

feel highly gratified with the new development. With an eye to future events we already perceive that the hitherto unprecedented mode of worshipping, will soon find worthy imitators and thus achieve the grandest results. There is hope that following the good example, in another decade or so, half of the population of India—Mussulman dervishes and Christian Salvationists helping—will turn its temples, mosques and churches into theatres and circuses, for purposes of religious *tamashas*. Thus, the “deeper principles of the new faith” will be henceforth explained, indeed, “as they had never been explained before.” Then, the *hoi polloi* will be “taught divine wisdom” by *padris*—choreographers, whose flying battalions on the light fantastic toe may be used for the purpose of swiftly pursuing and catching sinners by their coat-tails and head-locks, to be saved whether they will or not; and we may hope to see “*padri-nautes*,” “*padri-minstrels*” and “*padris-jadoo-wallas*.” The alliance and kind brotherly help of the Bhutan and Sikkim Dugpa-lamas, as that of the Singhalese devil-dancers is strongly recommended in this case. It is to be sought by all means, and their costumes, solemn awe-inspiring masks of pigs’ and bullocks’ heads, and tuition thankfully accepted and adopted. The signs of the times are all there, and a most important religious reform in a near future may be expected now with full confidence.

But there are other reasons why we should feel thankful to the great Calcutta artist and deviser. Out of the several “Reformers” of benighted India, one, at any rate, has now condescended, with extremely laudable sincerity, to put aside his canting rôle of “God confabulating” seer, to appear—if we can credit the *Brahmo Public Opinion’s* information, in what seems to be his inborn characteristics—those of a “clownish-looking juggler” who, from his school-boy days, “could successfully imitate some of the arts of celebrated jugglers.” Then, besides the fact that the world of theists cannot be too thankful to Babu Keshub C. Sen for trying to infuse into the usual owl-like gravity of prayers and divine worship a streak of innocent mirth, sport and frolic—drollery never failing to attract more than irksome prosy solemnity—the charming novelty of the thing should be also taken into consideration. Enacting parables and “performing wonderful conjuring tricks” for the greater glory of God, is not an everyday sight: and we have now the explanation of the profound sympathy shown to, and the passionate defence of, the professional and professional Salvationists by the Calcutta mystic. Melpomene and Terpsichore are sweet sisters to Thalia of the mask and shepherd’s crook, and our Babu seems to be bent on devoting all the nine Muses to the service of God, including Erato, made so much of by King Solomon. True, it may be objected that the main idea—that of proving that “God can be seen and heard” by the help of *bogus* phenomena and “magical apparatus”—is not exactly novel; in fact, that it is as old as the hills. But it bodes fair that the “New Faith” should follow so closely in the well-trodden paths of the “old ones.” And even though—from the day, in fact, that the first couple of Roman Augurs had upon meeting to plug their cheeks with their tongues to conceal laughter, and down to our own times when the holy Neapolitan friars are still entrusted with the delicate operation of making St. January’s blood boil and sing—the priests and servants of God of nearly all other creeds have to call in occasionally jugglery to their help to prove the existence of their respective deities,—this detracts nothing from Babu Keshub’s glory, as a genuine inventor and a discoverer. The additional and very sensational method adopted by him of boldly proclaiming the *soi-disant* divine miracles as simply conjuring tricks, is as unusual as it is novel, and is as highly commendable. We take Babu Keshub under our protection, and recognize him every right to demand a patent from both the Lord Bishop of Calcutta and the Maharajah of the Vallabacharyas.

