, even after making a personal acquaintance with you, one returns home, one seems to think one had been to visit the paintings in an art gallery! In this world of Maya, you are the real illusions, the mystery, the real
mirage in the desert, you, the upper classes of India! You represent the past tense with all its varieties of form jumbled into one. That one still seems to see you at the present time, is nothing but a nightmare brought on by indigestion. You are the void, the unsubstantial nonentities of the future. Denizens of the dreamland, why are you loitering any longer? Fleshless and bloodless skeletons of the dead body of Past India that you are—why do you not quickly reduce yourselves into dust and disappear in the air? Aye, in your bony fingers are some priceless rings of jewel, treasured up by your ancestors, and within the embrace of your stinking corpses are preserved a good many ancient treasure-chests. Up to now you have not had the opportunity to hand them over. Now......in these days of free education and enlightenment, pass them on to your heirs, aye, do it as quickly as you can. You merge yourselves in the void and disappear, and let New India arise in your place. Let her arise—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains. These common people have suffered oppression for thousands of years—suffered it without murmur, and as a result have got wonderful fortitude. They have suffered eternal misery, which has given them unflinching vitality. Living on a handful of grain they can convulse the world;.......Skeletons of the Past, there, before you, are your successors, the India that is to be. Throw those treasure-chests of yours and those jewelled rings among them—as soon as you can; and you—vanish into air, and be seen no more—only keep your ears open. No sooner will you disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renaissant India—ringing with the voice of a million thunders and reverberating throughout the universe.

Swamiji gives a sociological analysis of the condition of the Indian Society. He says that the upper classes have outlived their time, their functions have ceased long ago. Today, they are the relics of the past, only a nightmare to haunt the present-day state of society. Swamiji admonishes them, because their presence in present-day body-politic of Indian Society confuses and hinders the normal evolution of the latter.

Later on, when he speaks of the rise of New India out of the huts and factories of the laboring classes he depicts the state of Future India as it ought to be. In this prophecy of his, he is in line with the "Proletocult" (Proletarian Culture) movement of the Russian Communists. The said movement is a movement of the spontaneous growth of the culture amongst the toiling class, which will be based on the psychology of the same group. This culture will represent the psychology of the Proletariate, and not of the Bourgeoisie.

In India, the culture of the toiling masses which Swamiji prophesises will be the bond of union between all the varying sects and communities. And this "Proletocult" will create the New India. Swamiji here has anticipated the movement of the West by two decades.

Just weigh the matter in your mind. Those uncared-for lower classes of India—the peasants and weavers and the rest, who have been conquered by foreigners and are looked down upon by their own people—it is they who from time immemorial have been working silently, without even getting the remuneration of their labours! But what great changes are taking place slowly, all over the world, in pursuance of nature’s laws! Countries, civilisations and supremacy are undergoing revolutions. Ye labouring classes of India, as a result of your silent, constant labours Babylon, Persia, Alexandria, Greece, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Baghdad, Samarkand, Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, Holland and England have successively attained supremacy and eminence! And you?—Well, who cares to think of you! My dear Swami,
your ancestors wrote a few philosophical works, penned a dozen or so epics, or built a number of temples—that is all, and you rend the skies with triumphal shouts; while those whose heart’s blood has contributed to all the progress that has been made in the world—well, who cares to praise them?.....ye ever-trampled labouring classes of India! I bow to you.


Swamiji is denouncing the class-character of civilization, and is saying that those who from time immemorial are working diligently and silently to produce the wealth of India, are uncared for by those who exploiting the labor of the same have been rolling in luxury! Swamiji here is giving a historical perspective that the production of the labor of these silent toilers has given rise to a brisk international trade between India and the outside world. This, in turn has enriched those countries he has mentioned. India’s material prosperity and progress are due to the silent work of her mute laboring masses. But the class-spirit of those who are at the top of the social hierarchy prevents the truth to be manifested. The upper classes who have contributed nothing to India’s material civilization appropriate to themselves the honor of being the originators of India’s civilization. Here, he is hinting at the saying of Disraeli that two nations with diametrical interests, civilization and ideals live side by side in the same body-politic of a country! Finally, Swamiji pays his respect to the Indian toiling classes who as the producers of wealth have contributed to the progress of man’s civilization.

