

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जायत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES

10th March, 1921 (continued)

The Swami said: “*Sattva* gives self-control, *rajas* evokes activity and *tamas* degrades. *Tamas* must be changed into *rajas* or activity. *Tamas* is like sleepiness in snow,—fatal. If one takes a fatal dose of opium, he should be forcibly kept from falling into sleep, even by physical torments; for to sleep then is to die. Indians are going down into *tamas* under the pretext of *sattva*. Swamiji tried hard to whip them into activity.”

Some one asked: “Why this degradation?”

The Swami replied: “The reason is the usual one;—they have strayed away from the ideal.”

“Please ‘whip’ them yourself.”

“What more whipping do you want? Have I not been doing it ever so long? Or why should I talk and talk like this? I could remain satisfied with my personal spiritual practices. Do you mean I should whip literally? The fact is that unless we have the desire to wake up, no outside provocation is of any avail.

“It all happens through the Lord’s will. He is holding the thread of everything in His hands, and making us dance like dolls. Children do not understand. We also are little better than children.

“If it is His will that you would help any one, He will fill your heart with wonderful patience and sympathy for him, and He will bring him to you.

“A man went to a Sadhu to become his disciple. The Sadhu, before accepting him, informed him of all the hardships of a disciple’s life. The man replied: ‘Sire, make me a Guru directly.’ For then he will be saved from the hard austerities. If you always spare yourself, you cannot hope to accomplish anything. . . .

“The Yogis used to do impossible things. They could even change the sex of a foetus. Numerous instances of this are recorded in the books. There is no reason why it cannot be done,—the Yogis had mastered its secret.

The Swami said of K— that he used to feel a greater joy in serving patients than in meditation and repetition of the Lord’s name. “It is a wonderful thing—serving man looking upon him as God Himself—as instituted by Swamiji. Shall I send for K— ?” said the Swami, “you may ask him personally. Whenever C— admitted a new worker into the Sevashrama, he would extract a promise from him that he (the worker) would readily do all kinds of service required of him. And thus for twenty years he conducted the Sevashrama beautifully. There must be some fixed principles or no true work is possible.

“When Ka— begged Swamiji to initiate him into Sannyasa, Swamiji said to him: ‘I want money ; I am seriously thinking of selling you as a coolie to a tea-garden. Are you agreed?’ Ka— also seriously replied: ‘Yes, Swamiji, I am.’ And that is exactly what Ka— has done ; he has sold himself into Swamiji’s service. Indeed this is the only way to success.”

11th March, 1921

It was the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami was recounting stories of Swamiji. He said: “Once in America Swamiji was speaking against the existence of God, when one of his audience stood up and asked angrily: ‘Sir,

do you mean to say that there is no God?' 'No,' Swamiji at once replied, 'there is no dearth of God. There are three hundred millions of gods in India ; I can give you as many as you like.'

"Swamiji knew that there was no lack of spirituality in India. If we can only give our people physical nourishment, they will again manifest spirituality. We are more cultured than other peoples. The Western civilisation is certainly inferior to ours.

"Swamiji held that half the success of his lectures was due to his wonderful voice. . . .

"I find now that longevity is desirable. For long experience brings dispassion for the world. One cannot renounce without enjoying.

"*Pravritti and Nivritti*—propensity for outer activity and cessation from it—are like building up a new business and winding up an old one. In the former case one is eager to grow and spread ; in the latter, one yearns to get rid of it anyhow.

"The Westerners also have renunciation,—they can do anything for their country. We in India do not understand country, but we are ever ready to give our lives for religion.

"In New York, I had to hold a Sunday class. Before going to the class, I would meditate on my subject for about an hour. That would be enough for me. Gradually however I acquired self-confidence. People do not care so much for language in a lecture as for ideas. They try to follow your thoughts."

Here ends the second series of Swami Turiyananda's conversations. We hope to present our readers another series next year. In the meantime we shall take up the publication of the conversations and reminiscences of Holy Mother, the first instalment of which was published in our last December issue.—EDITOR.

FIRE-BATH OF REASON

BY THE EDITOR

Some at least of our readers, we presume, have been following the monthly publication of the *Essence of Vedanta*, the translation of the *Vedântasâra*, an excellent primer of the Vedanta philosophy. They must have noted that the book has given careful consideration to the qualifications of those who are entitled to study it. In the February issue, the qualifications of the *adhikâri*, that is to say, of one competent to study Vedanta, have been extensively enumerated and explained. We may quote them here: "He is the only competent student who has obtained a general comprehension of the entire Vedas by studying them and the Vedangas in the prescribed method, who has cleansed his mind of all sins of either this or previous births by avoiding all actions as are actuated by desires and forbidden in the scriptures and by performing the daily and occasional obligatory rites, and who has adopted the four *sâdhanâs* or means of attaining spiritual knowledge." These four *sâdhanâs* are the discrimination between the real and the unreal; the aversion to the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions here or hereafter; the group of six attributes—calmness or tranquillity (resting of the mind steadfastly on the Real after detaching it from sense-objects), self-control (withdrawing the sense-organs from sense-objects), self-withdrawal (the mind-function ceasing to act by means of external objects), forbearance (bearing of afflictions without caring to redress them, being at the same time free from anxiety or lament on their score), faith (acceptance by firm judgment of the mind as true of what the scriptures and the Guru instruct), self-settledness (constant concentration of the intellect on the ever-pure Brahman), and yearning for freedom (the desire to free oneself, by realising one's true nature, from all bondages).

Were these conditions enforced seriously, it is doubtful if many had cared to taste the *Essence of Vedanta* in the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata*. To many, especially to our Western readers, these preliminary conditions have probably appeared fantastic. It is absurd, they may have thought, that the study of a philosophical treatise should be hedged round with so many

difficult conditions. It is reasonable to expect that a student of Vedanta should have a fine intellect to be able to grasp its subtle arguments and inferences. It may also be granted perhaps that the common moral virtues and dutifulness help to produce a philosophical aptitude. But why those other conditions about doing and refraining from certain actions and those implied in the "four *sâdhanâs*?" Nor do they pertain to this life only, but stretch beyond to past and future lives. These are good enough for making a saint. But a fine intellect is the only requirement of a student of philosophy.

It is not the Vedantasara alone that is so extravagant of conditions. Other Vedantic treatises also insist on them. Thus *Viveka-Chudâmani*, *Sarva-Vedânta-Siddhânta-Sâra-Samgraha*, *Upadesa-Sâhasri*, *Gîtâ*, some Upanishads and *Brahma-Sutras* also lay down more or less the same conditions to their studies. The most significant enforcement of these conditions, perhaps, is instanced in the story of Indra and Virochana in the Chhandogya Upanishad. They went to Prajapati for a knowledge of the Atman. He made them live under the vow of Brahmacharya with necessary moral and physical disciplines for thirty-two years before he vouchsafed to them what is but a crude idea of the Atman. That teaching satisfied Virochana but not Indra who came back puzzled. He then underwent the same disciplines for thirty-two, thirty-two and five years consecutively. Only then was his intellect considered fit to comprehend the truths of the Atman.

But what strange and unnecessarily rigorous conditions these for a merely intellectual comprehension of the Vedantic doctrines! Perhaps it will be said that it was not for a purely philosophical understanding of the Vedantic truths that these conditions were imposed, but for their actual realisation and experience in life. That may be so. For our philosophers did not usually differentiate between the spirit of religion, i.e., actual realisation and of philosophy or intellectual comprehension, and a philosophical enquiry uninspired by a passionate longing for Reality and Truth was to them a strange thing. But that those rigorous conditions were insisted on even in cases of intellectual enquiry is clear from Sankara's interpretation of the first word (*Atha*) of the first aphorism of the *Brahma-Sutras* which it must be granted is a purely intellectual treatise. Sankara says, "It therefore is requisite that something should

be stated subsequent to which the enquiry into Brahman is proposed.—Well, then; we maintain that the antecedent conditions are the discrimination of what is eternal and what is non-eternal ; the renunciation of all desire to enjoy the fruit of one's actions both here and hereafter ; the acquirement of tranquillity, self-restraint, and the other means, and the desire for final release." Even an intellectual pursuit of Truth was considered invalid and unprofitable on the part of one who has not purified himself previously by going through the fire of the stated disciplines.

It is no wonder that they should appear needless or excessive to the modern sense. Philosophical enquiry, as we understand it at the present times, is unfettered by conditions. It has to be undertaken with an unbiased and "unconditioned" mind. Practice can follow from a previous ascertainment of the nature of Truth and Reality. Until the truth of life and reality has been intellectually comprehended, it is absurd to take up a course of discipline for its experience and realisation, for there is nothing to tell us that the discipline will lead us up the correct path. But the Vedantic philosophers seem to have reversed the natural process: according to them, the discipline comes first, and next the ascertainment of Truth. It is worth while to enquire into their meaning.

Let us see what others have got to say on the point. Prof. Paul Deussen discusses the conditions in details in his *The System of the Vedanta* and observes in reference to "the group of six attributes" such as calmness or tranquillity etc. : "Neither of these will fit the picture that we form of the true philosopher to-day. In contrast to the Stoic sages,.....we imagine the philosophic genius rather as a profoundly excitable, nay, even passionate nature ; and, in spite of all concentration and meditation, we demand from him, as from the empiric investigator, a full interest in the visible world and its wonderful phenomena, only that he must see them with other eyes than the empiric And just as little will the requirement demanded from the pupil under No. 6 (i.e., *Shraddhâ* or faith) command itself to us, since we have learnt from Descartes, that the beginning of wisdom consists in this, *de omnibus dubitare.*"

Prof. Max Müller, however, controverts this argument of Prof. Deussen. "It has been thought," he says in defence of the Vedantic philosophers, "that this quietness is hardly the best outfit for a philosopher, who, according to our views of

philosophy, is to pile Ossa on Pelion in order to storm the fortress of truth and to conquer new realms in earth and heaven. But we must remember that the object of the Vedânta was to show that we have really nothing to conquer but ourselves, that we possess everything within us, and that nothing is required but to shut our eyes and our hearts against the illusion of the world in order to find ourselves richer than heaven and earth. Even faith, *sraddhâ*, which has given special offence as a requisite for philosophy, because philosophy, according to Descartes, ought to begin with *de omnibus dubitare*, has its legitimate place in the Vedânta philosophy, for, like Kant's philosophy, it leads us on to see that many things are beyond the limits of human understanding, and must be accepted or believed, without being understood."

In our opinion, this defence of Prof. Max Müller rather lets down the Vedantists, making them appear as dogmatists. A philosophy prefaced with a fixed and stereotyped temperamental outlook is as bad as one based on assumed data or dogmas. Our temperament affects considerably our determination and evaluation of truth. A judicial attitude, neutral and unbiased, is safest and most correct for a proper appreciation of reality. If the student of philosophy begins his philosophical enquiry with a prepared and moulded mind as a result of disciplines, he starts with a handicap and can but have a sectional view of truth ; his mind is unable to appreciate other viewpoints and his inferences will necessarily be faulty.

Apart from this difference, however, both Prof. Deussen and Max Müller endorse the wisdom and efficacy of these conditions. They look upon them more as a moral preparation than strictly philosophical and consider it as a fine preliminary to Vedantic enquiry. "The sea must no longer be swept by storms, if it is to reflect the light of the sun in all its divine calmness and purity." Besides, they consider that the Vedanta is not a philosophy in the accepted sense but is a mixture of religion and philosophy and is therefore justified in insisting on a preparatory moral discipline. But the question is: Do we by submitting to this discipline really prepare the mind "to reflect the light of the sun in all its divine calmness or purity" or only twist it into a misshapen mirror in which everything is reflected awry and grotesque? For there are those who hold that the stoic discipline and renunciation of the world lead us

away from the real and the true. How can the beginner judge which view is true? And would it not be prejudicing his mind and clouding the issue for him to insist on his submission to the Vedantic conditions?

In our opinion the significance of the formulation of these conditions lies deeper than has been conceived by either Prof. Deussen or Prof. Max Müller. It is for a moral preparation no doubt, but that is only a secondary consideration. *The main object is the perfection and purification of the faculty of reason and perception.* None would deny that a perfect reason is an indispensable requisite of a student of philosophy. Without excellent reasoning powers, the study of philosophy, especially a philosophy so subtle as the Vedanta, is a fool's errand. The teachers of Vedanta, therefore, being true philosophers, insisted on the fulfilment of this essential condition and prescribed the moral disciplines as a means to that end. The only difference between them and the modern teachers of philosophy is that the latter tacitly accept the condition as fulfilled whereas the former considered it too important to accept it so without taking the students through a period of watchful probation.

We hold that without moral perfection, that is to say, without the fulfilment of the conditions laid down by the Vedanta philosophy, one cannot acquire perfect reasoning powers. Character and true reasoning are indissolubly connected. All those who have influenced mankind profoundly with their philosophies have been saints, men of perfect character. Clever people there are and intellectual giants whose moral life would scarcely bear scrutiny. But their greatness is partial; their powers shine within limitations; and when they are philosophers, their conclusions are often characterised by defective vision, discerning in certain points but failing miserably in others. They cannot grasp the totality of truth and reality. One who aspires to know the Highest Truth, the All and the Whole, cannot proceed with a defective reason. He must be endowed with perfect reasoning powers.

Now what is the greatest impediment to perfect reasoning? Prejudice, bias or preconception. Reason requires that nothing should be accepted as true and real without proof. Descartes was perfectly justified in considering universal scepticism as the starting point of philosophy. But he forgot that along with scepticism there must also be a perfect instrument of thought,

a perfect reasoning faculty. The mind must be freed from all bias, and that is not an easy task. Are we not taking everything on trust? Does the world exist? Have we a body? Are things real? Are the thousand desires that torment us momentarily worth anything? We cannot say, "Yes," nor can we say, "No." The answer is not so evident as it would seem. We cannot grasp truth and reality. We see darkling as through a haze which distorts the dimensions of things,—everything is twisted, oblique and deformed. Even when the mist seems to clear off for a moment, we cannot retain the true vision. Reason, the guide and watch of the mind, is itself entangled and paralysed. Its voice is too feeble, it cannot command the mind with authority and certitude. What has made the mind and the reason so terribly inane? The wise answer: "Desires."

