

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. XLV

OCTOBER, 1940

No. 10



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

*Sri Ramakrishna's birthday anniversary ;
evening-time ; Girish Ghose and other
devotees present*

It is evening. The gentle sound of bells proclaiming the evening service in the temple is heard. Bathed in the moonlight, the temple-spire, the adjoining court, the garden, and the tops of trees have assumed a charming spectacle. The Ganges, flowing northwards now, by the side of the temple, appears as if it were in high glee. Sri Ramakrishna sits on the small cot in his room, enwrapped in silent meditation of the Mother of the universe.

The festival of the day has come to an end, but a few devotees are still lingering. Narendra has already left.

The evening service in the temple is over. The Master, in an exalted mood, is pacing up and down the long verandah, south-east of his room. M. also stands there gazing at him. The Master, all of a sudden, addressing M. says, “Oh, how wonderfully does Narendra sing !”

*The meditation of Mahākālī according to
the Tantras ; its deep meaning*

M. : “Yes, revered sir, do you mean the song, ‘In the midst of the dense darkness’ ?”

Sri Ramakrishna : “Yes, the song has got a deep meaning in it. The profound mood it drove me in, is still holding sway over my mind !”

M. : “Yes, revered sir.”

Sri Ramakrishna : “The practice of meditation in darkness is upheld by the Tantras. Where then can one see the light of the sun ?”

Srijut Girish Ghose comes and stands there. The Master is singing :

‘Oh, is my Mother of a dark hue ?
She, Who has space for Her apparel,
brightens up the lotus of my heart
with the beauty of Her dark complexion.’

The Master, lost in divine ecstasy, stands there with his hands placed on the body of Girish, and continues singing :

'I have no desire to go either to Gaya,
or to the Ganges, or to Prabhas,
Kashi or Kanchi,
If only I can breathe my last with
the name of Mother Kali on my
lips. . . .'

'Now my thoughts are on the right
track.

I have learnt my lesson in contem-
plation at the feet of a high soul,
possessed of a deeply contemplative
mind. . . .'

The sight of Girish seems to deepen
the ecstasy of the Master. He keeps up
standing and sings again :

'I have resigned my soul at those
blessed feet that remove all fear,
And have set myself free from the
terror of Death.

* * * *

I have exchanged my body in the
market of this world for the blessed
name of Mother Durga.

I have planted the wish-fulfilling tree—
the name of Mother Kali—in my
heart,

And am awaiting the approach of
Death to show it to him by opening
the heart.'

In the madness of that exalted mood
the Master repeats the line, 'I have
exchanged my body in the market of
this world for the blessed name of
Mother Durga.'

Sri Ramakrishna (to Girish and other
devotees) :

" 'The mind is filled with ecstasy and
consciousness is lost.'

"Here, consciousness means the con-
sciousness of the world. It is the
knowledge of Reality or Brahman
that we require.

"Devotion is the most essential thing.
There is devotion both with desire and
again, without it. The latter is called
pure devotion, or devotion without any

cause or reason. Keshab Sen and those
of his party were quite ignorant of this
kind of spontaneous devotion which
means that the mind is devoted to the
lotus-feet of the Lord, but without the
least trace of any desire.

*Is Sri Ramakrishna an Incarnation?
The State of a Paramahansa*

"There is another very exuberant
type of devotion which overflows, as it
were, all limits. One, under the spell
of that devotion, laughs and weeps,
dances and sings in spiritual exaltation.
Such a state can be witnessed in the life
of Chaitanyadeva. Rama said to
Lakshmana, 'Brother, wherever you
come across this overflowing devotion,
know that I myself am present there.' "

Does the Master hint at his own
condition? Is he an Incarnation,
descended on earth to teach people the
virtue of devotion?

Girish : "Everything can be attained
through your grace. What was I and
what have I become !"

Sri Ramakrishna : "My good sir, you
have got good *Samskaras* (inherent
tendencies) and so you are making pro-
gress. Nothing can be attained before
the time is ripe for it. The physician
may come and prescribe a medicine
when the patient is already on the path
of recovery. A complete cure may then
follow. But who can ascertain whether
the cure is due to the medicine or to
the process of natural healing?

"Lakshmana said to Lava and Kusha,
'You are mere children and do not know
Ramachandra in his true self. Ahalya,
who was reduced to stone, regained her
human form by the touch of the feet of
Rama.' Lava and Kusha replied,
'Revered sir, we know everything, we
have heard of all these. The stone
turned into human form, because such
was the decree of the sage. The sage
Gautama ordained that in Tretâ Yuga

Ramachandra would pass by that hermitage, and by the touch of his feet she would regain her human form. So, who can decide whether it was due to the greatness of Rama or to the injunction of the sage?"

"Everything takes place as the Lord ordains. If you gain any knowledge from here, know that I am only the instrument. The moon holds the same relation with all. Everything comes about through the will of the Lord."

Girish (with a smile): "You mean that everything takes place according to the will of God; is it not so? I also say the same thing!" (All laugh.)

Sri Ramakrishna (to *Girish*): "A sincere soul realizes God in no time. The following people cannot attain knowledge: one who has a crooked mind and is not sincere; one who is labouring under a morbid mania for

cleanliness; and one with a sceptical mind."

The Master speaks highly of the exalted state of Nriyagopal.

Three or four devotees are still standing there by the side of Sri Ramakrishna in that long south-eastern verandah and listening to him. The Master describes the condition of a Paramahansa. Says he, "A Paramahansa always feels that God alone is real and everything else is unreal. A swan has got the power to separate milk from water. Milk and water get separated due to the secretion of an acid from its tongue. The Paramahansa also is in possession of a similar acid—the acid of devotion imbued with divine love. One possessed of that devotion, can discriminate between the real and the unreal, can realize and see God."

SONNET SEQUENCE TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

I

Not an oblation of one hundred and eight
 Bael leaves and water, has this heart for You,
 But stalks of golden Champaka, of late
 Discovered in it where the sun broke through.
 So like a garland did You fashion them,
 To die not, nor to yield a petalled place,
 But side by side to flower along the stem
 Like fragrant smiles reflected from Your face;
 They were but grown for worship of the Stream
 Sprung from Your feet, that Holy Mother fed
 With flame hibiscus when in waking-dream
 She saw You come, the Ganges come ahead.
 Great Kali-Shiva-Ganges-Om, complete,
 This flowered heart is offered at Your feet.

—Dorothy Kruger

THE FINAL TRUTH

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

On a certain occasion, as Sri Ramachandra was sitting in his court attended by sages and seers, he saw Hanuman before him, and with a view to gratifying all kinds of his devotees asked the latter, "Hanuman, how do you look upon me?" Hanuman, "the best among the intelligent," thought within himself that there must be some great purpose behind such a query from the Lord, the inner controller, to whom nothing was unknown. Revolving thus Hanuman replied, "When I am identified with the body I am Thy servant, when I regard myself as the individual soul, I am part of Thee, and when I look upon myself as the Self I am verily Thee—this is my firm conviction."

Hanuman has here revealed the attitudes of all worshippers. This is the final view of all the schools of Vedanta. It gives nobody any cause for despair, on the contrary it assigns to everybody his right place. The attitude of the servant—Thou art the Lord and I am Thy servant—is for those who have not been able to rise above the body idea. Those who look upon themselves as individual souls and have risen above the body idea without fully realizing it—for them is the attitude of part and whole—"Thou art the whole and I am Thy part."

And those who have realized their Selfhood take up the attitude of identity—I am Thee. Thou and I are one—there is no difference there. These are the three attitudes—dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and non-dualistic. Sri Ramachandra made Hanuman, the crest-jewel among devotees, declare the final truth about the three attitudes in

order to please all the devotees present in his court. This is the final commentary on the ultimate truth of the Vedanta.

None need despair. Everybody is worshipping that One and is related to Him whatever may be the state he is in.

"I am centred in the hearts of all; memory and perception as well as their loss come from Me. I am verily that which has to be known by all the Vedas. I indeed am the Author of the Vedanta, and the knower of the Veda am I." Gita, XV—15.

The One conscious Existent, the Supreme Person, the all in all, pervades and permeates everything. He is verily that which has to be known by all the Vedas, He indeed is the author of the Vedanta, and the Knower of the Veda. To know it is to know Vedanta. Further without this realization none can know the real truth of Vedanta even if he swallows the whole literature of Vedanta. I have taken it to be so. And further I have taken the Master's saying, "My Mother and I . . .", not to relate to anything conscient or inconscient. It is all Consciousness that he has meant—"The object of worship is conscient, the worshipper too is conscient. It is the attitude of the child. The child cares for nothing except the mother, its love is undivided." He is all in all.

"Or what avails thee to know all this diversity, O Arjuna? (Know thou this, that) I exist, supporting this whole world by a portion of Myself." Gita, X—42.

He pervades the whole world by one part of Him, while the rest is always free and beyond everything. The Vedas too have sung :—"The entire world of being is a quarter of Him, while the three-quarters are the immortal heaven."

So much with regard to Brahman. And as regards the individual, if he has the body idea, God becomes the Lord and he the servant. If he feels himself to be the individual self, God becomes the whole and the individual the part. And when the individual feels himself to be the Self, there is no more any feeling of difference. Then he becomes one with the Supreme Self and says, "I am but Thee." That is the finale of the individual's effort. This is the Vedantic wisdom recognized by all. He is all in all. There is no knowledge, no object of knowledge and knower other than He. He is all—the Self, the individual and the world. There is nothing except He. He who says that there is an other is not yet free from delusion. He "mutters incoherently like one asleep." He is like one who is not aware of what he is talking in the haze of sleep.

"The Unmanifested manifests Itself through superimposition and misapprehension." It is in this sense that the Shruti has said, "Ākāsha has been born of this Atman" etc., and not in the sense of real creation.

"There is neither dissolution nor origin; there is none bound, none aspiring; there are none desiring freedom, and none free—this is the ultimate truth." (Gaudapāda's Kārikā on M. U., V. P. 32).

This is the final truth. What more

will Shankara say about freedom in association with the Lord or in nearness to the Lord. You indeed know that the Lord has proclaimed the desirelessness of His devotee in the Bhāgavata saying, "He does not accept (freedom) even if offered." None says study, repetition of His name, austerities, meditation, concentration or trance to be the Goal.

"It is by knowing Him alone that immortality is attained; there is no other way but this."

This is the word of Vedanta. And the Lord has said:

"All the worlds, O Arjuna, including the realm of Brahma, are subject to return, but after attaining Me, O son of Kunti, there is no rebirth." Gita, VIII—16.

"I am the Self, O Gudakesha, existent in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings." Gita, X—20.

"The Goal, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the Dissolution, the Substratum, the Storehouse, the Seed immutable." Gita, IX—18.

So it is hardly necessary to emphasize that He is the all in all of the individual soul. It is right to eat mangoes when you have come for it. What more need is there for other information? They who will be made preachers by the Lord will alone take care of others and decide what paths will be harmful or beneficial to them. We shall be fortunate indeed if we can just eat mangoes. My earnest prayer to the Lord is that He may introduce you to the owner of the garden.

THE QUEST OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Manasarowar, the fairy lake of Tibet, lay in front of us. *Hamsa* birds were moving gracefully over its blue waters. It was dawn. The azure blue lake with the snow-covered peaks surrounding it presented the appearance of a precious sapphire set in the midst of diamonds. The sun peeped over the eastern peak, and rays of light fell on the surface of the lake making it golden here and green there. The silvery summit of Kailas was seen towering above the northern horizon. A celestial calmness pervaded the atmosphere. The party of pilgrims stood watching the scene, their hearts throbbing with silent wonder. The turmoil of the world below was forgotten. The long trek across the Himalayas daily revealed varying scenes of beauty and splendour. But there was nothing to equal the glory of sunrise over the silent waters of Manasarowar. This beautiful lake and that holy peak which were cherished as dream-visions, a few days before, have now assumed the shape of reality. Objects which were considered real have now receded into the background of memory. The sea with its roaring waves, ships carrying merchandise across the waters to distant lands, busy ports, crowded streets of men, schools with their merry crowds of boys and girls, churches, temples and mosques, law-courts and market-places, factories and warehouses have all turned out to be a mere memory, a confused dream unconnected with reality.

* * *

Hindu and Buddhist scriptures and the age-long traditions of China and India tell us that the gods abide here. The racial memories of the Aryans and Mongols ascribe a great antiquity to

this holy spot. Long before the Himalayas raised its lofty peaks above the waters of the primal ocean, the lake Manasarowar and the four great rivers—Indus, Brahmaputra, Sutlej and Karnâli, which are said to be fed by its waters through sub-terranean channels, lent beauty to the table-land of Tibet. The seismic disturbance that brought about the upheaval of the Himalayas must have been a tremendous event in the annals of this remote past. In some mysterious way, these annals have been preserved in the memories of the race. In the dim past, the Mongols referred to in Puranic legends as Yakshas must have lived in these peaks and valleys, which in all probability, had a more temperate climate than what is experienced now. In those days, there might have been other fauna besides the wild horse and the yak that roam over the hill-sides to-day. The conditions might have been more favourable to plants and flowers also. Now only stunted juniper bushes grow on the sides of the wind-swept mountain-peaks, the summits of which are covered with perpetual snow. The beauty of the place is of an austere type; it resembles the heavenly beauty seen on the face of a Yogi seated in meditation. The scriptures tell us that the lake Manasarowar presents the picture of the human mind as it lies absorbed in the blissful state of Samadhi. If "beauty is truth" as the poet says, the pilgrims who are on the quest of the beautiful are also earnest seekers after truth.

* * *

The scene changes; we are back in our Himalayan monastery, the Ashrama at Mayavati. During the night it was raining heavily. With the approach of

dawn, the sky has cleared up. Far in the foreground the snow-covered peak of Nandâdevi appears tinged with the golden rays of the morning sun. The rose-plants in the garden are in full bloom. The sun-beams softly caressing the flowers produce that blush and that beauty so characteristic of the queen of flowers. The warbling of birds and the sound of flowing water in the neighbouring valley enhance the beauty of the calm morning. In the midst of this loveliness our constant companion, the philosopher, whose interests are somewhat different from ours, steps forward and interferes with the train of our thoughts. Here let us confess that our companion, who is always at our heels, seldom leaves us alone to an hour of pure enjoyment without proposing some of his never-ending questions. Now he meets us with the poser: "Whence do roses receive their blush and their beauty?" We try to answer in the layman's fashion by proposing a number of similar questions and attempting to deduce the factor common to all of them. Whence do babies get their pretty dimples, the golden glow-worms their aerial hues, rainbows their enchanting colours, and stars their celestial brilliance? The hand that touched the baby's face with a dimple, the same divine hand lighted up the star and the glow-worm, painted the rainbow and caressed the rose-petals into a beautiful blush. Our companion mildly protests and says, "This is religion, poetry, mysticism, this pious thought offered by way of explanation stands unsupported by reason."

* * *

At this juncture, the gardener arrives. We turn round to him and repeat the philosopher's question, "Brother, whence do roses get their blush and their beauty?" Being a scientific gardener, well-versed in horticulture and

other allied sciences, he links up cause with effect and offers us an explanation. As far as we remember, these were his words: "This time, we had a severe winter; thirty inches of snow fell; the rose-beds were dug up two months before the snow-fall; the roots were exposed to the autumn sun for a fortnight; the beds were manured; the plants were pruned leaving healthy stocks about a foot long; in winter the stocks remained covered with snow for a fortnight; the spring came; the snow melted away; new buds appeared; the roots, strengthened by exposure to the sun, assimilated the manure of the soil and sent up the life-giving sap to the buds; the new leaves drank the sunlight; the flower buds opened up and there you have the roses." Saying this, he handed over to each of us a pretty flower. The philosopher was fully satisfied.

* * *

The other questions remained unanswered. Perhaps, other scientists may tell us that the baby's dimples came from the patent food on which she was fed, that the glow-worm's hues came from the phosphorescent substances contained in its body, that the rainbow's colours were not colours at all, but the light refracted by minute particles of water, and that the stars were not softly brilliant, but that they were burning suns emitting fiery rays from inconceivably long distances. Our attempt to deduce the factor common to the beauty of the rose, the baby's face, the glow-worm, the rainbow and the star receives a rude shock. We sought for a universe; the scientist and the philosopher present us with a multiverse in the labyrinths of which we find it difficult to thread our way.

* * *

Is a pretty baby nothing more than skin, flesh and bones? Is the moon's

surface nothing but bare hard rocks that resulted from some sub-lunar volcanic eruption? Are not flowers anything more than some organic compounds, all of which the scientist can synthetically produce in his laboratory? Have not all these something in common, something that touches our souls, as different from that which appeals to our senses? Is not the beauty that holds the mind of the lover and the poet, one aspect of the Reality for which the philosopher is seeking? Reality is commonly said to reveal itself in the threefold aspect of truth, beauty and goodness. Is the philosopher justified in confining himself to a fraction of one of these aspects, the truth arrived at by reasoning? All these questions that seriously disturb the mind of the layman, perhaps, do not arise in the specialized mind of the philosopher.

* * *

The universe in its final analysis reveals not only the ninety-two or more chemical elements and various mechanical stresses and strains but also a living soul with psychical strains and stresses expressed by loves and hates, dictator's ambitions, poor men's hopes, widow's wails, the beauty of smiling landscapes and of thunder and of lightning, the "fretful fever" of life and the balmy sleep of death. If these are not real, life is not real. At every stage of his progress, the seeker of Reality should provide us with a harmonious and integrated Whole in its threefold aspect of truth, beauty, and goodness, leaving to the scientist the investigation of the parts and the necessarily partial truths that Reality reveals to him within the limitations he had set to himself. For about three centuries science has interested itself in the investigation of nature and with all its efforts has only ploughed a few furrows in the wide fields of truth, the fields of

beauty and goodness are untouched by it. On the other hand, the true seer climbing up the peak of wisdom, at every stage of his journey views the Whole and within the range of his view, gives a complete unified picture. Such a view satisfies our whole mind appealing to its cognitive, affective and conative aspects, thus opening the path that leads to God, the source of all truth, beauty and goodness.

* * *

The earliest teachers of the human race were inspired men, prophets and seers, who consciously or unconsciously communed with the Deity. The words that they spoke originated from a Higher Power which possessed them and led them on to a vision of the Whole. That is why their words live not merely in books but in the hearts of men, who dedicate their lives for the preservation of those words and their transmission to posterity. The eternal Vedas, the holy Bible, the sacred Koran and the scriptures of the other great religions are the greatest books of humanity. In lofty rhymes or in beautiful prose they incessantly declare the Divine message, the message of truth, beauty and goodness. They are not mere philosophical treatises that help men to lift the veil of appearances and discern the truth behind them; these books transcend the limits of philosophy and often speak in a tongue which the pure in heart understand, but philosophers fail to comprehend. Are then these books poetical utterances? They certainly contain the sublimest poetry, a poetry that unites Heaven to the Earth, asserting Eternal Providence and justifying the ways of God to men; but these are more than poetical compositions. Is it their function to map out a path that leads to the good life and finally raise man beyond himself to the threshold of heaven? They certainly

perform this function in the best possible manner, but they are higher than mere ethical treatises. Their message, being a message of synthesis, transcends the limitations of the partial messages expressed by the philosopher, the poet and the moralist. Their message is not merely an aggregate of the partial messages, but a unified Whole, a single message that consists of all the three phases.

* * *

Next to seers, poets stand as the great teachers of the human race. True poetry transcends the limitations of time and space. The lofty rhymes of Milton are for all nations and all times and so is Kalidasa the common property of the East and the West, of the past, the present and the future. Through these men the race regains its lost heritage, it acquires the companionship of angels and celestial beings. There is a deep truth behind the old legend concerning man's fall. We are all exiles; nevertheless our foster-mother Earth, in her snow-clad hills and ocean's blue expanse, in her woodlands and rivers, presents to our view some aspects of the Garden from which the first man and woman were exiled. Poets realize this truth more than other men and offer their homage to the Spirit that hovers over all that is beautiful. Unfortunately, man, giving vent to his insatiable greed for possessing things, has defaced Nature. It all began with looking out for food, a little space to live in and a shelter for protection from the inclemencies of the weather. These bare necessities were needed to give freedom to the mind to soar into higher regions and live in the serene atmosphere in which saints and seers live perpetually. But very soon greed captured the mind of man and the true purpose of life was forgotten. Messengers came to us and delivered the message of the Most High. We heeded

them not and the result is the ugly mess in which we find ourselves to-day.