Well, who on earth can vie with us (specially the Bengalees) as regards talking and discussing? Show it in action if you can. Let your work proclaim, and let the tongue rest. But let me mention one thing in passing, viz., that Europe began to advance from the date that learning and power began to flow in among the poor lower classes. Lots of suffering poor people of other countries,
cast off like refuse as it were; find a house and shelter in America, and these are the very backbone of America! It matters little whether rich men and scholars listen to you, understand you, and praise or blame you—they are merely the ornaments, the decorations of the country!—It is the millions of poor lower class people who are its life. Numbers do not count, nor does wealth or poverty; a handful of men can throw the world off its hinges, provided they are united in thought, word and deed—never forget this conviction. The more opposition there is, the better.


Swamiji is criticising his own people which is still the fact! He says that "hurraing" for a few rich men and their hangers-on do not create any new thing. It is the work of the poor lower classes who are the backbone of a people that builds up any tangible thing. The Occidental countries started to advance from the day when democracy began to be realized in every-day life by the former unprivileged masses. Equalitarianism in all respects of life has been the key to the progress of those countries.

EDUCATIONAL SAYINGS

Teach the masses in the Vernaculars, give them ideas; they will get information, but something more is necessary; give them culture. Until you give them that there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.


The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; com-
pared to them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the
easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our
lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost
individuality. That is the great task between our people and
princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that
direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have
trod them down for centuries, and at last the poor of
India have forgotten that they are human beings. They
are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what
is going on in the world around them, and then they will
work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man
and every woman must work out their own salvation.
Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then
the rest must follow as the effect.

*Works*: *Vol. IV, P. 308.*

Swamiji correctly compares the condition of the Western and
Indian masses. The Indian masses being the inheritors of
an ancient civilization and religious code are more humane
and moral than their Occidental compeers.¹ On above
grounds it is more easy to raise them. Therefore Swamiji
pleads for the education of the masses, and to give them ideas
and to open their eyes. Swamiji hits the nail on the head
when he says, “We have to develop their lost individuality”.
This is the kernel of the Indian social question and this is
the problem of the twentieth century. Compare the sayings
of the Russian peasant delegates in All Russian Soviet Con-
gress held in 1917 where they said, “We are dark peoples,
we have been kept blind by the former regime, we cannot
see anything, etc.” Swamiji’s description of the condition
of the Indian masses did agree with that of the Russian
masses; and what he advocated long ago for the upliftment
of the masses of his own country is being applied in Russia.
The result is that with the spread of education and infusion
of new ideas, the Russian *moujik* is transforming himself
into a new man.

1. Vide: *De Tocqueville’s remarks on the character of the French masses.*
Now the question before us is this. There cannot be any growth without liberty. Our ancestors freed religious thought and we have a wonderful religion, but they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is in a word, horrid, diabolical. In the West, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. Just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress and marriage and in every other thing, so long as he does not injure others.


Swami depicts the true condition of Indian society. He is clearly for the overthrow of the status quo of present moribund Indian society, and advocates social freedom.

We talk foolishly against material civilisation. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualisation of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans? It was due to the Hindus' ignorance of material civilisation. Even the Mohammedans taught them to wear tailor-made clothes. Would the Hindus had learned from the Mohammedans how to eat in a cleanly way without mixing their food with the dust of the streets! Material civilization, may even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priesthood is to be removed. No priesthood, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody! Our young fools organize meetings to
get more power from the English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty. Suppose the English give over to you all the power. Why, the powers that be then, will holding the people down, and let them not have it. Slaves want power to make slaves.

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 313.*

Those who maintain that Swamiji only talked of ancient Indian religion and of basing the Indian Society on that foundation take a note of what he has said previously. He was clearly for the overthrow of the present-day Indian social system and for abolition of religious and social exploitation. He stood for an all-round freedom of man. Here he has strongly emphasized the need of developing the material side of our civilization. Here also, he admits that "Economic interpretation of History" is the greatest motive factor in human society, therefore he speaks of "more bread, more opportunity for everybody". Also he exposes the class-character of patriotism of those who shout for liberty. "Slaves want power to make slaves" is a psychological truth, and is this not the mentality of our patriots?

Where is that broad-hearted man who is apt to forget even his own body in meditating over the beauty and glory of the Divine? Those who are such are but a handful in comparison to the population of the whole of India; and in order that these men may attain to their salvation, will the millions and millions of men and women of India have to be crushed under the wheel of the present-day society and religion?

