

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

Vol. XLVII

---

JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1942

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

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## TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By M.

Secret of divine communion—Master's respect for other faiths—Many names of one God—The sign of a Yogi—God and worldly duties—Duty towards family—Different levels of devotees.

August 13, 1882. The Master was in conversation with Kedar and other devotees in the temple garden. Kedar was a government official and had spent a number of years at Dacca, where he became a friend of Vijay Goswami. They used to spend a great part of their time together, talking about Sri Ramakrishna and his spiritual experiences. Kedar had been a member of the Brahmo Samaj. He followed the path of devotion. Spiritual talk always brought tears to his eyes. It was five o'clock in the afternoon. Kedar was very happy, having arranged a religious festival for Sri Ramakrishna that day. Ram had hired a singer, and the whole day passed in the midst of joy. The Master explained to them the secret of communion with God.

*Master* : ‘With the realization of Sachchidananda one goes into Samadhi. Then duties drop off. Suppose I have been talking about the Ostâd<sup>1</sup> and he arrives. What is the need of talking about him then? How long does the bee buzz about? So long it isn't sitting on the flower. But it won't do for the Sâdhaka to renounce duties. He should perform his duties, such as worship, Japa, meditation, prayer, pilgrimage, and so on.

‘If you see someone engaged in reasoning, even after the realization of God, you may liken him to a bee which buzzes, in a way, even while sipping honey from the flower.’

The Master was highly pleased with the Ostad's music. He said to the

<sup>1</sup> A teacher of music.

musician, 'There is a special manifestation of God's power in a man who has any outstanding gift, such as proficiency in music.'

*Musician* : 'Sir, what is the way to realize God?'

*Master* : 'Bhakti is the one essential thing. To be sure, God exists in all things. Who is a devotee then? He whose mind dwells on God. But this isn't possible as long as one has egotism and vanity. The water of God's grace cannot collect on the high mound of egotism. It rolls down. I am a mere machine.'

(To Kedar and other devotees) 'God can be realized through all paths. All religions are true. The important thing is to reach the roof. You can reach it by stone stairs, or by wooden stairs, or by bamboo steps, or by a rope. You can also climb up by a bamboo pole.'

'You may say that there are many errors and superstitions in another religion. I should reply, Let it be so. Every religion has errors. Everyone thinks that his own watch alone gives the correct time. It is enough to have yearning for God. It is enough to feel love and attraction for Him. Don't you know that God is the Inner Guide? He sees the attraction of our heart and the yearning of our soul. Suppose a man has several sons. The older boys address him distinctly as "Bâbâ" or "papa", but the babies can at best call him, "Ba" or "Pa". Now, will the father be angry with those who address him in this indistinct way? The father knows that they too are calling him, only they cannot utter the word well. All children are the same to the father.'

'Likewise, the devotees call only on God, though by different names. They call on one Person only. There are four ghats on one lake. The Hindus, drinking water at one ghat, call it "Jal". The Mussalmans, at another ghat, call it

"Pâni". The Englishmen, at a third, call it "water". And others, at a fourth, call it "aqua". God is one but His names are many.'

Thursday, August 24, 1882. It was almost dusk. The Master and M. stood talking alone near the door on the south-east verandah.

*Master* (to M.): 'The mind of the Yogi is always fixed on God, always absorbed in the Self. You can recognize such a man by merely looking at him. His eyes are wide open, with an aimless look, like the eyes of the mother bird hatching her eggs. Her entire mind is fixed on the eggs, and there is a vacant look in her eyes. Well, can you show me such a picture?'

*M.* : 'I shall try to get one.'

As evening came on, the different temples were lighted up. Sri Ramakrishna was seated on his small couch, meditating on the Divine Mother. Then he chanted the names of God. Incense was burned in the room, where an old lamp had been lighted. Sounds of conch shells and gongs came floating on the air as the evening worship began in the temple of Kali. The light of the moon flooded all the quarters. The Master again spoke to M.

*Master* : 'Do your work unattached to the world. The work Vidyasagar is engaged in is very good. Always try to do your duties in a detached spirit.'

*M.* : 'Yes, sir. But may I know if one can realize God while performing one's duties? Can "Rama" and "desires" coexist? The other day I read in a Hindi couplet, "Where Rama is, there desire cannot be; where desire is, there Rama cannot be."'

*Master* : 'All, without exception, perform work. Even to chant the name and glories of God is work, as is the meditation of the non-dualist on "I am He." Breathing is also an activity. There is no way of renouncing work

altogether. So do work, but surrender the result to God.'

*M.* : 'Sir, may I make an effort to earn more money?'

*Master* : 'It is permissible to do so to maintain a righteous family. You can try to increase your income, but in an honest way. The goal of life is not the earning of money, but the service of God. There is no stain on money if it is devoted to the service of God.'

*M.* : 'How long should one feel obliged to do one's duty towards the family?'

*Master* : 'As long as it feels pinched for food and clothing. But one need not take the responsibility of a son when he is able to support himself. When the young fledgling learns to pick its own food, it is pecked by the mother if it comes to her for food.'

*M.* : 'How long must one do one's duty?'

*Master* : 'The blossom drops off when the fruit appears. One doesn't have to do one's duty after the attainment of God, nor does one feel like doing it then.'

'If a drunkard takes too much liquor, then he can't retain his consciousness. If he takes only two or three glasses, he can go on with his work. As you advance nearer and nearer to God, He will reduce your activities little by little. Have no fear. The mother-in-law gradually reduces her daughter-in-law's work when the daughter-in-law is with child. Her activities cease altogether when she is about to be confined. After the birth of the child she is allowed only to take care of it.'

'Finish the few duties you have at hand, and then you will have peace. When the mistress of the house goes to bathe after finishing her cooking and

other duties, she won't come back however you may shout after her.'

*M.* : 'Sir, what is the meaning of the realization of God? What do you mean by God-vision? How does one attain it?'

*Master* : 'The Vaishnavas hold that those who are on the way to God and those who have realized Him may be divided into different levels. These are the Pravartaka, the Sadhaka, the Siddha, and the Siddha of the Siddha. He who has just set foot on the path may be called the Pravartaka, the beginner. He may be called a Sadhaka who has been practising spiritual discipline, such as worship, Japa, meditation, and the chanting of God's name and glories. He may be called a Siddha, a perfected soul, who has known from his inner experience that God exists. An analogy is given in the Vedanta to explain this. The master of the house is asleep in a dark room. Someone is groping in the dark to find him. He touches the couch and says, "No, it is not he." He touches the window and says, "No, it is not he." He touches the door and says, "No, it is not he." This is known in the Vedanta as the process of "Neti, Neti", "Not this, not this." At last his hand touches the master's body and he exclaims, "Here is he!" In other words, he is now conscious of the "existence" of the master, he has found him, but he doesn't know him intimately.'

'There is another type known as the Siddha of Siddha, the supremely perfect. It is quite a different stage when one talks to the master intimately through love and devotion. A Siddha has undoubtedly attained to God, but the "supremely perfect" has known God very intimately.'

# MUST INDIA ACCEPT SOCIALISM?

BY THE EDITOR

I am the food, I am the eater of the food, I join the food to its eater. . . . He who distributes food protects me. But he who does not do so is eaten by me.

—*Taittiriya Upanishad* III. x. 6.

## I

Some time back we were pleasantly surprised to hear from President Roosevelt that Bolshevist Russia is not altogether a godless country. 'It is significant', pointed out the Archbishop of Canterbury, 'that, on the outbreak of war thousands flocked to churches for prayer in Moscow and elsewhere.' And he added, '. . . it may well be that Russia's defence of its own land and the new unity which this will bring may lead to a new tolerance of religion by the Soviet Government and a new resurgence of the *interests of religion always deep-seated in the hearts of the Russian people.*' M. Lozovsky, the Russian spokesman, also confirmed this tolerance of religion and explained that the ~~difference~~ between other countries and Russia is that, while most countries mix up religion with the State, Russia separates the Church from the State, and education from the Church. President Roosevelt made the position clear in the following words: 'Well, I have not learned it (Article XII of the Constitution of Russia) by heart sufficiently to quote it. I might be a little bit off, but anyway freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom equally to use propaganda against religion, which essentially is the rule in this country (U.S.A.), only we do not put it quite the same way.' We are thankful to President Roosevelt for drawing pointed attention to this aspect of Bolshevist

life and we are obliged to the Archbishop for opening our eyes to the deep-seated religious tendencies of the Russian people. The Hindus believe that religion, or to use a better term spirituality, is an inalienable characteristic of a human being. At a time, therefore, when Hitler was strengthening his home-front by telling the Nazis that they were engaged in a holy crusade against heathens, we were relieved to hear that religion flourished in a Bolshevist country despite all the social, political, and economic changes effected there. In other words, Soviet Russia found no irreconcilable antagonism between religion and Bolshevism, though it is true, perhaps, that there is not much love lost between the two. Soviet Russia refuses to have any dealing with organized religion, or even religion as such, though it tolerates the different beliefs as purely individual affairs. It strikes one that this new attitude is the result of practical experience and is likely to change further for the better in future, as the Archbishop most reasonably expects.