* * *

Long before Christianity was born, pagan Greece with her sublime ideals of beauty exerted a mighty influence in raising the Western nations from savagery to civilization; when in the Middle Ages, Christianity fell into the hands of ignorant priests and failed to carry out its mission, the pagan ideals of beauty fostered by Greece, resuscitated under the guise of the New Learning, led the nations to great achievements and gave new strength to Christianity itself; now that Christianity is losing its hold over men's minds and becoming increasingly incapable of stirring up men's imaginations, once more the same ideals of beauty should be set up before the nations to lead them back to sanity and human decency, from the abyss of ugliness and degradation into which they have hurled themselves.

Men who call themselves progressive often fail to understand the pious Hindu who undertakes the arduous journey across the Himalayas to obtain a sight of the holy peak of Kailas and the sacred lake Manasarowar. They fail to comprehend the mind of the devotee who is prepared to spend all his worldly possessions to erect a beautiful temple to his chosen Deity. The sight of old and decrepit men trudging along forest-paths to some shrine hidden by encircling forests may evoke a note of pity in the heart of the progressive; but he fails to understand the mind of the pilgrims. If the progressive would only give some thought to the matter, he would realize that pilgrims and temple-builders seek after something more permanent than material acquisitions, for these men are on the quest of the beautiful and are seeking for

"An endless fountain of immortal drink,

Pouring unto us from the heaven's
brink."

* * *

Beauty is the philosopher's stone that raises the worth of all that it touches; but unlike the object of the alchemist's search, it lies close at hand, it surrounds its votaries and becomes an unfailing source of joy and true happiness. He who has realized the worth of beauty becomes a changed man, his actions and his thoughts become life-giving, ennobling, and elevating to himself and to others. Sunlight flowing from the empyrean floods the earth with new life making it fruitful and abundant. Likewise Beauty coursing down from the high heavens brings joy to the earth. Even as sunlight falls upon poor men's cottages and the mansions of the rich, beauty pervades everywhere. On the way back from Kailas, in the midst of a deep Himalayan forest, far removed from the haunts of men, we came across a placid mountain lake, the surface of which was covered with a wealth of pink lotuses. It was a glorious sight, and for a moment we were wondering why Mother Nature was playing the prodigal and wasting all those pretty blossoms in the deep recesses of a forest. Then the thought occurred to us that Nature never disowned man, but man impelled by his own perversity has gone away from Nature's gardens to live in the proximity of ugly factories with smoking chimneys. Man, the rebel child, can go back to his mother's lap, whenever he chooses to do so.

* * *

Music is one of the forms in which Heavenly Beauty expresses herself on Earth. It is said that when St. Cecilia played the organ an angel hovered near the saint, for the moment mistaking earth for heaven. When the Divine Cowherd played upon His flute in the flowery parks of Brindaban, the gods

must have considered our earth itself as the highest heaven. Music has the power to tame wild beasts: The martial music, that urges the soldier to march fearlessly into the arms of Death, does its work by making man forget, at any rate temporarily, his physical vesture and the bondage of the mind, even as the moth forgets itself, when it approaches the naked flame. The devotees of God have invariably given expression to their deepest thoughts in musical language, for their thoughts were not merely intellectual, but were suffused with deep feelings, which music alone can express. Hinduism and Christianity as well as the pagan religions of old have given a high place to music in their temples and churches. Heaven itself is described as a place softly resounding to the sweet harmonies of music. It is a place

"Where the bright Seraphim in burn-
ing row
Their loud up-lifted Angel trumpets
blow,
And the Cherubic host in thousand
choirs
Touch their immortal Harps of golden
wires."

* * *

Language has its own harmonies and cadences, which find expression not only in the utterances of poets but also in the ordinary conversation of men and women whose mind has been touched by the magic wand of beauty. The conversation of such people is a constant source of delight. They may talk to young children, within the limitations of a child's vocabulary; they may address their servants or their equals; or they may hold converse with those who are more erudite and better-informed than themselves; in all these cases, the words that they choose would be the most appropriate, the sentiments that they express would be elevated and

pleasing to the hearer and the very tone in which they speak would be musical and refined. A man can never be truly cultured until he can use his mother-tongue with ease and elegance. The joy that we feel in social intercourse mostly centres round the charm of the spoken word. This charm so spontaneous to its possessor may not be achieved by studying the rules of rhetoric, for it is the outward expression of a pure mind that had subjected itself to the influence of the beautiful.

* * *

Even as the holy touch of beauty is revealed in conversation and social intercourse, so also it becomes manifest in every movement and every action of its votary. Perfect manners appear as a result of a certain inner perfection attained by men and women. It is perhaps a mistake to think that social contact is necessary for developing the social virtues. The son of a sage, brought up in the seclusion of a forest, with no companion save his father, enters the king's court and behaves with perfect decorum. The communion he had with God and Nature has given him that inner perfection which puts him at ease in royal palaces as well as in poor men's cottages. The *poseur* who strives for the mere form often misses the substance and is held up to ridicule. Beauty also finds expression in a person's apparel. The statuary of Greece and Rome reveals the fact that the ancient people of those countries, men as well as women, wore flowing garments so very different from the tailor-cut, tight-fitting clothes of contemporary West. The Eastern nations still retain something of the ancient models of clothing. The taste as regards colours may perhaps be profitably copied from the flowers, which are of a bright colour in the tropics and of weaker tints in more temperate climates. Men and

women are as much a part of nature as flowers are, and may express themselves in their vesture in the best possible manner by conforming to their surroundings.

* * *

Ever since man emerged from primitive conditions of living in caves and tree-tops, he began to exhibit his artistic sense in his dwelling-houses. "The house that Jack built" exhibits permanently a portion of Jack's mind; in its turn, the house influences Jack's mind. "Lines" consisting of houses built on the same model often fail to please, because they do not reveal the individuality of the dweller. While harmonizing with the surroundings a house should exhibit a certain amount of individuality. Within the means of the dweller, it ought to be well-built, well-proportioned and furnished in a manner suitable to the requirements of the dweller. Good pictures, properly chosen and properly hung, form an essential part of the humblest dwelling.

* * *

Apart from revealing itself in dwelling-houses, clothes, manners and speech, the beautiful is revealed at its best in the character of its possessor. Ethical values transform themselves to a certain extent into aesthetic values. Drunkenness, debauchery, morbid lust, violent crimes and such other sins are extremely ugly. Ostentation and pride offend good taste, as much as they offend the moral sense. Viewed from the intellectual point of view, all the above fall under the category of ignorance. On the other hand humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forbearance, uprightness, service to the teacher, purity, steadiness, self-control and other beautiful moral qualities are declared by the Gita (XIII. 7-11) to be true knowledge. From the testimony of the

Hindu Scriptures, we recognize the identity of truth, beauty and goodness. The beautiful is not only the true, it is also the good. It may be noted that the Gita does not stop with saying that the moral qualities enumerated above lead to true knowledge, it definitely declares their identity with true knowledge.

* * *

In the mystic land of Tibet, religious leaders and founders of monasteries have built their *Gumphas* and houses of prayer in such surroundings as would lead the mind naturally to lofty thoughts. There are as many as eight monasteries around the Manasarowar

and four around the peak of Kailas. The large monastery at Taklakot is built on the top of a hill. Water for the needs of the two hundred and fifty inmates has to be carried daily from the plains below, the carriers have to walk a weary mile to reach the monastery. The writer, when he visited this monastery, was wondering why the wise lamas had chosen a site where water was not available. Just then the full moon rose with all its splendour between two snow-clad peaks and there was silence all around. The writer immediately realized that the wise men of Tibet had exercised great wisdom in choosing the site of the monastery at Taklakot.

ART AND THE ASCETIC

BY R. RAMAKRISHNAN, M.A., L.T.

From the remote past to the present the ascetic in India has always won adoration at the hands of the public. In fact there is a secret longing, sometimes dominant and at other times dimly perceived, but ever existent, in the Indian mind to turn ascetic. The ochre-coloured robes of the monk spontaneously fill the Indian heart with an instinctive reverence. As Swami Vivekananda pointed out to a Western audience (it is good that at the present moment we remind ourselves of the Swamiji's utterance), "Whereas Occidental nations have used every effort to improve their material position, India has done differently. There live the only men in the world who, in the whole history of humanity, never went beyond their frontiers to conquer any one, who never coveted that which belonged to anyone else, whose only fault was that their lands were so fertile and they accumulated wealth by the hard labour

of their hands, and so tempted other nations to come and despoil them. They are contented to be despoiled and to be called barbarians, and in return they want to send to this world, visions of the Supreme, to lay bare for the world the secrets of human nature, to rend the veil that conceals the real man, because they know the dream, because they know that behind this materialism lives the real, divine nature of man, which no sin can tarnish, no crime can spoil, no lust can taint: which fire cannot burn, nor water wet, which heat cannot dry, nor death kill; and to them this true nature of man is as real as is any material object to the senses of an Occidental. Just as you are brave to jump at the mouth of a cannon with a hurrah: just as you are brave in the name of patriotism to stand up and give up your lives for your country, so are they brave in the name of God. There it is that when a man declares

that this is a world of ideas, that it is all a dream, he casts off clothes and property to demonstrate that what he believes and thinks is true. There it is that a man sits on the bank of a river, when he has known that life is eternal, and wants to give up his body just as nothing, just as you can give up a bit of strand. Therein lies their heroism, that they are ready to face death as a brother, because they are convinced that there is no death for them. Therein lies the strength that has made them invincible through hundreds of years of oppression and foreign invasion and tyranny. The nation lives to-day, and in that nation even in the days of the direst disaster, spiritual giants have never failed to arise. Asia produces giants in spirituality, just as the Occident produces giants in politics, giants in science."

It is very necessary for our national well-being that we remember and recognise what our own racial ideal has always been. That our ancient ideal in this respect yet remains unchanged can be exemplified by recent incidents. If one were asked to refer to a single individual who represents India to-day more than any other, one would naturally speak of Gandhiji. A generation ago one would have spoken, in the same sense, of Vivekananda, as the soul of India. And yet of these two, one was a *parivrajaka*; the other is a half-naked fakir. Swami Vivekananda in his boyhood used to perceive two visions, one of worldly honour and social eminence, and the other of asceticism and renunciation, and his unerring instinct preferred the latter. This incident is typically Indian in its significance. So long as we have our Himalayas and our Ganges, we shall have sages amidst us, and so long as sages spring amidst us, our national soul will remain true to itself. When

Swami Vivekananda spoke in America, he conveyed the greetings of the oldest order of monks to the youngest of nations. It is appreciation of spirituality that is the foundation of spirituality, and if we long to keep the flame of our ancient ideal burning bright, we must not cease to adore asceticism in a land whose chief nation-builders have been either monks or men like Janaka.

And yet it is surprising to find that even to-day when thanks to the labours of a multitude of leaders who have inaugurated a period of glorious renaissance in India, we are able to judge our old institutions at their true worth, there are men who regard asceticism as a huge waste of national energy and as a tragic loss of human ability, who scoff at monks and their mission, and are cynical alike about the possibility and the usefulness of true *Sannyasa*. Such men are by no means confined to the uneducated group; it is among the educated and cultured, among persons who ought to know better, that such scoffers are found. A variety of causes is responsible for this sorry state of affairs, though no cause is unanswerable and no argument in support of the position is irrefutable. That such wrong perception and distorted vision should persist now is to be wondered at, because Swami Vivekananda very recently demonstrated the marvellous possibilities of monkhood, and made history by yoking the monks to national and social service.

One of the factors which perhaps help a few people to entertain a poor opinion of ascetics is what may be termed the prostitution of the ochre-coloured robe. All over the land one finds idlers and lazy beggars trying to eke out an easy living by playing upon the habitual reverence of the average man and woman towards the monastic order. We often come across instances wherein

a man who finds his time at home uncomfortable turns monk. But to condemn or to cavil at the noble institution of monkhood for the aforesaid reason is to betray poverty of intelligence and confused thinking. Do we, because we are occasionally gifted with a rotten fruit, condemn fruit-bearing itself? Are we to give up science because an imperfectly educated society turns its marvellous possibilities to destructive purposes? There is no institution on earth but is vitiated by being abused by a few individuals. This however does not justify the scrapping of that institution.

Others feel that monkhood is a sort of cowardice and that it implies a fundamental fear to face the battle of life and also a basic inability to take part in and emerge successfully out of, the battle. This assumption also is wrong to the core. If those who have understanding eyes look about them, they will find on the evidence of contemporary activities that in organising skill, managing ability, far-sighted scheming, administrative efficiency and in the profitable handling of financial affairs, monks often beat the so-called worldly men. A monk no doubt walks on the path of God, and what is day to others is night to him, but his is a trained and well-tutored mind, and whatever is the work he takes on hand, he does it to perfection. Yoga is skill in action, says the Gita. A devotee should not be a fool, admonished Sri Ramakrishna. And of the saint Pavahari Baba it is said that when he cleaned his vessels they shone like gold, because he bestowed so much attention on every work he did, be it meditation or the meanest labour. It is said that Swami Vivekananda used to say that he who was not a good cook could never be a good monk!

Yet others pity the poor monk, for

they think that his life is dry, unartistic, very prosaic, perhaps endowed with light, but certainly without sweetness. He has no loving wife to cheer him, no children to comfort him in his old age, no home unto which he can repair as a storm-tossed ship returns to the calm of the harbour; he is alone, friendless, melancholy, foolishly denying to himself the joys of earth, needlessly occupying himself with abstractions, treading the hard narrow path and sacrificing the solid here for a doubtful hereafter. This picture is pathetic indeed, but its huge defect is that it is not true. For a true monk is not only steeped in joy, he is the high-watermark of art also.

Men seem to have crude notions of an artistic life. When a person lives a comfortable life in a bungalow set amidst fine scenery, and takes delight in poetry and song, pictures and flowers, and dresses himself in silken clothes and perfumes his body, and in general leads a go-easy, butterfly-like existence, society connects art with him. And since a monk's externals are quite different, the conclusion is invariably—though illogically—arrived at that the monk's life is devoid of all art. "Beauty is Truth, Truth, Beauty; that is all that we need know", says the poet. The monk is a worshipper at the shrine of Beauty, because he is a votary of Truth. He is of imagination all compact; he lives in harmony with the healthier side of nature. The sky is his roof, the grass his bed, and between him and nature there is an understanding companionship. His mind is free from illusion and he is able to penetrate into the inner reality of things. The oppressive burden of non-essential trifles is not on him, and the habitual state of his mind is an elevated state. The whole universe is his kin. He is a poet, not of words, but of life. Even exter-

nally and physically he has greater opportunities of enjoying the beauties of nature. He keeps far from the madding crowd's ignoble throng. He also dives deep into the inner nature of man. To him the entire universe is surcharged with divinity. He squeezes more juice out of life than the worldly man.

Sri Ramakrishna was a monk, and his chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda, was a monk too. Both these were artists par excellence, for they tapped the fountain-head of all art. Their minds were turned away from the drab realities of a work-a-day world and were attuned to a life of higher emotions. Readers of Sri Ramakrishna's biography will remember that the first time that he was seized with ecstasy was when as a little boy he was crossing the rice fields and he was overwhelmed by the singular beauty of a flight of snow-white cranes passing beneath a cloud-covered sky. And Romain Rolland, the great biographer of Ramakrishna, remarks with reference to this event, "Even in this first ecstasy the real character of the divine impress on the soul of this child can be seen. Artistic emotion, a passionate instinct for the beautiful, was the first channel bringing him into contact with God He came to know (all the paths), but the most immediate and natural with him was delight in the beautiful face of God, which he saw in all that he looked upon. He was a born artist." Indeed who can be a greater artist than this illiterate temple-priest who could make beautiful images of gods, to whom the sight of flowers or grass brought the memory of Siva or Krishna, who could see in an English boy leaning against a tree the Charmer of Brindaban, to whom every feminine face was the image of the Divine Mother, who could not stand the sight of a crowd or a visit to the Zoo

without losing himself in ecstasy, who beheld visions of enthralling beauty, whose career on earth was an unbroken absorption in and communion with the Universal Artist, a spray from Whose brilliance is manifesting itself as this world of manifold graces and hues? To quote Romain Rolland again, "Sri Ramakrishna's temperament was exceptionally highly strung, for he was supersensitive to all the winds of joy and sorrow, both moral and physical. He was indeed a living reflection of all that happened before the mirror of his eyes, a two-sided mirror turned both out and in. His unique plastic power allowed his spirit instantaneously to shape itself according to that of others, without however losing its own *feste Burg*, the immutable and infinite centre of endless mobility." (*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*—a stronghold sure is our God.)

One may call it mere coincidence, or one may find in it an evidence for the belief that Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are the twofold expression of a single personality, but it is interesting to note that Swami Vivekananda's first absorption into the realm of the super-conscious bears resemblance to the similar first experience of his Master. We quote from the authentic *Life of Swami Vivekananda*:

"In the year 1877 when Naren (the future Vivekananda) was a student of the third class (he was fourteen then) his father went to Raipur in the Central Provinces. He arranged that his family should follow him later on under the charge of Naren. It was a long journey partly by bullock-cart through dense forests and over unfrequented roads. An incident happened on the way which shows that Naren's spiritual insight was deepening. He had had visions and many moods of spiritual consciousness; this experience was induced by contem-

plating the beauties of nature. The party had been journeying in bullock-carts for several days. The weather was perfect and Naren was feeling the joyous freedom of life in the open. The natural beauty on the way mitigated the fatigue of the journey. Naren was charmed with the exquisite grace and beauty with which the Almighty Creator had adorned the rugged bosom of the earth. On that particular day the party was passing over the Vindhya range where the lofty hills on either side of the road almost met. The verdant trees and creepers laden with flowers and joyous with the warbling of birds of variegated colours filled Naren's heart with ineffable bliss. Suddenly his eyes alighted on a very large hive in a cleft in one of the hills. It must have been there for a very long time. His mind in thinking of that colony of bees was soon lost in wonder at the majesty and power of the Divine Providence. Lost to all outward consciousness he lay in the bullock-cart—how long he could not remember—and when he returned,—blessed, as it were, and blissful—to the normal state of things, he found that, in the meantime, considerable distance had been traversed. Perhaps this was the first time that his powerful imagination helped him to ascend into the realm of the Unknown and oblivion of the outer world.”

Swami Vivekananda was all through his life a super-artist. Something that had vital connections with the fundamentals of art (in its widest sense) always distinguished this man among men, who with his kingly personality and his soulful eyes charmed everyone that came to him, who by the wonderful flow of his torrent-like, crystal-clear eloquence kept huge audiences spell-bound, nay, elevated them to diviner regions, who refused to be morose because he was a child of light, who when

East and West lionised him could yet remain an innocent child of the Mother and a ward of the Master, who could not bear the sight of misery and would lose beatitude itself in order to be of help to woe-stricken humanity, whose heart like the ocean was vast and was agitated by the waves of others' sorrows, whose soul was strong as the Himalayas and yet tender like a soft flower, who was no dry ascetic but was a person full of the milk of human kindness, whose synthetic imagination could harmonise the highest destiny of man with the service—he would call it worship—of the poorest, the lowliest and the last, whose life in short was an epic poem of flaming thoughts, burning emotions, heroic endeavours, and Titanic living.

What a passionate artist Swami Vivekananda was is well narrated in these words of Sister Nivedita, and the poem of the Swami extracted below gives us an idea of the grandeur and power of his imagination.

“His brain was teeming with thoughts, the Swami said one day, and his fingers would not rest till they were written down. It was that same evening that we came back to our houseboat from some expedition, and found waiting for us, where he had called and left them, his manuscript lines on ‘Kali, the Mother’. Writing in a fever of inspiration, he had fallen on the floor, when he had finished—as we learnt afterwards—exhausted with his own intensity.”

