

THE DHARMA MAHOTSAVA *

The East is the mother of Light, Religion, Science, Philosophy, Wisdom—all had their origin in the East. India is justly called the cradle of civilization and the mother of religions. Long before the dim rays of civilization entered the horizon of the western world, India was in full possession and enjoyment of these eternal verities that make for our spiritual progress. Her influence was felt in distant countries, in Egypt, in Babylonia, in Greece, and is today felt far away on the Pacific coast and on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. The teachings of the wise men of the East have forced themselves on the minds of our brethren in all lands and in all countries. The World Congress of Religions of Chicago was but the re-echo of what had passed in times gone by in India. True, the great gathering of the World Congress of Religions had different objects in view from those that operated on the minds of our ancestors, who occasionally met in India in religious conferences. But this difference shows only the existence of different circumstances that seem to surround us. If the Chicago World Congress was the inevitable result of the spiritual surroundings of America and if it was necessary in the outcome of human society, the same necessity has been pressing upon India for hundreds of years, and more so since the division of the Indian peoples into diverse creeds and communities, until the combined forces brought about the memorable event of the year 1895, the Dharma Mahotsava of Ajmere.

* From his unpublished writings in possession of Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, Bombay.