And what good can come out of such a crushing?

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 337-38.*

He criticises the action of those handful of men who for their own development will crush the major portion of their own people. Inversely he advocates the Marxian maxim—"greatest good to the largest number".
Secondly, as I have written before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India. It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope—patiently, steadily and without noise.

Now about work. From the day when education and culture, etc., began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilisation as of Western countries, and the ancient civilisation as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e., by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform. Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them by sucking whose blood the people known as "gentlemen," have become and continue to be gentlemen!


Swamiji again emphasises the fact that no good will come out of running after the rich people. He had his bitter experience in this matter.

Later, in a few words he sketches the development of education and culture in world's history. In ancient and feudal times education with its corollary culture, were confined amongst a selected few who were recruited generally from the affluent classes. The initiates of Stoa and Academy in Greece and of Taxila in India of ancient time were drawn from the wealthy classes. It is said that Brahmavidya was first confined in ancient India amongst the Kshatriyas—the ruling class. With the rise of monasticism, education became the monopoly of the monks,—again a selected group. The
monks of Cluny and Clavireaux and of other cloisters in Europe, and of Nalanda, Vikram silica Sovnapuri and Jagaddal viharas and elsewhere in India, were the repositories of learning in Dark or Middle Ages of those lands. Only in quite modern time, education is becoming popular. The modern educationists and the sociologists are advocating compulsory education of all as the means of uplifting and advancing a people. Here, Swamiji is trenchant in his criticism of those who talk of saving the society and country yet will not go to the masses to uplift them in any way. By “India” our “gentlemen” think of their own class only! Swamiji is referring to these exploiters.

Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education, faith in one’s own self, and through faith in one’s own self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them, while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant.


Let each one of us pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny—pray day and night for them, I care more to preach religion to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. I see what they call the poor of this country, and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to
door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a Mahatman (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratman (wicked soul). Let us unite our wills in continued prayer for their good.


In these epistles Swamiji is referring to the attitude of the social reformers. In his lifetime social reformation movement was most active in India. But this criticism can be applied to the present-day political reformers and revolutionists of latter days as well. All of them have been moving in a circle. To them, India means their own class or group, hence he is pointing out that “the nation lives in the cottages”. It seems that he was the first public man to point out that the fate of the Indian nation depends upon the condition of its masses. His cry in this respect is the same as that of the social-revolutionaries of the West. He did not chew the cud of mid-Victorian ideologies, hence his opinions in this respect seem so similar to that of the twentieth century Occidental social-revolutionaries.

So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages!


Swamiji is denouncing the propertied classes for their exploiting policies towards the poorer classes. He is denouncing the class-spirit of the capitalist and bourgeois classes who do nothing to those whom they exploit, and on whom they thrive!
For the luxury of a handful of the rich, let millions of men and women remain submerged in the hell of want and abyssmal depth of ignorance, for if they get wealth and education, society will be upset!

Who constitute society? The millions, or you, I, and a few others of the upper classes?


Swamiji defended the plea of the social-revolutionaries of his time.

Intelligence must not remain the monopoly of the cultured few; it will be disseminated from higher to lower classes. Education is coming, and compulsory education will follow. The immense power of our people for work must be utilised. India's potentialities are great, and will be called forth.


Swamiji again is pleading the cause of egalitarianism in society.

I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.


He is criticising the class-character of Indian politics. So long ago, he detected the true nature of Indian nationalist politics.

The one problem you have is to give to the masses their rights. You have the greatest religion which the world
ever saw, and you feed the masses with stuff and non-
sense.


Swamiji is clearly denouncing the exploiting policy of the
upper strata of the Indian Society towards the masses. He
says in different words that instead of humanising the masses
with the help of their religion, the masses are being exploited
and humbugged in everyway. Even religion has become a
capitalist proposition. He is hinting at it.

The mass of people in our country is like the sleeping
Leviathan. The education imparted by the present
University system reaches to one or two per cent. of the
masses only. And even those who get that, do not
succeed in their endeavours of doing any good to their
country.
Try to have their (masses) eyes opened as to what has
taken place or is taking place in different countries, what
this world is like, and so forth. You have got lots of
poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from
door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time, and open
their eyes.