A good part, if not the whole, of what we call our universe, is concerned with and fundamentally related to the smiles and tears of our dear ones. This vast solid world is based on our love for a few puny human beings—wife or husband, parents or children. We would feel the truth of it if *all* our dear ones were to leave us and we had no objects of attachment. The standards of value with which we determine and judge reality and truth are flimsy creations of our changing mind. Do you really know even this visible world? We know only men—our understanding is essentially anthropomorphic—and of men, clearly, only a few. And the worlds of animals, plants and the inanimate exist merely as a background to those all-important few. That is our universe. Even the sense-knowledge of it is so imperfect and foolish! India's philosophers knew that not only all secondary, but even primary qualities are subjective, and the subject weaves its universe in strangely whimsical patterns and not at all in the calm, rational fashion we fondly imagine. Our universe revolves round one or two human beings, and they are the concrete forms of our desires.

We are not writing in an imaginative vein. Any one can test and find the truth of our statement. The Knowing Ones have traced all desires to two arch passions: that of sex and of possession. These two are dominating the mind in variegated forms and are the ultimate foundation of the world of phenomena in all their gross and subtle aspects. Annihilate them and the world will vanish away. And of them again, the idea of sex

is deeper and more fundamental. The "vital elan" in the last analysis is but the sex impulse.* The story of creation often found in the Upanishads that the Absolute Being in the beginning divided itself into a male and a female is not wholly allegorical. It is almost a literal version of an actual fact. Therefore the human soul ever seeks for a mate and runs thus seeking from birth to death and death to birth. Our whole life is entangled in the forms in which this primal impulse seeks manifold realisation. Those forms are the most real to us. All other things we judge by their standard. Things never appear to us in their true value or as they are in themselves. Therefore the sex impulse, above all, has to be curbed and crushed.

Therefore desires must be eradicated, desires that create false values, cloud our perception of things and paralyse our reason. By destroying desires, we perceive clearly and correctly, and reason functions properly. This has been the experience of all who have conquered their desires. Even a partial conquest of them revolutionises our perception of things. The present relations of things change totally; the so-called real become unreal; the phenomenal world seems emptied of its substance,—it appears chimerical; and a vaster, more durable, finer and spiritual reality emerges triumphant. Is it not then absurd to hope to comprehend the truths of life and reality with such a defective instrument of knowledge as our mind and reason in its present state is? Must not we first purify and emancipate reason? Now it sees and conceives everything in a crooked and twisted form and out of its true bearings. It is dominated by false standards of value. It is too gross to soar into the ethereal regions of philosophical truths and too weak to retain its finds. Suppose reason conceives this world and life to be unreal. Will not our carnality laugh it to confusion? Clearing the mind of mere superficial *idols*, false opinions and prejudices, avails little. More pernicious and vitiating *idols* are desires. By their destruction we gain true freedom of reason and real philosophical outlook.

We may here conceive of an objection. It may be argued that the eradication of desires really abnegates life and is therefore unreal, abnormal and unnatural; and that it makes us

* Here sex implies not merely its crude, carnal manifestations, but also its deep, subtle aspects.

in fact less fit to comprehend reality inasmuch as it takes us away from it. But is not the very fact that desires are destructible—for they *are* destructible, as has been exemplified by repeated experience—a proof of their irrationality? Whatever is rational is essential to Truth and Reality and cannot be destroyed. Inessentials are but idle notions and therefore destructible. Therefore reason must be emancipated from its predilections, its irrational bias, by striking at their very roots—the desires from which they spring. Only reason thus freed can comprehend things in their true forms and relations, and be fit for philosophical enquiry.

If we examine the conditions laid down by Vedanta as preliminary to its study, we shall find that they are all calculated to confer that freedom on the mind and reason. From the different Vedantic treatises we find the conditions to be “the four Sadhanas,” Sannyasa and Brahmacharya. The first of the four Sadhanas, the discrimination of the Real and the unreal, is only another form of “universal scepticism.” It requires that we should question the reality of the phenomenal world and reject whatever is found unreal. But it must not be superficial or a mere make-believe, for that is worthless and takes us nowhere. It should profoundly mould our life, behaviour and consciousness: we must learn to look upon, feel and treat the unreal as unreal. That is what the second Sadhana, the renunciation of the fruits of actions, implies; for a hankering for the delectable fruits of earth and heaven ill assort with the consciousness of their unreality. Therefore all desires for enjoyment at present or in future must be given up. The third, the acquirement of the six qualities, such as calmness, etc., prevents the mind from going to and dwelling on the sense-objects as real. And the fourth, the desire for freedom, concentrates the scattered forces of the mind and makes them flow in one impetuous current to the search and discovery of the Real. These four together constitute Sannyasa. Only when the mind has been freed from the vitiating assumption of the reality of the world and devoted to the search of truth, is one fit for Sannyasa. But without Brahmacharya, continence, none of them are possible or of any avail. It not only perfects the brain and the nervous system and strengthens them to bear the tremendous

strain of sustained and powerful thought, but what is more important, it frees the mind of the sex idea, the more potent of the twin factors of Maya or Primal Ignorance, which, as we have stated before, clouds the knowledge of things, ensnares reason, and conjures fantastic illusions for the soul to dream through the succession of births. We thus find that they all tend to cure the mind of its irrational predilections, set the reason free and make their perception and vision clear and pure.

Vedanta aims at the highest truth which is necessarily revolutionary in character and influence. The mind that will discover and know it must be extraordinarily strong and free. It must pass through the fire of an austere discipline to be purged of its impurities. Not all can be philosophers. Not all are fit to know the truth. Many aspire, but few, very few, attain. And that they may not despair, let them fulfil the preliminary conditions faithfully. And then to their emancipated reason and mind, the mysteries of life and the world will no more be mysterious, for their perception and inference will be free from the errors of the common man and will always be true and correct.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY NAGENDRANATH GUPTA

(Continued from page 122)

Another experience that Swami Vivekananda related to me bordered on the tragic. The particular vow he had undertaken at that time was that he should steadily walk the whole day without either looking back or begging from any man. He was to halt only if accosted and to accept food if it was offered to him unasked. Sometimes he had to go without any food for twenty-four and even forty-eight hours. One afternoon about sunset he was passing in front of a stable belonging to some wealthy person. One of the grooms was standing on the road. Vivekananda had had nothing to eat for two days and was looking weak and weary. The groom saluted him and looking at him asked, "Sadhu Baba, have you eaten anything to-day?" "No," replied Vivekananda, "I have eaten nothing." The groom took him into the stable, offered him water to wash his hands and feet and placed his own food consisting of some *chapatis* and a little chutney, before him. The chutney was hot but in the course of his wanderings Vivekananda had got accustomed to eat chillies, which were often the only condiment he had with his food.

I have seen him eating a handful of pungent, green chillies with evident relish. Vivekananda ate the *chapatis* and the chutney, but immediately afterwards felt a frightful burning sensation in his stomach and rolled on the ground in agony. The groom beat his head with his hands and wailed, "What have I done? I have killed a Sadhu." The pain must have been due to eating the chutney on an empty stomach. Just about this time a man with a basket on his head happened to be passing and halted on hearing the cries of the groom. Vivekananda asked him what he had in his basket and the man replied it was tamarind. "Ah, that is just what I want," said Vivekananda, and taking some of the tamarind he mixed it with water and drank it. This had the effect of allaying the burning sensation and the pain, and after resting for a while Vivekananda resumed his journey.

In the remote regions of the Himalayas Vivekananda met with some perilous adventures, but nothing daunted him and he went through the treadmill of discipline with high courage and tireless energy. The vows imposed upon him entailed prolonged trials of endurance, an unbroken course of self-discipline, meditation and communion. When he arrived in America, without friends, without funds, he had nothing beyond his intellectual and spiritual equipment, and the indomitable courage and will that he had acquired in the course of his purposeful wanderings in India. One of his own countrymen, who had attained some fame and was a man of considerable eminence, attempted to discredit him by circulating unfounded calumnies against him. In spite of difficulties Vivekananda found his way to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and it was there that recognition came to him. He was probably the youngest man in that memorable and historical as well as unique gathering. Beyond the fact that he was a Hindu he carried no other credentials. The name of his Guru was unknown in Europe and America. He was an obscure young man unknown to fame, with no reputation either in his own country or out of it for scholarship, holy living, or leadership. It is impossible to conceive an assembly more critical or less emotional than that gathering of learned and pious men from all parts of the world representing all the churches and creeds of the world. Men of great erudition steeped in sacred lore, reverend and high dignitaries of many churches, men who had left the seclusion of the cloister and the peace of the monastery had met in solemn conclave in a great city in the Far West. It was a Parliament not filled from the hustings and polling booths, but from the temples and pagodas, the synagogues and churches and mosques of the world. They were mostly men well advanced in life, accustomed by years of discipline to self-control, engaged in contemplation and meditation, and not likely to be lightly swayed by extraneous influences. Some of them were men of an international reputation, all of them were men of distinction. Obviously the least among them was this youthful stranger from the East, of whom no one had ever heard and who was probably there more by sufferance than by the right of any achievement to his credit. How he carried that grave assembly of religious men by storm, how pen-pictures of the young Hindu monk in the orange-coloured robe and turban filled the newspapers of America, and

how the men and women of America crowded to see and hear him are now part of history. Slightly varying Cæsar's laconic and exultant message it may be truthfully said of Swami Vivekananda, he went, he was seen and heard, and he conquered. By a single bound as it were he reached from the depth of obscurity to the pinnacle of fame. Is it not remarkable, is it not significant, that of all the distinguished and famous men present at the Parliament of Religions only one name is remembered to-day and that is the name of Vivekananda? There was, in sober fact, no other man like him in that assembly, composed though it was of distinguished representatives of all religions. Young in years the Hindu monk had been disciplined with a thoroughness and severity beyond the experience of the other men who had foregathered at the Parliament of Religions. He had had the inestimable advantage of, having sat at the feet of a Teacher the like of whom had not been seen in the world for many centuries. He had known poverty and hunger, and had moved among and sympathised with the poorest people in India, one of the poorest countries in the world. He had drunk deep at the perennial fountain of the wisdom of the ancient Aryan Rishis and he was endowed with a courage which faced the world undismayed. When his voice rang out as a clarion in the Parliament of Religions slow pulses quickened and thoughtful eyes brightened, for through him spoke voices that had long been silent but never stilled, and which awoke again to resonant life. Who in that assembly of the wise held higher credentials than this youthful monk from India with his commanding figure, strong, handsome face, large, flashing eyes, and the full voice with its deep cadences? In him was manifested the rejuvenescence of the wisdom and strength of ancient India, and the wide tolerance and sympathy characteristic of the ancient Aryans. The force and fire in him flashed out at every turn, and dominated and filled with amazement the people around him.

Other men from India had preceded him in the mission from the East to the West,, men of culture, men of eloquence and religious convictions, but no other man created the profound impression that he did. These others assumed a tone which was either apologetic, or deferential to the superiority of the West to the East. Some said they had come to learn and did not presume to teach and all were more or less overawed by the dazzling magnificence of western civilisation. But Swami Vivekananda never had any doubts or misgivings and he knew he came from a land which had produced most of the great and wise teachers of men. The glitter of the West held no lure for him and his voice never lost the ring of authority. Besides the people anxious to profit by his teachings there was a good deal of promiscuous admiration. There was the usual sheaf of romantic letters from gushing and impressionable young women, and well meant offers of service from many quarters. A dentist offered to clean his teeth free of charge whenever necessary. A manicure presented him with a set of his dainty instruments for which an Indian monk has no use. A more substantial offer was about a lecturing tour with a well filled purse of shining dollars at the end of the tour. The money would have been useful for the monasteries afterwards established by Swami Vivekananda, but his vows precluded him

from either earning or laying by any money.* Besides the open lectures that he delivered in America and England he held what may be called informal classes attended by a small number of select people, usually earnest inquirers or people anxious to learn what the Swami had to teach. The actual number of his disciples in those countries was not large, but he set many people thinking while his marvellous personality made itself felt wherever he went.

Swami Vivekananda had left India an obscure and unknown young man. On his return he was preceded by the fame he had won in America and England, and was acclaimed everywhere as an apostle and leader of the ancient Aryan faith. At Madras he was given an enthusiastic reception. Some of the organizers of his public reception at Calcutta thoughtfully sent him a bill of costs. Swami Vivekananda mentioned this incident to me with indignation. "What have I to do with any reception?" he told me. "These people fancied I have brought a great deal of money from America to be spent on demonstrations in my honour. Do they take me for a showman or a charlatan?" He felt humiliated as well as indignant. On his return to India earnest young men came to him to join the Ramkrishna Mission founded by him. They took the vows of celibacy and poverty, and they have established monasteries in various parts of India. There are some in America also so that Swami Vivekananda's work in that part of the world is still carried on and his memory is held in great reverence. Swami Vivekananda told me that the Paramhansa insisted on celibacy and moral purity as the essence of self-discipline, and this is equally noticeable among Swami Vivekananda's disciples and those who have joined the Brotherhood after his passing. Every member of the Ramkrishna Mission is pure of heart and pure in life, cultured and scholarly, and is engaged in serving his fellow-men to the best of his ability, and the community is the gainer by their example and their selfless and silent service.

The last time I had met Swami Vivekananda before he left for the United States was in 1886. I happened to be in Calcutta on a brief visit and one afternoon I received intimation that Paramhansa Ramkrishna had passed into the final and eternal *samadhi*. I drove immediately to the garden house in a northern suburb of Calcutta where the Paramhansa had passed his last days on earth. He was lying on a clean white bed in front of the portico of the house, while the disciples, Vivekananda among them with his eyes veiled with unshed tears, and some other persons were seated on the ground surrounding the bedstead. The Paramhansa was lying on his right side with the infinite peace and calm of death on his features. There was peace all around, in the silent trees and the waning afternoon, in the azure of the sky above with a few clouds passing overhead in silence. And as we sat in reverent silence, hushed in the presence of death, a few large drops of rain fell. This was the *pushpa-vrishti*, or rain of flowers of which the ancient Aryans wrote, the liquid flowers showered down by the gods

* But he actually accepted the monetary offer of a lecture bureau and delivered lectures under it for some time in different cities of U. S. A. — *Editor*.

as an offering of homage to the passing of some chosen mortal to rank thenceforth among the immortals. It was a high privilege to have seen Ramkrishna Paramhansa in life and also to have looked upon the serenity of his face in death.