Earlier theorists bent on the destruction of inequality, could hardly foresee such a situation. 'If God is,' thundered Bakunin 'man is a slave; now, man can and must be free; then, God does not exist.' For dethroning God from the hearts of men Bakunin argued: 'The idea of God implies the abdication of human reason and justice; it is the most decisive negation of human liberty, and necessarily ends in the enslavement



of mankind, both in theory and practice.' Recent history has proved that these sweeping remarks are the outcome of a perverted vision and a false evaluation of the different factors that build up the life of a nation.

The reasons advanced against religion by earlier thinkers may partially be true in so far as they are directed against any organized religion or any particular theology; but to arraign religion as such is to shoot too wide of the mark. Individual beliefs do not really stand much in the way of political or economic progress. It is when these beliefs are organized into a church that real trouble *may* arise. Catholicism came into conflict with European States because it had a mighty organization to back it up—an organization that had stepped out of its proper religious sphere and assumed the task of guiding the social and economic destinies of mighty empires. Some of the modern States, being aware of this inherent force of compact groups, have reacted variously towards organized religions. Turkey has separated religion from the State; but Nazi Germany has made religion the handmaid of the Reichstag. In the latter case, however, the blame attaches not to religion itself but to the political party that puts national aggrandizement before everything else. So far as a communist State is concerned, however, our task is made lighter by Russia's indifference to, or shall we say tolerance towards, religion. Will those Indian leaders who would banish religion in the interest of political progress, take a lesson from this?

The plain fact is that there is no necessary antagonism between religion and the State, as the socialists would have us believe, unless either the State chooses it otherwise or religious potentates want to enjoy power and pelf under the guise of spiritual leadership. That

love of power and wealth, we may point out, is the common weakness of human beings. Religion alone need not be blamed for it. The cure of religious maladies is more religion and not its total uprooting.

## II

But should religion be relegated to a secondary position for ever? Can it not be a more vital factor in human affairs without encroaching unnecessarily on the political, economic, and other fields of useful human activity? What answer has Hinduism to give to such a question? Hinduism makes a distinction between spirituality and religion, between the subjective and integral experience of truth and the creation of a proper atmosphere for such a realization, between the achievements of the few and the struggle of the many, and between the unity of the final vision and a graded preparation for the same. Social customs, codes of ethical conduct, methods of worship, and the study of scriptures may be called religion, but not spirituality; even beliefs are of secondary importance. Spirituality is intrinsically an individual affair. Hindus may be born in churches, but Hinduism consists in getting beyond them. But the scriptures hasten to show that, if the ultimate realization frees a man from all social obligations, he is not anti-social. Prior to this achievement his conduct had been chastened by following faithfully a code of morality; and after that achievement a Higher Power takes hold of him, and his life becomes a blessing to humanity. Thus there is no inherent conflict between Hindu spirituality and the State.

The Hindus go further and declare that it is such a spiritual realization that alone matters, and everything else in life should be a preparation for it. A society that does not actively help such

a consummation has failed in its true objective and cannot have a long life. It can have a hectic ill-balanced existence for a short period but it will soon break into pieces through its own inner conflict. A steady spiritual goal alone can inspire sustained social effort; while changing goals can only lead to makeshift arrangements. The Indian ideal prefers human values to the political and the social, and leaders of society must have vision enough to incorporate the thoughts of our seers into various social patterns. A steady goal, however, does not necessarily imply a static society. Hindu spirituality admits of new social adjustments to changed circumstances. It also recognizes differences of temperament and prescribes different spiritual paths for different people. Hindu unity is thus maintained through a variety of social customs. From a very early age the Hindus recognized that there might be different facets and degrees of the same truth; 'Truth is one, but sages call it by various names.' This catholicity settled once for all the disputes that might arise in the social field; and in spiritual matters it released men's hearts for a variety of experiences.

The distinction between spirituality and religion has got this advantage that society can be thought of in terms of changes although the spiritual outlook remains the same. As a matter of fact, history teaches us that the Indians never lacked in initiative and creative urge. Even so late as in the sixteenth century India struck wonder into the hearts of nations by her prosperity. Her social institutions were very elastic and possessed ample vitality. The fusion of races went apace. But streams of foreign invasion did not allow full play to the national genius. The nation was hard pressed to pay more attention to self-preservation.

Foreign political, social, and cultural aggression made a frightened generation take shelter in rigid laws and customs, which are still hampering our growth.

It is hardly true, therefore, to say that our political and economic backwardness is due to our spiritual outlook: on the contrary, there is lifelessness in our society because we are politically effete. Our spirituality advocates the greatest amount of activity in the relative plane of existence. The Hindus believe in the law of Karma—in the theory that we ourselves, individually and collectively, are responsible for what we are. Individually I am free to determine my future to the best of my ability, and collectively we are free to change our society through a united effort. The Chhandogya Upanishad declares that a man is what his determination would have him be. Nay, he can even become a Hiranyagarbha, the One identified with the Universal Mind. This Universal Mind again changes from time to time according to the Karma of the race. God measures out the results we deserve individually and collectively. A subsequent event is pre-determined in the sense that it has sufficient causes for its coming into effect. But these pre-existing conditions are greatly within our own control. We can plan our future if we only have the determination to do so. God creates everything according to pre-existing tendencies, i.e., according to the accumulated merit of the race. He is not a whimsical despot.

It is because of this element of change against a permanent background, that Vedic India changes into the Paurânic, the Pauranic into the classic, and the classic into the Smârta; and still the spiritual ideas and ideals remain identically the same. If socialism must

come to India, Vedanta will know how to make its voice heard in a new environment. Nay, to a Vedantist the ideal of equality and universal fellowship is very tempting indeed. But it has not been proved so far that Hindu religion is unequal to the task of man's all-round 'spiritual' unfoldment, nor has it been shown that it is too static to admit of necessary changes. There is hardly any need for it to yield place to a new philosophy of State. In fact Marxian dialectics are quite out of place here. Nor is a material interpretation of history necessary. Swami Vivekananda was conscious of the fact that empty stomachs and high spirituality go ill together and he insisted on raising the standard of life of the common people; for in more sense than one civilization is dependent on economic prosperity. The Hindu scriptures preach religion, material welfare, and aesthetics along with 'spirituality'. The Taittiriya Upanishad declares that *Anna* or food should be recognized as Brahman, and that such a knower of Brahman should increase his stock of food by every means, for himself and for others.

### III

The greatest appeal of socialism lies in its sympathy for the masses and in its call for an organized class-struggle for the amelioration of their hard lot. They ask: What has Hinduism done for its downtrodden masses? To all appearances the Hindu higher classes are as apathetic to the miseries of their co-religionists as the capitalists of other countries are to their masses. Nay, our critics argue, the conditions are still worse in India, since to an economic serfdom has been added a social oppression, the like of which is met with nowhere else. A rigid caste system, with untouchability and unapproachability as its corollaries, has

turned the poorer members of society into human brutes. To our shame we acknowledge that the criticism is substantially correct. But what is the remedy for this social malady? Our critics suggest that a religion that sanctions such inequity must be forthwith replaced by socialism, which will level down all inequalities. The remedy is worse than the disease and aims at killing the patient in order to make an end of its suffering. Before trying such a revolutionary change, we shall do well to examine our own institutions to see if they are inherently defective. Socialism is after all a theory, and before it can be acceptable it must disprove the utility of all other established theories. Its *modus operandi* has also to be thoroughly examined.