KALI, THE MOTHER

The stars are blotted out,
The clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness vibrant, sonant.
In the roaring, whirling wind
Are the souls of a million lunatics,—
Just loose from the prison house,—
Wrenching trees by the roots,

Sweeping all from the path.
 The sea has joined the fray,
 And swirls up mountain-waves,
 To reach the pitchy sky.
 The flash of lurid light
 Reveals on every side
 A thousand, thousand shades
 Of Death begrimed and black—
 Scattering plagues and sorrows,
 Dancing mad with joy.
 Come, Mother, come!
 For Terror is Thy name,
 Death is in Thy breath,
 And every shaking step
 Destroys a world for e'er.
 Thou 'Time', the All-Destroyer!
 Come, O Mother, come!
 Who dares misery love,
 And hug the form of Death,
 Dance in Destruction's dance,
 To him the Mother comes.

Both Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda could sing most sweetly, and those that heard them found in the songs the outpourings of the soul.

Sri Ramakrishna often used to speak about the monks who came to him at Dakshineswar. Of one of them he said, "One day a Sadhu came, with a serene light on his countenance. He would sit for hours at a time smiling to himself. Coming out of his room mornings and evenings, he would look at the sky, the Ganges, and the trees, and raising his arms dance with joy. Sometimes he would roll in laughter and shout, 'Bravo! What fun! How beauti-

ful is this projected universe!' That was his prayer and meditation after he had tasted of the sweetness of Divine Bliss." This monk was certainly an artist.

Here are a few relevant extracts from Vivekananda's utterances:

"The secret of Greek Art is its imitation of Nature even to the minutest details; whereas the secret of Indian Art is to represent the ideal True art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, takes its nourishment from the ground, and yet is quite high above it when full-blown. So Art must be in touch with Nature—and wherever that touch is gone, Art degenerates—yet it must be above nature. Art is—representing the beautiful. There must be art in everything. . . . The value of matter depends solely on its capacities of expressing ideas. . . . The artistic faculty was highly developed in our Lord, Sri Ramakrishna, and he used to say that without this faculty none can be truly spiritual. . . . The very soul of the Asiatic is woven with art. The Asiatic never uses a thing unless there be art in it. Don't you know that art is, with us, a part of religion? . . . How great an artist was Sri Ramakrishna himself!"

True asceticism is therefore no negation of art, but a glorification of it. The ascetic's attitude is this:

"If Maya is so beautiful, how much more beautiful must the Reality be!"

THE WEST NEEDS VEDANTA

BY DR. A. EUSTACE HAYDON

[A lecture delivered under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society of Chicago by Dr. A. Eustace Haydon, a distinguished scholar of the United States of America, Head of the department of Comparative Religions of the University of Chicago and an ardent admirer of the Hindu systems of thought.—Ed.]

I am coming to you, not as a believer, not as a devotee, but only as a student of culture, who has jogged, wondering, over all these ways of the world paths, up and down the roadways of the centuries, to see what happens. And the thing which impresses any such traveller, as he looks over the long story of the cultural histories of people, is the multitude of ways in which man has tried to find for himself a sense of security, peace, confidence and hope for the future. . . . This problem that we have had as a human family, of coming to terms with the universe, making a home for ourselves in the world, building the kind of environment which would offer joy in living, beauty, splendour, or perhaps I should be more modern and say satisfaction in living, has been too difficult for us.

Swami has spoken about ancient India. That is one of the things that is now enjoying the attention of scholars working in the cultural history of the past, even perhaps more than contemporary affairs, to realize that in that old world through Egypt, Mesopotamia, far into Eastern China and through the Khyber Pass to the Indus Valley, five thousand years ago there was a great culture. We have been long ago aware of the ancient culture of Egypt. We have been presented with the excavations of Mesopotamia, so that now we begin to realize what a magnificent achievement man had made in the near East and then into the Mediterranean,

a culture almost shocking in its splendour to those who are accustomed to thinking of the old days as a time of plunder. Old China must have been beautiful too with its ancient means of guaranteeing security. Of course, men have been living in that section of China five hundred thousand years and perhaps they should have achieved something in that time.

In India now the path is coming to life. It reduces some of the pride of the Aryan, it reduces some of the arrogance of the Nordic, because these Aryan invaders went in, not as a cultured people, but as they went into Greece, as barbarian invaders with strong arms, good muscles, stout hearts and a very serious belief in truth—that is, in keeping your word. May be you think they have lost some of that virtue since that day. But at that time they did insist on the right word, the validity of the oath, allegiance to the given word, but after all they were tribal savages really, and into that ancient culture they went and were swallowed up and became the Hindus you know to-day, creating out of that the peculiar quality you feel in Indo-Aryan culture.

The West met the East long ago—five thousand years, well, suppose we say forty-five hundred years ago, and after that time came the vast sweep of the arm of this rather aggressive people, swarming over all of the Western world. But in India they developed that rather peculiar culture which gives to the

world the highest, certainly the most heart-compelling, the most mystic philosophy of all the religions we know. And while every group in the world, each in its own way, found the answer to the problem, "How can I find the way? How can I be sure of the joy of living?" India chose above all others this complete ideal, this absolute ideal, which you know as Vedanta.

But all these systems are alike in that they are all ways in which baffled and divided man, unable to solve the problems of life, unable to meet the struggles of living, unable to find the centre of the web of nature, turned away and said, "It is too great for me," but India pushed beyond into the Unknown. I think, as objective students of culture you have to remember that always.

Judaism gave the Western world a God and it is rather interesting to know that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are the only religions that have said, "The world has a meaning. The Divine Will runs through everything and the purpose of God in organizing all events and everything is moving toward a far-off goal." That was the contribution of the Jews. The old Greeks felt that this world did not have any purpose—that the thing was to find a reality which was behind. A little story of Western Christianity is found in the talk of Vivekananda about fifty years or so ago when he said, "Don't try to reform this world—go beyond it." That was the attitude of the cultured Oriental gentle man. There is a reality beyond this world and the affairs of man, and man belongs to that world of the spirit, trying to find his way home. One of the Greek neo-Platonists said, "You should realize you are always homesick. You are like a child taken away from his home and who is always longing for the

return." That is why we can never find rest until we find it in that. That mystic longing—that is what I mean by this choice. Now whether that was a great calamity or whether it was the thing which saved the human race through ages of trial, time will tell.

Certainly when man divided the universe in two and said one is natural and the other is spiritual, every people except the Chinese, chose the spiritual as the home of man. Yet he also has the urge to live in the world of nature—the material world, and it has been really difficult to do. That is why so many of these thorough-going idealists say to you as men and women living in the hurly-burly of the everyday world, "You really cannot get through; you will have to follow the path until the vision of the Eternal bursts upon you—until you realize that you are one with the Eternal."

Perhaps I should say that the West has made that venture sporadically, but only sporadically until about the early quarter of the nineteenth century. There was a time when the neo-Platonist was leading the Christian world; that time of religious philosophy which the Vedanta perfected in India, about the same time that Shankara was preparing his system in India. In the Western world John Scotus almost got himself into trouble by postulating the divinity of man, by plunging through into that all-absorbing, all-embracing, all-enfolding spiritual reality, which he called either He or It. But you see the Christian world has, for the most part, said that God is above man—man is on a different level, and that man is a creature and that man could never rise into the divine state. That idea of the different nature of man came from the Greeks and their theory of essences . . . that we are on different levels in the Western world—God and man. That

attitude was felt when they got a God-man on their hands.

Then five centuries later came Meister Eckardt, who identified the only reality as God and swept man and the whole universe into that reality, and refusing to accept any qualifications and going to the point of the old Indian sages found God by saying "He is not that—and He is not that," unqualified beyond all possibility of grasping Him in words. And it is strange, is it not, that to-day the Nazis, the race theorists of modern Germany, who are making the new theory, and are going back to Eckardt and announcing German blood in terms of a German root, are not heretics and not Christians. But of course, the Christian theological picture patterned on that of the Vedic type of thought did not reach the Western world until about the end of the eighteenth century. Then I would like to know how it came in, because there certainly was an influence from India somewhere and no one has worked out that problem. I think it would be a good topic for a doctor's dissertation. Kritzer (?) suggested there was an esoteric wisdom. It appeared in the early part of the nineteenth century and he said that the Western religions as we know them were religions for the people, but that all the time in the midst of these Western forms there was an esoteric tradition which came from the Indian sages and was preserved since the fifth or sixth century B.C. It always had been kept and only a few were allowed to participate, and here is the union of the East and the West. No one has agreed with Kritzer. Certainly Schopenhauer knew the want of the West—indeed it is exactly the type of thing that this absolute idealism could give that appeared in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

They had been moving through

tragic times. Their world was breaking up and few could accept the traditional dogma. In England it was turned to empirical science. If you read Hume's works, written at the end of the eighteenth century, you will see the attitude of scepticism. Then you entered into that period of social disorder. Napoleon was ramping about and all the old security was lost and landmarks were drifting and there did not seem to be any anchorage and you could not fall back on the old notions.

Lessing began to talk about the world moving by a progressive law, tying the centuries together and lifting its head in an all-ennobling civilization and he surrendered the dualism of the past and gave the idea of one single reality—"There is only one reality, which is spiritual, and we are that." Man is one with the eternal. That is why Schopenhauer could take the Upanishads and use them as his scriptural reading. One observer reported that tears would run down his face as the old man bent over the book and he would pat it and say, "This is the everlasting book." If you know your Upanishads and the idealism of the old preachers you will know how it balanced with the philosophy they were trying to arrive at. If Swami had been sent at that time he would have swept Europe. They needed a confidence in the things that make for idealism. I know that some of you are going to come to grips with me in your mind. You will say that if they had gotten to work with a planned and solid programme we would have gotten further.

A little later German idealism swept England and produced Browning, Coleridge, T. H. Green, and became the dominant philosophy of the nineteenth century, came to America and became and was accepted as the final statement in philosophy and thought. And of

course it was a rather beautiful thing, and if I may make a generalization I would say that more of the intellectuals of the world in all ages have accepted this absolute idealism as their philosophy than have accepted any other theology or philosophy.

And often, as I look at the desires of the modern world, as I feel the terrific task that man must do to-day, I wish I could be a Vedantist or an absolute idealist. I cannot, but I wish I could, because it must make you break free from all these limitations, you do not worry the way people worry who feel they must chart the future. You have a marvellous peace which does not come to people who see their world as maladjusted, chaotic and before which they stand in fear and bewilderment. If you can feel that you are one with the Eternal, if you can chant that chant which Swami, with his intonations gave to you, and believe it, then you have a dignity, you have a pride, you have a confidence, you have courage, you have a sense of worth very difficult to get in any other way. Many cultures have tried to do it since, but India did it twenty-eight hundred years ago. When China was choosing the natural world, India was insisting that the only world is the spiritual, and man is that. So long ago it was done, and that insistence is a glorious thing. You know it really is a marvellous thing when a person insists that he is the only reality in the universe. That is hard for a Christian to say, and no Christian can say it if he is orthodox, but India was not taking any chances in a world where men were seeking salvation. The gods could be fickle, the gods could have their purposes and leave us out, the gods could decree that a certain number are going to hell and a certain number are going to be saved. India said, "I am that,"

identifying the human soul with the eternal.

Now see what it is, if you can feel on that basis. Then anything that comes is only a form and an appearance. If you are yourself eternal, if you yourself are not attached to this temporal and transitory world but belong to that eternal—nothing can be safer than that. Think of the dignity of it, the pride you can feel in it, the sense of worth. Here we are walking the streets, unemployed, trying to make a place in the world that does not want us. We are tormented and tortured by circumstances, we are disappointed and distressed in a world that is upsetting all our plans. We are groping our way through the maze of the Minotaur, but the Vedantist can have that eternal calm, that sense of being of spiritual worth so that all of these things mean nothing in the eternal sphere. It is a magnificent thing to be able to do that. I cannot do it, but if I could pick a philosophy, that is, if I were able to say "This is the philosophy I would like", that is what I would pick. And the West needed it, and in the form that it received it, the form which developed in the first half of the nineteenth century and which gave us a new form of dignity.

Then the English churches filled up and people saw for themselves what religion meant. When Vivekananda came to sweep the Conference, (of course you know about that) one Boston paper said, "Just think of the impertinence of us, sending missionaries to a country that can produce a man like this." And he really was able, by his dynamic personality, to present his idealism to our audience. He was real—he gave them the straight stuff and America listened and America has not forgotten. But the thing which is perhaps most significant about these philosophic systems of India,

about Vedanta, is the peculiar quality of its attitude in regard to things religious. Vivekananda said, "Your social service is social scavenging. The absolute is better. Try it, realize it."

Now if I were picking out the thing that Vedanta might give to our Western culture as significant, I would say first that the thing which is greatest in the culture of India and the Vedanta is that universal tolerance of all forms of life. Have you ever heard of any of these sages of India leading persecution against other forms of belief? You might answer, "Well they say that in regard to ultimate truth no one knows, and if you try to define the eternal you have to say we do not know, and if nobody knows the truth why should they worry about other forms of belief?" But India said all forms are good and all ways and all paths lead to the one God. And that tolerance is absolutely essential if we are to find our path. Not by saying "This is mine and that is yours and mine is the only truth," but by saying, rather, "He has something and we have something and together we will work into a single pattern." That tolerance is in great danger to-day. I mean not only in the realm of philosophy, but the spirit of tolerance. Intolerance is defining your position as against another person's position. It is not what we should do really. We should say, "What is it that you have and I have not that makes you think differently?" And in an atmosphere of tolerance we would come through it. It is because the sages of India have never repudiated the truths of others that India is making such a rapid adjustment of her old ways of thinking to the new scientific advances.

If you were to take Tagore's poems in "Gitanjali" and "Fruit Gathering", you can see that he has repudiated the transcendent realm of the ancients and still thrill to this presence, so completely has Tagore adjusted his idealism to the modern world. You know Tagore said, "India is in threat of actual loss", and that is what is happening to-day. You will find this old idealism transmuted into a naturalistic mysticism. They have come to give to the world a new synthesis because more and more has man in the Western world come to realize that we are all building together, that man is part of the universe, that we are part of the cycle—that we derive from thousands of millions of lives of cosmic history, that we are linked with all forms of nature which have come up through the past to the present and that we all help to make up part of this stupendous life.

If we can catch the meaning, if we can feel the heart of all our fellows and have that sense of oneness of all man and all things, that mysticism which would give us the same which Vedanta has given us, that is what you feel in Tagore, this unification, this feeling of the oneness of man and the reality of the universe expressed in the urge of the human spirit.

We must all be saved, or we must all perish together. It is not a question of one nation or one people. We are all walking along a world path. We all belong to each other and into this great simplicity at last may be planted the cultures of the whole world so that under the leadership of wisdom man may go forward to ever greater achievement.

KEDARNATH AND BADRINATH

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

Living in an Ashrama in the Himalayas, almost every year, I had to see off or receive pilgrim parties to or from Kailas or Kedarnath-Badrinath. This had naturally the effect of rousing in me a desire of undertaking one of these pilgrimages. But circumstanced as I was, it was not possible for me to encourage such an idea. So, long had I to keep it secret in my heart. But every desire, however much we may strive to ignore it, must take root, and God sometimes fulfils our wishes in a strange way.

HARDWAR

So I found myself on the first of May last at Hardwar on my way to Kedarnath and Badrinath. Many of my friends thought I was not a person who could stand the hardship of such a journey and so asked what arrangement I was making for my conveyance. One very innocently asked whether I was going by an aeroplane, not knowing there was no air service to Kedar or Badri and the one that had been started was stopped. But to all enquiries when I said that I was going on foot, many thought I was rash or foolishly risking my health.

Pilgrims to Kedar-Badri generally start from Hardwar. Here one makes arrangements for coolies, Dandies (a kind of conveyance carried by 4 coolies on their shoulders), etc. Hardwar itself is a great place of pilgrimage. As one comes here, one meets with pilgrims from all over India. With two Himalayan ranges close by and the Ganges flowing below, the very sight of

Hardwar is inspiring. A small town has grown in Hardwar, but still the place is comparatively quiet. A neat and clean place humming with innumerable pilgrims who come from far and near, and yellow-robed monks with their calm and placid faces walking in the streets, when you come here you at once feel that you are in another world—you are in "God's own land," you are in a place where the chief motive of life is the quest of the Eternal.

From the standpoint of the pilgrims, the most important place at Hardwar is the Brahma-Kunda, a bathing place on the Ganges, where a bath is considered to bring much merit, as far as mythology is concerned. I visited Hardwar some years back, but still as I come again, I find a newness in the whole surrounding. So the old things I see again, and I see them in a new light. I come to the Brahma-Kunda one evening. But what a magnificent sight awaits me! On the bank of the river as well as on the platform surrounding the bathing place there are hundreds of persons—men and women, monks and householders, wearing different kinds of dress of different colours, indicating difference of caste, creed, race and order of life—all wrapped in great devotion. As you see this sight, you feel as if their collective mind was away from sordid, mundane things. Some are waving lights in worship of the sacred river, some with folded hands are saying their prayers, some, you find, are telling their beads. The sound of bells from the surrounding temples where evening service is being

held, drowns your wandering thoughts, and you are transported to a new region.

A modern man will say: "It is all superstition! Only the undeveloped mind gives importance to such things! Why should this place be considered so sacred! Why should mythology, which after all has no sure basis, play such an overwhelmingly important role in our life! Religion is really the opiate of the people; it has got such an intoxicating effect upon the mass mind!" But suppose, as in some country in the West, we banned religion even in India and by an act of legislation we made this sacred spot a prohibited area,—of what a great treasure would these hundreds of persons be deprived? If not anything else, do these men not find an escape from the sufferings and miseries of life for some time at least? Perhaps a mother has lost her only child, with a lacerated heart she is praying for its welfare. Perhaps there is in this assemblage a man weary with the burden of life—with its incessant struggles and conflicts, he seeks respite from that—in the thought of the Higher Power. Someone perhaps is oppressed with a divine discontent—he wants to unravel the meaning of life: as the day meets the night, in the twilight hours when everything is calm, his thoughts soar high up to Heaven for the solution of his great problem. And some perhaps have found the peace that passeth understanding—they are absorbed in Holy communion, forgetful of the surrounding. If we stifle religion with ruthless impatience, what substitute can we give for that? Ninety-nine per cent. of the troubles have their origin in the fact that we want to thrust our own ideas upon others, we do not see a problem from the needs and standpoint of our neighbours.

HARDWAR TO RISHIKESH

It was arranged we would start on the 7th May. In these days we would see party after party of pilgrims starting on pilgrimage. What a beaming joy in their face! What an enthusiasm in their heart! As we watched these scenes from day to day, we became impatient; a few days towards the end of the period that we were at Hardwar became burdensome to us. But nevertheless we had the consolation we were in an atmosphere of pilgrimage.

At last the appointed day arrived. It was the morning of the 7th May. We were to start.