It was not till eleven years later in 1897 that I met Vivekananda again. He was then famous alike in the East and the West. He had travelled largely, seen many countries and many peoples. I was at Lahore and I heard he was staying at the hill station of Dharamsala. Later on he went on to Jammu in Kashmir territory and next came down to Lahore. There was to be a demonstration and a house had been engaged for him. At the railway station when the train came in I noticed an English military officer alighting from a first class compartment and holding the door respectfully open for some one else, and the next second out stepped Swami Vivekananda on the platform. The officer was about to move away after bowing to the Swami, but Vivekananda cordially shook hands with him and spoke one or two parting words. On inquiry Vivekananda told me that he did not know the officer personally. After entering the compartment he had informed Swami Vivekananda that he had heard some of the Swami's discourses in England and that he was a colonel in the Indian Army. Vivekananda had travelled first class because the people at Jammu had bought him a first class ticket. The same night Vivekananda came away to my house with two of his disciples. That night and the following nights and during the day whenever I was free we talked for long hours, and what struck me most was the intensity of Vivekananda's feelings and his passionate devotion to the cause of his country. There was a perfect blending of his spiritual fervour with his intellectual keenness. He had grappled with many problems and had found a solution for most of them, and he had in an unusual degree the prophetic vision. "The middle classes in India," he said, "are a spent force. They have not got the stamina for a resolute and sustained endeavour. The future of India rests with the masses." One afternoon he slowly came up to me with a thoughtful expression on his face, and said, "If it would help the country in any way I am quite prepared to go to prison." I looked at him and wondered. Instead of making the remotest reference to the laurels still green upon his brow he was wistfully thinking of life in prison as a consummation to be wished, a service whereby his country might win some small profit. He was not bidding for the martyr's crown, for any sort of pose was utterly foreign to his nature, but his thoughts were undoubtedly tending towards finding redemption for his country through suffering. No one had then heard of Non-co-operation or Civil Disobedience, and yet Vivekananda, who had nothing to do with politics, was standing in the shadow of events still long in coming. His visit to Japan had filled him with enthusiastic admiration for the patriotism of the Japanese nation. "Their country is their religion," he would declare, his face aglow with enthusiasm. "The national cry is *Dai Nippon, Banzai!* Live long, great Japan! The country before and above everything else. No sacrifice is too great for maintaining the honour and integrity of the country."

One evening Vivekananda and myself were invited to dinner by a

Punjabi gentleman (the late Bakshi Jaishi Ram), who had met Vivekananda at Dharamsala, a hill station in the Punjab. Vivekananda was offered a new and handsome *hookah* to smoke. Before doing so he told his host, "If you have any prejudices of caste you should not offer me your *hookah*, because if a sweeper were to offer me his *hookah* to-morrow I would smoke it with pleasure for I am outside the pale of caste." His host courteously replied that he would feel honoured if Swamiji would smoke his *hookah*. The problem of untouchability had been solved for Swami Vivekananda during his wanderings in India. He had eaten the food of the poorest and humblest people whom no casteman would condescend to touch, and he had accepted their hospitality with thankfulness. And yet Swami Vivekananda was by no means a meek man. In the course of his lecture on the Vedanta at Lahore, one of the loftiest of his utterances, he declared with head uplifted and nostrils dilated, "I am one of the proudest men living." It was not pride of the usual worthless variety but the noble pride of the consciousness of a great heritage, a revulsion of feeling against the false humility that had brought his country and his people so low.

I met Goodwin, the young Englishman who at one time was on the high road to become a wastrel, but fortunately came under Vivekananda's influence and became one of his staunchest and most devoted followers. Goodwin was a fast and accurate stenographer and most of Vivekananda's lectures were reported by him. He was simple as a child and wonderfully responsive to the slightest show of kindness. Later on I met some of the lady disciples of Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Ole Bull, Miss MacLeod, and Miss Margaret Noble, the gifted young Englishwoman to whom Vivekananda had given the beautifully appropriate name of Nivedita, the Offered One, one dedicated and consecrated to the service of India. I first met Sister Nivedita at Srinagar in Kashmir and next at Lahore where I saw a great deal of her, and again in Calcutta where she came to my house more than once. I took her through the slums of Lahore and showed her the Ramlila, which greatly interested her. She made eager enquiries about everything relating to India. She was in splendid health when she first came out to India, but the austerities which she practised affected her health, and she rapidly spent herself and was spent in the service of India. Of her fine intellect and gift of literary expression she has left abiding evidence in her exquisite books.

In conversation Vivekananda was brilliant, illuminating, arresting, while the range of his knowledge was exceptionally wide. His country occupied a great deal of his thoughts and his conversation. His deep spiritual experiences were the bedrock of his faith and his luminous expositions are to be found in his lectures, but his patriotism was as deep as his religion. Except those who saw it few can realize the ascendancy and influence of Swami Vivekananda over his American and English disciples. Even a simple Mahomedan cook who had served Sister Nivedita and the other lady disciples at Almora was struck by it. He told me at Lahore, "The respect and the devotion which these Memsahabs show the Swamiji are far greater than any *murid* (disciple) shows to his *murshid* (religious preceptor) among us." At the sight of

this Indian monk wearing a single robe and a pair of rough Indian shoes his disciples from the West, among whom were the Consul General for the United States living in Calcutta, and his wife, would rise with every mark of respect, and when he spoke he was listened to with the closest and most respectful attention. His slightest wish was a command and was carried out forthwith. And Vivekananda was always his simple and great self, unassuming, straightforward, earnest and grave. Once at Almora he was visited by a distinguished and famous Englishwoman whom he had criticised for her appearance in the role of a teacher of the Hindu religion. She wanted to know wherein she had given cause for offence. "You English people," replied Swami Vivekananda, "have taken our land. You have taken away our liberty and reduced us to a state of servility in our own homes. You are draining the country of its material resources. Not content with all this, you want to take our religion, which is all that we have left, in your keeping and to set up as teachers of our religion." His visitor earnestly explained that she was only a learner and did not presume to be a teacher. Vivekananda was mollified and afterwards presided at a lecture delivered by this lady.

The next year I met Swami Vivekananda in Kashmir, our house-boats being anchored near each other on the Jhelum. On his way back to Calcutta he was my guest for a few days at Lahore. At this time he had a prescience of early death. "I have three years more to live," he told me with perfect unconcern, "and the only thought that disturbs me is whether I shall be able to give effect to all my ideas within this period." He died almost exactly three years later. The last time I saw him was at the monastery at Belur shortly before his death. It was the anniversary of Ramkrishna Paramhansa and I saw Swami Vivekananda, when the Sankirtan (singing of hymns with music) was at its height, rolling in the dust and heaping dust on his head in a paroxysm of frenzied grief. The recent visit of the King of Belgium to the monastery at Belur was a homage to the memory of Swami Vivekananda. In the world-war no crowned king in Europe was more innocent of blood-guiltiness than the King of Belgium, and India will gratefully bear in mind this pilgrimage of a monarch from Europe to the sacred resting place of one of the greatest sons of India. Swami Vivekananda's thoughts ranged over every phase of the future of India and he gave all that was in him to his country and to the world. The world will rank him among the prophets and princes of peace, and his message has been heard in reverence in three continents. For his countrymen he has left a priceless heritage of virility, abounding vitality and invincible strength of will. Swami Vivekananda stands on the threshold of the dawn of a new day for India, a heroic and dauntless figure, the herald and harbinger of the glorious hour when India shall, once again, sweep forward to the van of the nations.

(Concluded)

NEO-HINDUISM

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE AT BENARES

[IMPRESSIONS OF A VISITOR]

It was in the winter of 1925 that I had the opportunity of visiting the Home of Service at Benares. The Home has already gained such an importance as to fall within the list of places worth visiting in this holy city and its surroundings, and visitors seem to go round the extensive area of the Home, spotted with red brick buildings, with the same interest as they do in the new Hindu University or in the ruins of the ancient Buddhist monastery at Sarnath. Pilgrims also visit the Home managed by monks and the attached monastery and shrine of Sri Ramakrishna with as much devotion as characterises their visits to the sacred temples of the holy city.

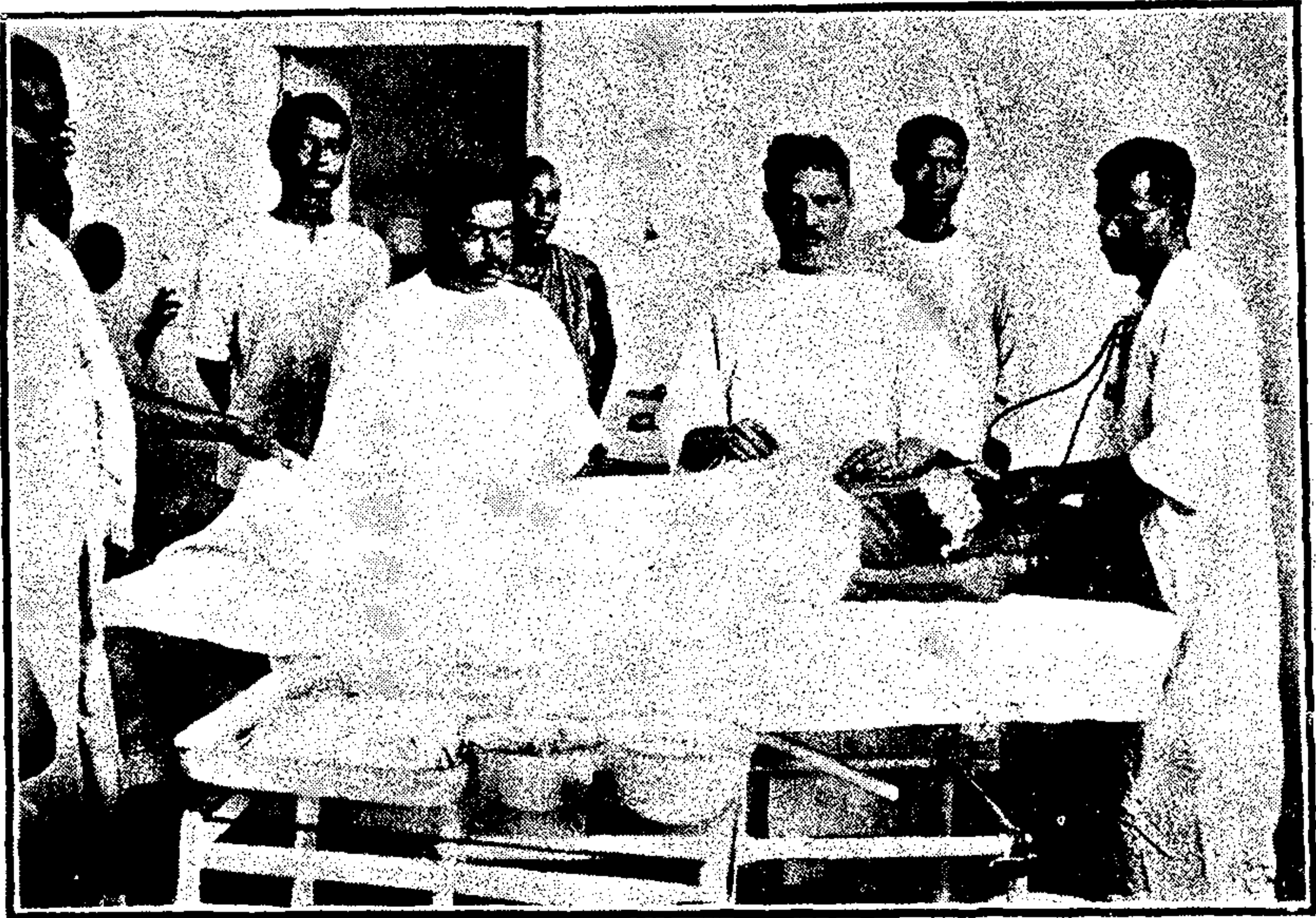
It was about 9 A.M. when I entered the institution. On entering the premises I found a pretty big crowd gathered round a gentleman seated at a table on the veranda of a fairly large building—a block by itself. I



The Outdoor Dispensary

learnt afterwards that the gentleman was the doctor attending to the outdoor patients at the dispensaries of the Home of Service. On advancing a little further in the same building I came to the offices, and at the doorway I was greeted by a young man in ochre robes and with shaven head, evidently a monk, who welcomed me cordially. "Can I help you in any way?" asked the young man, and I replied, "Yes, I would like to see the institution, if your rules permit it and if it is not causing you

any inconvenience." "You are quite welcome to see it," said the young monk and took me round the whole institution. We first entered the outdoor dispensaries which consisted of two big rooms situated in the same building next to the offices. All the three systems, Allopathic, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic, are followed here according to needs. About 40,000 cases had been treated here that year upto the time of my visit.