Is a class-struggle inevitable in every society irrespective of the ideals it stands for? Cannot a society be so ordered that clashes are minimized and still provision is made for individual development? The Advaita Vedanta teaches that all men are potentially equal, though it does not say that they are actually so at any particular moment. The potential divinity must be manifested before equality can be claimed. This attitude is quite in keeping with facts. Vedanta recognizes inevitable differences which socialists seem to overlook. Vedanta, however, is true to the socialist ideal since it provides ample scope for the development of the individual irrespective of his social position. An ultimate equality in place of present differences is what Vedanta teaches: a forced equality in spite of present inequality is what socialism stands for. In other words, Vedanta advocates a steady advance; while socialism, or to be more precise, the generally accepted form of it, stands for violent changes to be brought about by force, if necessary, and perpetuated

through a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Facts, however, disprove all these pet socialistic theories. In States that swear by various forms of socialism, ideal equality is conspicuous by its absence. Nor is an economic equality fully attained. As one writer points out: 'The (geographical and racial) contrasts in Russia extend, in spite of communism, to the people. The average wage in the factories is 200 roubles a month, but "shock workers"—piece workers—can earn much more and the experts as much as 10,000 roubles a month. The range is as big as in Britain, with the difference that direct taxation is small.' Social equality is equally absent. Communism and Nazism (National Socialism) and all other forms of socialism have to depend for their continuance on dictatorships. 'The governing class in a communist State has even more power than the capitalist class in a democratic State. So long as it retains the loyalty of the armed forces, it can use its power to obtain for itself advantages quite as harmful as those of capitalists. To suppose that it will always act for general good is mere foolish idealism, and is contrary to Marxian political philosophy. Communism restricts liberty, particularly intellectual liberty, more than any other system except Fascism. The complete unification of both economic and political power produces a terrifying engine of oppression, in which there are no loop-holes for exception' (Bertrand Russell). The so-called dictatorship of the proletariat is in reality a dictatorship of a clever coterie or at best a small but powerful minority who become an oligarchic governing class. History teaches that government is always carried on in the interest of the governing class. Socialism, in practice, miserably fails to attain its goal.

The change advocated by the socialists is not really a change from capitalism to socialism, for State capitalism may persist in a socialistic State. And there is no reason to suppose that such a socialistic State will not have an imperialistic outlook in international politics. Such a State may still persist in the exploitation of weaker nations abroad. Besides, the labourers there may have no real voice in the direction of affairs and may for all practical purposes be serfs of the State.

The real change that matters is not a change of institutions but a change of the relationship among the members of a society,—a change of heart as it were. Our real aim is an equality of treatment and opportunity and not merely an equality of possession and social status. The truth of this will be easily understood when we look at India. Take the huge figure of unemployment into consideration and then the appalling poverty. The effective wealth of the country is scarcely enough to remove all the wants of its teeming millions. There is scarcely enough to make even a considerable number of persons rich. An equal distribution of wealth under the present circumstances means a painful poverty for one and all, i.e., misery for a greater number. Scattered capital will hardly contribute to national regeneration and we shall perforce be driven to State socialism, which can hardly satisfy the pure theorist. It is not the levelling down of the rich that we are to strive for, but the pulling up of the poor by improving means of production. Our immediate problem is not so much of distribution as of production. So far, our business magnates have responded intelligently to the demands of the present day by opening up new avenues of employment and increasing the

national wealth, though they are not always free to use all their resources in the best possible way. They deserve our thanks and not condemnation for their grand achievements under the most adverse circumstances. We do not forget that they have often failed; and they may justly be blamed or warned, if need be. But does that justify us to undertake revolutionary changes? We have to go a long way in our economic development before we can talk of socialism. Our present trouble does not lie that way. Our real social disease is that our higher classes have lost any real touch with the masses, with the consequence that the hardships of the poorer sections of our society cannot evoke the necessary sympathy. Religion can do a lot here, and in the transitional period can successfully bridge the gulf between the rich and the poor with various forms of social service. Besides, religious people have to see to it that our classes take better care of the masses.

#### IV

The socialist will point out: This is how religion comes to the rescue of established orders. We may tell him, however, that if we decry an unthinking imitation of the West, we do not hold any brief for the vested interests, and that we are not unaware of the miseries of our countrymen. Our richer classes have not fully done their duty to the poorer ones: they have not utilized their resources in the best possible way. We are aware that the vast majority of our countrymen suffer from an inferiority complex in the mental world and in the physical world they can hardly keep body and soul together. These conditions must be changed and the sooner it is done the better. What we want to impress on our readers, however, is that this can

and should be effected by revitalizing our ancient ideas and ideals. For a nation can advance more rapidly by following the ideal for which it has lived and striven than by retracing its steps and beginning a fresh life as it were.

As we have already stated, social reforms are at bottom only a readjustment of social relations with a view to gaining better understanding between the different limbs of which a society is composed, so that continuous progress may be ensured. We have to recognize that the extreme inequality between the Brahmin and the Pariah, the landlord and the tenant, the haves and the have-nots must be removed if India is to make an all-round advance. On this question all religious-minded people should agree with the socialists. We differ when socialism tries to build its edifice on the unsound foundation of class-struggle, or in other words when it wants to evolve social stability through a militant assertion of the self-interest of the oppressed classes. Vedanta says: Help and not fight. Society makes real progress not by subordinating all other interests to those of a particular class but by helping each section to acquire the best any other may have discovered. Mutual fight is not a blessing in itself; it is the sign of a disease, a loss of balance between the different limbs.

There are other defects in Marx's philosophy. 'In reading Marx's writings', writes Cole, 'one often feels that he regards the class as somehow more deeply real than the individuals who make it up...Marx sometimes seems to be playing dangerously with the Hegelian conception of degrees of reality, as if the reality and historical conception of classes somehow condemned their individual members to a subordinate order of real existence.' The

Hindus admit, and the present-day Hindu society has to admit it all the more, that in any society of men, collaboration is the prerequisite of effective social activity. There has never been a human society in which each individual acted by himself without group loyalty or collaboration. But because an individual acts in group it does not necessarily follow that he has ceased or should cease to have his individuality. In a factory a person may have no such thing as his own individual product, but he counts still as a productive factor and his whole-hearted co-operation or withdrawal of it may mean much to the production as a whole. Real trouble arises when a person is ill-adapted to his social environment. But society may be adjusted in such a way that each individual gets fair play. The Hindu recognizes the spiritual freedom of each individual and it is the duty of society to make full provision for the growth of the inner man. Apart from that there is no reason why an individual should not contribute his utmost to the welfare of the group. As Swami Vivekananda pointed out, the Hindus are more socialistic than socialists themselves. The socialists fight for the predominance of their own group, viz., the proletariat, and at the root of this fight is the economic interest of the individuals composing the group. The Hindu does not fight any other group, but serves society as a whole, for through this alone can he have his own objective realized. Renunciation and service are the two ideals of India. Each individual makes a voluntary sacrifice of his selfish desires and in return gets his own fulfilment in and through the service of others. Take for instance, the institution of marriage. Young men are not free to choose their partners in life. For society reminds

them that it is not for sense pleasure that couples are tied in wedlock. They are united for serving the higher purposes of spiritual advancement in which the husband and the wife are helped by each other. Look again into the institution of caste, i.e., caste not by birth, but according to one's mental make-up and physical capacity, as defined in the Gita. By this caste system, society ensures a maximum output through a perfect utilization of individual power. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad pictures the householder as a central figure in society, engaged in a series of selfless duties towards all beings from the gods to the lowest insects. (I.IV. 16). The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes the same fact and equates these duties with the highest sacrifice. (Gita III. 10-16, IV. 23-31).

Our real disease is not inequality, but the monopoly of privileges. Says Mahatma Gandhi, 'If I interpret the Hindu spirit rightly, all life is absolutely equal and one. It is therefore an arrogant assumption on the part of a Brahmin when he says, "I am superior to the other three Varnas." This is not what the Brahmins of old said. They commanded homage not because they claimed superiority, but because they claimed the right of service through and through without the slightest expectation of reward. The priests who to-day arrogate to themselves the function of the Brahmin and distort religion, are no custodians of Hinduism or Brahminism. Consciously or unconsciously, they are laying the axe at the root of the tree on which they are sitting, and when they tell you that Shastras enjoin untouchability and when they talk of pollution distance, I have no hesitation in saying that they are belying their creed and that they are misunderstanding the spirit of Hinduism.' We fully agree with this out-

spoken condemnation of social injustice in the name of religion, and no true follower of Swami Vivekananda can do otherwise. The underlying spirit of Hinduism is service and not the assertion of rights and privileges by any particular community.