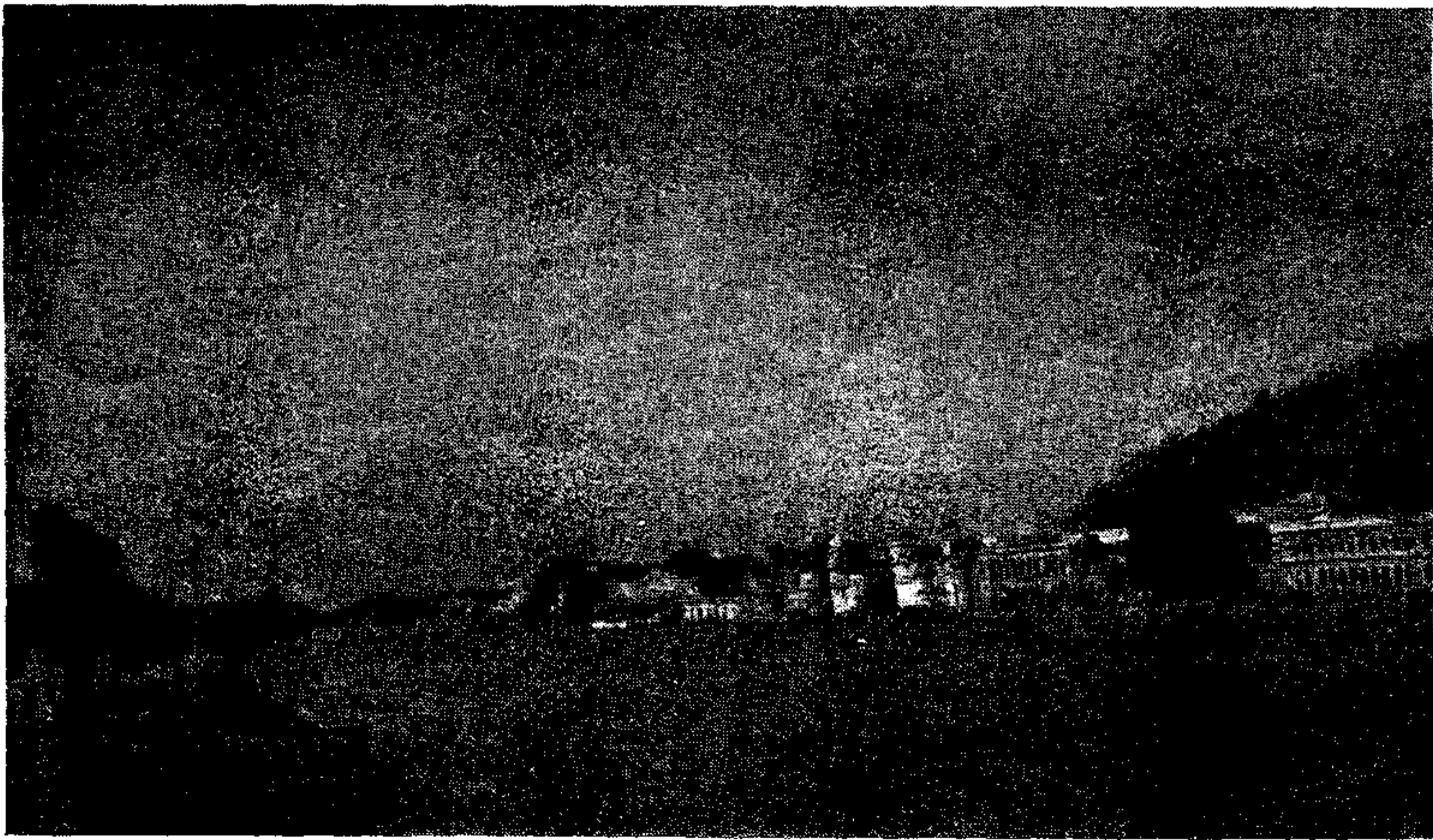
We formed into a party of four. The party was very carefully selected. In it there was one who was expert in management, another who had the ritualistic sense—capable in the deciphering of the deeper significance of worship, images, etc., in temples, a third who was overflowing with devotion, and I who would often pity myself at the sight of the qualities they had.

Formerly pilgrims would walk on foot from Hardwar. But nowadays one can go fourteen miles—to Rishikesh—by train and further about sixty miles by motor bus. We decided that we would go to Rishikesh by train. We sent our attendants—two servants and a cook—two days earlier to go on foot and wait for us at the junction of the bus lines at Devaprayag.

In a pilgrimage one has to exercise much forethought as to the requirements on the way. Naturally one has to take many necessary and unnecessary things. We could not afford to make our luggage too heavy. And still what we took was trying enough for two Nepalese coolies, who are noted for carrying heavy loads. In pilgrimage one gets an ascetic attitude of mind. Whereas in ordinary life few can resist the temptation of

making a display of their wealth and luxury, during pilgrimage one likes to be content with as few things as possible and forget all thoughts of comfort and convenience. One likes to be absorbed in the thought of God. But when one's whole mind is given to God, where is the scope for thinking about physical comfort? So on the way when we found many pilgrims wending their way with almost no belonging with them—even rich men sometimes in their self-imposed poverty, how ashamed at times we felt of our possessions! How small

behind when one thinks of the long journey—our friends surrounded us with joyous exclamation of “Kedarnath Ki Jai” (glory to Kedarnath), “Badri Vishal Ki Jai” (glory to great god Badri). But in their look was a mingled feeling of joy and anxiety—joy because we were going on a holy pilgrimage, anxiety because who knows what difficulty we might have to face on the way. Some came even up to the Railway station to see us off, and they would not be satisfied unless they saw us quite comfortable in our seats in the train. The engine whistled, the



HARDWAR

in our heart of hearts, did we feel before them! But one has to make concession for the weakness of the flesh and therefore to exercise common sense even when the mind tends to be swayed away by devotion.

As we got on the Tonga with our heavy loads and many odds and ends—a long stick for climbing hills, an umbrella as a protection against the sun and rain, a waterpot that must be kept ready at hand, and some such things which seem like so many encumbrances, but none of which can be left

train started, and we were cut off from the last spot of modern civilization. For, Rishikesh which was the terminus of the Railway and where we were to get down had an air of the medieval age. The train ran up to that place only for the convenience of the pilgrims.

We reached Rishikesh at noon. At the station some friends were awaiting us. Rishikesh is important chiefly as a place where monks and ascetics live and perform spiritual practices. A bazaar has grown afterwards simply as a

necessary evil. There are some Kshetras, from where are supplied the bare necessities of the Sadhus who live here. We knew some Sadhus—our friends—who lived here, and we became their guests(!). They begged food for us; but in their excess of love made other arrangements also, so that asceticism might not be forced on us—people who had arduous days before them.

We went for a bath in the Ganges. There we met with many pilgrims bound for Kedar or Badri or both, making the place alive with their talks, we saw at a distance the cottages where Sadhus live, and visited also a Kshetra wherefrom Sadhus get their “Bhiksha” (alms). As you see the concourse of Sadhus with great calmness on their face and each carrying a piece of cloth in his hand for receiving “Bhiksha,” you feel there are at least some in the gathering who could in their home feed hundreds of persons daily, but why have they themselves taken the begging bowl? Yes, some are mad for wealth and luxury, some are mad for name and fame, while some seem to have gone mad in their quest of the Unknown. It is true there are black sheep amongst these about whom I am taking such an idealistic view. But an institution should be judged by its best and not by its worst members. And is not success—specially in moral and spiritual sphere—a succession of failures?

At Rishikesh we got an introduction letter from the manager of the institutions of Kalikamliwala to the many Kshetras and Dharmashalas (rest houses) on the pilgrim route. The letter gave instruction to the managers of the Dharmashalas on the way to accommodate us and to look after our needs and comforts. This proved to be very useful.

RISHIKESH TO DEVAPRAYAG

We left Rishikesh at about 1 p.m. The motor bus was to start at 12 noon, but it was delayed by an hour. The scorching sun was overhead, the bus was packed up—one may say beyond its capacity—with passengers, mostly pilgrims. Our suffering was intense. But have we not pledged ourselves to all inconveniences in order to perform the pilgrimage? So none of us could conscientiously complain of any suffering. Nay, some of the pilgrims went just the other way. As the bus started and began to go gliding by the side of the Ganges, some pilgrims—women from Central India—began to sing songs, perhaps in honour of Kedarnath or Badrinath, loudly in a chorus. We could not follow a word of it nor was the song pleasing to our unaccustomed ears. And such a loud noise when we were being almost baked in heat and were not in a mood to utter a single word! When the song started, the whole thing seemed so out of place and proportion that some of us had to make an effort to suppress the tendency to laugh. But look at the faces of these old women. So much devotion is visible on them. And under the influence of that devotion they have forgotten all consideration of their physical discomforts. And what are we?—body-centric, thinking in terms of refinement which after all is nothing but a veneer over things all rotten. Perhaps when the true value of things will be judged, these simple-minded women will be found to be much higher than many of those who ignorantly pride themselves over the present tailor-made civilization.

But precept is one thing, practice is another. With all my philosophical musings, suffering was not lessened. The bus was in a dilapidated condition,

jerking was intense—so much so that one lost control over one's body, and the sun's flaming rays were coming through the windows. We shall have to pass four hours this way, if the bus kept the scheduled time! The ladies got tired. Songs were stopped. Everybody was silent—there was dead silence but for the buzzing noise of the machine. Because of the great suffering none had the inclination to utter a single word. When this went on for some time, one of our party was asked what he was thinking about. At such a curious

Devaprayag looks picturesque from a distance. Situated on the slope of a hill which is guarded by two rivers—the Alakananda and the Bhagirathi, Devaprayag with its closely built houses seems as if it was the work of a consummate artist.

At Devaprayag we put up at the Dharmashala of Kalikamliwala. This was the first night in our pilgrimage and the first experience at a Dharmashala of Kalikamliwala. Kalikamliwala is the appellation of a Sannyasin whose real name was Swami Vishud-



DEVAPRAYAG

inquiry, the calm and grave reply was, "Brahman the Absolute." The reply provoked immediate laughter. Yes, even your misery becomes enjoyable if you know how to enjoy things.

The longest day must have its end. We also came to the journey's end. But not at the scheduled time. We were late by two hours. It was evening when we reached Devaprayag. We became hopeless as to when we would reach the place. We thought it was still a long way off. But when our motor suddenly took a turn, we saw the beautiful spot from a distance.

dhananda. He was called Kalikamliwala (literally, one with a black blanket), because he had only a black blanket as all his belongings. Out of great devotion to him, a wealthy man offered him a large sum of money. But the saint would not take anything for himself. He once went on pilgrimage to the Himalayas. He knew the sufferings and difficulties of the pilgrims in that almost inaccessible region. So he wanted his devotee to build resting houses on the way to Kedarnath and Badrinath and some other neighbouring places of pilgrimage. As a result,

pilgrimage to these places has now become so easy. One can be sure of accommodation at a distance of every ten or twelve miles, and the poorer people can get also raw foodstuff at these places. What a great service that self-sacrificing holy man has done to the pilgrims! Whereas in the past only very few persons could dare go to Kedarnath and Badrinath, nowadays thousands of pilgrims visit these temples every year and offer silent homage to that noble soul whose very name is unknown to many.

We were given one complete room as a special privilege, because we had an introduction letter. But in the Dharmashala there was a crowd of pilgrims. Even the verandah outside our room was full. Of the pilgrims some were cooking, some talking with the Pandas (priest-guides) as to the next day's programme. Some were in prayer and meditation even amidst a bustling noise. Noise and bustle and want of proper accommodation become a part of life in a pilgrimage like this. Should one forgo one's timely meditation because of that? So some were rigid as regards the practice of saying prayers.

As it was already dusk, we did not go out for seeing the place. We had also enough to do as regards the management of our one-night household. But lo! there came an unexpected difficulty. We had sent our coolies and the cook to wait for us at this place. The coolies turned up but the cook was away. What was the matter with him? Where to get a new cook? On enquiry it was found that the engaged cook, who belonged to Devaprayag, on arriving at this place, was informed by his relations that his marriage was arranged. So he quietly fled away without leaving even any infor-

mation for us. A comico-tragedy indeed! No use brooding over the seriousness of the difficulty, when a difficulty has overtaken you. So we went hither and thither, enquired of this man and that, and managed to get a new cook.

We were tired and therefore fell fast asleep that night. Towards dawn we were awakened by noisy talks and songs. The pilgrims were making preparations to start—binding their luggage, giving directions to their respective coolies, talking to the Pandas, and so on. And some, whose preparations were complete, began to sing holy songs as they were about to start.

It was fixed that we would begin our journey at noon, so there was no hurry for us. In the morning we were busy making further arrangement for the journey. Then we went for a bath in the confluence. Devaprayag is considered a sacred place because here there is the confluence of the two rivers—the Bhagirathi and the Alakananda. There are some mythological stories also to further prove the sacredness of the place. How far they are true, it is difficult to say. But when they serve to elevate the minds of so many persons, why do you disturb your mind with historical researches? As you come to the bathing ghat on the confluence, you see a magnificent sight—two mountain rivers dashing against each other with main force and then become united into one—the Ganges. The noise is terrible, sprays sometimes rise high, roaring waves play with boulders in eternal glee. As you look at and watch this sight with high mountain slopes on both sides standing like two sentinels, your thoughts are lifted up automatically above mundane things. Many were found having their sacred baths. Some were performing worship also. They were all or mostly

pilgrims to "Kedar-Badri." Above the bathing ghat at an elevated place there is the temple of Sri Ramachandra, believed by some to have been built by Sri Shankaracharya.

DEVAPRAYAG TO SRINAGAR

We left Devaprayag at 1 p.m. There is a motor bus running up to Kirtinagar, a distance of eighteen miles. But this short distance we had to cover in three hours—again under the midday sun. It seemed the sun in the lower region of the mountain area was much more severe than in the plains. So when we reached Kirtinagar we were quite exhausted. But now we had to begin our journey on foot and walk a distance of four miles to Srinagar, which was to be the halting place for the night. Here our real pilgrimage began, for we had now to go on foot. Kirtinagar is a bazaar in the Tehri State on the bank of the Alakananda, which divides the Tehri State from British Garhwal. By crossing a bridge one comes from Kirtinagar to the British area and takes to the pilgrim route. Many pilgrims come on foot from Devaprayag. They do not go to Kirtinagar side. We had to do that, because we wanted to escape the trouble of walking this distance. But it was doubtful whether it was advantageous to come by a bus. It gave us so much trouble that one of us was actually thinking, even at that time, that on the return journey he would come not by bus but on foot.

It was evening when we reached Srinagar. We were surprised to find Srinagar was such a large place. We passed through a big street with shops on both sides which contained many amenities of modern life. Formerly it was the capital of the Tehri State. Now it belongs to the British. For some time it was the headquarters of

British Garhwal. Now the headquarters has been removed from Srinagar to Pauri about eight miles off.

At Srinagar we took shelter in the Dharmashala of Kalikamlwala. It was a nice building. The manager was all attention to us. And we were all comfortable. When we arrived at the Dharmashala, there were few pilgrims. But as the evening advanced, the number began to swell. Soon the place wore a busy look with crowds of persons jostling for accommodation. I sat at a distance on the big compound under the open sky and listlessly watched the crowd. In that big crowd it was interesting to see how some, in their gross selfishness, were quite oblivious of the inconveniences they were putting the fellow-pilgrims to, and how some, even in these trying moments, were very considerate to others. Lo! here in that corner, by the side of the temple which is in the compound, you find some widows sitting quiet in meditation. Stars are overhead, round about are persons with thoughts centring on the great god Kedarnath, sound of the temple bells has deepened the solemnity of the atmosphere. And here you find some persons sitting like statues in meditation—enjoying intense solitude in a great crowd. In our busy life we think we can afford to ignore God or even deny Him, but are there not some whose mind turns towards God as iron filings to magnet under all conditions? Well, these are the persons who keep up the torch of religion burning and will do so though there is around us the dust and storm of controversy as to whether there is any value in religion, whether God is a myth or the concoction of the imagination or a dope to befool the masses.

SRINAGAR TO RUDRAPRAYAG

We were perhaps the earliest to leave Srinagar next morning. We walked a distance of eight miles and halted at Bhattisera. We wanted to take some rest and so stopped here for the whole day. Early next morning we began our march bound for Rudraprayag, a distance of about ten or eleven miles. But within this area there are three Charais (ascents), one of which is steep enough to make one feel easily exhausted. As you begin the climb, your pace slows down, breath becomes heavy, and on your poor hill-stick sometimes falls half the weight of your whole body. But slow and steady wins the race. Don't think of the distance, just think of the immediate step your feet are taking. One—two—three steps you have taken; by so much you are nearer the destination. But don't consider the task hopeless. If you keep on, in so many hours you will reach the end. And as you look around and ahead, encouraging sights greet you. There are many pilgrims—old and young, strong and disabled—crawling up like you. Should you feel exhausted or your heart belie your determination, there comes the cheer—"Jai Kedarnath Ki Jai." This is the "war-cry" of the pilgrims. As you hear the sound, you feel a new courage, get a fresh supply of hope, and you go on.

We took about five hours to arrive at Rudraprayag. But on the way we had nice experiences. We saw the devotion of the pilgrims—how even old women almost doubled up with age were going on in this arduous pilgrimage. It might be they were risking their life; it might be they were destined not to make a return journey. But what does that matter? If they take their last breath on the way, will they not take that with the name of Kedarnath on their lips and the thought

of that great Deity in their mind? And what is there in the world? They have had enough of its experience! Here they are in a place amidst beautiful surroundings—in the land of Shiva—where sordid things of the world cannot reach. If it be death, is it not a glorious death? There—you see one sitting quite exhausted on the road-side. She is stopping for a while to take breath. But when you look at her, you see that her face beams with joy as her lips utter: "Jai Kedarnath Ki Jai."

It was nine in the morning when we reached Rudraprayag. We stopped at the Dharmashala of Kalikamlwala and were given a room, from where we could have a splendid view of the Alakananda. We thought we had enough of climb in the morning, so we wanted to take rest here for the whole day.

Rudraprayag is situated at the confluence of the two rivers—the Alakananda and the Mandakini, and therefore it is considered a sacred place. Every pilgrim takes a bath at the confluence, as such we also did not like to miss it. In the evening I took a stroll just to have a more intimate knowledge of the place. Near the confluence at some height is the temple of Shiva, called Rudreshwar. Here lives a Sannyasin, who, I heard, has started a Sanskrit school and two hospitals. Orthodox monks are given more to meditation and prayers than to any social service. It was only Swami Vivekananda who boldly declared that you could worship God as much in human forms as in temples, and started an organization which does social service as a part of spiritual practice. I felt curious to see the Sannyasin. He came down from his cell with a courteous smile on his lips. As I admired him for his starting schools and hospitals, he quoted the verse of the Gita which says, "He who sees Me in all and all in Me,

he is never separated from Me nor do I become separated from him." "So service to the poor and the destitute is as much a religion as seeking God through meditation and Japa," he opined. He lives here for six months of the year and in the winter he goes to the plains and collects subscription for the humanitarian work he has been doing here.

I liked to see the confluence again in the evening. There is a small temple just at the top of the bathing ghat, which reaches the water through a



GUPTAKASHI

very, very large number of steps. That makes the ghat all the more beautiful. As you stand at the ghat, and see the ceaseless splashing of waters of the two holy rivers which down below run steadfastly, without caring for anything in the world, you feel a sort of detachment from worldly ties.

Well, you see there a devotee trying to take advantage of the situation. He is sitting quiet in meditation on one of the steps. As I watch him closely I find a piece of burning incense stick hanging from his pocket. That seemed queer to me. But his meditation seems to be so real and his devotion

so sincere that I dare not smile even within myself. After some time he rises, and goes down to the brink of the water. It was getting dark, everybody was off, there were only one or two stray pilgrims going up or down the steps. In that twilight hour this devotee was waving his incense stick—as in the evening service in a temple—looking intently at the rivers.