Swamiji strongly urges the youth of India to carry on a
vigorous propaganda for upliftment of the masses. His
suggestions for this kind of work fall in line with the work
of the Russian youth done before the rise of New Russia, and
the work of the Chinese youth of the present genera-
tion.

There is some chance if you can impart education to the
masses. Is there a greater strength than that of know-
ledge? Can you give them education? Name me the
country where rich men ever helped anybody! In all
countries it is the middle classes that do all great works.
Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the
rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into
their brains. Afterwards the peasants of each village will collect funds and have one of these in their village.

“One must raise oneself by one’s own exertions”—this holds good in all spheres. We help them to help themselves. That they are supplying you with your daily bread, is a real bit of work done. The moment they will come to understand their own condition and feel the necessity of help and improvement, know that your work is taking effect and is in the right direction. While the little good that the moneyed classes, out of pity, do to the poor, does not last, and ultimately it does nothing but harm to both parties. The peasants and labouring classes are in a moribund condition, so what is needed is that the moneyed people will only help them to regain their vitality, and nothing more. Then leave the peasants and labourers to look to their own problem, to grapple with and solve it.


But know for certain that absolutely nothing can be done to improve the state of things, unless there is spread of education first among the women and the masses. Ah, if even we shrink from working out the salvation of the sinful, the heavy leaden, the humiliated, and the afflicted in soul, who else are to take care of them in this world?

Long ago, when the talk about national question was a monopoly of a few of the elite of the society, Swamiji has given a practical program to the youth to raise the masses as the sine qua non of India’s national advancement. But how many has hearken to it?

Everything requires to be changed a little according to place, time and civilisation.

And so the whole country has been plunged to the utmost depths of meanness, cowardice and ignorance. These men have to be uplifted; words of hope and faith have to be proclaimed to them. We have to tell them, "You are also men like us and you have all the rights that we have".

Swamiji is here delineating the mentality of the people as he saw them during his wide travel all over the country. Ages-long slavery engendered this character in the minds of the Indians about whom Megasthenes spoke so highly.

The peasant, the shoemaker, the sweeper, and such other lower classes of India have much greater capacity for work and self-reliance than you. They have been silently working through long ages, and producing the entire wealth of the land, without a word of complaint. Very soon they will get above you in position. Gradually capital is drifting into their hands, and they are not so much troubled with wants as you are. Modern education has changed your fashion, but new avenues of wealth lie yet undiscovered for want of the inventive genius. You have so long oppressed these forbearing masses; now is the time for their retribution. And you will become extinct in your vain search for employment, making it the be-all and end-all of your life.


Swamiji is speaking about the potentialities of the masses. Those who have identified themselves with the cause of the toiling masses of India and work with them, know it to be the truth.

Later, he prophesises about the future condition of the petty-bourgeois class which has already begun to take place. The latter said that on account of the economic stress after the first world war, the poor middle class became gradually

2. Vide K. Kautsky: "Proletarian Revolution".
proletarianized! They became pay-earners, and some of them went down as wage-earners. Caste-distinction is preventing this class in India from being class-conscious as yet and to throw their lot openly with the Proletariate!

Never mind if they have not read a few books like you—if they have not acquired your tailor-made civilisation. What do these matter? But they are the backbone of the nation in all countries. If these lower classes stop work, from where will you get your food and clothing? If the sweepers of Calcutta stop work a day, it creates a panic; and if they strike for three days, the whole town will be depopulated by the outbreak of epidemics. If the labourers stop work, your supply of food and clothes also stops. And you regard them as low-class people and vaunt your own culture!

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long uniformly like machines guided by human intelligence, and the clever educated section have taken substantial part of the fruits of their labour. In every country this has been the case. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this, determined to exact their legitimate dues. The masses of Europe and America have been the first to awaken and have already begun the fight. Signs of this awakening have shown themselves in India, too, as is evident from the number of strikes among the lower classes now-a-days. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.

Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them, and make them understand, "You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies, and we love you and never hate you". If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle their
knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature, and along with these the profound truths of religion. In exchange for that teaching, the poverty of the teachers will also disappear. By mutual exchange both parties will become friendly to each other.