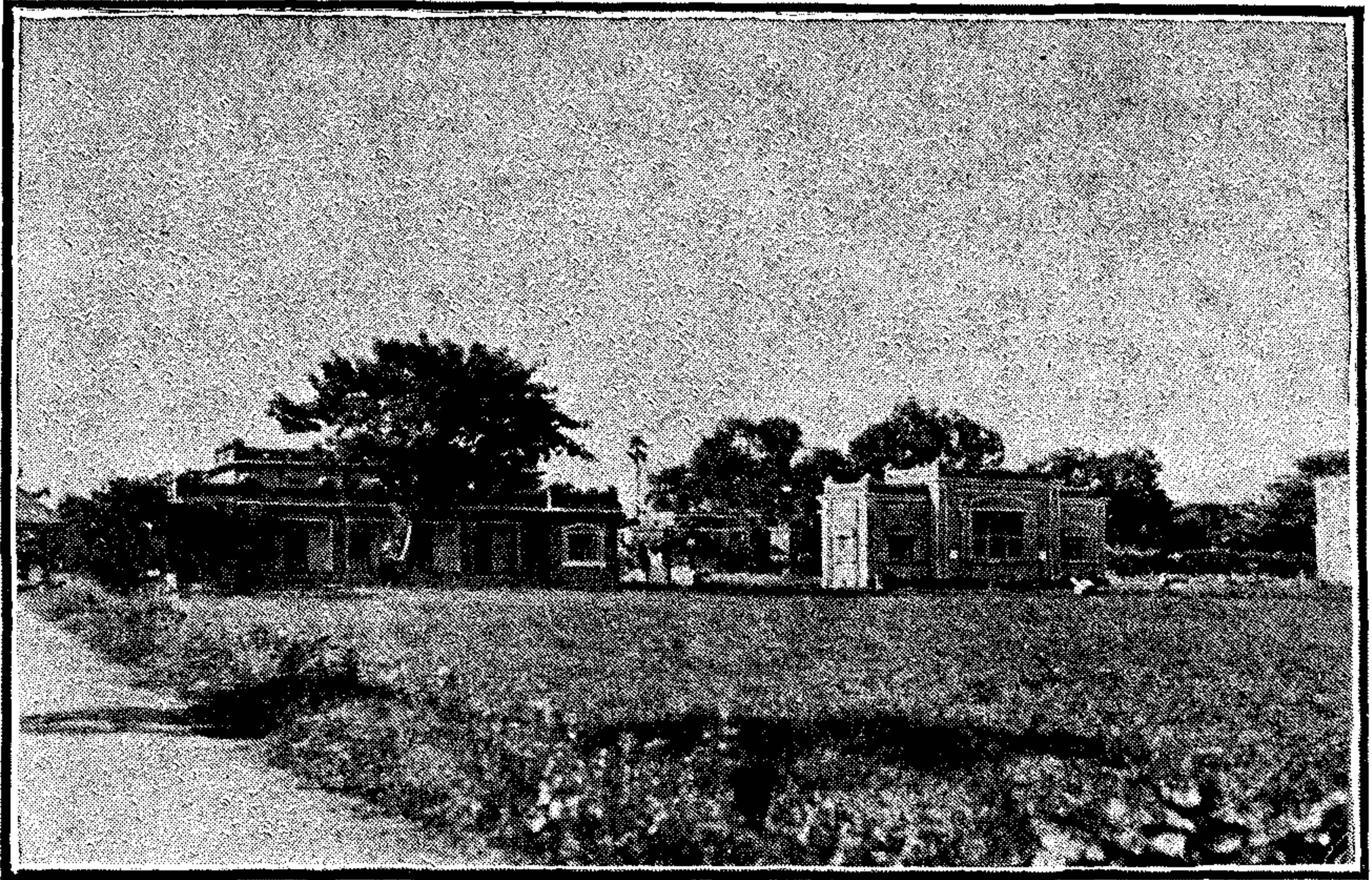


An Operation

We next entered the operation room, neat, clean and well-equipped, where two doctors and two monks were quite busy attending to cases. It was already late in the morning, yet the number waiting patiently for their turn was pretty large, which showed that the monks and the doctors had quite a heavy time of it. From there we went to the indoor hospitals, small blocks each containing four to six beds, standing on well laid grounds, bedecked with beautiful flower beds which did great credit to the taste and consideration of the Home authorities. The sight of the variously coloured chrysanthemums and roses was fascinating, and one could hardly suspect the great misery which was being so devotedly attended to and alleviated beside these feasts of smell and colour. The wards were extremely neat and clean and absolutely sanitary. The segregation wards for infectious diseases are kept apart at some distance from the main hospital wards. The simplicity and perfect orderliness of the buildings covering the extensive area of the Home indicating Hindu charity in a variety of ways, cannot but appeal to any one who visits it.

I found the wards quite full and some of the patients suffering from acute diseases, who would certainly have died for want of proper care had not timely-help been given by the Home. A good number of these patients, I heard from my guide, were picked up from the road-side by

the workers of the Home who go daily round the city with this express object. I was particularly struck by the happiness in the faces of the unfortunate inmates, which showed that they get full attention and utmost care. I could not talk to them as they did not understand my language, but their looks seemed to thankfully acknowledge the benefits they received at the Home. The diet sheet showed that it was sufficient and nutritious, and the beds were quite comfortable and clean. There were



The Surgical Ward and the Operation Theatre

in all about a hundred and twenty patients, and I found the workers, all monastic, attending to their every comfort cheerfully and lovingly, though some of the patients were suffering from unclean diseases. Some of the workers were actually grappling with death to rescue the unhappy patients from its grim clutches. A good majority of the workers, I learnt, are English-educated, and some of them have the highest university qualifications, and all of them are cultured gentlemen, their only reward lying in their own inward satisfaction. Seeing them one is reminded of the verse :

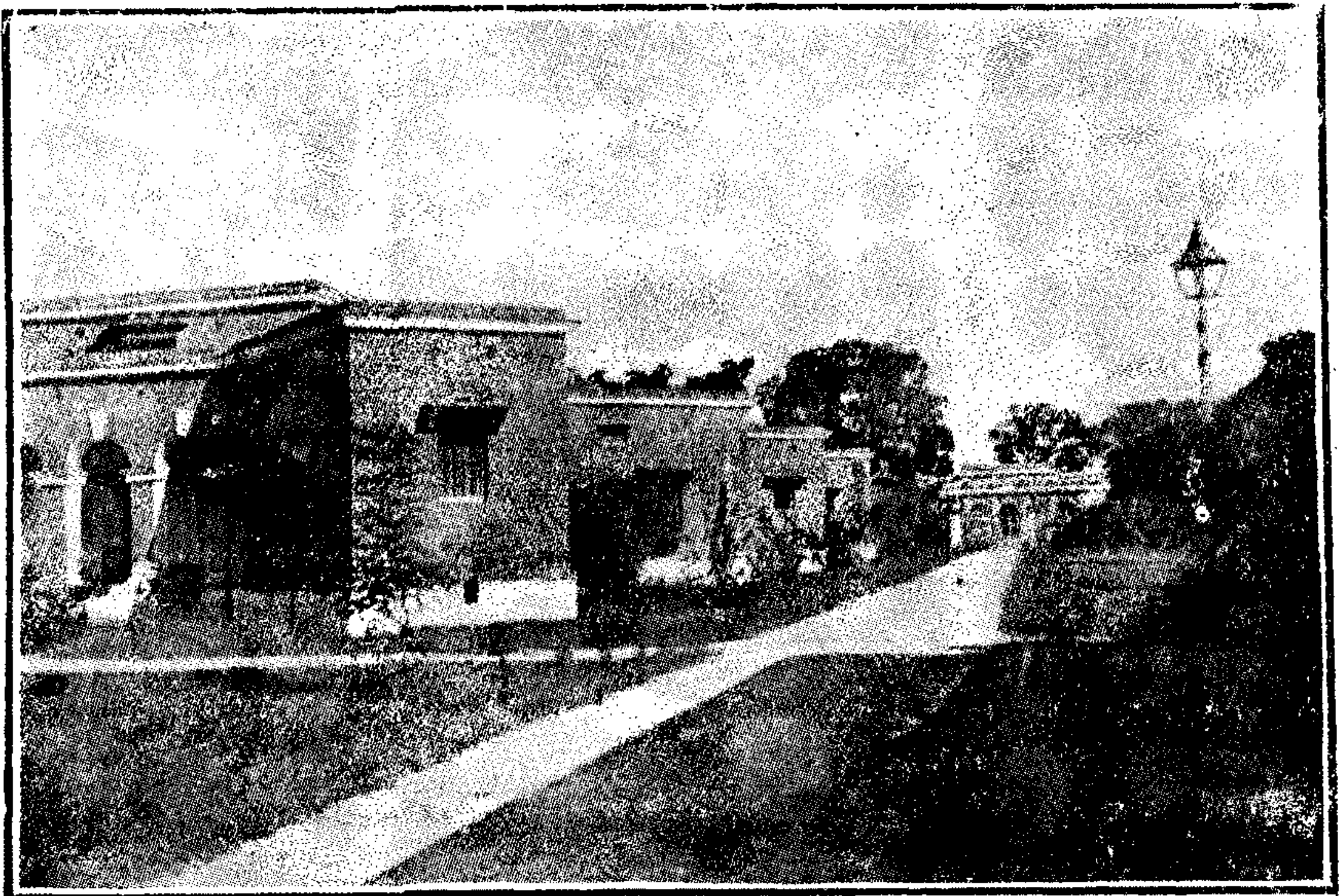
न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नाऽपुनर्भवम् ।
कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनाम् आर्त्तिनाशनम् ॥

“I do not covet earthly kingdom or heaven or even salvation. I desire for the removal of the miseries of the afflicted.” The doctors and workers all serve out of love and devotion, and the menials alone are paid.

The Home maintains besides these hospitals a refuge, a block by itself, which can accommodate twenty-five invalids. The operation theatre is a finely fitted up-to-date room where all aseptic cases are operated. I was informed that during that year there were about two hundred such cases operated in this theatre. Hard by there was another building under

construction which was intended to be a surgical ward. All the wards are gifts made by the rich people of the country, who built them in memory of some dear departed relations or friends, and their names are engraved in tablets fixed in the walls of the buildings.

The women's department of the Home has a compound for itself. We had to wait for the permission of the lady superintendent in charge of the department before we entered it. Of course I could not enter any of the wards. This department has a girls' home attached to it where orphan and helpless girls and widows are accommodated and given an education and training which fit them fully to meet the practical conditions of life or the life of service in the Home itself. The authorities were



The Women's Department

contemplating at the time of my visit to establish a school for the training of nurses, which would no doubt serve a very useful purpose. For this as also for building a refuge for women which was at the time situated elsewhere, they had applied to the Government for the acquisition of the adjacent lands. All these however do not exhaust the activities of the Home. It has also its outdoor works, e.g., distribution of rice in weekly doles to poor but respectable families, occasional help to urgent cases of students or stranded travellers etc., distribution of warm clothings etc.

I was everywhere impressed by the earnestness of the workers which clearly pointed to the deep religious consciousness that lay behind their untiring energy and devotion. The Home was about to complete its twenty-fifth year, having been started in the year 1900 by a few young-men. The beginning was with an old woman of eighty whom they found lying very ill and in sad plight by the road-side exposed to the inclemency

of weather. With a four anna bit secured by begging they began their work of love and were filled with a great peace and happiness when the old lady was brought back to health. This formed the nucleus of the Home. They continued their work of service and formed themselves into a brotherhood of mercy. They started an association called the Poor Men's Relief Association which name was changed for the present one when it was transferred to the Ramakrishna Mission, the young men themselves becoming the followers of Swami Vivekananda and monks of the order founded by him. I was told by my guide that the name "Relief Association" was particularly objected to by the Swami who preferred the word "service" to "relief" and had it accordingly changed to "Home of Service." "Do not march in false colours," he said to the young men. "Let service to humanity, and not pity or charity, be your ideal."

Thus with the slight help begged of an unknown gentleman and the blessings of a sick and neglected old woman nursed back to health and



Swami Shubhananda (Charu Babu)

life, was the institution ushered into existence; and ever since the Home has been making steady progress from year to year through trials, vicissitudes and opposition inevitable in all new enterprises and great works in every land and especially in India. I had the opportunity of seeing Swami Shubhananda who, more than any one else, was responsible for the organisation and the progress of the Home;—not a striking personality by any means, frail and short of stature, very shy and humble, but with an austere and ascetic look about him,—quite a typical monk. When later on I came in closer contact with him I was deeply impressed by the sweetness of his profound nature, full of love and compassion. Yet he was a man of strong principles. He was a devotee above all, full of an

intense faith which had sustained him in the darkest and most anxious days of the Home, for he *knew* that it was the Lord's work and that he need not worry so long as he was perfect in the discharge of his duties. It was the efforts of this single man to which is mainly due the present prosperity of the Home which can now count among its property an extensive ground dotted over with buildings accommodating one hundred and twenty patients in its indoor hospitals, a refuge for invalids,

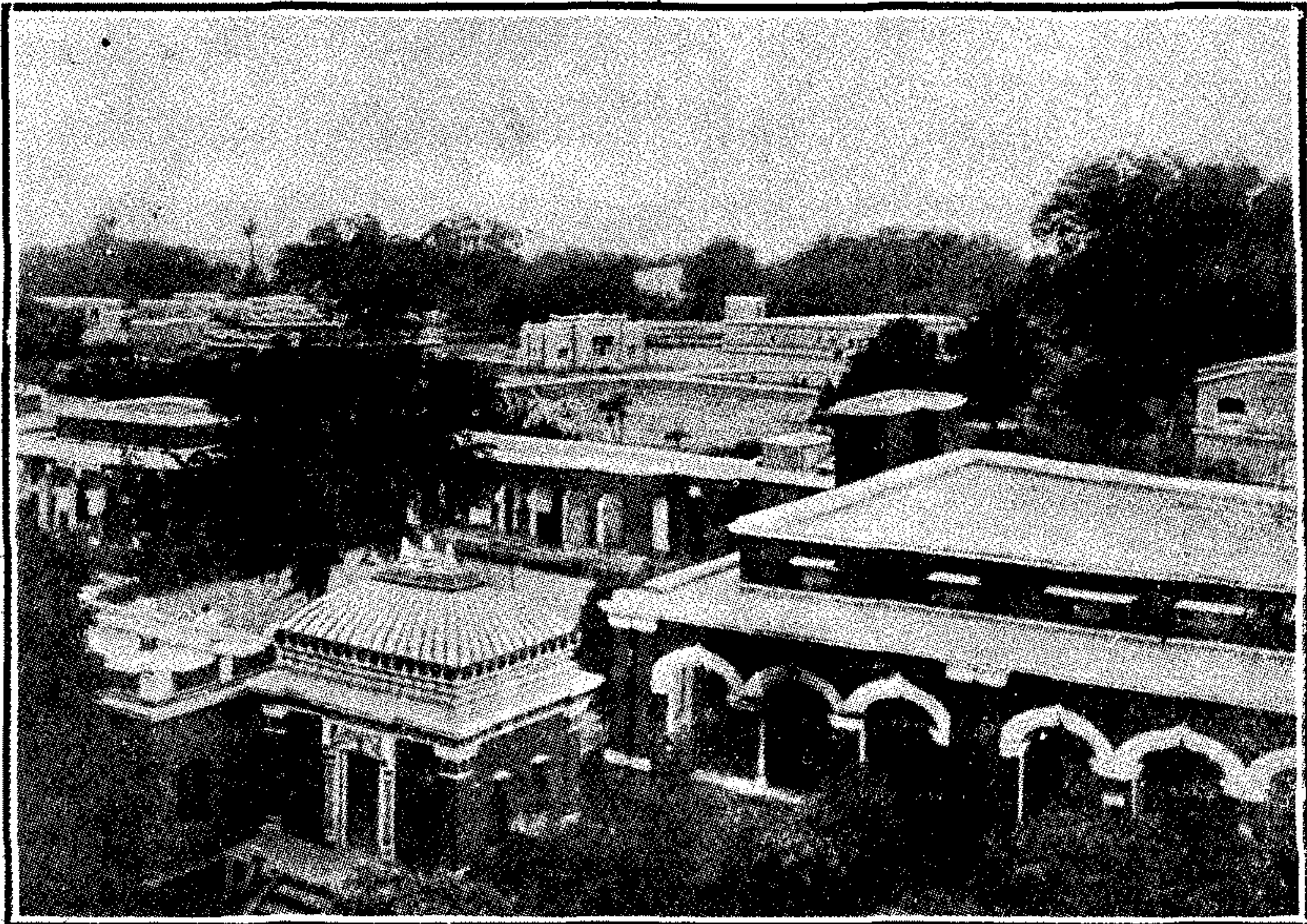
offices, dispensaries, an operation theatre, workers' quarters, doctors' quarters etc., a separate women's department with a girls' home attached to it,—the whole valued at several lacs of rupees (to make only an estimation of the material value of the work apart from its spiritual aspect)—a practical demonstration of what sincerity of purpose and steadfastness can do.