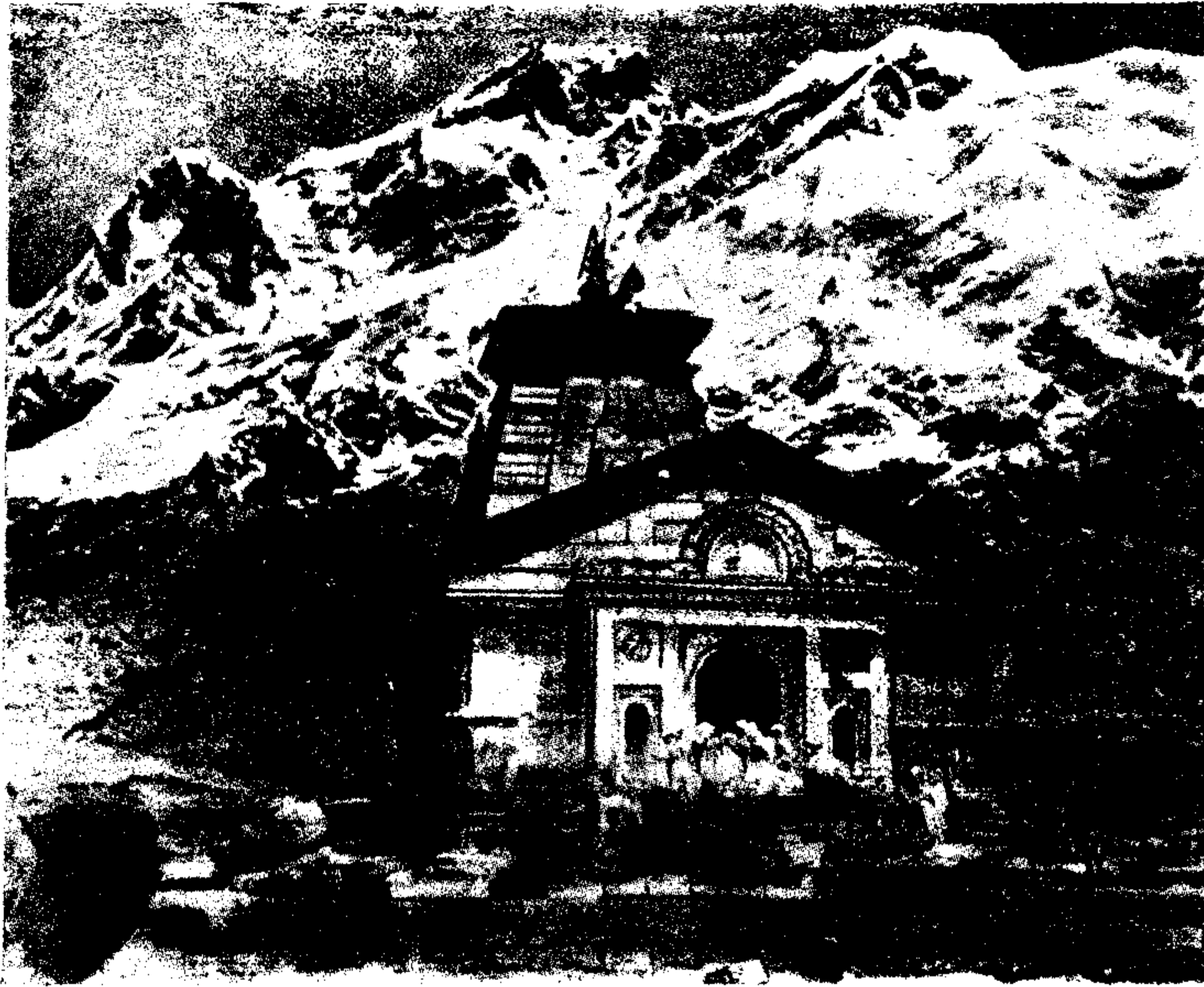
As I saw this sight my first reaction was: "To whom is he offering service? There is no image or deity on this side?" But who knows this man sees an invisible presence in a place where a person like me sees none! Perhaps he is right, and I am wrong. I was doubting the reasonableness of his doings, but I could not turn my eyes away from him. I stood quiet and motionless.

RUDRAPRAYAG TO GUPTAKASHI

Early next morning we left Rudraprayag. By this time we had become accustomed to walk in the mountains. So to-day we walked both in the morning and the afternoon, with a halt for midday meal at some place. Our plan was to stop for the night at Agastyamuni, a place which has got a Dharmashala. But as we reached the place, the Dharmashala did not seem to be very inviting. And as there was time, we proceeded further. We heard that there were nice "Chatis" (rest-houses, belonging to shopkeepers, where pilgrims are permitted to stay, if they buy raw foodstuffs from the respective shops) at a place called Chandrapuri. So we began to walk fast, so that we could secure a good

Chati, going ahead of other pilgrims. But soon I found it was not possible for me to keep pace with my com-

Hindus. Who knows, perhaps Shankaracharya himself went by the very path I am treading—Shankaracharya, who,



THE TEMPLE OF KEDARNATH

panions. I began, therefore, to go slowly and leisurely—specially as I had no fear as regards accommodation if other members of our party could reach the destination in time.

From Agastyamuni, the road runs through a plain ground with trees on both sides as in an avenue. It was towards evening and comparatively cool. It was very pleasant to walk. The situation was nice. Surrounding was beautiful. And I got into a philosophical mood. This is the road which has seen thousands of pilgrims going every year to Kedarnath which has got such an attractive effect upon the minds of the

according to some tradition, built the present temple of Kedarnath. Since



BADRINATH FROM A DISTANCE

then how many monks with simply a begging bowl in their hands have gone

this way! For them this pilgrimage was very arduous. Perhaps the road was not so good as this. Perhaps the place was full of deep forests. But they scorned all discomforts, ignored all difficulties in their determination to see the God of gods—Shiva, in his Himalayan abode. I try to enter into the life of other pilgrims whom I see on the way. Some ladies, perhaps from Gujarat, are going on foot. Because they are on pilgrimage, they seem to be so free from conventions. The male members are a little ahead. There is a little girl going by a "Jhampan" (a conveyance made of cane and bamboo) on the shoulder of a coolie. Perhaps this girl did not allow her parents to come, leaving her behind. The girl was wise. She will have a nice experience, which is all the more rare for a girl of her age. When she will grow old, she will remember this experience of the pilgrimage with so much delight.

It is getting dark. I have to reach the destination. I look into my pocket guide-book. It says Chandrapuri is three miles from the place I left. But it seems I have already walked three miles. Is it a wrong information given in the book? Is it a printing mistake? Soon I find I am all alone in the road. Other pilgrims have stopped at some or other resting-places behind. Now I am to go by the side of a hill with an abyss on the left side. It is dark. I may miss my footstep. Who knows whether wild animals abound in this place? Who knows I may be waylaid by a bandit? There is no police station nearby. All kinds of fear—having or not having any basis—creep and then rush into my mind. I want to walk fast. But that is not possible; I am already exhausted with the long journey of the day. And after all what shall I gain if I reach, say, fifteen

minutes earlier?—I console myself. When I reached Chandrapuri, it was advanced in night. As soon as I reached Chandrapuri, I asked my companions how many miles was that place from Agastyamuni. At this they began to smile. I understood they also found out the mistake in the guide-book.

Next day we reached Guptakashi, stopping at Kundachati for the noon meal. Guptakashi is an important place. Here there are some Dharmashalas, a bazaar, and a Post Office. From Guptakashi we got a distant view of the snowy peaks near about Kedarnath. We could also see Ukhimath—the place where the worship of Kedarnath is performed in winter, when the whole temple of Kedarnath is buried in snow—just like a picture on the other side of the Mandakini. We were delighted at the idea that on our way to Badrinath from Kedar we would pass by Ukhimath. Guptakashi (lit. secret Kashi or Benares) is famous for its temple of Vishwanath as also of Parvati. It is a miniature Benares. We were struck by the beauty of the marble image of Parvati. These temples are very old, but it is difficult to surmise how old they are, for those who will supply us any information about the temple have no historic sense. There is a big paved courtyard adjoining the temples. We visited the temples in the evening. It was astonishing to see how the pilgrims, though tired and exhausted by the day's walk, would eagerly visit the temples and not miss anything which has got any religious importance.

In a corner of the courtyard by the side of the temple of Vishwanath sat a young Pandit reading some scripture and explaining that in beautiful Hindi. At first the audience was very small, but gradually the number began to swell.

We did not enquire who had engaged the Pandit or if he had any self-interest in the matter. But is it not a nice system of spreading religious education? Nowadays these Pandits have fallen into much disfavour. But have they not preserved our ancient culture, and are they not still trying to keep the flickering light of that burning? One could see that this young man had no modern education. But with what devotion and enthusiasm was he reading the ancient lore!—so much so that the audience listened to him spellbound.

GUPTAKASHI TO TRIYUGINARAYAN

The next day we covered about thirteen miles and reached a Chati called Badalpur. On the way we passed by a place called Maikhanda, where there is a temple of Mahishamardini—another name of the Divine Mother with reference to a story in the Chandi that She killed a demon named Mahishasura. It is said that the battle took place at this place. You can neither believe nor disbelieve the statement. But in any case a devotee thinks of the Mother as he enters the temple and thinks of Her grace. That is a great gain.

At Badalpur we found no good accommodation. We put up in a Chati which was almost open. The place was pretty cold and at night it was bound

to be colder. That alarmed us. We created artificial walls around us with waterproof sheets and mats, and passed the night.

The next morning after walking a distance of seven miles we reached Triyuginārayan. The last three miles of the road were very steep. But we did not feel so much difficulty because of the joy that we were approaching Kedarnath. It was only one day's journey to reach there. We met also many pilgrims—amongst them some of our friends—returning from that sacred place. As we met each batch of fresh pilgrims, the mountain air in that otherwise lonely place rang with our usual greetings—"Kedarnath Ki Jai."

Triyuginarayan is the name of the place because here is a temple of Triyuginarayan—another name of Vishnu. The story goes that Himalaya, the father of Parvati, gave here his daughter in marriage to Shiva. But why should there be the temple of Vishnu at this place is more than one can guess. The temple is very ancient and attracts a large number of pilgrims, who come out of the way to visit this place. From here one can have a very nice view of the peaks of Kedar. The place was very cold. We halted here for the night.

(To be continued)

THE MESSAGE OF PHILOSOPHY TO THE MODERN WORLD

BY KUMAR PAL, M.A.

The present epoch is characteristic of an all-round conflict and confusion. There are various rivalries raging in the political field. Controversies are afoot in the various schools of thought. Dissensions and differences prevail in every walk of life. Unrestrained pursuit after 'originality' and 'individuality' characterises every little bit of writing or speech-making. 'Isms' are growing as plentifully and rapidly as slugs on a rainy day. Each person has a different objective and his own short cut to secure it. In such a state of affairs it is becoming more and more difficult to ascertain the exact meaning, significance and scope of even the words of common use. Instead of having two sides or both aspects, every thing has begun to have innumerable sides and every possible meaning.

The concept of philosophy too has become an inextricably tangled web of explanations and interpretations. Philosophy is confused on the one hand with science and religion and on the other with the various philosophies, e.g., political philosophy, social philosophy, natural philosophy etc. We also come across philosophies of the object, of the subject, of the spirit, of the truth etc. Some apply the term philosophy exclusively to metaphysics, and others to ethics, whereas still others describe it as a method of approach to any object of study.

Yet it seems that philosophy, science and religion should ultimately stand for one and the same thing and culminate in the seeing of Unity in Multiplicity by means of a fully organised and

unified system of knowledge. Philosophy (from philos+sophia) stands for love of wisdom. Science (from scire=to know) is systematised knowledge. Religion (from re=back, legare=bind) binds or relates the human soul back to God and establishes a bond between facts of experience and their underlying principles. All the three attempt to arrive at certain hypothesis which may explain the diversity of phenomena by a single uniting law or generalisation. The subject-matter of philosophy and religion is the same as that of the various empirical sciences—the universe, human beings, other bodies, their relations, property, law, politics etc.

Bertrand Russell very characteristically remarks, "The definition of philosophy will vary according to the philosophy we adopt."—(*Outline of Philosophy*, p. 1). In fact the confusion arises from a wrong notion of the origin and purpose of philosophy. Western writers trace the beginnings of philosophy to wonder, doubt or curiosity. But science also receives its impetus from these very feelings. Newton wondered to see the apple falling down, and his curiosity led him to the discovery of the law of gravitation, thus laying the foundations of physics. Galileo's wonder at the sight of the numerous shining bodies in the firmament led to his fateful reflection. He doubted the hypotheses of Ptolemy and proclaimed his own investigations which marked the starting point of modern astronomy. Likewise other

scientists too were inspired by doubt, wonder, fear and such other feelings.

But all this does not constitute philosophy. Philosophy distinguishes itself from sciences in two respects. Firstly, science tries to collect facts into bundles by means of scientific laws and categories. It deals directly with facts as they are presented in our experience. The philosopher's work on the other hand is at the second remove from crude fact. The scientific laws underlying facts, not the original facts, are the raw materials of philosophy. Secondly, the business of philosophy is to reconstruct the fundamentals which govern *all* the special sciences. It is concerned more with the harmony of the whole body of science in the light of all kinds of experience. As Alexander Herberg repeatedly points out, "Philosophy is the Science of the sciences; the sum of all the sciences; Universal Science; the Synthesis of all sciences; the Quintessence of all sciences, the Science of the widest problems in all fields; and of those which affect mankind most closely."—*The Psychology of Philosophers*, pp. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Professor A. N. Whitehead also observes, "It is the primary aim of philosophy to unify completely, bring into clear coherence all departments of rational thought."—*Science and the Modern World*, p. 166. Dr. Bhagavan Das, with the comprehensiveness of a true philosopher rightly states, "All sub-divisional and subordinate particular sciences and arts, though distinguishable, are inseparable; and all are ultimately only parts of one Scientific and Philosophical Religion or Religions and Scientific Philosophy."—*Science of the Self*, p. 22.

In fact, all sciences and human experiences form the data for the constructive work of philosophy. That is why the Upanishads declare Brahma-

Virya to be the foundation of all sciences (ब्रह्मविद्यां सर्वविद्याप्रतिष्ठाम्—Mundaka. I, i, 1). The great lawgiver Manu writes, न ह्यनध्यात्मवित्कश्चित्क्रिया-फलमुपाश्रुते, VI. 82. The renowned astute statesman, Kautilya also realises,

प्रदीपः सर्वविद्यानां, उपायः सर्वकर्मणाम् ।
आश्रयः सर्वधर्माणां, शश्वदान्वीक्षिकी मता ॥

No doubt, intellectual curiosity (जिज्ञासा) is one of the motives which set the philosopher's mind to work. But it is not a curiosity of the scientific type. It is the Brahma-Jijnâsâ, the most Comprehensive Curiosity or the Curiosity about the Universal Self, the Supreme Brahman, by knowing which all is known. Philosophy does not seek to remove the day-to-day doubts, but strives to attain that stage where all doubts are dissolved and there are no longer any misgivings about the Truth. The aspirant of philosophy seeks to resolve all his mental complexes (हृदयग्रन्थि). It is the universal pain of life and the perpetual fear of death which the philosopher endeavours to get rid of. He is not to rest content with a mere momentary patchwork or make-believe. He must achieve that Absolute and Supreme Peace which is never perturbed. Nârada (see Chhândogya Upanishad) had learnt all the sacred scriptures and had studied all the sciences but could not attain peace, and freedom from sorrow. So he humbly approached Sanatkumâra and enquired how he could realise that Self, the knowledge of which carries one beyond all pain and sorrow.

All the six well-known systems of Indian philosophy very clearly lay down that the impelling motive for philosophy was an urge for freedom from bondage and nescience or the yearning for pleasure, Sukha Lipsâ, and the avoidance of pain, Duhkha Jihâsâ.

The first two aphorisms in the Nyâya

Sûtras of Gautama, state—तत्त्वज्ञानात् निःश्रेयसाधिगमः । दुःखजन्मप्रवृत्तिदोषमिथ्याज्ञानानां उत्तोरोत्तरापाये तदनन्तरापायादपवर्गः ।

The Vaisheshika Sûtras of Kanâda also maintain :—

तत्त्वज्ञानात् निःश्रेयसम् ।

Kapila declares in the beginning :—

अथ त्रिविधदुःखात्यन्तनिवृत्तिः अत्यन्तपुरुषार्थः ।

Sâmkhya Kârikâ too begins as follows :—

दुःखत्रयाभिघातात् जिज्ञासा तदपघातके हेतौ ।

Patanjali proceeds like this :— दुःखमेव सर्वं विवेकिनः । हेयं दुःखमनागतम् । द्रष्टृदृश्ययोः संयोगो हेयहेतुः । तस्य हेतुरविद्या । विवेकख्यातिरविप्लवा हानोपायः ।

यो० सू० II. 15, 16, 17, 24, 26.

The Mimâmsakas too aim to enjoy heaven (स्वर्ग), which does not differ in the least from the Absolute Bliss of the other schools. As is said :—

यन्न दुःखेन संभिन्नं न च ग्रस्तमनन्तरम् ।

अभिलाषोपनीतं च तत्पदं स्वः पदास्पदम् ॥

The Brahma Sûtras contain many aphorisms to this effect :—अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा । जन्माद्यस्य यतः । तन्निष्ठस्य मोक्षोपदेशात् । मुक्तः प्रतिज्ञानात् । अनावृत्तिः शब्दात् अनावृत्तिः शब्दात् । etc.

Mahatma Buddha also renounced his house in search of freedom from pain and misery.

Thus philosophy starts with a universal doubt and pain and culminates in Absolute Truth and Peace, while the sciences have special ends in view. Dr. Alexis Carrel is pleased to call philosophy the 'Science of Man' as a whole. He says, "Various sciences abstract only from man what is attainable by their special methods."—*Man the Unknown*, p. 161. "Science must study man as a whole. The Science of Man makes use of all other sciences;" p. 52. It is the most practical of all sciences.

Here we must face the now famous but misdirected remarks of Karl Marx,

which add an additional feather to the caps of the many varieties of Marxism at present in fashion. In the eleventh of his *Theses against Feuerbach* he writes, "Philosophers have so far only interpreted the world in different ways, the point, however, is to change it". This implies, according to the 'explainers of Marx' that the previous philosophy was out of touch with actual life.

The whole view of past philosophy is here entirely mistaken. His judgment evinces a deplorable ignoring of philosophical theories and historical progression, in addition to the probable personal prejudices which biassed him against contemporary society. Like all other philosophers Marx too put an interpretation upon the world and like him all others evolved theories in order to change it. In fact theory has always been in advance of practice, replacing and revolutionising the old order and meanwhile progressing itself to another farther post.

Every one has to acknowledge that conduct is instinctively governed by the ideal, practice by theory, that there is a philosophy behind every great public movement, that ideas are the forces which move nations. It is well said by Aldous Huxley, "All that we are is the result of what we have thought. Men live in accordance with their philosophy of life, their conception of the world. It is really impossible to live without a metaphysics."—*Ends and Means*, p. 34. It is not a matter of philosophy or no philosophy, but of good philosophy or bad philosophy. All the same we must allow that philosophy itself is to some extent conditioned by history. As Dewey says, "Philosophers are parts of history caught in its movement, creators perhaps in some measure of the future, but assuredly creatures of the past."—

Philosophy and Civilisation. Hegel also said that a civilisation without a metaphysics would be like a temple "in all other respects richly ornamented but lacking its Holy of Holies."

The bearing of philosophy on social reconstruction may be well elucidated by the fact that almost all major social or political convulsions in the past are closely associated with the names of prominent philosophers. Plato and Aristotle formed the backbone of the aristocratic structure of the Greek City State. The Christian doctrine of 'the chosen few' was responsible for the medieval institutions of serfdom and feudalism. The appeal to reason rather than the established authority which characterised the philosophy of the Renaissance fomented widespread revolts and upheavals which marred the peace of Europe for two centuries and disintegrated Christendom.

Three famous English philosophers are associated with the revolutionary turning points of English history—Hobbes with the Civil War of 1642, Locke with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and J. S. Mill with the liberal era inaugurated by the First Reform Act of 1832. The Cartesian dualism of body and soul "switched civilisation to the road, which led science to triumph and man to degradation."—Dr. Alexis Carrel, *Man the Unknown*, p. 261.

Likewise the idea that the object of government and of political association is the happiness of a community of individuals in which each has an equal right to happiness was "stated by democrats as a corollary of metaphysical belief."—Leonard Woolf, *After the Deluge*, p. 152. Like a rough stone into the smooth and polished mirror of a pond, this idea fell into the minds of a few Englishmen and Frenchmen of the 18th century and immediately outwent the ripples, up and down, criss-crossing,

agitating the surface of men's minds and of society. The mild ripples soon grew into mighty waves in America, France and other countries.

The absolutistic reaction in the 19th century and after was inspired by the authoritarianism of Mathew Arnold and the idealistic absolutism of Hegel. Hegel justified the real as the rational and equated the ideal with the historical. His ideas have been gleefully repeated with perversions and distortions by every modern tyrant to justify and to rationalise their follies.