Be you my helpers in this work. Go from village to village, from one portion of the country to another, and preach this message of fearlessness to all, from the Brahmin to the Chandala. Tell each and all that infinite power resides within them, that they are sharers of immortal Bliss. Thus rouse up the Rajas within them—make them fit for the struggle for existence, and then speak to them about salvation. First make the people of the country stand on their legs by rousing their inner power, first let them learn to have good food and clothes and plenty of enjoyment—then tell them how to be free from this bondage of enjoyment. Laziness, meanness and hypocrisy have covered the whole length and breadth of the country. Can an intelligent man look on all this and remain quiet? Does it not bring tears to the eyes?


Swamiji's exhortation to the youth of the country has not been heeded. On the contrary, the Bourgeois-Nationalists of the Indian National Congress though advocates mass education, yet have got peculiar way of their own. Their ideology garbled with Tolstoyanism, which in its last analysis is the vested interest of their class, makes them believe in Ahimsa. And that in a country full of Tamas generated by a thousand years of slavery. The Zakir Hussein Committee report drawn in Wardha in 1938, says, "As the Indian nation has adopted non-violence as the method for achieving all-round freedom, Indian children would need to be taught superiority of non-violence over violence (p. 8), that a simple
outline of Indian history should be given... and that emphasis should be laid on the ideals of love, truth and justice and on lessons drawn from life showing the superiority of truth and non-violence in all its phases and its concomitant virtues over "violence and deceit". Dr. P. V. Kane in his presidential speech at the Indian History Congress, 1953, has criticized that "such a text-book be guilty of suppressio veri and suggestio falsi". Further, he says "I believe that no honest history can be written about Indian history based on the principles stated in the report referred to above, particularly for the period from about 1200 A.D. to 1920 A.D.

To-day, the powers that be, are starting basic educational schools on the basis of that ideal. There, the education centres around Spinning at the beginning. On this program, the fundamentals of Experimental Pedagogy is ignored. Party idealism in the name of basic education of the masses is being propagated. Thus, basic education is being officialized as the vehicle of party interest. Also, a false interpretation is being given of Indian civilisation. The spirit of Mahabharata, Ramayana, Gita, and Chandi are denied as if the ancient Indian seers and religious sages were inspired in their lives by Tolstoyanism imported from Russia, where it is unworkable. Swamiji has deplored this slavementality of the Indians.

SAYINGS ON WOMEN

I have never seen women elsewhere as cultured and educated as they are here. Well-educated men there are in our country, but you will scarcely find anywhere women like those here. It is indeed true, that "the Goddess Herself lives in the houses of virtuous men as Lakshmi". I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. Oh, how free they are! It is they who control social and civic duties. Schools and
colleges are full of women, and in our country women cannot be safely allowed to walk in the streets! Their kindness to me is immeasurable. Since I came here I have been welcomed by them to their houses. They are providing me with food, arranging for my lectures, taking me to market, and doing everything for my comfort and convenience. I shall never be able to repay, in the least the deep debt of gratitude I owe to them.

Do you know who is the real "Shakti-worshipper"? It is he who knows that God is the Omnipresent Force in the universe, and sees in women the manifestation of the Force. Many men here look upon their women in this light. Manu, again, has said that gods bless those families where women are happy and well-treated. Here men treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic. But why is it that we are slavish, miserable and dead? The answer is obvious.

And how pure and chaste are they here! Few women are married before twenty or twenty-five, and they are as free as the birds in the air. They go to market, school and college, earn money and do all kinds of work. Those who are well-to-do devote themselves to doing good to the poor. And what are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral. What does our Manu enjoin? "Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons". As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now.


Things are changing in India as well. In mediaeval Europe,
girls used to be married in comparatively early ages. A queen of Denmark was married at the age of ten. The Black Prince of England was born when his mother was sixteen years of age! In India the economic condition is changing the life of the present-day man and woman.

What do I find in America and Europe?—the worship of Shakti, the worship of Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense-gratification. Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship Her with all purity, in a Sattvika spirit, looking upon Her as their mother!


I now see it all. Brother, श्री नाबेंगु गृहमन्त्री समागम तत्र देवता: —
“Thou art the woman, Thou art the man, Thou art the boy and the girl as well”. (Svetashvatara Upanishad.) And we on our part are crying, दूरुपदल रे प्यारदल—“Be off, thou outcast!” केनेव निमित्ता पारी मोहिनी एक—“Who has made the bewitching woman”?

Works: Vol. VI, P. 224.