Benares is no doubt famous for its charity. But even there an institution like the Home is an urgent necessity. For the Home has provision, unlike other charity houses in that city, for the diseased, women, non-Brahmins and the respectable poor. The *chhatras* are narrowly orthodox and do not do anything for non-Brahmins, the sick and women ; and the authorities of the city hospitals do not go about the town in search of the sick and the helpless as do the workers of the Home. The work of the Home is based on the broadest principles of universal brotherhood and everyone is served here irrespective of his or her caste, creed or colour. No difference is made even in the case of the so-called untouchables.

What is more significant is the spirit that prompts the workers of the Home in this disinterested, but arduous work. It is neither philanthropy nor charity. Here charity has been metamorphosed into worship. They serve the poor and the diseased in the spirit of worship. It is a temple where God is being worshipped through service to men. For Hinduism teaches that behind everything, even the least, is God who is the one Reality in the universe and therefore there should be no difference between the service of men and the worship of God. All difference between human and Divine vanishes. Any work, provided it is inspired by this spirit, is as good a means to salvation as the contemplative life which is generally regarded as the religious life *par excellence*. The motto of the workers is *âtmano mokshârtham jagaddhitâya cha*.—"For one's own salvation and for the good of the world." Thus does the Home stand for the highest ideal of the country, renunciation. But by renunciation it does not mean living *away* from the terrors and sufferings of the world but *amidst* them and conquering them. "To renounce is to conquer and to have and hold is as great as to give up." In this way has religion been brought once more from the forest retreats into the every-day life of men.

In these days when religion has degenerated into mere formalities and ceremonials, the call for a return to its fundamentals, especially to the gospel of work, which the Home is silently sending to the nation, should not be light-heartedly ignored. Its spirit of helpfulness and its catholicity of outlook which have brought men of diverse castes, creeds and provinces together and are breaking down the walls of caste rigours, provincialism and sectarian hatred by withdrawing the vision of men from the trivialities of the world to the Divinity shining in everyone, are unique. It is a happy thing that the Home of Service is situated in the vicinity of many educational institutions, specially the Hindu University which is not so far off as to be beyond its moral influence. The Home teaches as eloquently as a professor, though not in words. The sensitive and impressionable young

minds are easily affected by everything attractive, whether good or bad. The Home is no doubt exerting a silent, healthy influence on those young minds, inspiring them with the idea of a noble life of sacrifice and service to the country.



A Bird'seye View of the Home of Service.

The modern age has done marvels in the sphere of natural sciences. But it has allowed itself to be too long dominated by them with the consequence that high thinking and spiritual ambitions of men have been suppressed. The abnormal growth of science on the one hand and stagnation of religion on the other have resulted in the spread of materialism. What cannot be proved scientifically is thrown out as useless, though it is capable of giving peace and happiness to thousands of our fellow-men who do require them for their growth. And we have thus a wide gulf created between the educated higher classes and the masses, with menacing consequences. But the spiritual instincts of man cannot be suppressed for long. His inner nature must expand. He demands free scope to soar high. He resents control. Truth and knowledge are hailed by him so long as this freedom is not checked. He likes to supplement his world of every-day reality by an ideal world where the highest and the noblest parts of his mind may find play. If he is chained to the senses and the intellect as science seeks to do, he revolts and seeks shelter in worst kinds of superstitions such as worship of ghosts and spirits or some other like absurdities, as substitutes for the worship of God, Krishna, Buddha or Christ. Signs of such a revulsion are not wanting in the present times though they are not quite prominent. But such a state of things is fraught with a danger to the progress of mankind greater than the supposed danger from the current religions of the world against which

modern knowledge is carrying on warfare. Or it may be that if things take a good turn when religions are thrown out as unscientific, an altruistic ideal will be set up in their place. In that case, the Christ's sermon on the mount and the Buddha's first discourse near Benares which gave a new light to mankind and changed their view-point from the external world to the internal, would lose all their significance. But probably they will leave behind before they are discarded a profound influence which would give rise to a cult of humanity, more or less loosely connected with the original ideas of the New Testament or the Tripitakas.

Already the churches in all countries have changed their attitude with regard to social questions, and the relief of the poor and the masses has been made a regular item of their programme, and even the enemies of religion seem to be staunch upholders of this movement. To rescue children from vice and give them moral and secular education, to clothe, feed and nurse the hungry, the sick and the distressed have occupied the anxious thought of the enlightened in all countries. The goal of human progress is fixed as the social perfection of man. Man's duty is to subordinate his personality to society and to live for others. Humanity is the one object of his worship. The ideal of God is replaced by an abstract idea of humanity. Such a movement however is different from what we are accustomed to call religion. Everything granted, it still remains unproved why we should be sympathetic, why we should serve others and love them, and last of all, what is really *good* for the world. We cannot get much by merely advocating self-sacrifice and love, unless we back it by an idealistic principle.

In this world there is nothing that is purely good or purely bad. Every act is a mixture of good and evil. Utility is not absolute. And charity is often found to encourage the very evil that it seeks to eradicate. The condition of the world has not been much improved since the dawn of civilisation however much we may dream of the millennium. We have the same amount of happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, privileges and social differences to-day as in the days of the Roman or the Buddhist emperors. We have not been able to make this world happier, in spite of many great men having laid down their lives for its betterment. Good and evil disappear only to reappear under new garbs and names. If good is on the increase, so is also evil. A civilised man can enjoy more than the savage, but his capacity to suffer also has increased proportionately. Our joys are greater, so also our sorrows. Therefore utility and charity must be explained by a more fundamental philosophy which will conform both to science and human experience.

In the doctrine of the One Atman as taught in the Upanishads we have such a philosophy. It teaches the divinity of man and the fundamental identity of the individual with the universal, which puts an end to all dualism, and to all differences conceived between the human and the Divine. This philosophy is the basis of all altruism and ethics. The Home of Service, I found, has conceived altruism in the light of this Vedantic philosophy, a philosophy which, it must be confessed, is most logical and satisfactory in its solution of the problems of existence. It launches one directly into the heart of the universal. It

refers our natural feelings to a universal cause. I must love another because in so loving I love myself, for there is only one reality, the Atman. I help others not with the idea of doing good to the world and improving it, but because that is the only way for me to get out of this life of contradiction. These ideas and ideals that inspire the Home of Service are fast putting their stamp on Benares, and through Benares and her pilgrims on the Indian religious world. Only this ethical and philosophical idea, I think, with its concomitant social results can save the world and its civilisation. I hope it will in no distant time become the religion of the world.

THE CENTRAL ASIAN INTERMEDIARIES IN THE PROPAGATION OF BUDDHISM

BY DR. PROBODH CHANDRA BAGCHI, M.A., D.Litt (Paris).

(1) THE INDO-SCYTHIANS (the *Yue tche*). The Indo-Scythians probably contributed the most to the foundation of Sino-Indian relation. The first Chinese political mission under Chang Kien was sent to the Scythian court, established at that time in the valley of the Oxus. The continual Hiung-nu (Hun) menace to the Chinese Empire compelled the Emperor to search for an ally amongst the western peoples and the powerful *Yue-tche*, the old enemies of the Huns became the first objective of political negotiation. Though the political mission did not at once succeed, a trade relation and a cultural exchange was soon established. It was towards the end of the 1st century before Christ (2 B. C.) that the Chinese ambassador Tsing Kiang received the first Buddhist text from the *Yue-tche* prince and brought it to the Chinese court and it was probably the first direct knowledge of Buddhism which the Chinese ever had.

The Scythian conquest of north-western India at about the same time brought them into direct contact with India and lead to the foundation of a great empire which soon extended from the Punjab to the valley of the Oxus and included Kasghar and Khotan and came into conflict with the Chinese supremacy in Central Asia in the middle of the first century after Christ. It had far-reaching consequences. Apart from the political and commercial consideration it greatly helped the infiltration of Indian religion and literature in Khotan in the south and Kucha and other kingdoms in the north.

The Scythians began to play a very important rôle in the history of middle Asia. Their centre of activity was transferred to the region of Gándhára and the new capital was founded at Purusapura (Peshwar) which was already international from the times of the Greek conquest. The Scythians soon embraced Buddhism and brought a new contribution to the development of Buddhism and its expansion outside India. Kaniska who adopted the Chinese imperial title of *Devaputra* (*T'ien-tseu*) became the

patron of a new form of Buddhism, the Maháyána which was soon destined to be an universal religion, and to have a prosperous career in the greater part of Asia. Kaniska sat at the feet of Indian teachers like Asvaghosa who promulgated this new faith. It is not impossible that this new faith first propagated on the border lands of India, the meeting place of different civilisations, and patronised by the Indo-Scythian kings was inspired to some extent by the Indo-Scythian and other foreign peoples living side by side with the Indians.

It seems that during her first relation with China India was represented by the Indo-Scythians. The tradition would have us believe that the first Indian missionaries, Kásyapa Mátanga and Dharmaratna, who went to China in 68 A.D., were found in the country of the Indo-Scythians when the Chinese ambassadors came to meet them. The texts which these missionaries transmitted to China were not translations of the original works of the Canon, but brief *exposé* of the fundamental doctrine of Buddhism meant for pure propaganda in foreign countries.

From this time onwards we hear of continual arrivals of Buddhist missionaries and it is not without importance that many of them were Indo-Scythian by nationality. Thus Lokaksema (or more accurately *Lokachema*), a monk of rare learning came to Lo-yang (Si-ngan-fu) in 147 A.D. and translated there some of the most important texts of the Buddhist canon into Chinese. May it be noted that the most of these texts formed a part of the Maháyána literature. Lokaksema worked there till 188 A.D., a very long period of work indeed, and some of his translations which are still extant testify to the amount of work which he did for the propagation of Buddhism in China. Towards the end of the same century (190-220 A.D.), one of his young disciples, named Tche K'ien who was also an Indo-Scythian by nationality, was compelled to leave North-China on account of political troubles and to migrate to the south of the Yang-tse-kiang. He worked in Nanking till the middle of the 3rd Cen. A. D. (252-253 A.D.) and translated over a hundred Buddhist texts, 49 of which are still extant. It is again to be noted that he emphasised on the new form of the religion, I mean, the Maháyána. Though he translated texts from the Buddhist Agamas he did not fail to translate Maháyána texts like *Vimalakirtinirdesa*, a scripture of capital interest to the new Church.

Tche K'ien was the first translator in South-China and was thus the first to have imparted a first-hand knowledge of Buddhism in that region.

Without confining our attention to other Indo-Scythian monks of minor importance who followed them I pass over to a great name, that of Dharmaraksa, known to the Chinese as Tchou Fa-hou. Dharmaraksa was born toward the middle of the 3rd Cen. A. D. of an Indo-Scythian family settled in Touen hoang. He received his education from an Indian teacher, travelled with him in different parts of Central Asia, and visited, without doubt some countries on the border-land of India. He then learnt 36 different languages, and came into touch with different peoples and possessed a direct knowledge of Buddhism. A monk of rare genius, he was not contented with his lot at Touen hoang. So he left for China in 284 A. D. and worked there for the cause of Buddhism till 313 A. D.

As a man of Touen hoang he possessed a thorough knowledge of the Chinese language and translated more than two hundred Sanskrit texts into Chinese of which 90 works still exist. Besides he organised a regular school of translators where Chinese, Indo-Scythian, Indians and others worked side by side for a common cause, *viz.*, the propagation of Buddhism in China.

With the disappearance of the Indo-Scythian people from the face of history, or rather their assimilation into the vast population that spread from India to the border-lands of China, the Indo-Scythian monks ceased to play any part in the history of Buddhism. But their work was commemorated by China and we can still trace their stamp on the early evangelic activities of India. We can say without exaggeration that they were the first bearers of the torch of Indian Buddhism to China.

(2) PARTHIA, Mithradates I, a very able monarch who reigned between 171-136 B. C. succeeded in extending his dominions so far that his power was felt up to the Indus and probably even to the east of that river. He annexed to his dominions the territory of all the nations between the Indus and the Hydaspes or the Jhelum. The chiefs of Taxila and Mathura assumed Persian titles of satrap and a close relation between Parthian monarchy and the Indian border-land is demonstrated by the appearance of a long line of princes of Parthian origin who now enter on the scene, and continue to play some role in the history of India till the 2nd Cen. A. D. So we have no reason to be surprised if Parthia had already possessed a direct knowledge of Buddhism in the beginning of the Christian era.