The above will make it abundantly clear that the serious pursuit of philosophy is not conceptual jugglery. It is not a mere figment of the imagination or a network of simple commentaries upon the past. It is motivated by a keen desire to get rid of misery. Philosophy has led nations to glory or to the gallows. "The essential task of philosophy is to reflect upon life and seek to guide and illumine it."—G. C. Chatterji. Philosophy ought to be no barren speculation but an illuminating vision of truth which inevitably prompts to self-culture and social service. It is aptly remarked, "A true life of mysticism teaches a full-fledged morality in the individual and a life of absolute good to the society. It is a truism of mysticism that a mystic who is not of supreme service to society is not a mystic at all;"—Professor Ranade.

More especially to the Indian mind, philosophy is essentially practical, dealing as it does with the fundamental anxieties of human beings which are more insistent than abstract speculation. "Indian Philosophy is not only a theory, a body of knowledge, a set of beliefs. It is a philosophy which arises in and in turn gives rise to, philanthropic aspiration and inspires and guides beneficent activity. It is eminently intellectual, emotional and

devotional, and actively humanitarian.” —Dr. Bhagavan Das. What is nowadays generally regarded as the whole of Indian philosophy is really only a part of it. The six systems deal solely with the knowledge aspect. This mistake is responsible for the growing apathy towards them. That is why our philosophers are now studied in the spirit of antiquarian research and not with a wish to find a solution for the problems that face present-day society. One feels as if our philosophy has nothing to do with life, it is not living but dead. A complete survey of Indian philosophy must also include the Bhakti Sutras and must incorporate the Dharma Sutras, which respectively dwell at length upon the emotional and actional aspects of human life.

Now let us see what light philosophy throws on the question of social reconstruction which is the biggest, gravest and most urgent of all the problems that face mankind. “Society stands at the edge of a precipice and sees no way to safety.”—Annie Besant. “Modern civilisation does not suit us.”—Dr. Alexis Carrel. From the babbling baby to the old men in dotage all alike feel that there is something wrong with the modern society. We hear complaints from all quarters.

But the reformists also are seen all around holding in their hands different recipes guaranteed to cure all the ills of humanity. “Some seek to remove the disease by denying it.”—Freud. Others (i.e. Marxists) would like to win laurels, miraculously as it were by kidnapping the patient and replacing him, without being detected, by a perfectly healthy man of their own making. As Dr. Carrel remarks, “Many theorists build up civilisations which although designed by them for man, fit only an incomplete or monstrous image of man. The systems of government entirely cons-

tructed in the minds of doctrinaires are valueless. The principles of the French Revolution, the visions of Marx and Lenin apply only to abstract men.”—*Man the Unknown*, p. 37.

So if we have to proceed philosophically we must not take a partial view. We must attack the problem on all fronts. First of all we have to diagnose the evil which we want to remove. It is admitted by all that the source of our discontent is maladjustment with our social environment. This is because the present “civilisation has been erected without any knowledge of our real nature”.—Carrel, *Man the Unknown*, p. 34. The whole structure of modern society may, no doubt, be said to be based upon certain philosophical principles, but they are only half-truths and are quite unsound.

For instance all are aware of the too great importance attached to the material side of our life. “It is chiefly the worship of money that has brought about the deathlike slumber of all that makes man great.”—B. Russell, *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, p. 116. This is to a large extent to be ascribed to the economic interpretation of history by Karl Marx.

It has, no doubt, “contributed something to human thought and knowledge, by trying to strike out a new path, ‘blaze a new trail’, as it were; but it does not endeavour to explain the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ of the birth of geniuses, much less of the world process. In short it is not interested in the deeper metaphysical problems at all.” *Science of the Self*, p. 243,—Dr. Bhagavan Das.

However, we must take care lest there should be a spiritual reaction. The mere substitution of the spiritual for the material would not correct the error. The exclusion of matter would

be still more detrimental to man than that of mind. What is needed is a synthesis of the two. The economists must realise that human beings think, feel and suffer, that they should be given other things than work, food, and leisure, that they have spiritual as well as physiological needs.

Secondly, we notice that some systems of social organisation lay greater emphasis upon the individual as opposed to the society and thus foster license and anarchy. Others commit the opposite mistake of sacrificing the individual at the altar of society and thus defeat the very purpose of social organisation. We ought to take stock of the individual differences of temperament, aptitude, capacity and requirements if we wish to have a stable society.

The third erroneous conception that is vitiating human relations to-day is the Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence, which is now unscrupulously followed by individuals and nations in their mutual relation. We are ignoring the more important law of the alliance for existence. It is quite true the law of the struggle for life must be obeyed, to avoid degeneration of body and soul. But this by itself alone will make life impossible without the association and co-operation of

others in resisting adversities and adversaries.

The present structure of society is based upon the ignoble warfare of classes. The exploiters are squeezing life out of their own downtrodden brethren without the least compunction. In place of beneficent universalism, vicious nationalism and racialism or classism are clogging the wheels of progress and may thrust humanity headlong in the bottomless pit over the edge of the precipice.

The civilised world has need of a fundamental change if it is to be saved from utter collapse—change in its economic structure, in its social organisation, in the distribution of population, and in its philosophy of life. The erroneous metaphysical half-truths must be abandoned. The new order must look after the spiritual as well as the material interests of mankind. The new deal will have to reconcile society and individual in an individuo-social scheme. The ideal society must take into account both the laws of struggle for existence and alliance for life. The dawn of the new era will witness the disappearance of the present dichotomised classes which will be replaced by vocational guilds according to the psychophysical laws of human nature and mutually collaborating with one another for the common good.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE VALE OF TEARS

Recently a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order passed away in Massachusetts, U.S.A. He laboured for thirty-four years in the New World, spreading, by means of lectures and publications, the eternal message of the Ancient East. We knew him well. His was a cherubic soul, full of tender feelings for all humanity. Gentle in spirit and ever depending upon the guidance of the Divine Mother, Swami Paramananda carried joy and sunshine wherever he went. The tragedy, that is being enacted in the war theatres of the West, had brought a shock to the sensitive soul of the Swami as it has done to many other sensitive souls, who make the world's woes their own. One of the Swami's assistants sending us an account of the last days of the Swami says: "During the latter months all were conscious of the wounds, the war with its attendant human misery was inflicting on his heart; he admitted lying awake hour after hour, night after night, weighted by the woe of the world and pleading with the Divine Mother for its lifting."

We know that this world is a vale of tears. The ordinary woes from which humanity suffers, such as old age, death and sickness, were sufficient to touch the heart of a Buddha and make him forsake a throne, in order to find a remedy for the ills of the world. What is taking place to-day in the war zones of the world in both the hemispheres is something out of the ordinary. Innocent women and children are the victims of the curse that has descended upon humanity. The deterioration of the moral outlook offers greater shocks than the physical miseries to which the com-

batants and non-combatants are subjected. The propaganda of untruths and half-truths, almost universally spread, and the mutual recriminations of the combatants pollute the very ether, the waves of which carry these to the men and women of a weary, disillusioned world.

THE UNITY OF HUMANITY

This grim tragedy, unprecedented in the history of the world, demonstrates to us the fact that the human race forms a single organism and that the malady that touches a part affects the health of the whole. The days of isolation in which one part of the world was indifferent to the sufferings of the other have gone for good. What is taking place in Europe affects us deeply here, in India. We share the trials and tribulations through which our brothers and sisters are passing. We see the little children taking leave of their mothers, prior to the voyage across the seas in search of a place of safety. We see the refugees from the conquered countries, trudging along with their meagre belongings, seeking for shelter and food. Starvation has begun to do its work among the victims of aggression. Pestilence is sure to follow in its footsteps. With a world-economy thoroughly disorganised, the years ahead of us are sure to bring distress to peoples all over the world.

Statesmen on whose heads lies the grave responsibility of directing the affairs of nations, appear to be like men in a sinking barge, all rushing to one side, impelled by an instinct of self-preservation and by that very act bringing about the destruction of all. Fear and hatred started the war, fear

and hatred keep it going and even when the combatants are thoroughly exhausted and fallen, there appears to be no chance of fear and hatred ceasing to be.

If the human race is to survive, immediate steps should be taken to replace the fear and the hatred that shapes the policy of nations by love and mutual trust. This will become possible only if justice is meted out to all. If peace and goodwill are to prevail in the world, man should meet man as a brother and an equal. The difference of aliens and nationals should cease to exist. The conception of ruling races and subject races should be cast aside as the relic of a barbaric past. Man can deceive himself and may succeed in throwing dust into his brother's eyes, but can he deceive God? He thinks, he can. Politicians, who prepare carefully worded statements, which, while yielding nothing, exhibit an exterior of generosity, deny the very existence of the God of Truth. These men, if they pray at all, will probably submit carefully worded petitions to the Almighty Father asking Him to guarantee all good things to themselves and utter confusion to all who lie outside their charmed circle. One wonders, why these men drag in the name of the Crucified One, knowing fully well that their lives and actions are far removed from the great ideals preached by Him.

THE ETHICS OF CONQUEST

Mother Nature, for her own reasons, has implanted in the mind of humanity a sense of admiration for physical prowess. The most popular of the songs of nations exalt the warrior, praising his victories in the battle-field. This was all right in an age when mere physical strength and agility decided the issue. But conditions have entirely changed. Nevertheless the old racial memories lying deep down in the un-

conscious mind impel humanity to worship the conqueror who, by fair means or foul, succeeds in annexing other people's territory, and reaping harvests which others have sown. Nothing succeeds like success and it appears to be the privilege of the successful man, in any sphere of life, not only to insult the less fortunate but also to doubt the latter's moral worth. The strength that leads to success, be it the strength of armaments or the capacity for low cunning and vile treachery displayed by "civilized" man against his weak neighbour, is considered to be the source of all virtues. The old word "virtue," derived from the Latin word "vir" meaning man, is definitely associated with rudeness, brutal strength and ruthless violence which vassals, subject races and oppressed females recognise as the manly virtues of their lords and masters. The conquering Goths and Vandals became the possessors of all virtues, whereas the defeated Romans were branded as imbeciles.

Women and the oppressed people of the world will be saved a great deal of unnecessary disappointment, if they would know that the "justice" that is meted out to them is the justice dictated by the conquering man, be it within the confines of the household, or in the wider sphere of international adjustments. The conqueror is always applauded by his comrades. As for the people, they not only applaud him but bow down and take the dust of his feet, notwithstanding the fact that thousands of their brave sons were sacrificed to the appeasement of the ambition of their demigod. The vanquished, of course, call him names, but very soon the wounds get healed and they living under the *pax* established by the conqueror forget the old wrongs and, as slaves always do, kiss the hand that struck them down. Bards sing the praises of

the conqueror, calling him a mighty deliverer. Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane were mighty deliverers in their days. So was Alexander, the Macedonian, euphemistically called "the Great," and so was the little Corsican, who a century ago enslaved almost all the nations of the West. Now that the French people have fallen on evil days, the mighty Bonaparte to whose ambition the flower of French youth was sacrificed may, perhaps, be considered a mere adventurer. Herr Hitler is a demigod to eighty million people of the Germanic race. Recently in one of his utterances the Fuehrer boasted that two hundred million people were behind him. If the gods whom he worships were to bless his arms and lead him to world domination, his gods will become the true gods. History is quite definite on this point. The "realistic" people all over the world will join in calling Herr Hitler a "good boy." Bards will sing pæans in praise of the mighty deliverer. Of course, the rebels of the world, ordinarily known as "advanced thinkers" being too poor in worldly goods to sustain any appreciable loss by standing against established authority, may refrain from joining the universal chorus.

Humanity in its madness may sing pæans in praise of its conquerors, but the painful side of the picture is that humanity, at the same time, spurns and spits on the face of the poor unfortunate victim lying crushed under the heels of the conqueror, "*Vae victis*," woe to the vanquished, appears to be one of the established doctrines guiding humanity in its footsteps. The fallen victim is forcibly deprived of his arms, his hands get withered and he is kicked again for his weakness and inability to bear weapons. The conqueror to ease his conscience, if he happens to have any, insults the poor victim by attributing to him cowardice, moral turpitude and a host of other sins. The conqueror's cunning, treachery and cold-blooded ruthlessness assume the shape of superior wisdom, diplomacy and success in arms. The recorded history of the human race extends to about sixty centuries, that is about two hundred generations. This period is, of course, a mere nothing in comparison to the time taken by the race to evolve from its animal ancestors. Perhaps the race has to go through some more tribulations in order to understand that empires rise and fall and Truth alone persists.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OR THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH. BY M. K. GANDHI. TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL IN GUJARATI BY MAHADEV DESAI. Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad. Second Edition, May, 1940. Pp. 636. Price Rupees Four.

The English-reading public in India will be very thankful to the publishers for the service they have rendered in bringing out this one-volume cheap edition of Mahatmaji's Autobiography. We understand that the original in Gujarati, priced at Re. 1/- has run through five editions and that nearly fifty thousand copies have been sold. The first edition of the English translation was issued in two volumes as a library edition. The price was prohibitive for the average Indian reader and hence arose the necessity for this cheap edition. The merits of the book have been universally acknowledged. From the point of view of language, the second edition goes a little ahead of the first, for it had the benefit of a careful revision by an eminent English scholar. Reading through the pages of this fascinatingly interesting human document, one finds that Mahatma Gandhi closely resembles the Sage Thiruvalluvar of ancient Tamil-land, the reputed author of Thirukkural in being a teacher (not only in the religious but also in the educational sense), a true philosopher, a mystic-seer, a lover of little children, an affectionate husband, a man of disciplined habits, a staunch devotee of God and of the Sages, a wise administrator and above all an ardent votary of Truth. We are forced to draw the attention of the publishers to what we consider as one blemish in the book. The footnote on page 292 is evidently meant to make amends for an error of judgment committed in the first edition. As every reader of *My Experiments with Truth* may not be expected to have access to a copy of a certain issue of *Young India* published thirteen years ago, the purpose of the footnote would have been better served, if the gist of the note in *Young India* had been incorporated in the footnote, or better still if the offending passage had been altogether deleted from the text of the book.

THE INDUCTIVE CONCEPTION OF LIFE. BY PROFESSOR ENZO LOLLI. TRANSLATED BY H. E. KENNEDY, B.A. Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pp. 126. Price 4 s. 6 d.

The Translator in his preface says, "The author's doctrine was presented to the public for the first time in the Italian *"Rivista di Filosofia"* in an article entitled *"Introduzione a uno studio sull' induzione neurica"* (Introduction to a Study of Neural Induction), and later in the volume *"Il mondo como induzione neurica"* (The World as Neural Induction). The present work is a development of one particular aspect of the author's theory concerning the problem of life. If it seems to some that the development of the theory is here incomplete, it may be said this is due to the fact that the author was anxious to render his work sufficiently popular to appeal to the generality of readers. The scope of the doctrine which the author has taken up for exposition may be seen from his words: "According to the inductive conception of life, life, thought, the purest forms of spirituality like the most earthly forms of pleasure, come to us from on High, by means of a series of refractions, combinations and interventions. The river which flows continually from a source beyond time and space, is what vivifies us, relieves us of our miseries and gives us the sublime hope that there is an aim at the end of our efforts, a goal possible of attainment, in spite of the toil-some, rough, dark journey, with its frequent struggles which we have to face—a goal which becomes the more beautiful and the sweeter, the harder the road." The author bases his theory upon some fundamental facts of biology and attempts an explanation of the nature of life and its manifestation in living beings. The relationship between the individual life and the life of the All is compared to an induced current in a closed coil and the electric circuit that sets up the induction. The book is translated in a clear and lucid style and contains many interesting conclusions.

THE TWOFOLD PATH IN THE GITA. BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, M.A., PH.D.

Published by Swami Nityananda, Sri Suka Ashram, Kalahasti. Can be had of Sri Satchidananda Sangha, 44, Nagappier Street, Triplicane, Madras. Pp. 34. Price Two annas in postal stamps.

In this booklet Dr. Mahadevan has presented to us the substance of the main theme of Shankara's Gita Bhâshya. Shankara has pointed out, in his characteristically logical and illuminating way, that the Gita teaches two separate paths to two separate kinds of persons, leading to different goals, and that the Gita does not advocate the combination of Jnâna and Vedic Karma simultaneously in the same person. A distinction is made between Karma Marga or works done for selfish ends and Karma Yoga or the path of work without desire for fruits. The Gita emphasizes the performance of Karma Yoga as a preliminary to the attainment of Jnana through which alone Mukti is possible. Thus the Gita places before everyone the highest ideal of life and clearly enunciates the easiest path to it. We commend this brochure to our readers.

HINDI

SRI RAMACHARITAMANASA. BY SRIMAD GOSWAMI TULSIDAS. *Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pp. 648. Price 8 As.*

The Ramacharitamanasa occupies a unique place in Hindi literature. Its popularity is ever on the increase since it was written over three hundred years ago. It is doubtful if there is any other book in any Indian vernaculars which enjoys such a wide and universal popularity. Its literary excellence, sweet expressions and devotional fervour have secured a permanent place for it in the heart of the Hindi-speaking public.

The Gita Press has earned the gratitude of the public by bringing out this pocket-

size chief edition of the Ramacharitamanasa which may be availed of by all. The printing and get-up are quite nice.

PRACHIN BHAKTA. EDITED BY HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR. *Published by the Gita Press. Pp. 152. Price 8 As.*

This embodies the life-stories of fifteen devotees collected from some of the famous Puranas of the Hindus. Though short the narratives are quite interesting and inspiring and may be read with much benefit.

PREMI BHAKTA UDDHAVA. BY SANTANUBEHARI DVIVEDI. *Published by the Gita Press. Pp. 62. Price 3 As.*

This gives a short but beautiful account of the life of Uddhava as found in the Srimad Bhagavata and the Gargasamhita. The divine love of Sri Radha has also been incidentally described. A short substance of the famous dialogue between Sri Krishna and Uddhava as recorded in the Srimad Bhagavata is given in the last chapter of the book.

DÂI HAZÂR ANMOL BOL. COMPILED BY HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR. *Published by the Gita Press. Pp. 345. Price 10 As.*

This contains two thousand and five hundred sayings of holy men of all countries and nations. A perusal of the book brings home the fact that great people of all countries think in identical terms and no nation or religion on earth can lay exclusive claim on truth. A mention of the names of the great Teachers below their sayings would be very welcome.

