

EVENTS OF THE DAY.

A Parliamentary Return concerning the production and consumption of alcoholic drinks gives to Great Britain and Ireland a pre-eminence of doubtful glory. We are nothing if not thirsty—in fact, the thirstiest people in the world. We consume more



Photo. Venkiah, Madras.

SWAMI ABHAYANANDA.
AN AMERICAN CONVERT TO HINDUISM.

wine, beer, and spirits per head than are consumed in any other country on the civilised globe. England drinks more beer now than ever she did. Germany, however, which is gaining on England in so many other things, is gaining on her in this particular; and the consumption of spirits, too, has increased in England. A yearly consumption of thirty-three gallons of mixed drinks is England's allowance per head, against France's twenty-nine, Germany's twenty-eight and a half, and America's admirable thirteen. Our Government, however, eases its conscience by drawing thirty-six per cent. out of the drinker against America's twenty-eight, and France and Germany's eighteen. England, in short, is drinking herself out of debt at the rate of £33,000,000 a year. There are, of course, many economists who will argue that in the very act of so drinking ourselves out of debt we are incurring liabilities more to be regretted than even pecuniary obligation.

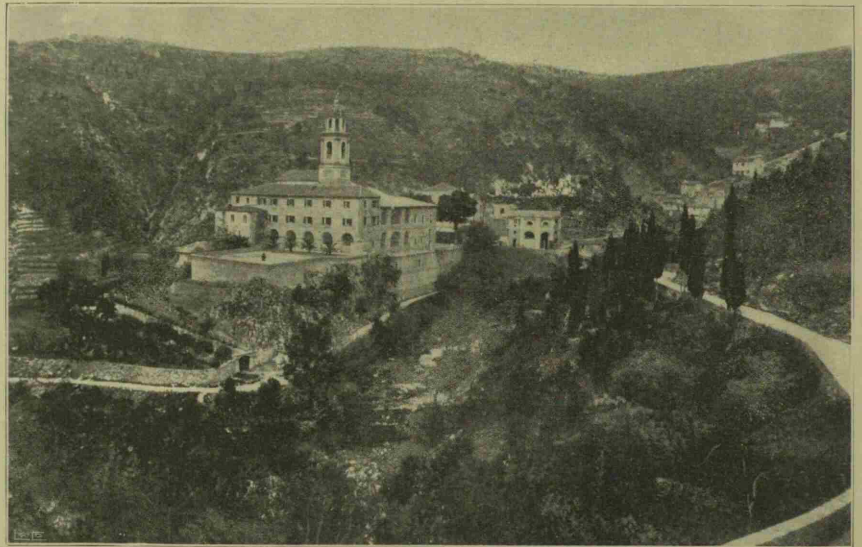
While conversions of Orientals to the religions of the West are not uncommon, the reverse is unusual. Swami Abhayananda, however, an American lady, whose portrait we reproduce, is a convert to Hinduism. She has recently visited Madras.

On April 6 her Majesty, in the course of her daily drive, visited the Laghet Monastery. The Queen was accompanied by Princess Victoria and the young Princes Leopold and Alexander of Battenberg, who visited the curious chapel of the monastery, the walls of which are covered with inscriptions recording the miraculous cures which are said to take place there every year. Queen Victoria was welcomed by the monks, and the venerable prior was presented. The Queen talked with him for some time, and expressed her delight in the district. She gave the prior an offering, and in return was asked to accept a sample of the liqueur for which the monastery is famous. Her Majesty graciously accepted the gift, and bought various remembrances from the brothers. Our illustration of the Carmelite monastery of Laghet will recall to many the memory of the lonely little sanctuary nestling peacefully in the hollow of the hills far above the waters of the Mediterranean, contrasting strangely with the threatening forts that crown the surrounding heights. A short journey, thanks to the *Cremailère*, or cog-wheel railway, which climbs the steep ascent from Monte Carlo to La Turbie, transports one from the most pleasure-seeking and passion-tossed town far back into the atmosphere of the Middle Ages. The turmoil of the world fails to reach this favoured spot. Here peace reigns; here the monks lead the serene life of prayer, study, and toil which was led by their predecessors centuries before the Casino was established. Hither Faith, child-like and unquestioning, leads thousands of pilgrims to pay homage to their Saviour. Their faith is attested by countless tributes of gratitude which, in all the crude horror of their realism, disfigure the walls of cloister and sanctuary—a rudely carved sloop reminding the visitor of some terrible shipwreck from which the donor was saved; a house on fire, represented in the most glaring colours, bearing witness to some other favour. Apart from the beauty of the site, the monastery itself presents but few objects of interest. The church occupies the centre of a vast block of buildings, being surrounded by open cloisters which during the summer months are thronged with pilgrims. The monks' cells surmount the south cloister, while the library has its home on the cooler north side. An adjacent building, containing the refectory and the guest-quarters, overlooks the garden,

which has been won with infinite labour from the rocky soil. The monastery was founded in 1636, and has ever since been in the hands of the Discalced Carmelites.