It was in the year 148 A. D. at the commencement of the War that ultimately caused the downfall of the Arsakidan dynasty that a Parthian prince appears in the western frontier country of China with a burden of Buddhist texts. He is known to the Chinese historian as Ngan-Che-Kao or Lokottama (?) the Parthian. He was a true prince of royal descent but abdicated the throne in favour of his uncle, left the family and turned out a Buddhist monk at an early age. He was a scholar of profound intelligence and gave himself up to Buddhist studies. He left for China and reached Lo-yang (Si-ngan-fu) in 144 A. D. He settled down there in the monastery of *Po-ma-sse* "the white Horse monastery" built for the first two Indian monks Dharmaratna and Kasyapa-Matanga. He soon succeeded in founding a school of translators which came to be known as 'Unrivalled'. Really it was such. Ngan-Che-Kao himself translated into Chinese more than a hundred Buddhist texts of which 55 are still extant. Most of these texts are extracts from the Buddhist Agama, generally illustrating the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. Another Parthian named Ngan Hiuan who belonged to this school came to Lo-yang as a merchant. He received the imperial favour for rendering some valuable service to the public and obtained the title of the "Chief Officer of the Cavalry". But he soon gave up all official distinctions and embraced the Buddhist religion. As a scholar, he collaborated with the monks of the White Horse monastery and translated some important Buddhist texts : The *Ugraparipticcha Dvādasanidāna sutra*, etc.

Amongst the workers of the school of Ngan-Che-Kao we find some Sogdien monks and what is more interesting a Chinese priest of the end of the 2nd Cen. A.D., the first we have ever heard of, named Yen-Fo-T'iao (Buddhadeva). He was a patient collaborator of Ngan Hiuan, learnt Sanskrit (? the original language of the sacred texts brought from Central Asia) and was able to recite the whole of the *prátimoksha*. He was given the title of *Acárya* and a Sanskrit name "*Buddhadeva*" (Fo-T'iao). To the same school of Ngan-Che-Kao belonged also the famous Indo-Scythian monk Lokaksema.

It is not without significance that the first organised effort made to translate the Buddhist Canon into Chinese was made by Ngan-Che-Kao a Parthian by nationality. Buddhism was introduced into China by the Indo-Scythians and it was through them that China first came to know of India. But it was left to this great Parthian to lay the foundation of a school for a systematic interpretation of Buddhism to the Chinese and it was in that school the first Chinese *Acárya* and Sanskrit scholar received his training.

We would not mention here other Parthian monks of minor importance who went to China during 3rd and 4th Centuries A. D. But they contributed not only to the spread of Buddhism in China but also to the work of translation of the Buddhist texts, which was only possible for those who possessed an intimate knowledge of the Indian language in which they were written down.

(3) SOGDIA. Next comes Sogdia.—Another Iranian country. The Sogdians like their brethren of Parthia contributed a good deal to the spread of Buddhism towards the Far-East. In the period which we have just mentioned we find a number of Sogdian monks and amongst them some famous scholars who undertook the work of translation of the Buddhist texts into Chinese.

The Sogdians were a very ancient people. Their existence as nomads is known during the Achaemenian period of the history of Persia. The Avesta mentions the country and the people as *Sughda*. "The Sogdians were tenacious agriculturists and clever merchants. Civilised and audacious, they had occupied all the cultivable zone between the lofty mountains and the steppes to the north of the *T'ien chan*. They advanced gradually towards the eastern Turkestan and had numerous settlement in different parts of Central Asia towards the beginning of the Christian era. There was almost a Sogdian route at this time from the great wall of China up to Samarcand. The Sogdian, a purely Iranian language played the role of a sort of *lingua franca* in Central Asia for some centuries.

Without speaking of the numerous traces of Sogdian translations of Buddhist texts discovered in Central Asia, I pass over to the great Sogdian figures who have left their stamp on the Chinese Buddhist Canon. The school of Ngan-Che-Kao in the end of 2nd Cen. had already some Sogdian translators. But the most important of the Sogdian monks who worked in China is perhaps K'ang Seng-houei.

Seng-houei was born of a Sogdian family. His ancestors at first settled down in India. His father was a merchant and had to stay in

Tonkin (*Kiao tche*). Seng-houei was born there in the first quarter of the 3rd Cen. A.D. On the death of his father he left the world and became a monk. He soon proceeded to Nanking where he built a monastery and founded a Buddhist school. He was the first to introduce Buddhism in Southern China. There is some truth in it. Tche Kien, the Indo-Scyth who was translating Buddhist texts in Nanking at about the same time was only an *Upasaka*, a layman. So he had no right to give ordination to the novice. Seng-houei was a perfect monk and had exercised his full rights by converting many Chinese to the new faith which he had brought to them. Seng-houei translated about a dozen Buddhist texts into Chinese and some of them have come down to us.

It is sufficient to show the great efforts which the Sogdian monks made for the spread of the Buddhist culture in China. It is not necessary here to take notice of numerous other Sogdian monks living in the Buddhist monasteries of China for several hundred years, though their contribution to the common cause should not be underestimated.

(4) KHOTAN (*Yu T'ien*), Kustana in Sanskrit.

Khotan situated on the southern route generally followed by the Chinese pilgrims on their way back from India played the same rôle as Kucha in the north in the diffusion of the Buddhist religion. The Buddhist texts discovered from Khotan show that the ancient Khotanese was an eastern Iranian language and was a highly developed vehicle of Buddhism. Being situated in the vicinity of India and accessible both from Kasmir and Afganistan, the Khotanese population contained a large element of Indian people and the language consequently underwent a great Sanskritic influence.

According to the tradition we are lead to believe that Khotan was colonised by Indians at the time of Asoka. Whatever the value of the tradition may be, the numismatic evidences prove without doubt that Khotan received two streams of colonisation one from India and the other from China already before the middle of the 1st Cen. A. D. The connection with India is confirmed by the discovery of numerous documents written in Kharosthi characters and a Prákrit dialect, which was certainly the language of common life. Side by side we have Chinese documents of the 2nd and 3rd Centuries of the Christian era.

Khotan came into direct contact with China from the time of Tchang Kien's mission. As a consequence of this mission Khotan sent an embassy to China during the reign of Wou-ti of the Han dynasty in 140-87 B.C. After a temporary silence Khotan was compelled by the invasion of Pan-tchao in the beginning of 2nd Cen. to accept the suzerainty of China, and to remain a faithful ally for a long time.

Buddhism was introduced into Khotan from Kasmir. But Khotan received Buddhism through other channels too, from Kasghar and Yarkand. Though, we do not know definitely the time when it was introduced we have some record of its later history in Khotan. Already in the year 259 A.D. a Chinese monk named Tchouhche-hing comes to Khotan for the study of Buddhism. Tchou She hing is a fairly well-known figure in the early history of Chinese Buddhism. It was he who compiled a catalogue of the Buddhist texts translated into Chinese. On account of

difficulties in the interpretation of Buddhist texts, he wanted to study with good teachers who, he heard, were to be found in Khotan. He died there at the age of eighty but succeeded in sending a collection of sacred texts to China through his disciple Punyadhana (*Fou Jiu Tan*), most probably a monk of Khotanese origin. Shortly after in 291 A.D., another Khotanese monk named Moksala (*Wou-lo-tch'a*) went over to China and translated a Maháyána text, the famous *Pancavimsati Sáhásrika Prajnápáramitá*. In the beginning of the 5th Cen. (401-433 A. D.) a Chinese prince of Leang-tcheu, named Ngan Yang came to Khotan for the study of Maháyána. He settled down there in the *Gomati-mahávihára* and studied the Maháyána Buddhism with an Indian teacher named Buddhasena (*Fo-to-se-na*), who was a zealous adept of Maháyána and "in all the countries of the West was known as *She-tseu* (Simha) for all his attainments." Ngan Yang, on his return to China translated some of the most important Maháyána texts. At about the same time Dharmaksema an Indian monk proceeded from Kasmir to Khotan as he heard that it was the best place for the study of Maháyána. Subsequently when in China he undertook, the work of translating the *Mahaparinirvána Sútra* into Chinese he came to Khotan several times in search of a complete manuscript of this important text of Maháyána.

A few years later in 439 A. D. eight Chinese monks started from Leang-tcheou in search of Buddhist texts. They came to Khotan where the Quinquennial assembly (*Pancavársika*) was being held at that time. They wrote down some texts from the mouth of Khotanese monks and returned to China.

Evidences can be multiplied for proving the great rôle of Khotan in the history of the transmission of Buddhism to China. Analysis of several texts translated into Chinese have shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that Khotanese monks were actually fabricating scriptures in the 4th and 5th Centuries A. D. They show indirectly what power the Khotanese Buddhist Church was commanding for several Centuries.*

* The Paper was read before the Greater India Society and is a part of the Bulletin on "India and China" which is being printed by the Society.

THE ESSENCE OF VEDANTA

(Continued from page 124)

[VEDĀNTASĀRA]

ऐहिकानां स्रक्चन्दनवनितादिविषयभोगानां कर्मजन्यतया-
नित्यत्ववत् आमुष्मिकाणाम् अपि अमृतादिविषयभोगानाम् अनित्यतया
तेभ्यो नितरां विरक्तिः—इहामुत्रफलभोगविरागः । १७

17. Renunciation of the enjoyment of fruits of action in this world or hereafter :—This is the same utter¹ disregard for the enjoyment of immortality² etc. hereafter on³ account of their being unreal as for the enjoyment of such earthly⁴ objects as the flower-garland, the sandal-paste and the wife, which are unreal on account of their being results of action.

[1 *Utter etc.*—It is a particular tendency of the mind which dissuades an aspirant from such enjoyment.

² *Immortality*—The word means here abode in heaven which is as impermanent as the mundane existence. When the merit that has earned it is exhausted, the soul returns to the earth for a new birth.

³ *On account of etc.*—It is unreal because it is the result of sacrifices etc. Comp. “तद् यथेह कर्मजितो लोकः क्षीयत एवमेव अमुत्र पुण्यजितो लोकः क्षीयते।” (Chhā. Upa. 8. 1. 6). A thing which has an origin cannot be permanent. Therefore dispassion should be practised for *all* things, even for the highest that man may attain—the position of Brahmā, which is also as unreal as any earthly object. Comp. “यच्च कामसुखं लोके यच्च दिव्यं महत् सुखं । तृष्णाज्ञयसुखस्यैते नार्हतः षोडशीं कलाम् ॥” (Mahabharata 12. 6636)

⁴ *Earthly*—What is related to the existing body.

Renunciation has been enumerated as the second Sadhana as without it the practice of the third one is not possible.]

शमादयस्तु—शम-दमोपरति-तितिक्षा-समाधान-श्रद्धाख्याः । १८*

18. *Shama etc.* :—These are *Shama* or the restraining of the outgoing mental propensities, *Dama* or the restraining of the external sense-organs, *Uparati* or the withdrawing of the self, *Titikshā* or forbearance, *Samādhāna* or self-settledness, and *Shraddhā* or faith.

[Detailed explanations of these terms follow. The acquisition of these virtues is enjoined here, as without them the aspirant cannot feel eager for Freedom.]

शमः तावत्—श्रवणादिव्यतिरिक्तविषयेभ्यः मनसः निग्रहः । १९

19. *Shama* is the curbing¹ of the mind from all objects except hearing² etc.

[1 *Curbing etc.*—As an extremely hungry man forgets all things except eating and shows an impatient eagerness for food, so the aspirant displays great disgust for the enjoyment of worldly objects and evinces eagerness for hearing scriptures etc. which is conducive to the attainment of Knowledge. But even then on account of previous tendencies the mind often turns to the enjoyment of earthly pleasures, leaving aside spiritual practices. Now *Shama* is that particular *Vritti* or function of the mind which keeps it in check from the pursuit of worldly pleasures.

2 *Hearing etc.*—Hearing of scriptures, thinking of their meaning and meditating on it.—श्रवणम्, मननम्, निदिध्यासनम् ।]

दमः—बाह्येन्द्रियाणां तद्व्यतिरिक्तविषयेभ्यः निवृत्तनम् । २०

20. *Dama* is the restraining of the external¹ organs from all objects except that.²

[1 *External etc.*—Organs are of two kinds, viz., of action and of knowledge. The five acting organs are those of speaking, grasping, going, evacuating and generating. The five perceiving organs are those of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. Mind is called the inner organ. Here the word *Dama* implies that particular function of the mind which turns away the organs from such objects as are other than hearing etc.

2 *That*—Hearing etc. See Note ante.]

**निवर्त्तितानाम् एतेषां तद्व्यतिरिक्तविषयेभ्यः उपरमणम् उपरतिः ;
अथवा विहितानां कर्मणां विधिना परित्यागः । २१**

21. *Uparati* is the cessation¹ of these restrained external organs from the pursuit of objects other than that,² or³ it may mean the abandonment⁴ of the prescribed⁵ works according⁶ to Scriptural injunctions.

[1 *Cessation etc.*—*Uparati* is that function of the mind which keeps the restrained organs from further pursuit of any other object than hearing etc.

2 *That*—Hearing etc. See Note ante.

3 *Or it etc.*—As the word *Uparati* according to the first definition differs very little from *Shama* and *Dama*, the alternative definition is given to make the meaning precise.

4 *Abandonment*—According to this definition the word *Uparati* means *Sanryāsa* or entering into the fourth order. Like the practice of *Shama* etc. the aspirant must accept the vow of monasticism as the essential *Sādhanā* for the attainment of Knowledge. Comp. the following passages of *Sruti* and *Smriti* :

न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके असुतत्वमानशुः । (Mahana. Upa. 10. 5)
वेदान्तविज्ञानमुनिश्चितार्थाः सन्न्यासयोगाद् यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।

(Mundaka Upa. 3. 2. 6).

एतमेव प्रवाजिनो लोकमीप्सन्तः प्रवजन्ति । (Briha. Upa. 4. 4. 25).

पुत्रैः पत्न्यायाश्च वित्तैः प्रयायाश्च लोकैः पत्न्यायाश्च व्युत्थाय अथ भिक्षाचर्यं चरन्ति ।

(Briha. Upa. 4. 4. 26).