SANSKRIT

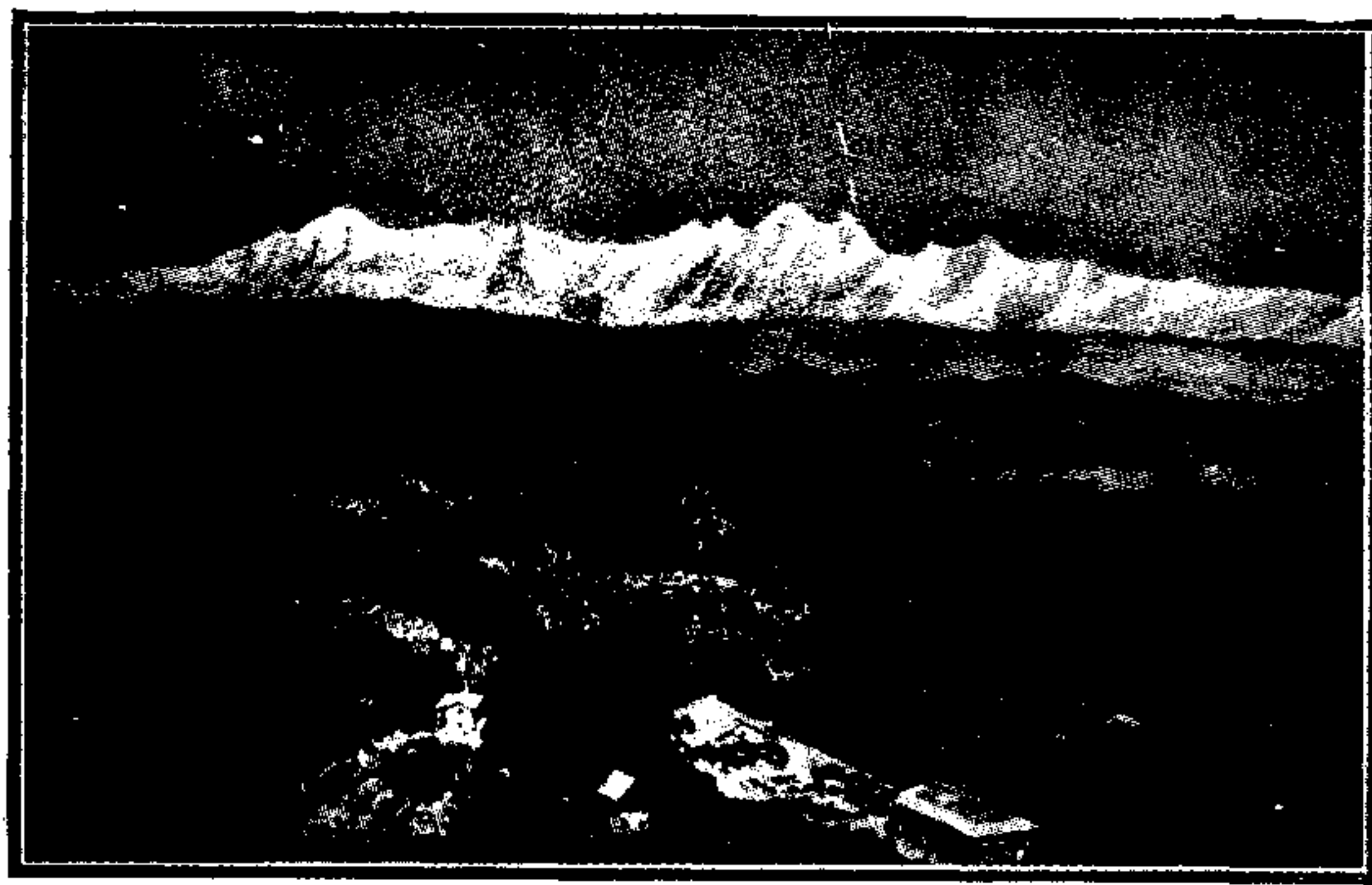
SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA. SANSKRIT TEXT AND COMMENTARY. PART III—CHAPTERS 7 TO 9. BY SWAMI SIVANANDA. *Published by the Divine Life Society, Rikhikesh. Pp. 104. For free distribution.*

This gives the original sanskrit text, a word for word meaning and a running translation in English with notes which will prove helpful to many.

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, REPORT FOR 1939

The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati was started by Swami Vivekananda—far away in the interior of the Himalayas—to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the Highest Truth in life. The



ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI

Ashrama has not been, however, out of touch with life and society. It has got a publication department, which has brought out quite a volume of religious literature; it has been publishing the *Prabuddha Bharata*, a high class monthly journal in English, dealing with Vedanta and different problems of Indian national life; and now and then it sends out preachers to different places in India and abroad. It has got also a dispensary forming a part of its activities.

The Mayavati Charitable Dispensary came into being as a sheer necessity—in fulfilment of the local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that even the stoniest of hearts will be moved to do something for them. The regular dispensary was opened in 1903. Since then it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from a distance of even 30 or 40 miles.

The dispensary stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is in

charge of a monastic member qualified for the task. He has sometimes to go out to call on patients who cannot come to the hospital. Last year a medical graduate was appointed to increase the efficiency of the work. Service is done in a spirit of worship, and as such irrespective of caste or creed. The efficiency with which the work is done has elicited admiration from one and all. Especially medical persons having the practical knowledge of running a hospital have appreciated the management of the institution situated in such a distant corner of the Himalayas.

In the hospital there are 12 beds. But for six months of the year we have to make arrangements for about 20 indoor patients—there is so great a rush for admission.

The operation room is fitted with most up-to-date equipments and as such almost all kinds of operation can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area. This year some serious major operations were successfully done.

We have also got a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Now almost all kinds of medical help that one can expect in a city are available here.



MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY

Arrangements have been made also for the amusement and recreation of the patients by buying a gramophone.

The total number of patients relieved during the year at the Outdoor Dispensary was 15,166, of which 10,812 were new cases and 4,354 repeated cases. Of these new cases 4,243 were men, 2,404 women and 4,165 children. In the Indoor Hospital the total number treated was 273 of which 216 were cured and discharged, 7 were discharged otherwise, 44 were relieved, 6 died. Of these 158 were men, 68 women, and 47 children.

We cordially thank all our donors, who by their continued support have made it possible for us to carry on this humanitarian work in such an out-of-the-way place. And we hope we shall receive from them such support and help even in future.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA,

President, Advaita Ashrama,

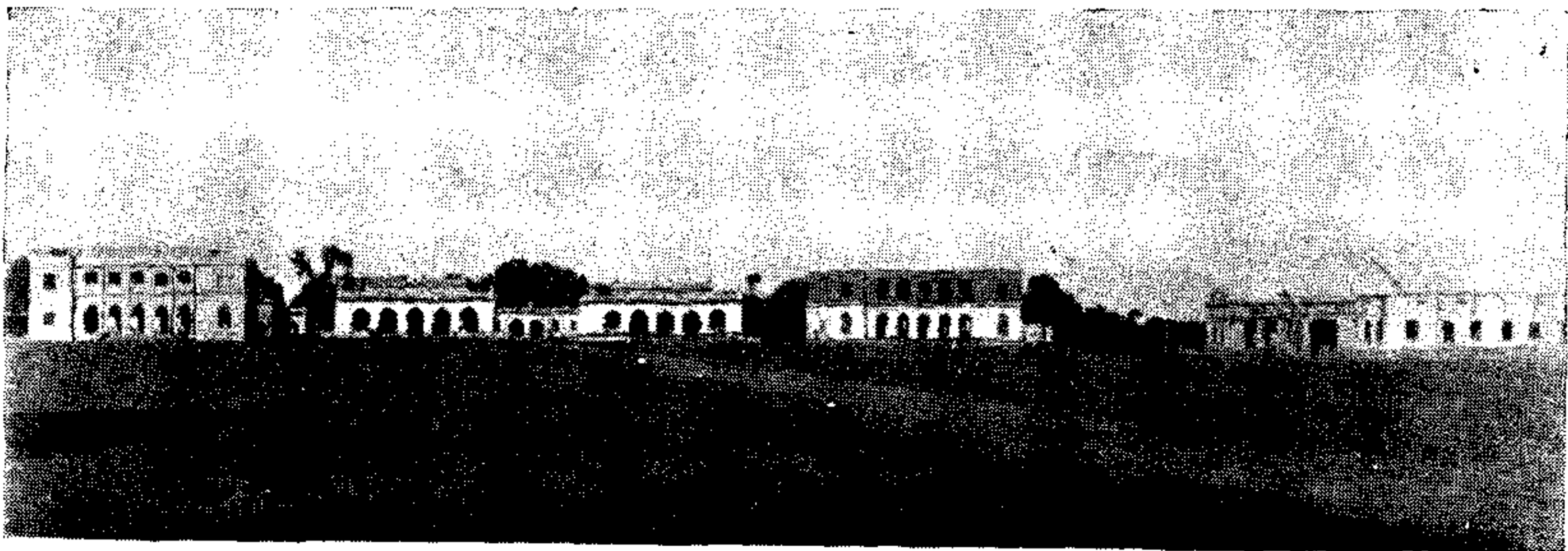
P. O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U. P.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

This is a residential High School run on the ancient Brahmacharya line. The report for 1939 gives an account of its activities. The number of students during the year was 151. Out of 18 workers in the teaching staff 12 were graduates and the rest undergraduates. Many of them were Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Ramakrishna Order. All the seven students in class X were sent up and all of them passed. One of the boys secured more than 80% marks in history. Classes in typewriting and gardening continued as before. The

senior and junior boys through which they managed by themselves some of their own affairs. The Debating Society of the boys held debates and discussions on various topics of interest. The annual number of the boys' magazine, the 'Vidyapith' was duly published.

The dispensary of the Vidyapith, besides attending to the students, treated 4,603 outdoor cases during the year. Minor surgical cases numbering more than 700 were also successfully treated. The library contained 3,800 books and the reading room was furnished with a number of newspapers and



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

boys were taking physical exercise in the morning and playing outdoor games in the evening. The boys went out on excursions from time to time to places of various interests. Students were trained in military drills and in the hardy and disciplined life of military campers. The health of the boys was very satisfactory throughout the year. There were two "Boys' Courts" for the

magazines. The kitchen-garden supplied in abundance fresh vegetables for a part of the year. The flower garden provided a training ground for the boys. The dairy yielded on an average more than a maund of milk daily. Electric light was installed in the buildings during the year.

Present needs : (1) Rs. 10,000 for construction of a dormitory. (2) Rs. 25,000 for a

shrine and prayer hall. (3) Rs. 10,000 for erecting a building for the library and reading room. (4) Rs. 5,000 for a water reservoir and electric pump with the necessary outfit. (5) Endowments for the maintenance for poor

students. Rs. 5,000 for each boy. (6) A fund of Rs. 10,000 for the maintenance of teachers with special qualifications. (7) A fund of Rs. 10,000 for the improvement and upkeep of the vocational department.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, BELUR MATH

The Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary at the Belur Math was started in the year 1918 ; since then it has been carrying on its beneficent activities with ever increasing popularity and efficiency. The Dispensary is now located in its own permanent building with a surgical theatre attached to it.

81,652 cases were treated in the Dispensary in the year 1939. The number of new cases

was 16,152, of which 1,741 were surgical. In cases of need, patients were helped with diet, clothes and blankets. Serious cases were promptly referred to the best hospitals and urgent cases were attended to even at night.

The Dispensary has incurred a loan of Rs. 882-3-3 for the completion of its present building and is badly in need of equipments and funds for meeting the recurring expenses.

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO, U.S.A.

Under the leadership of Swami Ashokananda the activities of the Society have maintained their progress. In June last he delivered two lectures every week—at 11 a.m., Sunday and 7-45 p.m., Wednesday—

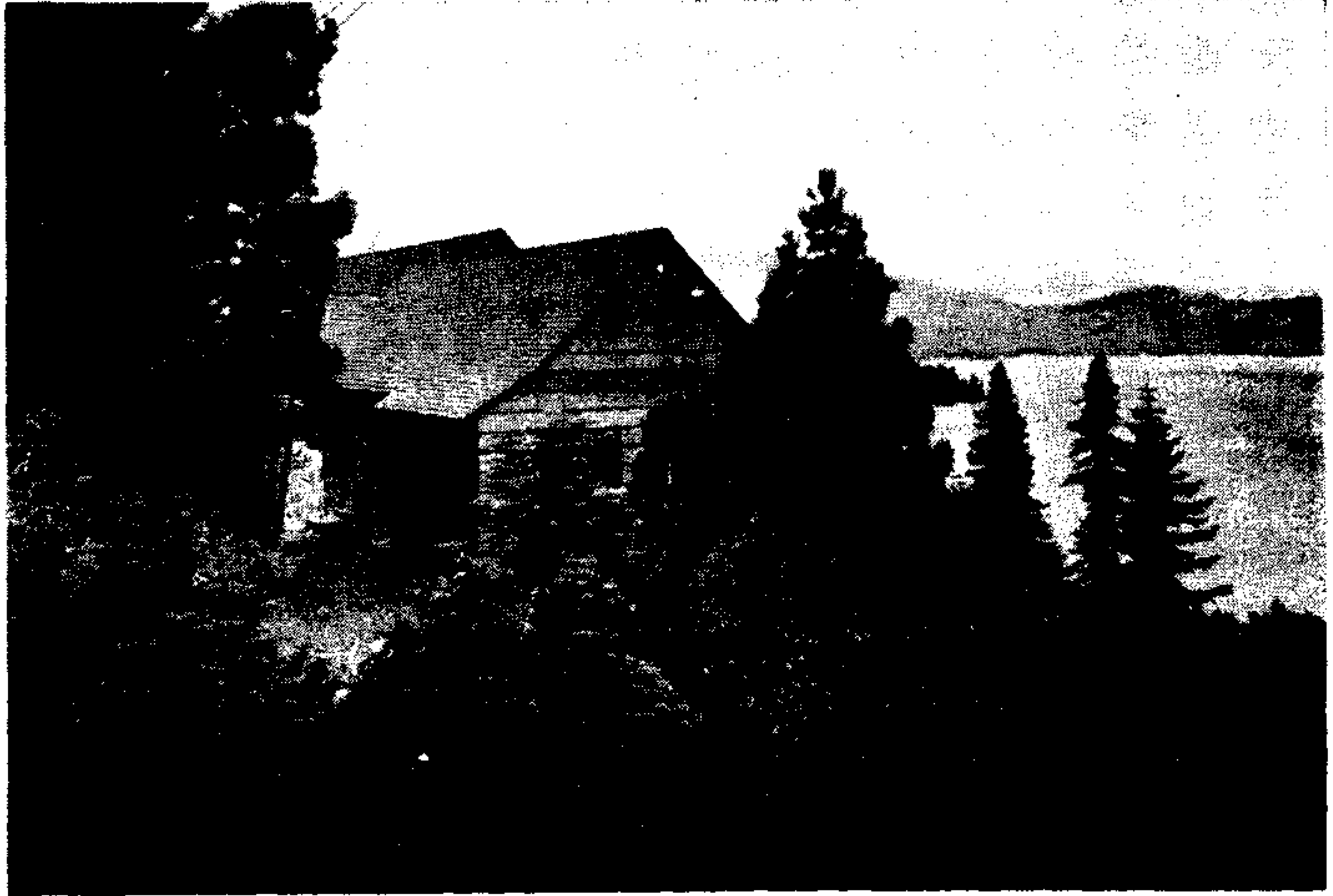
in which he explained the general principles of Vedanta and other cognate subjects. The Sunday morning lectures were given in the Century Club Building, 1355, Franklin Street, and the Wednesday evening lectures



LAKE TAHOE ASHRAMA, LAKE FROM THE PORCH LOOKING EAST

in the Auditorium of the Vedanta Society at 2963, Webster Street.

Besides, the Swami held a class every Friday evening at 7:45 in the Vedanta Society Auditorium, in which he conducted a short meditation and explained the Vedanta Philosophy in greater details both in its theoretical and practical aspects—while expounding the Bhagavad-Gita. The class and lectures were open to all. The subjects for the month were as follows:—"Proofs of Immortality", "The Law of Karma: Can we Destroy the Evils in Our Past?", "The Practice of Peace", "How to Contemplate on God", "The Divine Word Om", "The Teachings of Buddha", "Spiritual Visions: How to Attain Them", "God and His Relationships with the Souls and the World", "Masters, Visible and Invisible."



LAKE TAHOE ASHRAMA, VIEW FROM REAR LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

While a general idea of Vedanta can be had from the lectures and classes, many points may still remain unexplained. A greater satisfaction is possible through a personal interview with the Swami, who is always glad to meet those who may desire to know more of Vedanta or discuss their spiritual problems with him.

The Swami considers practical instruction the most important part of his activity and is glad to give practical instruction for spiritual development of those who want it.

Any one who accepts the principles of Vedanta may become a member of the Society with the approval of the Swami. Those who receive practical instruction from the Swami are expected to become members of the Society.



LAKE TAHOE ASHRAMA, FROM SOUTH-WEST

The Library is open every evening from 8 to 10, except Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, and every Saturday afternoon from 2 to 5. All are welcome to use the books in the Library, but only members of the Society are permitted to borrow them. Books may be returned and borrowed after

lecture and class Wednesday and Friday evenings.

The new Ashrama for the use of the Swami was built on Lake Tahoe, a beautiful, secluded region of the Sierra Nevada Range, about 150 miles to the North-East of San Francisco.

VIZAGAPATAM

The work of the Mission at Vizagapatam is slowly gaining ground. Swami Nisreyas-ananda is at present staying in a house given free of rent by a Professor of the Medical College. Friends have gathered round him in fairly large numbers. In addition to weekly lectures, he conducts regular Upanishad classes in the morning. On invitation he also goes to important towns

of the neighbouring districts. Steps are being taken to erect a permanent building for the Ashrama. The Madras Government has sanctioned the alienation of 1½ acres of vacant land near the beach. As was reported in the Prabuddha Bharata of July, Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji laid the foundation-stone of the Ashrama building on May 5th.

THE SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL AND SARADA MANDIR

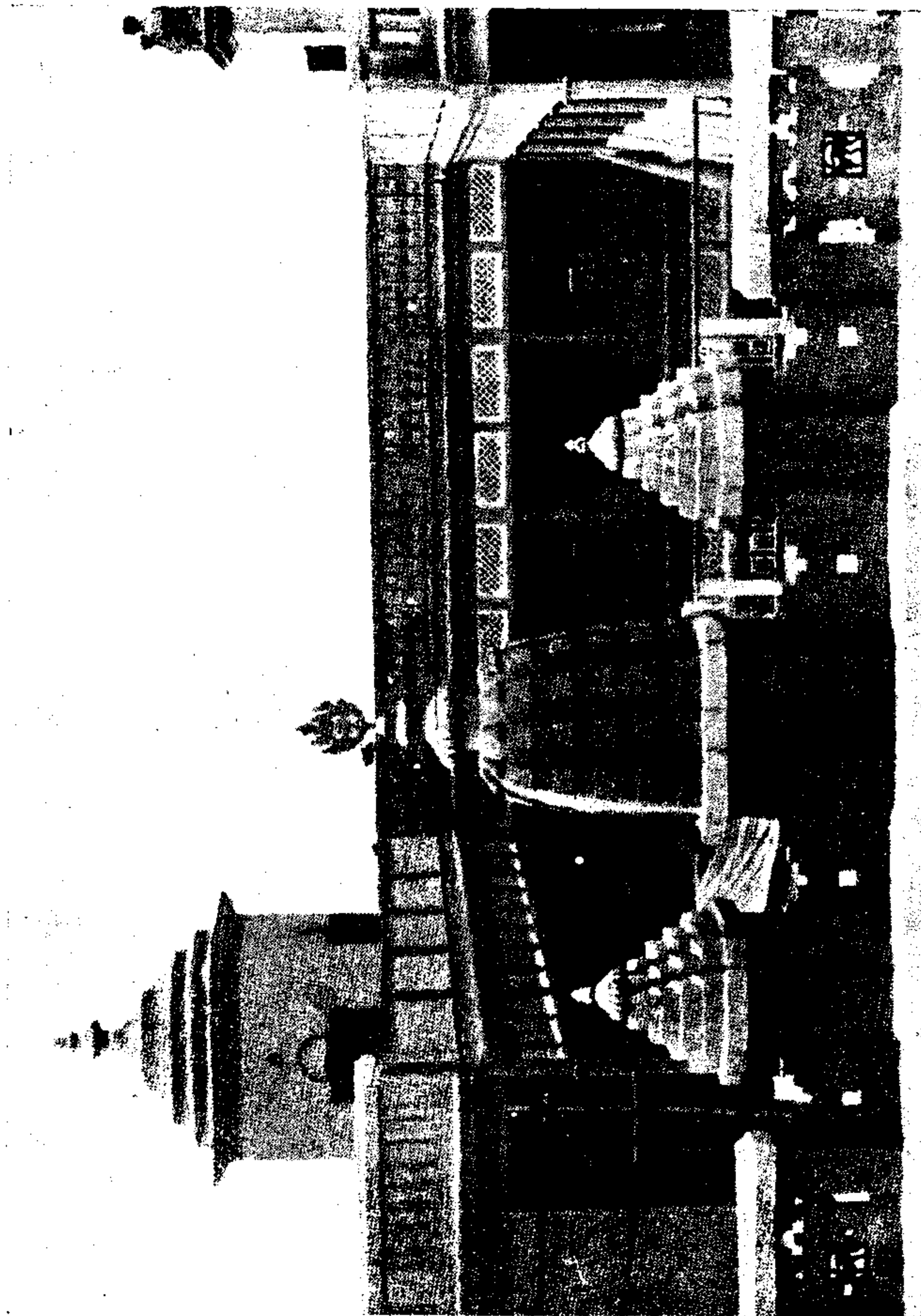
The school was founded in the year 1898 by Sister Nivedita under the direct inspiration of Swami Vivekananda. The aim of the institution is to train girl students in such a way that they may be able to solve their own problems and imbibe the true ideal of Indian womanhood in their lives. The report for the years from 1930 to 1939 presents a short account of its activities during the last ten years.