In addition to all this he has shown himself a true democrat and the protector as well as the benefactor of the humble and the poor. The strolling, naked *jadoo-walla* has now every claim to the title of “teacher, who imparts wisdom through allegories and metaphors.” Thus, whenever we witness from the secure depths of our verandah, a street juggler offering his *mongoos* a dainty lunch off the head of a foredoomed cobra, and see further on the latter—though headless—resurrected to life in half an hour or so owing to the miraculous influence of a monkey’s skull placed on the beheaded trunk of the serpent, we will bear in mind “the deep spirituality”...contained in this “magical feat.” Remembering the wise lesson that “great prophets and seers have spoken (and acted?) in parables,” and that “God always

speaks through nature” as his devotee, we will hear and understand him the better owing to the great lesson taught through the “*mongoos-cobra-monkey*” trick. For the first time in our life, we will clearly perceive that the *mongoos* represents infallible “divine wisdom, or blind faith,” devouring and swallowing up, like Aaron’s rod, “Human Reason” or “fallible intellect”—the latter, agreeably with the tenets of the New Dispensation the devil’s gift, “the formidable foe...at whose hands it (the holy Dove or Holy Ghost, which is the same thing) eventually fell a victim.” The monkey’s skull, of course, will remain an emblem of the active potentiality, in our sight, of that same blind faith to resurrect dead animals and extract moonbeams out of cucumbers—in the allegorical and metaphorical sense. Hence, our profound gratitude to the Minister who through his inexhaustible arsenal of religio-mystical inventions, has taught us a never-to-be forgotten lesson of wisdom. Some slight improvements in the programme may, perhaps, be also respectfully suggested. Thus, for one, the rose-water and *sherbet* meant to demonstrate practically the ever-flowing “nectar of God’s love, through a small pipe,”—first, in consideration to the drinking preferences of Calcutta, “the holy city of Aryavart,” and then as a fitter emblem of one of the attributes of the “Maker of all life”—might be suggestfully replaced by genuine *eau-de-vie*, the “water of life” of the Frenchman. Apart from this trifling change, we find little to criticize in the new departure, but on the contrary venture to predict it the brightest future. His reform *must* in time prove fruitful in results, as in the words of the Bishop of Durham, commenting upon the Salvation army: “the exaltation of sensationalism into a system is perilous in the extreme. When the most solemn events...are travestied, and the deity’s name profaned in parodies and common songs—awe and reverence being the soul of the religious life—he, therefore, who degrades the chief objects of religion by profane associations, strikes at the very root of that religion.”

Letters to the Editor.

LIGHT WANTED.

It is said in your much esteemed paper (vide “The Brahminical Thread,” by a Sarman, F. T. S.), the *Theosophist* for February 1883, that the caste of the Hindoos was not meant to be hereditary; but that they could raise themselves from the lowest to the highest caste by personal merit. But it is alleged by many a Pundit that, nowhere in the Hindoo Shastras, which teem with ceremonies of all descriptions, is it shown, what steps a Hindoo, having good qualities, would take, that is, what ceremonies he would have to perform for his raising himself from a low caste to become a Brahman in the Hindoo point of view. Will any of your correspondents enlighten the public on the subject; and thus pave the way for the raising of low caste men? This would, no doubt, arouse a healthy competition among our people and serve a good purpose; for then every one would come to value merit and participate in the general stimulus for learning.

K. C. CHATTERJEE,

D. P. W.

LALITPORE, March 4, 1883.

EXPLANATION WANTED.

THE word “Laya” (vide page 129, *Theosophist* for March 1883) has been interpreted as “annihilation.” In Sanskrit “Li” is to melt, dissolve. The Almora Swami, I think, means by this word “final absorption,” when there remains a “Unity” (call as one may this “Unity” as *Mula-prakriti* or *Mulapurush*). In this “Unity” is next differentiated “*Purush*” and “*Prakriti*.” Whether existing in “Unity” or “Duality,” there cannot be such a thing as annihilation of course, nor “creation out of nothing;” and thus, it must mean “eternity.” But what brings on the difference—“*Purush* and *Prakriti*” out of one homogeneous “Unity”—is incomprehensible to me.

A. GOVINDA CHARLU, F. T. S.

TUMKUR, 8th March 1883.

EDITOR’S NOTE.—And so it is to the majority of readers—students of esoteric Science excepted—perhaps.