Tribal custom ossified in feudal days degraded the status of woman in Indian society. When in post-Vedic days, some pleaded for equal right of inheritance between a son and a daughter, Yaska refuted it by referring to the Vedic custom (Nirukta). In present-day India women are competing with men in every sphere of life's activity. Economic change motivates change in society.

Still on this sacred soil of India, this land of Sita and Savitri, among women may be found such character, such
spirit of service, such affection, compassion, contentment and reverence, as I could not find anywhere else in the world! In the West, the women did not very often seem to me to be women at all, they appeared to be quite the replicas of men! Driving vehicles, drudging in offices, attending schools, doing professorial duties! In India alone the sight of feminine modesty and reserve soothes the eye! With such materials of great promise, you could not, alas work out their uplift! You did not try to infuse the light of knowledge into them! For if they get the right sort of education, they may well turn out to be the ideal women in the world.

* Works: Vol. VI, P. 446.

Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters concerning them, who are you?


Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, “I will work out the salvation of this woman or child”.......Hands off! They will solve their own problems.


**Thoughts on Marriagable Age:**

Once, Swamiji was asked about his opinion about early marriage. And he gave the following reply:

“Amongst the educated classes in Bengal, the custom of marrying their boys too early is dying out gradually. The girls are also given in marriage a year or two older than before, but that has been under compulsion—from pecuniary want. Whatever might be the reason for it, the age of marrying girls should be raised still higher....... The rulers passed the Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man under the threat of penalty to live with a girl of twelve years, and at once all these so-called leaders of your religion raised a tremendous hue and cry against it,
sounding the alarm, "Alas, our religion is lost"! As if religion consists in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen!

Then the question was asked that in his opinion, both men and women should be married at an advanced age. Swamiji answered in the affirmative. He answered thus:

Certainly. But education should be imparted along with it, otherwise irregularity and corruption will ensue......We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

Then the question was raised that we will have to reform our women in many ways. Swamiji answered:

With such an education women will solve their own problems. They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others, and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi!

Then the question was raised that his advice was a quite new departure, and it would take a very long time yet to train our women in that way. Swamiji answered:

Anyhow, we have to try our best. We have not only to teach them but to teach ourselves also.


In a question put to Swamiji whether he entirely satisfied with the position of women in Indian Society as existed then, he answered:
By no means, but our right of interference is limited entirely to giving education. Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world........

Again, could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities? Read our Sanskrit dramas—read the story of Shakuntala, and see if Tennyson's 'Princess' has anything to teach us!

Then the question was asked whether our women have problems at all? Swamiji answered:

* Of course, they have many and grave problems, but none that are not to be solved by that magic word 'education'. The true education, however, is not yet conceived of amongst us.


Just as Swamiji wanted in his days, the Indian women of today are discussing problems of their own in conferences. They are taking part in social and national problems of their days. The age-limit for marriage has already been fixed by Sharda Act during the British regime. At present, a bill is in the anvil of the National Parliament covering the age-limit for marriage, inter-marriage and the right of inheritance in paternal property by the daughters. A sympathetic and liberal-minded government is sure to give economic emancipation of Indian women in every sphere of life. Willynilly, that is going to take place in near future.
APPENDIX

A few informations omitted while discussing about the “Family Pedigree” are inserted here. Our father while practising in Lahore in about 1876-77 instituted the Bengalee festival called *Saradiya Durgotsav* amongst the Bengalee colony for the first time. He took the leading part and bore a considerable part of expense in inaugurating the Bengal national religious festival there. The Puja was performed in *ghat* (earthen jar) and in *pot* (picture). It seems that Bengalee image-makers were not available there at that time. Bisvanath wrote to our mother about it. From this it is clear that Bisvanath was liberal in his religious views. He respected the religion in which he was born, and honored the other persuasions as well.