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां सन्न्यासेनाधिगच्छति । (Gita 18. 49).

प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो योगो ज्ञानं सन्न्यासलक्षणं ।

तस्माद् ज्ञानं पुरस्कृत्य सन्न्यासेदिह बुद्धिमान् ॥ (Mahabha. 14. 1195).

According to reason also entering into the fourth order is essential to the attainment of Knowledge. Therefore *Uparati* means the acceptance of the vow of *Sannyâsa* as a means to the realisation of Truth, and this is supported by *Sruti*, *Smriti* and reason.

5 *Prescribed etc.*—Such obligatory works as *Sandhyâ*, *Agnihotra* sacrifice etc.

6 *According to etc.*—This is to warn against the abandonment of works through laziness or other *tâmasik* propensities. Regarding the scriptural injunctions comp. the following passages :

तद्धैके प्राजापत्याम् एव इष्टि कुर्वन्ति । (Jabala Upa. 4.)

प्राजापत्यां निरुप्येष्टि सर्व्ववेदसदक्षिणाम् ।

आत्मन्यग्नीन् समारोप्य ब्राह्मणः प्रव्रजेत् गृहात् ॥ (Manu 6.38)

तितिक्षा—शीतोष्णादिवृन्दसहिष्णुता । २२

22. *Titikshâ* is the endurance¹ of heat and cold and other² pairs of opposites.

[1 *Endurance etc.*—This virtue means the endurance of pleasure and pain, arising from heat and cold which are the inevitable associates of the body, by meditating on the Pure Self, knowing It as always free from heat, cold and other freaks of nature.

2 *Other pairs etc.*—They include respect and contumely, gain and loss, weal and woe, etc.]

निगृहीतस्य मनसः श्रवणादौ तदनुगुणविषये च समाधिः—

समाधानम् । २३

23. *Samâdhâna* is the constant concentration of mind, thus restrained, on hearing etc. and other¹ objects that are conducive to these.

[1 *Other objects*—They mean such virtues as modesty, humility etc. Or they may mean service of the Guru, compiling books, their preservation, etc.]

गुरुपदिष्टवेदान्तवाक्येषु विश्वासः—श्रद्धा । २४

24. *Sraddhâ* is the faith¹ in the words of Vedanta² as taught by the Guru.

[1 *Faith*—Gita, Mahabharata and other scriptures enjoin that a spiritual practice without faith does not produce the requisite effect.

2 *Vedanta*—See, ante.]

मुमुक्षुत्वम्—मोक्षेच्छा २५

25. *Mumukshutwa* is the yearning for Freedom.

[When the aspirant is equipped with the three above-mentioned *Sâdhanâs*, he cannot but have a strong desire for liberation. Then alone does he go to a spiritual guide seeking the Knowledge of Truth.]

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The famous "Monkey Trial"

It is hoped that our readers still remember the famous Tennessee trial in which Mr. John T. Scopes was found guilty in July 1925 of having taught Darwin's theory of evolution in the local high school. The Supreme Court of Tennessee, sitting at Nashville on Jan. 15 last, delivered its long-awaited judgment in the appeal from the sentence of £20 fine and costs passed by the Dayton Court.

Chief Justice Green reversed the decision of the local court on the ground that a judge cannot impose a fine of more than £10, it being the duty of the jury to impose a fine exceeding that amount. The entire bench of judges agreed that the verdict against Mr. Scopes should be quashed.

This does not however legalise the theory of evolution in Tennessee.

Significance of the Chinese Struggle

It is characteristic of Mr. H. G. Wells that he often makes us view things from a new angle of vision. Thus, for example, it may not have struck us that the various political disturbances in the East as well as in the West are symptoms of the emergence of a new system of government. It is neither autocracy, democracy, or oligarchy that is going to be the future administrative system of the world—it is something entirely new. In Russia and China, and especially in China, Mr. Wells finds this new system taking shape. "When we look to China," he observes in course of an article in the London *Sunday*

Express, "there seems to be something new there. . . . It is the clear onset of a new phase, of a new China, like nothing the world has ever seen before, a challenge, a promise to all mankind."

He continues: "It marks a new age. The days of great adventurers seem to be past in any country larger than Italy, and even in Italy it is possible to regard Mussolini less as a leader than as the rather animated effigy of a juvenile insurrection. What has happened in these wider, greater lands (Russia and China) is something much more remarkable, something new in history, a phenomenon that calls for our most strenuous attention—namely, government, effective government, competent military control, and a consistent, steady, successful policy by an organised association.

"This Kuomintang in China in so far as it is an organised association is curiously parallel to the Communist Party which, standing behind the quasi-Parliamentary Soviets, has now held Russia together, restrained such dangerous adventurers as Zinovieff, and defended its frontiers against incessant foreign aggression for nine long years.

"We shall be extraordinarily foolish if we do not attempt to realise the significance of this novel method of controlling government which has broken out over two of the greatest political areas of the globe. We have now two Governments through organised associations, Governments which are neither limited monarchies, dictatorships, nor parliamentary Republics, on the American and French models, one in Russia, and now another over the larger half of China, which bid fair to spread over the entire breadth of Asia until they are in complete contact.

"When I say that the Communist Party and the Kuomintang are similar, I mean only in so far as regards organisation. They have profound differences in origin and aim and profession. . . .

"Some twenty years or more ago I wrote a fantastic speculation about government, called "A Modern Utopia," in which I supposed all administration and legislative functions to be monopolised by an organisation called the Samurai, which any one could join by passing certain fairly exacting tests and obeying the rules of an austere, disinterested, and responsible life. One was free to leave the organisation and drop power and responsibility when one chose. The organisation ran the world. There were no great heroes and leaders and there were no representatives nor parliaments nor elections. Any one who chose to face the hardships of the job could have a hand in control, but there was no room either for the adventurer or for appeals to the oafish crowd in the direction of public affairs.

"Now this fantasy seems to have been one of those odd guesses that hover close to latent possibilities. . . . This anticipation sprang only from an early recognition that modern means of communication, the power afforded by print, telephone, wireless and so forth, of rapidly putting through directive strategic or technical conceptions to a great number of co-operative centres, of getting quick replies and effective discussion, has opened up a new world of political processes. . . . So

it is that both New Russia and this New China that has hatched itself out so astonishingly in the last year are things as new and different structurally from any preceding political organisms as mammals were from the great reptiles that came before them. . . .

"The Kuomintang seems to owe its origins and inspirations to that valiant man, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who so nearly escaped decapitation in the Chinese Legation in London, a quarter of a century ago. Its vital element is the student class, and especially the students freed by Western ideas, but by no means overwhelmed by them. It has come more rapidly to power against suppression. Its centre of origin is Canton; it is the creation of the South. . . . And while the Russian movement was primarily social and only secondarily Russian, the Kuomintang started apparently with the idea of "China for the Chinese," and accepted most of the established traditions of property. . . .

"Before we dismiss as incredible the development of a powerful and even dominating civilisation in the federated Soviets of Russia and Asia, let us recall the contemptuous superiority with which Europe regarded the United States at the outbreak of the Civil War. At any rate it seems to me that this New China, whose brain and nervous system is the Kuomintang and its centre Canton, is the most interesting thing by far upon the stage of current events, and the best worth watching and studying."

It is undoubtedly true that China's rising is big with tremendous possibilities, not merely political.

Beethoven and Vedanta

Unseen indeed does the dew of Indian influence fall and bring into bloom fairest roses. Last month we had occasion to mention the indebtedness of Tolstoy to Indian thought and his study of the Vedanta and the Yogas. The March issue of the *Modern Review* discloses another instance of Indian influence in an article on Beethoven by Dr. Kalidas Nag. The centenary of the great Prussian musical composer, Ludwig van Beethoven, fell this year on the 26th of March. It appears from communications from Mon. Romain Rolland, contained in the article, that Beethoven "submitted to the attraction of Indian thought." Mon. Rolland has sent some literary fragments which explain "how the master spirits of the last century, e.g., Goethe and Beethoven, Schopenhauer and Tolstoy, felt a sort of family attraction towards India." So we may say that in a way India has contributed largely to the building up of the modern Western culture.

Beethoven first came in contact with the Indian thought in 1809 through the famous Austrian Orientalist, Hammer-Purgstall. He was then in Vienna. "Hammer had written for Beethoven an operatic poem of Indian inspiration which Beethoven styled as 'herrliches,' (magnificent) and the great musician was very happy to talk on the subject with the Orientalist and to learn something about Indian music."

"The fragments of Indian religious texts which were found amongst manuscripts of Beethoven are partly translations and partly

adaptations of the sublime philosophies of the *Upanishads* and of the *Bhagavad Gita*." Thus from the Upanishads, Beethoven culled these gems of thoughts: "God is Spirit (no-matter), and therefore, he is beyond all conceptual definition;.....There is no one greater than he, the Brahma—his spirit is self-contemplating.....O God, thine all-permeating presence in the universe upholds all things, Sun, Ether,—Brahma!" He adapted the following from the Gita: "Do not allow your life to pass in inactivity. Be active, fulfil your duty, banish all thoughts of the consequence and of the result—which may be good or evil; for such serenity is the criterion of spiritual values." There are also some interesting jottings from Indian literature. Altogether Beethoven was deeply influenced by Indian thought. But he seemed "to have been more attracted by the religious thoughts of India than by her poetry."

A "Daridra-Narayana" Programme.

It often gives us great pleasure to observe the silent and steady process by which the ideas of Swami Vivekananda are penetrating the nation. Of all his ideas, the one which has become most popular is that of the worship of the Divine in man. We have often come across his famous symbolical phrase *Daridra-Narayana* being used in quite unsuspected quarters. It may be that the full significance of this word-symbol is not often appreciated. But it is bound to tell by and by.

The latest instance of such a pleasing discovery we found in the editorial of *Forward* (Calcutta) of the 8th March. It is said therein that the Congress Party in the Corporation had pre-arranged a programme of work for the improvement of the Corporation, which it called the "*Daridra-Narayan* programme" and which included various kinds of civic services. The very designation indicates the spirit in which the Congress Party in the Calcutta Corporation proposed to approach its duties. This is undoubtedly the right spirit. If all our public workers should adopt this worshipful attitude towards the objects of their service, India's triumph will not remain far off.

SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA : IN MEMORIAM

A cable from America brings the very sad news of the sudden death of our beloved brother Sannyasin, the Swami Prakashananda, for twenty years a preacher of Vedanta in America and for eleven years in charge of the Hindu Temple at San Francisco, California.

Born at Calcutta, in 1874, of Brahmin parents, the Swami from his childhood was brought up in a religious atmosphere. At his mother's knees the sweet-tempered boy learnt to lisp the prayers taught to every youngster of his caste. And other ladies of the household instilled his budding intellect with ideas of morality through stories of Hindu scriptures.

Though of a lively disposition, Sushil, as he was then called, at school was naturally drawn into friendship with boys of good behaviour. Youths of dubious character could never attract him. Then came his college days when during his hours of leisure he would try to solve the mysteries of Eastern and Western philosophy. Often he could be seen in the company of a few selected friends in some garden or other solitary places in the dusk of evening, discussing the different phases of Hindu religion.

It was during this period of his life that news reached Calcutta of the Swami Vivekananda's phenomenal success in America. The student community was roused, and Sushil and his friends perused and eagerly discussed every item of information they could get hold of. Printed accounts of Swamiji's lectures in the Calcutta papers captivated their young minds. They were charmed by the beauty of these addresses. The Swami Vivekananda became their hero. They regarded him as a prophet and future leader of their nation. And listening to his stirring appeal to young men to work for the good of humanity, Sushil decided to respond to this earnest call, and to become Swami Vivekananda's disciple.

In the mean time, since 1890, he kept in close touch with the Ramakrishna Math at Alambazar where he enjoyed the company of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples. He joined in their worship and kirtanas, and learned much about the great saint of Dakshineswar, his life and teachings.

At last, in 1896 when the inner urge to renounce the world became overpowering, Sushil, abandoning his university career joined the Brotherhood as a Brahmacharin, and in the following year when the Swami Vivekananda returned from America received initiation from him into the most holy order of Sannyasa. Henceforth he was known as the Swami Prakashananda.

The young Sannyasin now lived constantly in the shadow of that great personality, the Swami Vivekananda, absorbing his ideas, following his instructions, moulding his character after the life of his master. Thus he became one of Swamiji's foremost disciples and an untiring worker of the Ramakrishna Mission.

In 1898 Swamiji sent him with another disciple to preach in Eastern Bengal, where his lectures were highly appreciated. Then from the latter part of 1902 till the beginning of 1906 he was at the editorial staff of *Prabuddha Bharata* and helped in the management of the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, in the Himalayas. And in April of 1906 he was deputed to assist Swami Trigunatita in conducting the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, in its own quarters, known as the Hindu Temple. After the lamented death of the revered Swami Trigunatita, in 1915, he took charge of the Hindu Temple which under his loving and able guidance has grown steadily in importance and usefulness. He laboured hard to place the Society on a sound financial basis, to interest more students in the teachings of the Vedanta, to raise the prestige of his motherland in the eyes of the American people. During his long ministry the Vedanta Society at San Francisco flourished as it had never done before.

The Swami visited and lectured at different places in California creating an interest in Vedanta wherever he went. At many places he was requested to start a branch Society. In 1915 he spoke at the Congress of Religion and Philosophy held in connection with the Panama Exposition. He also delivered lectures on Buddhism in his capacity of Vice-President of the International Buddhistic Congress.

These various and endless activities began to tell on the Swami's health. But disregarding his own convenience and need of rest he continued to labour day and night, teaching,

preaching, always at the beck and call of his students, always ready to console and sympathise with a troubled heart.

At last the students realized that a change and rest were imperative. They presented the Swami with a handsome purse for a flying visit to his dear motherland. The Swami remonstrated that he could not leave his work, that it would suffer by his absence. The students, however, assured him that among themselves they would carry on the activities of the Vedanta Society. They requested him to return soon, and to bring with him another Swami to share his labour.