Let us then join hands in a common cause for reinvigorating our national life. We want more action and not more talk. There is no reason why the

poor should be neglected, and why social inequities should be perpetuated for ever. Socialism has repeatedly drawn our attention to the dark spots in our society. We may not accept socialism but let us not be blind to our own drawbacks. Socialism as a theory has no appeal for us, but we cannot but thank it for waking our conscience and rousing our sense of duty towards the more unfortunate.

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## THE EDUCATION OF INDIAN WOMEN

S. S. CYMRIC,

27 Sept. 1908.

My dear A.,

Your letter reached me this morning at Queenstown, and I am only too glad to have it to answer. I did not *know* that the difficulty was in understanding the necessity for our school. Thank you for explaining this fact so clearly. I shall try to answer it as distinctly.

Everyone acquainted with Eastern countries, knows that their great outstanding problem at present and for many years to come must be that of the education of their women. Even the illustrated papers—not to speak of M. Pierre Loti and the *Be*—make us aware of this problem in the case of Turkey and Egypt. And every one, including the Government, admits it about India. In the latter case, it is also popularized, though from what we would perhaps consider a mistaken point of view, by the missionaries. The missionaries are mistaken because, whether right or wrong in their assertion of the present *need* of education, they are not in a position to discriminate rightly the elements of value in the existing training of the Oriental girl for life.

Yet one fact remains, that the Oriental men are every day becoming

more and more imbued with a modern thought alphabet, which the women can by no means share with them, or not to any great extent. The consequences to *social* life of having men and women in two different worlds, not co-operative but mutually antagonistic, each looking upon the other as, at best, un-vital, are best left to the imagination. You will easily picture to yourself how the rightful inspiration and influence of the wife, or the mother, must in such a case, be reduced; so that it would almost seem as if the trend of society from generation to generation were more and more to institute and emphasize the weakness, ignorance, and timidity of women, instead of minimizing these, and tending increasingly to bring out her luminous and heroic qualities, as ought in a sound social state to be the case. Hence the inevitable moral, ethical, and intellectual decay of society. The only possible cure for this state of things is obviously, the co-operation of man and woman in the elaboration of a grand new conception of thought and life; and for this the education of women is a necessity.

Orientalists themselves know well that all this is true—I have never seen men hunger so for the companionship of their own women, on terms of mental equality and mutual respect. They are almost too ready to welcome intellectual gifts in a feminine form. The encouragement that they give to an accomplished woman, and the high estimates they are ready to form of her acquirements, are enough to turn a girl's head, as long as she remains a rarity. You are of course familiar—from your own reading—with the delicate reverence, and profound idealism, of the East for woman, so that these statements will not be so surprising to you as to most people, accustomed to ordinary misconceptions on this subject.

The question is then, How is the Oriental woman to receive the education she requires?

Attempts have, of course, been made. It is always difficult to collect statistics in reliable form, with regard to Indian affairs, owing to the departmentalized and provincialized system of management. Many people know a good deal about a district or even a province, but very few know anything of a given subject, *throughout India*. Still, by referring to Mr. Ratcliffe and asking him to collect from Lajpat Rai about the Punjab and Mr. Cotton (Editor of *India*) about Bombay and Madras, while Mrs. Ratcliffe is referred to about Bengal—we might be able to state something definite about *Government* expenditure on women's education. I understood that in a parliamentary debate this year, it was stated that the whole Government expenditure on education, for India, was £300,000 only! And of this, the amount spent on women must be infinitesimal. I have an idea that Government has tried to do a good deal in the Madras Presidency for girls' primary education, and I know that it

aids one or two higher education institutions in Calcutta and Bombay. But, on the whole, it has preferred to aid missionary and sectarian schools, rather than embark on work of its own. The education of the Indian woman in modern knowledge, is generally more or less dependent on missionary schools, or on schools manned by missionary agents.

In any case, the action of extraneous forces on education, is always peculiarly liable to be disastrous. Neither secular English officialism nor burning sectarian partisanship, is likely on the face of it, to produce the temper of mind that can sift out the elements to be developed and those to be avoided, in the feminist ideals of a foreign people.

Modern education, as it has hitherto been offered to the Indian woman, has always been more or less destructive. Even partisans would probably admit this, in some degree or another, their estimate of more or less, differing somewhat according to their point of view.

Thus the crude taste that deals with Berlin woolwork in aniline colours, has been substituted for the old artistic sense that we now see represented only in the museums. The power to read, unenlightened by a training in Indian classical literature, is apt to lead to unrestrained indulgence in cheap sensationalism.

The substitution of foreign ideals (unconscious and involuntary on the part of the educator, very likely) for those that are, leads to confusion of aims, and the luxury or frivolity, or other undesirable characteristics of the new example may be fully as likely to attract imitators as the more solid qualities intended for admiration.

Some of these results would be admitted by anyone, I think, and of course these are only a few.

The fact is, *Education, like growth, must be always from within*. The inner



struggle only, only the will of the taught is of avail. Those who think otherwise, do so, only because they are ignorant of education as a science by itself. We know that it is true of ourselves as individuals, that only the effort we make ourselves advances us. All the hammering in the world from outside would be useless, if indeed it did not repel and destroy our will to climb. The same is true of societies, as of individuals: Education must be from within.

It follows that if foreign elements are to be assimilated intellectually, the representatives of those elements must first be assimilated socially. You are, of course, familiar with this fact in the history of the West. Silk weaving is established in England by Huguenot refugees, the wool trade is brought to Yorks by Flemings from Flanders, the Cistercian monk masters Latin and the Norse tongue is reduced to writing. And so on.

Even in the case of Indian men, the enthusiasm for modern letters was first caught from a few special Englishmen who were personally loved, and the degree of a teacher's adoption by Hindu society, has usually been some key to the degree of his usefulness to it. In the case of women, in whom the moral element—the life of tastes, aspirations, ideals, and prejudices—so far outweighs all other mental factors, this assimilation is a still greater necessity than in that of men. And this is all that we claim. We have gone through a preparation that makes Indian people regard us as integral parts of their civic life. Being so accepted, we are able to put them in the way of obtaining knowledge for themselves. This knowledge—as yet only strictly in the primary stages of course—they are able to reach, through us, without any disturbance of their existing social, religious, or economic order.

The older women come to us in great numbers—thus the younger are amply chaperoned. As they do not live with us, they risk nothing by coming. Nor do they become dependent on us, nor we responsible for them.

At the same time we have *no* criticism to offer, of the institutions with which they are familiar. We are not helping widows to remarry, or girls, out of deference to our European birth, to contract habits that their unsophisticated grandmothers would have thought unrefined. On the contrary, holding that every country has a right to lay down its own etiquette, and feeling all possible respect for that of India, we ourselves strive, as far as we can, to show refinement in the Indian way. We don't teach religion, believing that that is the sphere of the home, but we refer freely to the ideas and ideals that are familiar to our pupils, and we avoid reference to, or overmuch explanation of, the unfamiliar.

Then we are trying to build up a conception of a girls' school, as it might be conducted by an Indian woman for Indian women, to the aid and furtherance of Indian social life, and not to its disintegration and destruction. Simple as all this is, it is nevertheless new, and has already found many imitators. We should like, however, to develop it in many directions, and especially to bring it nearer, in efficiency and standard, to our own conception of what such a school should be. We should like, moreover, to see ahead for a few years, knowing that we might plan for the employment of adequate resources. It is for these reasons that we are seeking aid in money.

Thanking you much for the patience that this long letter has required,

—M. (SISTER NIVEDITA.)

# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY DR. KALIDAS NAG, M.A., D.LITT.

The eightieth birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda will be celebrated in January 1942. India lost this great son of hers when he was barely forty, and it is very natural for us to ask ourselves the question as to how we stand to-day as Indians and as world-citizens after the last forty years. Bengalees are legitimately proud of Vivekananda, who was responsible for making the name of Bengal respected throughout the length and breadth of India. From a great Bengalee he grew to the stature of a great Indian; and like all great Indians he vindicated the claims of Indian spirituality as the indispensable asset of Man in history. As the spiritual leader of modern India he never made any invidious distinction between man and man, between the peoples of India and of the world. It is significant, therefore, to ask what could have been the direction of the great Swami to all of us enmeshed in the tragedies of current history. The war has brought us a sort of rude awakening from the pathetic slumber of self-complacency. With death ever hovering over us, we are expected to do a bit of the searching of hearts and possibly we may catch some of the significant notes from the Swamiji's grand symphony of the Soul.