Again, we have talked of Swamiji’s love for the country and of his ideal of “Mother India” that was similar with that of Bankimchandra as delineated in *Ananda Math* and in *Kamala Kanter Daptar*. The source of this trait is to be traced in early environmental factors. We have said that Swamiji used to frequent the *Hindu Mahamela* also called *National Mahamela* established by Nabagopal Mitra. We have also mentioned that the ladies of our family used to send hand-made articles as exhibits at the annual Mahamela. Sri Mahendranath throws some light on this matter of close association. Nabagopal Mitra belonged to the Thanthania Mitra family, and he was a grandson of the Simulia Datta family through a female line. On this account, Sri Mahendranath says, that on the occasion of social functions, the Mitras used to invite the Datta family, and he used to go to the Mitras’ in response to the invitation. Sri Mahendranath further says, that in that time, the influence of Nabagopal and that of Keshubchandra, was uppermost in the mind of the youth of the time. Naturally, Narendra fell under the influence of the both. Again, Sri Mahendranath says that Narendra used to read assiduously the books of Bankimchandra. This is verified by the communication of Sri Hem-
chandra Ghose published beforehand, that Swamiji told him and his associates to read "Bankimchandra and Bankimchandra".

Further, it is to be noted here, that the writer in his younger days found a copy of Jogendranath Vidyabhusan's *Atmotsarga Charitabali* (Lives of martyrs) and a torn copy of Bankimchandra's *Durgeshnandini* among the old books of family collection.

From all these evidences it is clear that Swamiji, while in his teens, was familiar with the patriotic Bengalee literature of the time. Thus, he imbibed positive patriotic feeling through the environment in which he moved.

Another information is to be given here. While Narendranath left his family for good, he deposited his musical instrument *Tamboura* (colloquial Tanpura) with our relative Dr. Ramchandra Datta who was then learning vocal music from an *ostad*. This fact was heard repeatedly by the author from his mother. Later on, when Ramchandra settled down as a *sebait* of the Ramakrishna Samadhi Mandir at his garden at Kakurgachi named *Yogodyan*, he took two tambouras with him to that place. The one was a very big one, made out of darkish-colored gourd, and the other was a smaller one and of brownish-color.

When the writer came of age and used to frequent the *Yogodyan*, he, seeing the bigger tamboura being used by Suresh (a disciple of Ramchandra) who was a musician, exclaimed, "This is my brother's tamboura". But Suresh and Kali (another disciple) both assured the writer, that the bigger one belonged to their *guru*. Hence, the smaller one must have belonged to Narendranath.

Sri Mahendranath says that Narendranath used to learn *pakhwaj* playing at Beni ostad's place. Hence, we never saw any *pakhwaj* of his at our place. Mahendranath further says, that the tamboura and the *pakhwaj* that are at the Belur Math, are the property of the Math. The writer has seen Swami Nirmalananda and Swami Saradananda playing and singing with those instruments.

Again, some mistakes have crept in the geneology as delineated in the text. The fifth child of our parents was a daughter who
died in infancy. Thus Narendranath had four sisters and one brother preceding him. He was the sixth child of our parents. This has been corrected by Sri Mahendranath. Further, our younger uncle Taraknath had a son by his first wife. But the wife died when the child was a few months old. Our mother nursed the baby. But the baby died after some months of its birth. It was narrated by our mother, that when the baby was six months old, arrangement was made for Annaprasana ceremony. When Kaliprasad, the grand-father was entering the Thakurghar (deity-room) to perform Nandimukhi sraddha as preparatory to Annaprasana, Taraknath then being a staunch Brahmo, intervened and objected to the performance of the sraddha. The child died sometime after that. He had six daughters by his second wife all of whom have passed away.

Another fact is to be mentioned here. When Narendranath became famous in the U. S. A. as Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the Pradhanacharya of the Brahmo Samaj sent a congratulatory letter to the Datta family of 3, Gour Mohan Mukherjee Street, stating, that “one of the members of your family has become famous in America”. We were then living in 7, Ramtanu Bose’s Lane. The letter fell in the hands of our cousin, Amritalal Datta (Habu Babu) who at last confessed to Haramohan Mitra, that “not understanding the value of the letter, he has destroyed it in an absent-minded way”.

Another seeming error has crept in the same chapter when some notable Dattas of the past have been enumerated. Late Narendra Nath Vasu Prachya Vidyarnava has said, that it was Vyas Sinha who was cut into two by the king Vallolasena. At the same time the whole family of Jadav Datta i.e., he with his ten sons and seven grandsons were put to the sword by Vallolasena for not accepting Kulinism in Saka 1061 = 1139 A.D. Many of the Dattas and others fled to East Bengal after this holocaust (vide Uttar-Rarhi Kayastha Kanda. P. 36).

Another error has crept inadvertently in P. 276: “Nabagopal Ghose” should be “Nabagopal Mitra”.