At last the Swami consented. He was now overjoyed at the prospect of meeting again his brother Sannyasins, of visiting again the places of his youth, of living over again his early days of spiritual enthusiasm, of seeing again many spots of sacred association. And so, on October 21st, 1922, he sailed for India, accompanied by Brahmachari Gurudasa and two lady devotees.

His trip to India proved a great success. The Swami received the warmest welcome wherever he went. He was still the old Sushil, simple, childlike, cheerful, loving, unchanged by long contact with the West.

But in India as abroad, he did not take the rest he needed. Many were the demands made on him. His brother monks tried to shield him, but the public knows no considerations. And it was not in the Swami's nature to refuse a single demand. Receptions, informal talks, lectures, private interviews, inspection of new centres of the Mission, visits to different parts of India, these filled his time. And almost before he realized it his short visit had come to an end. His American work was calling him. He thought of his faraway students left without a shepherd.

In April, 1923, he undertook the return journey, *via* New York City. The Swamis Raghavananda and Prabhavananda accompanied him, the former as far as New York City, the latter to San Francisco, as his co-worker.

The San Francisco students were jubilant at the return of their beloved teacher. They accorded him and Swami Prabhavananda a most hearty welcome.

The two Swamis now lived together at the Hindu Temple. It seemed Swami Prakashananda would now enjoy a little more leisure. But this was not what he was looking for. "When

my work is finished, I will rest," he used to say in his sweet, smiling way. "Now I must be up and doing to spread Swamiji's message all over California." And he sent his assistant on a lecturing tour to conquer new cities for the cause he was working for. "We must open new Vedanta Centres," he told Swami Prabhavananda. And his co-worker went creating new interest in Vedanta wherever he lectured, and finally, at the request of some earnest students in Portland, Oregon, established himself there.

Swami Prakashananda was delighted. "We are gaining ground," he said, "Swami Vivekananda is blessing the work. I want more Swamis, I will write to our headquarters in India."

In response to his earnest appeal the authorities at the Belur Monastery sent Swami Dayananda as his new assistant. He arrived at San Francisco in June, 1926, far from expecting that his senior brother Sannyasin would leave him so soon.

Swami Prakashananda's health was gradually failing. Symptoms of a previous attack of diabetes appeared again. And on February 13th, 1927, at the age of fifty-three, he was called from this world to join his great master whom he had served so faithfully.

His cheerful, loving disposition, his sympathy with those who were in trouble, his infinite patience, his childlike simplicity, combined with a deep, devotional nature, endeared the Swami to his students in California. They adored him from the bottom of their hearts.

The Swami's death leaves a vacancy it will be most difficult to fill. His students have lost in him a true friend and teacher, the Ramakrishna Mission a valuable worker, the Swamis of the Order one of their most beloved brothers and an outstanding example of selfless devotion to a noble cause.

May rest and eternal peace be the reward of him who on earth worked untiringly, unselfishly, who served God and man as his master would have it. We are reminded of Swami Vivekananda's words: Our salutation goes to all those God-like men who worked to help humanity.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF BOOKS

English

SELF-REALISATION by *Syamananda Brahmachary*. To be had of the author at *Sivala Ghat, Benares City*. Price paper Rs. 2, cloth Rs. 2-8. Pp. 288.

As indicated by the title, the subject-matter of the book is how the Self can be realised. The author's is the stand-point of Advaita Vedanta, and the following are among the topics he discusses: Deception of Maya; The theory of Maya propounded; The theory of opposites; Jivatwa,—how to get rid of; Worship of Maya and Truth; Law of Karma and Bhranti; Rebirth; the Self and the Realisation. The discussion is more popular than philosophical. The English of the book is capable of improvement.

COSMOLOGY by *Swami Prabhavananda*. Published by the *Vedanta Society, Wheeldon Annex, 10th and Salmon Street, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A.*

The writer shows in this booklet of 14 pages the scientific nature of the Hindu theory of creation. The treatment is remarkably simple.

THE YEKANTIN. Published by the *Yekanta Matha, P.O. Ranibennur, Karnataka Province, Bombay Presidency*. Price Re. 1-8. Pp. 106.

This is the "organ of the Yekanta Matha, devoted to the publication of the philosophical works of Sri Anandateertha Bhagawatpadacharya and the supremely illuminating commentaries thereon of Sri Jayateerthacharya." The present number which is the 1st part of the 1st volume, contains the English translation of the Brahma-Sutras with the commentary of Sri Madhwa and the gloss thereon of Jayateertha Bhikshu. The translation has been brought up to the end of the 1st pada of the 1st chapter, and is well done. We would however suggest that as the translation is meant mainly for those who are deficient in the knowledge of Sanskrit, it would better help them if *copious* explanatory notes are added in clarification of the terse passages in the gloss.

The present number is well printed, and is certainly a welcome addition to the Vedanta literature in English.

LEADERS OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ. Published by *G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras*. Price Re. 1-8. Pp. 248.

The book is a collection of the life-sketches of the eminent Brahma workers from Raja Ram Mohun Roy to Pundit Sivanath Sastri. It is a narrative of the social, religious, educational and philanthropic activities of the pioneers of the Brahma movement. The volume is enriched with an exposition of the philosophy and tenets of Brahmaism, is well got up and illustrated.

RAM-SITA by *A. Christina Albers*. Published by the *Book Company Ltd., 4/4-A, College Square, Calcutta*. Price 12 as. Pp. 148.

A nicely printed volume containing the story of Ramayana in simple

blank verse. The writer has taken the liberty to depart in slight measures from the original version.

Hindi

AYODHYA KANDA of *Râm-Charit-Mânas* by *Tulsidas*, commented on by *Ramnaresh Tripathi*. Published by the *Hindi Mandir, Prayag (Allahabad)*. Price As. 14. Pp. Demy. 338.

The commentary of Mr. Tripathi is very simple and free from sectarian bias, and is bound to be very helpful to the Hindi readers. The book, very well printed and large enough, is being offered at a cheap price through the kindness of a patron who has rendered substantial financial help in bringing it out. We are confident the book will attain popularity.

Bengali

THE BIOLOGICAL CAUSE OF THE DECLINE OF THE HINDUS by *Nibaran Chandra Bhattacharyya, M.A., B.Sc.* To be had of *Gurudas Chatterji & Sons, 203-1-1, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta*. Price Re. 1. Pp. 191.

A collection of essays covering many interesting topics, most of which were published originally in Bengali and English journals. The author discusses such subjects as fatalism, the cause of India's decline, ways and means of national regeneration, hygiene, degradation of matter, Sannyasa, etc. His treatment of the subjects is characterised by freshness of outlook.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Centre Started at Rajkot.

The opening ceremony of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Rajkot came off on the 5th of March with due éclat and solemnity. It fell on the auspicious birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, so it naturally became a day of consecration and joy. The morning opened with special Puja of Sri Ramakrishna and Homa joined by several distinguished gentlemen as well as His Highness the Maharaja Saheb of Morvi, who has been kind enough to lend his old Utaro at the Civil Station where the Ashrama has been placed now. The State Musician of the Rajkot State entertained the gentlemen present with a few select Hindi Bhajans.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the Ashrama grounds presided over by the Maharaja Saheb of Morvi. About three hundred gentlemen and several ladies were present at the meeting. The inaugural speech was made by the Maharaja Saheb. Among other things he mentioned that Sri Ramakrishna and the Mission founded under his name typified "Shiva and Seva," and hoped that the centre started at Rajkot would spread its benign influence gradually all over Kathiawar and be a source of inspiration to many. Swami Madhava-

nanda, the President of the Adwaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, who was present at Rajkot in connection with the opening of the Ashrama, spoke feelingly on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, laying special stress on the ideal of the acceptance and toleration of all faiths as exemplified in the life of the great Master. Mr. P. M. Patel, Dewan, Morvi State, Mr. P. G. Masurekar, Bar-at-Law and Mr. Prabhuram Shankarji Shastri also spoke, dealing with the different aspects of the life of Sri Ramakrishna and the humanitarian activities of the Mission. With a vote of thanks to the chair by Mr. C. M. Shroff, Dewan, Rajkot State, the meeting terminated.

Swami Vividishananda, the former editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, assisted by Swami Bhaveshananda will conduct the work of the centre, which would for the present consist mainly of giving class talks and lectures to the local gentry and students. The Thakore Sahab of Rajkot deserves special mention for his kind help and active interest in the work of the centre.

Activities of Swami Sharvananda

Since leaving Madras, Swami Sharvananda has been doing extensive and valuable propaganda work in Southern, Western and Central India. At Mysore where he went in the last August, he delivered a number of lectures to the public and the students. The University of Mysore invited him to deliver a series of lectures on the Philosophy of the Upanishads. The lectures were given on the following subjects: First Principle, Cosmology, Epistemology and Psychology, Eschatology and the Law of Karma, and Ethics. The lectures were very well attended and much appreciated.

From Mysore the Swami went to Bombay where he stayed till February. During these months, he delivered many public lectures, and was invited by the Bombay University to deliver a series of extension lectures on the Upanishads. These were so well appreciated by his large educated audience that when the Swami had finished his series of four lectures, he was requested by the Registrar of the University to deliver another series of three lectures which all left a deep impression on the learned audience.

From Bombay, he went to Nagpur where also he delivered two lectures at the University of Nagpur. He spoke on the Vedantic Epistemology at the Philosophical Union to a deeply appreciative gathering. He also went to Amraoti and delivered a lecture at the college there under the presidency of its English Principal. The lecture was so successful that the president remarked that "there never has been a lecture like this since the opening of this college."

It is an auspicious sign that the universities, generally the stronghold of Western culture and indifferent to our own, have been taking interest in the truths of the Vedanta. We do hope that the other universities also will invite the Swami to discourse on Vedanta to their students and the general public. We wish the Swami ever increasing success in this new field of action.

Christmas Services at the Vedanta Society, Portland, U. S. A.

The chapel at the Vedanta Headquarters had been beautifully decorated by loving hands, guided by devoted hearts. Evergreens, with the brilliance of poinsettias and red Christmas bells gave an atmosphere most fitting to the occasion.

On Christmas night, in this artistically harmonious setting, was held a deeply impressive service, Swami Prabhavananda taking as his theme, "The Birth of Christ."

His earnest words intensified in the hearts of his hearers the longing for one-pointed devotion to the Christ-Ideal and for the birth of the Christ within, that each may be able to say, with full realization, as did the Master: "I and my Father are One."

Special Christmas music was sung by a quartet of members and our beloved Swami closed the services with a moving benediction upon us all.

In the month of December Swami Prabhavananda spoke on the following subjects on Sundays: How to Conquer our Egotism. Who is the Savior? Sayings of Christ from the Cross. What is meditation. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Gospel of John). Poise and Efficiency. The Great World Teachers. "He must increase but I must decrease" (John).

Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bombay

In response to an invitation of the Western India Vivekananda Society, Swami Sharvananda came to Bombay in February, 1923, and delivered a series of lectures. By his learned discourses and brilliant conversations the Swami won the golden opinion of the public of Bombay. Some of the prominent citizens requested the Swami to start a centre of the Mission in Bombay and the first centre of the Mission was started at Santa Cruz in 1923 in a rented house. Swami Shivanandaji, the President of the Ramakrishna Order, visited the city in January, 1925. His presence created great enthusiasm amongst the devotees and admirers of the Mission. A movement was set on foot to have a permanent home for the Ashram. A plot of land was purchased from the Development Department and the President laid the foundation stone. The building and the land cost Rs. 25,000 of which Rs. 10,000 were subscribed by the public. The Ashram authorities had no other alternative than to run into debt of Rs. 15,000. A Parsee devotee who wants to remain unknown, has recently paid off the whole amount of the debt. The gift has come unexpectedly and spontaneously. The Bombay branch of the Mission will for ever cherish the memory of the noble-souled generous Parsee gentleman with gratitude.

This year, Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj arrived at Bombay on the 22nd December accompanied by Swami Yatiswarananda. The opening ceremony of the newly-built shrine took place on the 26th of December. He himself carried the photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and performed Puja and Arati. While he was engaged in the sacred function, Bhajan parties were singing with fervour. The terrace was

crowded with devotees and spectators. Everybody felt the presence of the Lord at least for the moment. Later, Swami Sharvananda who is now staying at the Bombay Ashram, performed the Puja with due rites and ceremonies, befitting the occasion. In the evening also a large number of people assembled to worship the Prophet of the age whose empire is extending as days are rolling on.

The R. K. Mission Students' Home, Calcutta

The report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta, for the year 1926 shows that it is making steady progress. At the end of the year it had 25 student-inmates of which 14 were free, 4 half-free and 7 paying. Some of them showed excellent results in the University Examinations.

The merit of the Home is that it supplements the College education by a training at home. Thus there were scriptural classes throughout the year except during the vacations, celebrations of various festivals and Saturday classes. A Mss. magazine was conducted by the students, and there was a tailoring class twice a week held by an hony. expert. All household duties except cooking were managed by the inmates.

The financial conditions require to be greatly improved. The total income to the General Fund including the balance of the last year was Rs. 11,508-7-9 and the total disbursements Rs. 6,728-6-0. The Building Fund is growing rather slowly, the balance being only Rs. 14,918-4-6. The Permanent Fund amounts to Rs. 2,555-9-3 only. The Home deserves unstinted support from the public, for it is fulfilling a unique function in the educational sphere of Bengal. Contributions may be sent to the Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 7, Haldar Lane, Bowbazar, Calcutta.

Sri Vivekananda Society, Poona

Consequent on the visit to that place of Swami Sharvanandaji of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission recently a Society has been started with about 25 members. The object of this Society is to study religion and philosophy in synthetic light as held out by the great Swami Vivekananda.

The opening ceremony of this Society and the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda came off on Tuesday, the 25th January at 6 p.m. at Sardar Moodliar Club, Raste's Peth, opposite to King Edward Memorial Hospital, Poona. Mr. L. R. Gokhale presided on the occasion. Professor Damle of Fergusson College, Poona, delivered an instructive and inspiring lecture on the life and work of Sri Ramakrishna and of Swami Vivekananda. There was a very large gathering of ladies and gentlemen. The function came to a close with a vote of thanks to the chairman and the learned lecturer of the day and distribution of flowers.