During his two world tours, Vivekananda compared notes with some of the rare spirits of the East and the West; and when he was leaving Europe for the last time, towards the end of the nineteenth century, he found, or rather felt, that 'the western world was on a volcano which might burst to-

tomorrow.'<sup>1</sup> Born in 1863, he might have remembered some stories of the collapse of France after the capitulation of Sedan (1870) with the triumphal march of newly united Germany. He was in full vigour of his youth when the first Sino-Japanese War (1894) broke out to be followed by the gruesome episodes of the Boer War in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Like Rabindranath, he looked at the 'sun-set of the century' with ominous foreboding. A Sannyasin and a Vedantist that he was, Vivekananda might have explained away many of these tragic human phenomena as mere illusion or *Mâyâ*. But, may I be permitted to say, India was blessed, in that age of Vivekananda, with the leadership of a Sannyasin who was also a *realist*<sup>2</sup> to the core of his being. He knew that he had not very many years to spare. But instead of concentrating his energies on the traditional discipline of self-adjustment and self-illumination, Vivekananda, like a true Bodhisattva of the modern age, renounced all thoughts of individual salvation<sup>3</sup> and gave every hour of his fading life, nay every drop of his blood, to evolve a new technique of living in which could be harmonized the principles of self-realization of ancient and modern India.<sup>4</sup> As a practical Vedantist he is without a peer. He steeped himself in the lore of ancient India and yet his clairvoyant

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III. p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 18; Vol. III. p. 149; Vol. IV. p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. VII. pp. 174-175.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. III. pp. 151-153; Vol. VII. pp. 172-173.

gaze examined and diagnosed all the present defects in our mental and spiritual make-up. Dharma had degenerated into mere maxims; so he hastened to build up the Sangha or the fraternity of workers supporting the *Dharma* with utmost devotion and sacrifice. In May 1897, after his return from the West he organized the Ramakrishna Mission, assigning as much importance to meditation as to manual work. He took classes on Oriental and Western philosophy, at the same time that he tilled the garden, dug a well, and kneaded bread, often feeding his colleagues and fellow workers with his own hand down to his last days. It was all active dynamic love, a love strengthened by total self-effacement and dedication to the welfare of Humanity. Very significantly he said: 'I want sappers and miners in the army of Religion.'

Within forty years from his demise, we find to-day that the army is dominating everywhere, pushing dogmas almost out of court. The Churches, creeds, and dogmas, no doubt, are continuing their formal routine and official existence, but where, alas, is that living urge for the sovereign principle of Unity, *Advaita*, composing all discords in human relations!<sup>5</sup> The Lion of Vedanta roared from the forum of the historic Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893; and, may be, the whole of India and the world would be called, at the end of this devastating war, to devise the ways and means of developing a new order of living or a new Sangha before we could initiate a new World Order. So I earnestly appeal to all those who have

faith in the sublime messages of Swami Vivekananda to get ready to celebrate appropriately the fiftieth anniversary of his Chicago Address and to bring in the contribution of India to the solution of some of the dire problems of modern humanity. One of his deepest thoughts, in fact his spiritual Testament, is expressed in the following lines found in his *Letters*:

'My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest and the poorest the noble ideals that the human race has developed, both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves.'

In these few lines, Vivekananda expressed a new philosophy of life and education and outlined a new order of national and international planning. Modern man tried the path of selfish nationalism as well as of academic internationalism. But both were found sadly wanting, and we are about to be drowned in the deluge of *isms*. With our tears, sweat, and blood we may have to strive again to build from the bottom, where we may be grovelling in the dust with the meanest and the poorest, whose mind and body have got to be freed from all obsessions and wants. This dream of Swami Vivekananda is the greatest challenge to modern society and the noblest heritage of man of to-day and to-morrow. May I suggest that to give some concrete shape to Swamiji's plan of world reconstruction, we should form an All-India Committee, in co-operation with the Ramakrishna Mission, to convene in 1943 another Parliament of Religions, just fifty years after Swamiji's epoch-making participation in the Chicago Parliament of 1893.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. III. p. 5; Vol. VI. p. 8.

# A PILGRIMAGE TO AMARNATH

BY BRAHMACHARI NARAYANA

To dwellers in the plains, the Himalayas have a mysterious appeal. From my boyhood I cherished a passionate desire to have a look at the snow-covered peaks which have been the source of inspiration and joy to pilgrims and poets. But being in a distant corner of South India and under peculiar circumstances my desire remained unfulfilled until an elderly Swami who had great love for me invited me to accompany him to Kashmir. I at once consented. At last I was going to a place from where I could view the snows, more than that, I could easily wander about in the regions of eternal snow. Soon a host of thoughts rushed into my mind. I had read all about Swami Vivekananda's visit to Kashmir and the pilgrimage to the holy cave of Amarnath, situated in the very bosom of snow-capped mountains, and his worship of Lord Shiva in the ice-Lingam. Accordingly we arrived at Lahore, on our way to Kashmir, by the middle of April. Changing train at Lahore we reached Jammu Tawi, a picturesque town situated at the foot of hills. Now we were in Jammu State territory. The journey, by bus, from Jammu to Srinagar, a distance of slightly over 200 miles, was something which I had never experienced before. For the first time I saw snow; we had to pass through a tunnel of snow at a height of 9,000 ft. above sea level.

## SRINAGAR

We arrived at Srinagar on the 20th of April and put up at a suitable place. Srinagar is the capital of Kashmir State and is the summer seat of the Jammu

and Kashmir Government. The beauty spots in and around Srinagar are many. It appears as if Nature has bestowed her choicest gifts upon this charming part of Kashmir valley. One is never tired of going round the gardens, parks, and avenues. The boat trips over the Dal Lake and Jhelum river are very pleasant.

## PAHLGAM

After spending a couple of months in Srinagar, the Swami and I left for Pahlgam, a place sixty miles away and easily reached by a motor road. Here the Tahsildar of the place very kindly accommodated us, the Swami getting a small wooden cabin and I, a tent in the open. Pahlgam is situated in one of the best valleys in Kashmir and is full of luxurious vegetation. Two small rivers flow through the valley and unite a few hundred yards below. Sitting in the tent I could see the mountains in front covered by pine trees, and the glacier higher up. What an inexpressible joy it was to stare at the mute giants, standing so close to us! High above the world of cares and worries, out of the reach of human beings and reminding them of their littleness, the white mountains stood, so cold, so distant, yet so beautiful! The town itself consisted of a few government buildings and a bazaar where one could obtain common requirements. There were also hotels and camping grounds for visitors who come in large numbers during the season.

Even before reaching Pahlgam we had planned to visit the cave of Amarnath. This holy shrine of Lord Maha-



DAL LAKE

deva, containing an ice-Lingam, is situated in the Western Himalayas, surrounded by a glacial gorge, at a height of about 13,000 ft. above sea level. It is twenty-seven miles from Pahlgam. The annual pilgrimage comes off in the month of August; and the auspicious time for Darshan is the day of the full moon in that month. I was full of enthusiasm about the pilgrimage and anxiously waited for the day when the pilgrims would arrive at Pahlgam. The Tahsildar informed us one day that the Government had appointed him as the State Officer in charge of the pilgrimage. The Swami and I were very glad to know that our host would accompany us. As the days of pilgrimage drew nearer, slowly people began to gather in Pahlgam. The hotels became crowded and the fields were covered with tents. Ponies and coolies were to be seen everywhere. At last the party of pilgrims, marching all the way from Srinagar, arrived on the 16th

August. In a day Pahlgam wore a festive appearance and the place looked like a village fair. All through the day motor lorries running from Srinagar brought a large number of pilgrims. Everywhere one could see crowds of people moving about. There was continuous turmoil till late in the night in deep contrast to the silence that prevailed on the previous day. In the evening along with Kashmiri friends we went round the camp. At one spot we saw installed the 'Charri' or the emblem of Shiva which was usually carried by special

bearers in front of the pilgrim party. From Pahlgam onwards no one is allowed to go in advance of the 'Charri'. The Mahant in charge of the 'Charri' is vested with the responsibility of conducting the pilgrimage and feeding or otherwise looking after the comforts of the Sadhus. After wandering through the bazaar and the lines of newly-erected stalls, we went to the camp of the Sadhus. It was a very interesting experience for me, for I had never before seen such a large concourse



THE JHELUM



POPLAR AVENUE

of Sadhus. The State Dharmarth Department had made the necessary arrangements for the convenience of the Sadhus. The other pilgrims had to make their own arrangements at Pahlgam, where one could hire ponies, coolies, 'dandies' and tents and purchase sufficient provisions for the five days of the pilgrimage.