Mr. Edgar Anderson, artist in paints, has shown himself to be something of an artist in words by an account of his sufferings and final salvation after the sinking of the *Stella*. He was going to Jersey to make sketches for a picture, which will be a picture with a history, and he had gone down to the cabin to have some dinner when he heard the foghorns sound and somebody cry, "The Casquets!" Through the fog he saw indistinctly a long ridge of rocks a hundred yards away, and close ahead the jagged and fantastic heads of granite, past which the ship shot at terrific speed, to be caught and torn at her keel by the hidden rocks. Then came a sudden shock; the ship bounded from one rock to another; now listing over to port, now with another spring righting herself, and finally settling down and down into deep water. Boats were lowered; life-belts served out; a gang of stokers blew off steam; and a lane was made by men for the women to walk through to the four boats lowered and filled without any confusion within seven minutes. Meanwhile, Mr. Anderson, buttoning his ulster, dived into the sea, and despite the suction of the sinking ship, rose to the surface twenty yards distant in time to hear a great explosion and to mark the brown sealding water on the surface of the sea, and the dead bodies afloat, as the funnel, shooting up cinders and smoke, sank under many fathoms of water. Mr. Anderson joined two other men on a raft, which they abandoned to get on a boat turned upside down, with eleven other men upon its keel. A narrow iron seat it made, and, as night drew on and the waves washed over it, a very difficult one. Other people were hanging on to buoys and bits of wreckage, the dead all about them, and they shouted to each other "to keep their spirits up."

A great wave washed all the men from the keel and righted the boat. Mr. Anderson when he tried to enter it at one side, was pushed back, for it was already full. Diving underneath, he managed to crawl in from the other side. Two men of the fourteen perished during this episode. The boat leaked, and, despite bailing, the men who rowed sat up to the chest in water. Two hours passed, and passengers died from shock and exposure, their bodies being passed overboard. The foghorn of the *Casquets* was still heard, and even amid these horrors the artist's eye remarked the beauty of the phosphorescent waves as they broke over the rocks, sending up showers of lights. Then a seaman who had rowed nobly went mad, and, falling back dead, was gently passed overboard, poor chap." Then another valiant rower died, but nobody had the energy to move him. The difficulty was to keep awake till morning broke, which it did at long last. Now the boat drifted, and now it was carried in the races near to the coast of France. The lights of four steamers were sighted, but only in the distance; and all hope seemed gone when a watchman at Omonville la Roque saw the boat and semaphored it. Cherbourg. A tug appeared as a speck on the horizon, and the survivors were shortly in safety.



THE LAGHET MONASTERY, VISITED BY HER MAJESTY ON APRIL 6.

Representations of Christ's features have lately received a great deal of attention. Not long ago we published a picture of the famous "Christ with the blue eyes." The medal reproduced on this page adds yet another to these interesting works of art.

The medal, known as that of the Campo dei Fiori, was discovered at Rome in the spring of 1897 by M. Boyer d'Agen, a journalist who does not profess to be anything of an archaeologist. One morning in the Jews' scrap-iron market held every Wednesday in the Campo dei Fiori, M. d'Agen stumbled across an old peasant who had evidently come in from the Campagna to dispose of scraps of old iron. These he had arranged on the ground upon his green cloak. Amused by the picturesqueness of this extemporised booth, M. d'Agen stopped and began to turn over the fellow's wares with the point of his cane. From a collection of old coins he took up one piece more thickly coated with earth than the others, and began to scrape it. The profile of a man and some Hebrew characters appeared, so M. d'Agen bought the curiosity for two sous. The device on the medal turned out to be a particularly fine head of Christ, and is believed to be the work of some master of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Connoisseurs do not assign to the medal an earlier date than this, owing to its resemblance to a medal, also with Hebrew characters, prepared between 1565 and 1572 to the order of Pius V. by Antonio Rossi of Milan. The discoverer of the medal presented the treasure to the Pope, who received it with intense interest and gratification. Reproductions have been made in gold, silver, and bronze by Messrs. Falize, the well-known goldsmiths of Paris.



THE CAMPO DEI FIORI MEDAL, WITH PORTRAIT OF CHRIST, PRESENTED TO THE POPE.