The school does not charge any tuition fee from the students. It teaches up to the Matriculation standard and has twenty lady teachers on its staff. There were 601 students in the school in 1939 as compared with 351 in 1930. Ten students passed the Matriculation Examination in 1939.

The kindergarten method is followed in the Infant Classes. It is from Class III that students actually begin books. Along with Bengali, English, Mathematics, History, Geography and Science, are taught sewing, needlework, knitting, drawing and rules of hygiene. The special feature of the curriculum is that the study of Sanskrit is compulsory from Class VI to X. The school is equipped with the scientific appliances required by the present curriculum of the Calcutta University. The library of the school contains 2445 books. The school possesses physiological charts, a magic lantern and a telescope. A special section



SISTER NIVEDITA



SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL AND SARADA MANDIR, CALCUTTA

for music and another for oriental painting were started but could not be continued for want of funds.

The Sarada Mandir is a Home for Brahmacharinis, who dedicate their lives to the cause of women's education. It also serves as a boarding-house for students of the school. A few college students also are admitted in it. There were 47 inmates during the year 1939. The girl students in the Mandir receive, under the fostering care of the inmate Sisters, training, congenial to Indian culture and traditions. They have to perform by turn all household duties. A chapel affords the girls an opportunity for performing religious exercises. Two of the inmates passed the B.A. Exami-

nation and four, the I.A. Examination during the period from 1932 to 1939.

Present needs are: (1) donations and subscriptions to meet the current expenses of the institution; (2) funds to procure land for a playground for girls; (3) funds for replacing the old school bus by a new one; (4) funds to revive the music and oriental painting sections; (5) funds to procure land in a secluded area in the suburbs of Calcutta where the inmates of the Sarada Mandir may occasionally retire for a contemplative life, and where the students of the school also may go during vacations and do intensive farming by way of planting vegetables and flowers.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, CALCUTTA

The Students' Home is situated in a suburban retreat on Sir Romesh Mitter Road, Dum-Dum. It is especially meant for needy meritorious college boys. They get here an opportunity of receiving secular as well as spiritual education, under the care and guidance of Hindu Sannyasins so that they may become real men, efficient and willing to rehabilitate their own families and

Intermediate Examination, of whom five were placed in the first division and one in the second division. One student passed the P.Sc., M.B. and another the 1st M. B. examination.

The Students' Home is in every respect an ideal institution for the training of our young generation and should attract the attention of all well-wishers of the nation.



R. K. MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, CALCUTTA

also to do their best towards the uplift of the country.

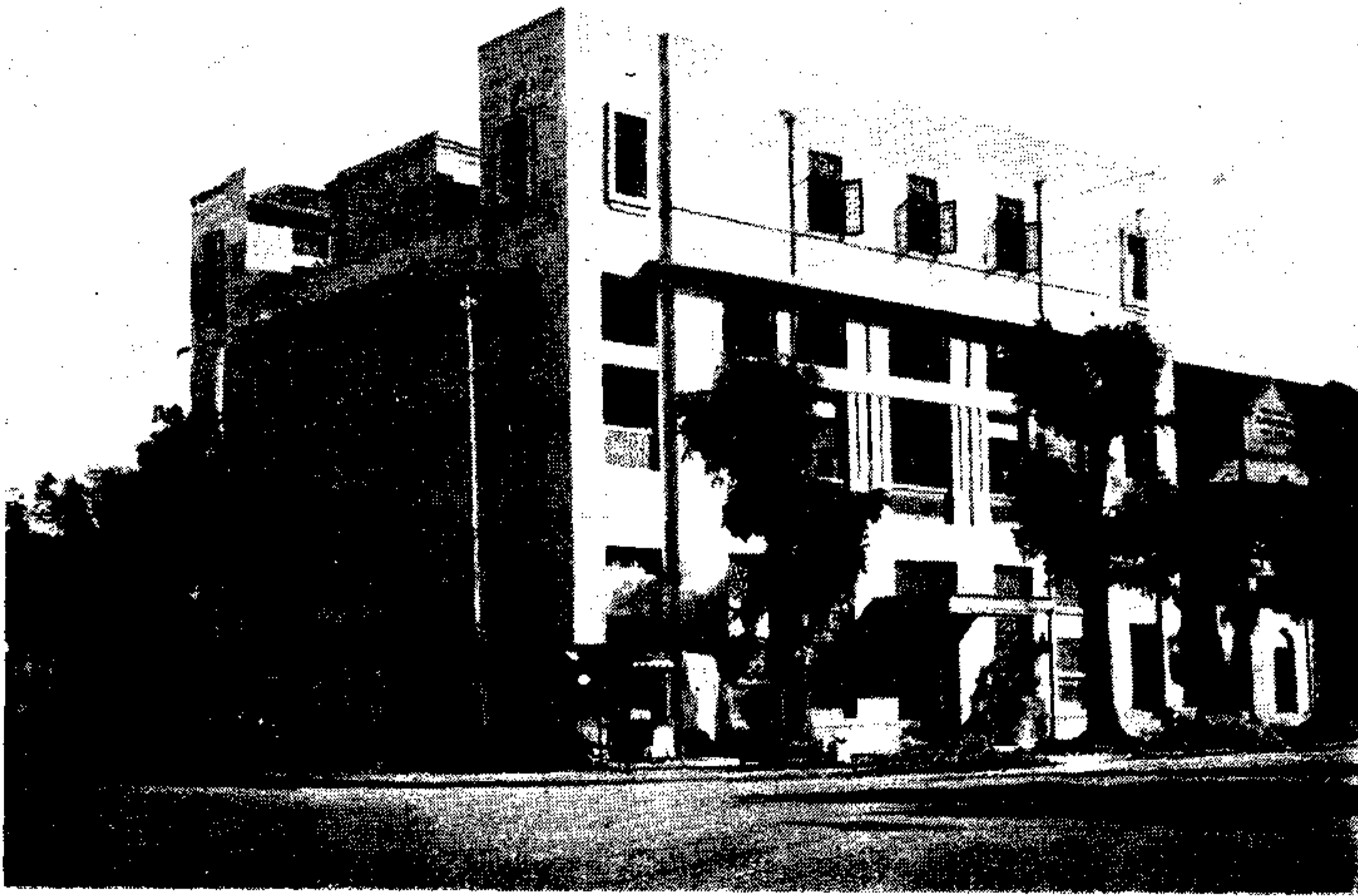
At the end of the year 1939, there were 44 students in the Home, of whom 25 were free, 9 concession-holders and ten paying. Eight students sat for the Degree Examination in 1939; of these three got honours, one passed with distinction and three in the pass course. Seven students sat for the

The authorities of the Home send their earnest appeal to the generous public to serve the cause of education in the country by helping the institution financially in the form of regular subscriptions and donations. An endowment of Rs. 5,000/- that will go to maintain and educate one free student at a time, may be made in the memory of any of the donor's relatives or friends.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SOCIETY, RANGOON

The opening of the newly erected three-storied building of the Society was performed on 31st January last. The building is situated at 230-32, Thompson Street, corner of Bigandet Street. The ground floor is a large and well-furnished Lecture Hall, and the top floor contains a shrine, a Prayer Hall and quarters for monastic

many as 156 papers and periodicals—monthlies, weeklies and dailies—in English, Burmese, and almost all the principal Indian languages. In 1939 the Library had 865 regular borrowers, and the average daily attendance at the Reading Room was 100. The Society also conducts a Tamil Ladies' Library, which contains 1,312 volumes. The



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SOCIETY, RANGOON

workers. Since its opening the activity of the Society has rapidly increased. The Free Reading Room and Library conducted by it have grown in popularity and size, and they supply a vital need of the City of Rangoon in the sphere of intellectual and moral education. The General Library contains a representative collection of 6,850 volumes, and the Reading Room receives as

total number of borrowers in this section in 1939 was 208.

Regular classes and occasional lectures on the Upanishads, Gita, Bhagavata and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were held by the monastic members of the Mission. The society also arranged a fortnightly class for the moral and religious instruction of the "B" class prisoners of the Insein Jail.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA, COIMBATORE DT., SOUTH INDIA

The report of the Vidyalaya for the year 1939-40 is a record of its progress and development in various directions. The Vidyalaya was started ten years ago with the object of imparting an education which would make our boys strong in body and mind and develop in them a healthy spirit to serve the country and the nation. One of the main features of the institution consists in fact that the boys take a large share in the general management of the

school and the boarding. They also manage their own store on co-operative lines.

Eight boys appeared for the S. S. L. C. Examination of whom seven came out successful. A scheme has been framed for advancing money to the old boys of the school for professional education. They are to pay back the amount within ten years of their beginning to earn. Some of the boys have gone to qualify themselves as Tamil Pandits, some for automobile engineer-

ing, some for fine arts and some for shorthand, typewriting or cultivation.

About two hours and a half were given every day for the teaching of crafts and about three hours for other subjects. Takli Yagnam was continued. On all school days there was spinning on Takli for twenty-five minutes.

The health of the children was carefully looked after. There were arrangements for various games. Scope was provided for the development of special talents. Occasional excursions were undertaken. Hindi

was taught in the first three forms. A Tamil quarterly magazine was conducted. Competitions in short stories, essays, poetas and elocution were held to create an interest among the boys for the study of Tamil literature. A summer school was organized to propagate the basic ideas of the Wardha Method of education.

Present needs : 1. Rs. 25,000 for a temple and a library. 2. Rs. 10,000 for a good workshop. 3. Rs. 5,000 for a gymnasium. 4. Rs. 3,000 for a guest house.

MAURITIUS

Swami Ghanananda, since his arrival in the Island, has delivered a number of impressive lectures both in English and Tamil, which have been responsible in bringing about a cultural and religious awakening among the people. He has been speaking twice a week on an average and conducting congregational prayers and occasional conversaciones.

As a result of the enthusiasm created among the people, 12 new night schools with 450 pupils and adults in them have sprung up in different parts of the Island and several more are springing up. Parents' Committees and a Parents' Association have been formed with a view to discussing the ways and means by which the Indian languages may be kept alive, and helping the Government in taking measures to introduce the teaching of these languages in the schools of the Colony. As a result of the stimulus given to the study and dissemination of Tamil through preaching and advice by the Swami, a few Mauritians started the first Tamil monthly in the Island on the Tamil New Year's Day. A memorandum for the incorporation of Hindu temples into a trust and the recognition of

Hinduism and Hindu marriages has been submitted to the Government by representative Indians. The chief need of the people is cultural, religious and social, and it is to be hoped that with the kindness and co-operation of the Government, the steps taken would result in an all-round awakening amongst the Mauritians.

The birthday anniversaries of Sri Rainakrishna Deva and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated at Port Louis, Rose-Hill and Rose-Belle. Poojas, public meetings, feeding of the poor, and processions formed the features of the celebrations. The total attendance at the celebrations, Poojas and meetings at Port Louis was 2,300, and the procession at Rose-Hill was attended by a thousand. More than 3,200 Daridranarayanas were fed at Port Louis, Rose-Hill and Rose-Belle.

There is a library and reading room at Port Louis where the Swami resides. The first of a series of Prayer books with prayers in Sanskrit and meaning in Hindi and Tamil has been brought out for use in temple congregations and schools.

A centre is likely to be started in the near future.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAMANDIRA AT BELUR MATH

To-day the feeling is widespread that the system of education which is in vogue in India has failed not only to educate our young people on national lines but also to meet the peculiar needs of the hour and to provide a general basis of sound living. Its effects are visible to-day in the vast army of the unemployed youth menacing the social structure of the nation. Educa-

tion has not prepared them for the hard battle of life, has not endowed them with qualities of fortitude, sacrifice, and leadership. Without employment, because there is a glut in the clerical services, they stare helplessly at the future.

Swami Vivekananda, who long ago saw the devastating effects of this system of education, foreshadowed the founding of a

national university with a view to educating the youth of our country on the lines of the ancient Gurukula. The aim of education, he felt, should be no mere instruction in the humanities or accumulation of a vast quantity of academic information. It must shape an irresistible will, impart strength to the muscles and develop qualities of leadership and produce young men who will walk with a resolute gait— independent in thought and bold in action. But his untimely passing away prevented an early fulfilment of his desire.

It is, therefore, imperative that a start should be made somewhere to remedy the evils.

After much serious thought the authorities of the Mission have decided to make a definite move to realize the desire of Swami Vivekananda for establishing a Vidyamandira at the Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, having religion as its pivot and combining Eastern culture and Western practicality. They hope that from modest beginnings a mighty system best suited to the needs of the country may be evolved in course of time.

Broadly speaking the Vidyamandira will consist of three main sections—Arts, Science, and Industry. In the Arts section, in addition to the ordinary University curriculum, arrangements will be made for vocational training. Facilities will also be provided for study and research work in comparative religion, philosophy, art and culture, aided by a well-equipped library. It is also the aim to help students from different parts of India and abroad to study Indian culture under the guidance of competent scholars. It is further hoped to start in course of time a branch for the training of teachers for the propagation of the right type of education among the people.

The special feature of the Science section will be its laboratory which will in time be developed into a centre of research, partic-

ularly in relation to the industrial development of the country.

The Industrial section will have various departments and train up boys for independent careers in trading, manufacturing and industrial pursuits. The Mission has also in view the addition of an agricultural branch including dairy to this section.

The above is a bare outline of the vast scope that lies before the Vidyamandira, which in fullness of time will develop into a self-contained University containing branches and departments which it is too early to forecast.

The plan is now getting into shape. To make a beginning it is proposed to start in 1941 an Intermediate Arts College under the Calcutta University of a residential type. Part of the selected plot of land measuring nearly 17 acres has been purchased and the rest is being acquired. The College building and a hostel which will accommodate 100 students are under construction. Relying on the support of our countrymen we have ventured to launch the scheme with the small amount of money at our disposal. A sum of Rs. 50,000/- more will be immediately needed for the initial cost of land and buildings.

We need not emphasize the necessity of an institution of this type. It is, as stated above, the humble beginning of a great experiment and it will take its own time to yield any spectacular result. But a great deal of its success will depend on the hearty co-operation of our benevolent countrymen, specially those who feel the urgency of such an educational undertaking.

We feel no doubt that those who are deeply concerned with the proper education of our youths will generously contribute their quota towards making the scheme an accomplished fact.

Contributions, earmarked for the Vidyamandira, may kindly be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

MIDNAPUR FLOODS—RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S APPEAL

The public is aware of the terrible floods that have devastated large areas of the Midnapur District. The damage done to crops and property has been exceedingly great. Thousands of families are in a home-

less and desperate condition. They must be fed, clothed and provided with shelters without the least delay. Feeling the immediate need of relief, the Ramakrishna Mission, in spite of the extreme paucity of

its funds, has decided to open relief work in the Bhagavanpur Thana of the Contai Sub-Division, which is one of the worst affected areas. Arrangements have been made to send a batch of workers to organise the work. The first distribution of rice will be made as soon as the inspection is complete. Reports of the work will be published from time to time.

We sincerely hope that the benevolent public will come to the rescue of these thousands of homeless men, women and children, and assist us, as in previous years, in bringing this arduous task to a successful close. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged at the following addresses:

- (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission,
P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah ;
- (2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office,
Baghbazar, Calcutta ;
- (3) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama,
4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.

Sd./- SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission.

17th September, 1940.

FRONTISPIECE

The frontispiece was drawn by the noted artist S. Manindrabhusan Gupta, when he went to Kedarnath some years back. The illustration indicates the last climb of the pilgrims in their great journey to Kedarnath. The vast snowy peaks, almost

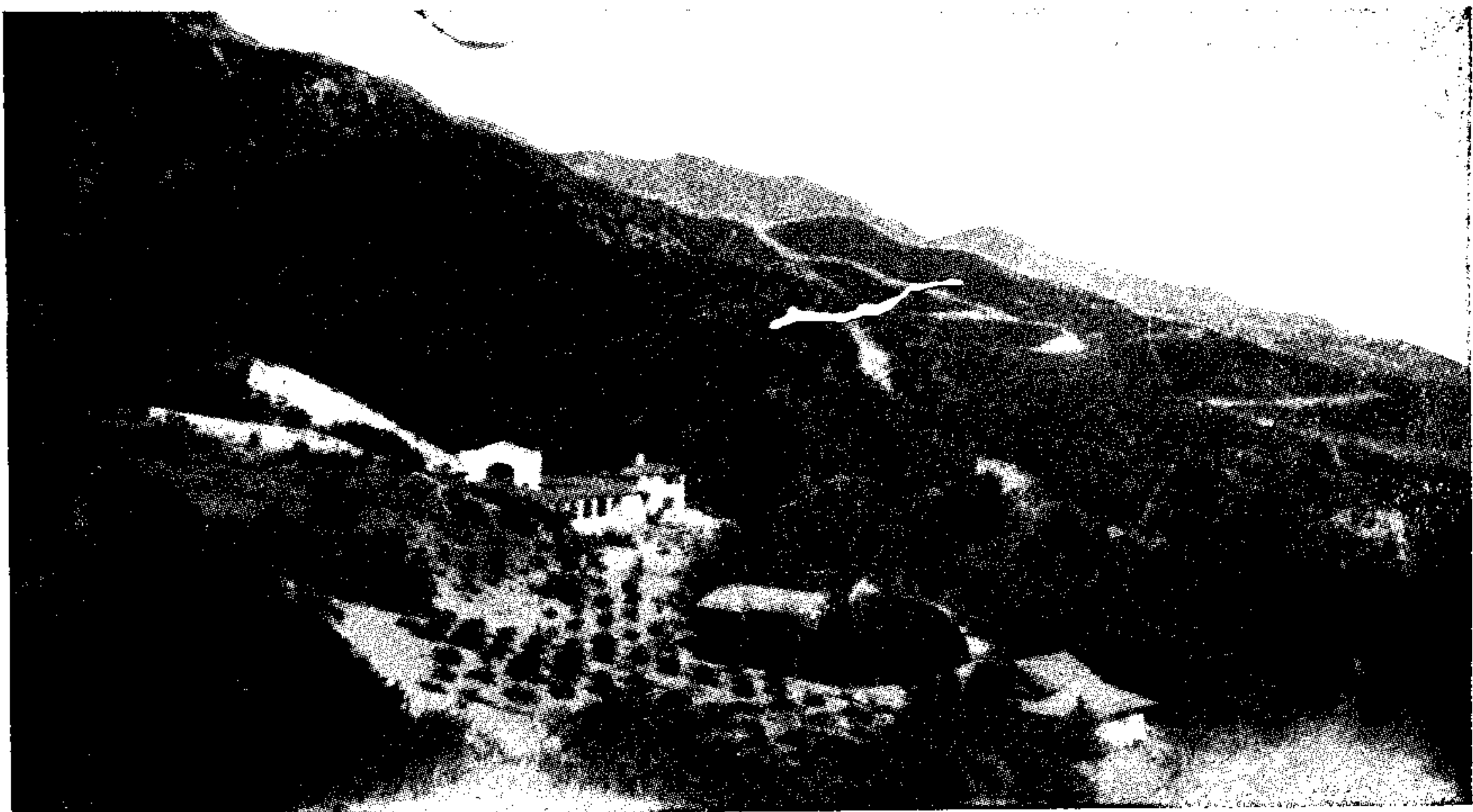
covering the northern sky, form the background of the holy temple. Pilgrims are passing through a level ground. Some have almost reached the temple ground, others are flushed with joy now that they are at their journey's end.



LAST CLIMB TO KEDARNATH



Swami Paramananda



**Ananda Ashrama (U.S.A.),
Founded by Swami Paramananda**