#### CHANDANWARI

After halting for a day at Pahlgam the party of pilgrims started on the onward journey on the 18th. The 'Charri' left very early in the morning. It was followed by the Sadhus and then the pilgrims. This morning I was up early, packed my things, handed them over to the Tahsildar's camp servants, and prepared myself to start. I and a Kashmiri friend left Pahlgam on foot at about

noon. The Swami and the Tahsildar left later on ponies. We had to reach a place called Chandanwari, eight miles away. As it was a short march we were not in a hurry. A feeling of suppressed joy and eager expectancy seized me as I walked along. Leaving Pahlgam, as we proceeded on the mountain path, we came across scenes of indescribable beauty. On either side of the road pine trees grew in large numbers and down below on the right roared the waters of the Liddar river. On the whole the road was easy. Each pilgrim walked at his own convenient pace, only taking care to reach the camp before nightfall. On the way, now and again, we would pass by a long line of ponies with packages balanced on their backs, or sturdy hill coolies carrying heavy loads and making their way up the serpentine path. I and my friend reached Chandanwari well before dusk. We had comparatively an easy time, for soon after reaching the camp, tents were pitched ready and our luggage properly arranged by the Tahsildar's servants. As the evening advanced it grew colder. In our tent we had a brazier full of live charcoal to keep ourselves warm. The camp was humming with noise till a late hour in the night. In front of us, three friends were camping. One was busy cooking and the other two were trying to light a fire in front of their tent. As the fire blazed, many other pilgrims passing that way came and warmed themselves for a while and after exchanging a word or two with their strange hosts, went away. What an amount of mutual

co-operation and fellow-feeling pervaded the whole camp!

#### VAVJAN

After we had completed the day's march we had to think of the next day's journey. I heard people whispering to one another that on the morrow they had to do the most difficult part of the journey. I grew nervous and anxiously asked my friend about the next day's march. As the day dawned on the 19th, the whole camp broke up within a very short time and the second day's march began. How rapidly did this little moving town vanish! Where I had seen innumerable tents only a few hours ago, there were left only the ashes of dead fires and holes in the ground made by tent pegs. Soon I and my friend were on the road to the next camp called 'Vavjan'. In front, towering over us, stood Pishu ghat, a very steep climb of more than a thousand feet. As I started ascending this hill it appeared to be not so difficult. But before I was half way through it I became exhausted. How I wished I had a pony! We both rested on a rock by the roadside. As I sat there and was thinking how foolish it was not to have acted upon the Tahsildar's suggestion to take a pony, my eyes fell on the long line of pilgrims, men and women, young and old, strong and weak, coming from below. An old woman was slowly walking along, holding a short stick in her hand. Her whole mind was on Shiva. Perhaps she was too poor to afford a pony or she considered it more meri-

torious to do the pilgrimage on foot. What grim determination was there in her old shrunken face! Her great faith in the Lord and her love to touch His feet had given her sufficient strength to undertake the journey with little hesitation. I was ashamed of myself seeing how little she cared for personal comfort and how fearless she was of Pishu ghat. In mountains a short rest is sufficient to refresh one even from much exhaustion. So we began ascending again. It took us two hours to reach the top. How full of joy were those who had reached there



NEARING THE AMARNATH CAVE



VAVJAN CAMP

before us! At last the long and strenuous ascent was over. The road further on was easy. Walking along a narrow path, going from mountain to mountain, we came to the large, beautiful Sheshnag lake situated at the foot of high mountains covered with perpe-

tual snow. We took a hurried bath in its blue waters which, though very cold, appeared enchanting.

We had to leave the regular path and go down by a side-way in order to reach the shore of the lake. From there to our camp it was a gradual ascent of



AMARNATH CAVE



about a mile. As darkness gathered around, the pilgrims hurried to their destination. Soon the tents were pitched and the second day of our camp life started. Vavjan was cold and damp and rocky all over. A huge glacier, clearly visible from our camp, seemed to be close at hand. This night the pilgrims were a little concerned about the danger of strong winds which often swept across Vavjan from the snow mountains near by.

#### PANCHTARNI

The next march from Vavjan to Panchtarni was ten miles. We started at about nine o'clock in the morning. To-day we had to cross a mountain pass, 16,000 ft. high. To add to our anxiety the sky became overcast with heavy clouds. After walking for a mile of level road we began a steep ascent. Within an hour we were over the Mahagunas Pass which was much dreaded by the pilgrims. Anxious faces were piteously looking at the clouds in the sky and were silently praying to Shiva to save them from the disasters of heavy rain. We had heard frightening accounts of how, in some previous years, pilgrims had suffered due to rains and even snow, particularly while crossing this Pass. Shiva answered the prayers of his devotees. The party safely passed through Mahagunas. From here to Panchtarni it was one continuous descent. I and my friend reached the place by five o'clock in the evening. On a gravel bed ran five contiguous streams of ice-cold water. We bathed in the two larger streams. We saw a few pilgrims observing the custom of bathing in all the streams, going from one to another in the same wet garments.

The fascinating beauty of to-day's camping place was more impressive than those of the previous two days.

With our camp standing close to the biggest of the streams, like some sage's hermitage on the banks of the Ganges, with plenty of wild flowers smiling all around, and the back of the mountain wall containing the holy cave of Amarnath standing just in front of us, the scenery of Panchtarni was full of sublime grandeur. As the evening advanced and the pilgrims poured into the camp, how quickly and quietly did the gay canvas town spring up! Tents of all sizes and shapes were to be seen pitched here and there, with the pilgrims just arrived, resting on their half-opened beds. Rows of shops on either side of roughly constructed paths reminded one of a moving bazaar. What an unforgettable picture did the Sadhus' camp present! Hundreds of monks, belonging to different orders—some naked and many others wearing only a loin cloth, with their ash-covered bodies and matted locks, symbolic of Shiva Himself—were resting in their small Geruyâ tents, sometimes not bigger than a large umbrella fixed on a single pole. Some were blowing their conches now and again. Some were sitting round their Dhunis (logs of smouldering fire) and were discussing or meditating. What a hard life were they leading! I was surprised at their strong faith in God and the great power of endurance they possessed. They were undoubtedly Shiva's soldiers, armed with poverty, renunciation, and self-sacrifice. I moved on to another part of the camp. Small lanterns shone in every tent. Devotees were sitting here and there in solitary meditation. Some were repeating the Mahimnah Stotra, an excellent hymn on the greatness of Shiva. How unfortunate that I did not know it by heart then, nor did I possess a book! I returned to my tent and requested the Tahsildar to recite a few verses from

that famous hymn, which he kindly did to my great delight.

#### AMARNATH

Long before the night passed into day on the 21st August, while the nearly full moon was shining in the sky, the whole camp was astir. The long awaited day auspicious for Amarnath Darshan had come. The sky was almost clear and the weather was dry and exhilarating. The cold was intense and in spite of my woollen clothings I felt it like pin-pricks. I thought of the naked and half-naked Sadhus who were cheerfully making their way up to the cave. What a contrast! I could command almost all the comforts necessary in such a place, and yet felt so uncomfortable. It became plain to me that the body could be inured to many things if only there was the will to do so. I started for the cave, with my friend, at about six o'clock in the morning. We put on a pair of grass slippers, specially made for the occasion. Many others also had done the same, for it was difficult to walk barefooted on snow, and the sanctity of the cave prohibited the taking of any leather foot-wear near its precincts. The journey from Panchtarni to Amarnath was about five miles. At places the road was very narrow and we had to go almost clinging to the sides of the hill for fear of being pushed down by a frightened pony or a swaying 'dandy' hurrying down from the opposite direction. Up to Panchtarni all the pilgrims were moving in one direction. But now we met a stream of pilgrims returning to Panchtarni after visiting the cave. Reaching the top of the hill, we turned to our right and entered into a snowy gorge. It was very delightful to walk over a long stretch of snow. Leaving the snow behind and passing through an open place strewn with boulders, we came to

a fast-running stream of icy cold water. From here the cave was visible. Even though it seemed to be very near, still we had to undertake a steep ascent of 100 yds. before we could reach the entrance of the cave. We sat down for a while, then bathed in the stream, and after that began the last climb. Finally as we entered the cave, our enthusiasm heightened and joy increased. It was a very large cave. Water was dripping from the roof and sides. There, in a dark niche, adjoining the floor, stood the ice-Lingam, its shape unlike the common Lingams found in Shiva temples. It was surrounded by a railing on three sides and none was allowed to cross it. I stood near the railing for a long time, enwrapped in thought. There sat Shiva, in His Kingdom of eternal snow, His great heart full of compassion for everyone. Even those who are hated by the world and persecuted by the powerful find welcome refuge in the Great White God. It was here that Swami Vivekananda had a great spiritual experience. Mahadeva, the Snow-king, is the friend of the poor and the needy. He graciously answers the sincere prayers of His devotees. Will he not answer mine? Pilgrims were moving about inside the cave and there was a buzzing noise. The offerings to the Lord consisted of ornaments of gold and silver, cash, rich garments, sugar-candy, and dried grapes. I could offer only the last two. In the cave itself the atmosphere was highly elevating and some unspeakable joy was welling up from within. Some peasants first came across this cave, hundreds of years ago. How is it that the Lord revealed Himself first to a few ignorant people? Perhaps their devotion was deep and sincere, and their simple and pure hearts were given over to Him. Yes, the Lord comes only to such; He cares not for a man's wealth or status, or

caste or creed. Before moving away from the Lingam I managed to put my hand through the railing and touch it. Then I looked up towards the roof of the cave and saw two or three pigeons fluttering from one hole to another. It is said that the sight of these pigeons signifies that one's pilgrimage has been fruitful. I left the cave after having stayed there for about two hours, and finding that I had missed my friend in the crowd, returned alone to our camp at Panchtarni by noon.

### THE RETURN

This evening the camp was comparatively quiet. Much of the excitement had subsided. Since we left Pahlgam I had not had occasion to talk leisurely either to the Swami or to the Tahsildar. But this evening, as our little party sat quietly round a fire, every face was beaming with smiles and each related his own experiences of the glorious day. The return journey is usually accomplished in two stages, Panchtarni to Chandanwari, and Chandanwari to Pahlgam. But I and my friend did it in one day, and reached Pahlgam late in the evening on the 22nd. The Swami and the Tahsildar stayed on for the night at Chandanwari and returned to Pahlgam the next morning. After all I had completed the pilgrimage to Amarnath. The Himalayas and the snow peaks, which were not so real to me a few months ago, had now become a reality. Now I understood why the ancient sages retired to the Himalayas to perform their spiritual practices. Now I realized why lovers of beauty climbed mountain peaks and visited glaciers at great risk. Man is ever after the quest of the beautiful and there is nothing more truly imposing or uplifting than the beauty of Nature. Apart from this the pilgrimage itself

was a unique experience. Men, women, and children, of all ages and classes, gathered together from different parts of the country for a single purpose, and marching from camp to camp, as if of one party, impressed upon one's mind that the motherland is one. In spite of linguistic, political, or other differences, all are knit together. In the camp, organization and mutual co-operation are remarkable. How free and fearless are the women! They are in their colourful costumes and gaily walk along, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups, singing hymns in chorus or telling beads silently. What an amount of relaxation among the pilgrims! And how full of mirth are the children! They are all in a holiday mood and no thought of the struggle for existence worries them. How clearly do we see that India is one and that her children, left to themselves, free from external dividing influences, are ever ready to unite. A month later, at Lahore, an elderly friend derisively asked me what I had gained by undertaking this arduous pilgrimage, which to him was not worth the trouble. And my friend was one who had no faith in the spiritual or religious benefit of a pilgrimage. The question appeared to be pertinent. What, actually had I gained by going to Amarnath? I could not give him any convincing reply, nor could I show him some tangible gain that I had achieved. I was worried for a time. I could not then understand how profitable the pilgrimage had been. My doubts were set at rest when I remembered what Swami Vivekananda told one of his disciples, after they both had returned from Amarnath: 'You do not now understand. But you have made the pilgrimage, and it will go on working. Causes must bring their effects. You will understand afterwards. The effects will come.'

# SHRADDHA AND JNANA

BY RAO BAHADUR D. S. SARMA, M.A.

It is important for us to know not only the relation of Shastra to Shraddhâ<sup>1</sup> but also the relation of Shraddha to Jnâna. Shastra is scriptural law, Shraddha is individual faith, and Jnana is divine knowledge. In the Bhagavad Gita the relation of Shastra to Shraddha is discussed at length in the seventeenth chapter in reply to Arjuna's question in the first verse there. 'Those who leave aside the ordinances of scriptures, but who worship with faith—what is their state, O Krishna?' But the relation of Shraddha to Jnana is not discussed so fully in the Gita, though it is indicated in the fourth and the sixth chapters. The word Shraddha occurs more than twenty times in the Gita. According to this scripture, faith is an indispensable element in spiritual life. All rites and ceremonies have to be performed with faith. All gifts have to be made and all austerities practised with faith. (XVII. 28). All teaching is to be followed with faith. (III. 31). All worship is to be conducted with faith. (VII. 21). And all knowledge leading to peace that passeth understanding has to be preceded by faith. (IV. 39). In fact, as a famous verse in the Gita puts it (XVII. 3), 'Man is of the nature of his faith. What his faith is, that verily he is.'

The enemy of faith is doubt—Samshaya. Shraddha and Samshaya are opposed to each other. The former saves a man, while the latter ruins him. The Gita (IV. 40) says, *Samshayâtmâ vinashyati*. The man who always doubts goes to

ruin. But doubt continues to haunt the mind of the religious man, however firm his faith may be. Especially if the religious man is also a man of wide culture, if he is a scholar who has made a study of other religions than his own, he is bound to be assailed by doubts of various kinds. Are all scriptures revelations in the sense in which they claim to be? Is everything in a scripture a revelation—its scientific concepts, for instance? Are all the claims made by or on behalf of founders of religions to be conceded? Are there not saints in other religions who held beliefs that were diametrically opposed to ours? And, above all, is humanity being guided by a God? If so, how can we explain this war and its unspeakable horrors and all the pain and suffering of innocent men and women? These and similar doubts the religious soul of to-day has to contend against. Faith is a comparatively easy achievement for an uncultured mind. And generally, the more narrow the mind the more intense is its faith. But there is no comparison in value between a cultured man's faith and an ignorant man's faith. To know all that can be urged by the Devil's advocate and yet believe—not in the old way but in a new way, not with the old faith but with a new faith—is far more valiant than to close one's eyes and shut one's ears and continue to believe in the same old way. Faith, if it is to live, has continually to change its front, though not its ground.

But faith is ever on slippery ground. For it is not the final word in spiritual life, at any rate, according to Hinduism.

Jnana is higher than Shraddha: realization higher than faith. We have to see as well as believe. When Jnana or the vision of God comes, Shraddha becomes luminous and its dark shadow Samshaya takes to flight. The Gita is very clear on this point. In the last two verses of the fourth chapter we are taught that Samshaya or doubt is eliminated only by Jnana. Shraddha is, of course, incipient Jnana. It is the evidence of the divinity of the human soul. It is an earnest of things to come, a guarantee that all will be well in the end. Shraddha is roused from its sleep by Shastra. And when it is fully awake it becomes Jnana. In other words, scriptures rouse our faith and guide it. And when we apply that faith to all our duties of life as well as to our prayers and devotions, light begins to dawn, doubts begin to vanish and we begin to see as well as believe. As the Mundaka Upanishad says, 'When He is seen both high and low, the tie of the heart is broken, all doubts are cut off, and all actions cease to bind.'

But suppose the man dies before his Shraddha ripens into Jnana, what happens? That is exactly the question put

by Arjuna in the latter part of the sixth chapter of the Gita. 'A man who has faith, but who is not steadfast and whose mind has fallen away from Yoga having failed to accomplish it—what way does he go, O Krishna?' The answer is well known. The Bhagavân assures him that neither in this world nor in the next will such a man perish. For a man who does what is good will never come to grief. The man who has fallen away from Yoga is reborn in course of time in the house of the pure and prosperous or in a family of Yogins rich in wisdom. And there he regains the understanding acquired in the former body and strives once more for perfection. By his former habit he is led on in spite of himself; and becoming perfect through many lives he reaches the supreme state. Thus, according to the Gita, Shraddha or faith will never go in vain. It is bound to develop into Jnana or vision of God—if not in this life, in the lives to come. But till that consummation is reached the soul with its gleam of light in its heart has to wander in the labyrinth of Samsâra like the musk-deer in the Himalayan wilds.

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## WHAT IS RELIGION ?

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA

Religion, in the eyes of many people, is no more than 'a cloak to be worn on particular days', as Shelly has put it. Even such use of religion is made only because it is a long-standing custom. It has to be done as a matter of course and they do it without asking why. With some people religion is nothing but a pose, and sometimes even a camouflage. A vast number actually believe that by adoration, confession,

penitence, and all that, they get a blank cheque for multiplying evil deeds. Then again, there is a crazy group running after religion for miracles that may go to cure a tooth-ache, or to keep off grey hairs and wrinkles, or perhaps to procure for them a windfall. Besides, there are a few mystery-mongers prying into the secrets of nature through the trapdoor of religion and discovering by

that process all sorts of spirits, ghosts, and hobgoblins.

On the otherside, there is a great number who consider religion as a tabooed theme. They find nothing in the universe except matter, force, and accident. From the nebula right up to the present state of the world it has been, as they honestly believe, an aimless journey made possible only by a series of countless accidents. They seriously hold that it was some accidental aberration of nature that led the ape to drop his tail and emerge as man. Except such accidents they have, therefore, nothing to adore. In fact, they do not find any design, purpose, skill, or intelligence behind the cosmos. Even life to them is a mere accident in a corner of an otherwise inert universe.

Bernard Shaw is, perhaps, perfectly justified in saying, 'One hardly knows which is the more appalling: the abjectness of credulity or the flippancy of scepticism.' The fact probably is that, of those who choose to stand for or against religion, very few care to inquire what it precisely stands for.

Surely, religion stands or falls with God, the Ultimate Reality. Now, a very earnest and vigorous search for getting at the root of the universe has been going on for centuries. The scientists have made much headway; yet they are far from the fundamental realities. They have been penetrating step by step into the mysteries of nature, but the basic why and how of things are still a long way off. Meanwhile, they have stumbled into a realm where all their pre-conceived notions have been blown up altogether and some of them have been led to speculate how the 'Mysterious Universe' looks more like the work of a Cosmic Mind than a huge machine. Matter as an ultimate constituent of nature has been resolved into 'bottled up radiant energy'. Time

has been welded with space to form what is called a four-dimensional continuum, where everything has its existence only as an event. The factor of indeterminacy has become prominent enough to jeopardize the universality of the law of causation itself. All these tend to upset the materialistic outlook and serve as a pointer to the existence of an effective Creative Will, sponsored in our days by Henri Bergson and George Bernard Shaw. There may be many among the scientists who are proud of the achievements so far made by science,—achievements that have undoubtedly extended the frontier of human knowledge and contributed profusely towards the amenities as well as destruction of human life. Yet all of them have to admit that the epoch-making discoveries of the present century in the realm of science have, by a stroke of the magic wand, as it were, removed the fundamental verities of life and existence beyond the range of comprehension. In its search for the deeper truths science has been led to a position where it is simply out of its depth.

Pure reason also has made no mean effort to unearth the Ultimate Truth. Since Descartes, rationalist philosophers have spared no pains to probe the cosmos with their keen intellect. Yet confusion reigns in the domain of philosophy. One system is replaced by another on the grounds of saner logic; and this has been going on for centuries. All the while, philosophy has been oscillating between the extremes of Realism and Idealism, leaving the relation between mind and matter as puzzling as ever. By this process, no doubt, human intellect has considerably extended and tightened its grasp on subtleties and enriched itself with certain invaluable findings and astounding guess-works. One of these findings is about the capacity of the intellect itself.

It admits that intellect cannot go out of itself to measure its own cause. The Ultimate Cause is beyond its reach; it is unknown and unknowable. Pure reason, therefore, has perforce to cry halt. One of the latest guess-works, however, has improved the position by declaring that in the search for metaphysical truths, intuition can go farther than intellect. If it does, rational philosophy has to change its skin and merge into Mysticism.

This brings us, in a way, close to the Vedantic standpoint. Intuition of a pure mind is considered by the Vedanta to be a surer approach to metaphysical truths than intellect. It declares, *नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया*, knowledge of the Final Truth cannot be attained by arguments. From many such utterances of the Vedic seers one finds how the Vedanta has passed its verdict on the power of the intellect, perhaps, more unequivocally than Immanuel Kant has done. Yet the Vedanta does not sponsor Agnosticism. It declares that what is unknown and unknowable to the intellect can be realized as one's own Self: *कश्चिद् घोरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षत्*, some sages realized the Self; *वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्*, I have realized the Supreme Being, the Resplendent One, beyond the pale of dismal ignorance.

Glimpses of deeper truths through the intuition of a pure mind lead one ultimately to this realization of the Absolute, which is beyond speech and mind (*अवाङ्मनसो गोचरं*). This realization is achieved only when the mind ceases to function in Samadhi ('Trance' according to the Christian mystics) as it does in deep sleep. This is the Turiya, the fourth state, where the consciousness of the illumined soul dwells during Samadhi, while that of the ignorant ones plies only among the three states of awakening, dream, and deep sleep (*जाग्रत्, स्वप्न, सुषुप्ति*). The

Turiya is the real awakening where one stands face to face with the Ultimate Truth, or rather finds itself one with it. Compared to this superconscious experience, the phenomenal world is just as a dream.

This realization makes one free for ever from all doubts (*द्विद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः*) and from all griefs, delusions, and fears. *तत्र कः शोकः को मोह एकत्वमनुपश्यतः*, neither grief nor delusion can assail one who realizes the essential oneness of things. *आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कुतश्चन*. knowing Brahman, the Absolute, as the essence of Bliss, the illumined soul has nothing to fear.

The Vedanta holds that the self of all creatures is one and that it is no other than God, the Absolute (*आत्मैव ब्रह्म*). The same Self dwells in the tiniest insect as in the Buddha (the enlightened one). The difference is in the degree of manifestation through a veil of Avidyâ or Primal Ignorance. From the state of the amoeba up to that of the Buddha the evolution is a gradual process of removing this veil. In the lower strata of the biological world this process is carried on by the elemental urge of nature through instinctive impulse, while man is born with the capacity for extending the range of his consciousness and developing his power almost indefinitely by his determined efforts. He can tear off the remaining portion of the veil and fully manifest the Divinity that has been lying all the while within him. And this is his religion.

Although endowed with a rational mind, man, at the start, is helplessly dominated by instinctive impulse as much as any member of the sub-human order. So long as he is swayed by such instinctive urge, he remains practically on the brute plane, and this in spite of all his efforts for sharpening his intellect, for stuffing his brain with all sorts of

information, and for extending his sway over external nature. He cannot act up to his own judgement when it goes against the trend of his impulse. Between his reason and impulse there is an almost perpetual conflict. And herein lies the tragedy of human life. His intellect has wrought miracles, no doubt, yet man is still rooted to the brute plane. The brute-in-man is extending its hegemony in the name of human civilization! So long as this state of things lasts, obviously, there cannot be any peace in individual, communal, national, or international life.

But the process of evolution has not come to an end. Man can and must leave the brute plane for ever and go higher up. Intellect has brought him so far. Now he has to take recourse to pure intuition, through which alone one can get glimpses of his inner Divinity. The Vedanta teaches him how he may unlock the gates of pure intuition by practising self-control, selfless service and concentration of mind. This is sure to lead man through higher and higher altitudes far above the brute plane till his consciousness transcends both intellect and intuition and becomes one with God. The lives of Christ and Buddha are luminous pointers to such a course of further evolution of the human species. These man-gods are the correct models of the Superman, and humanity has to shape itself after these effulgent models. And this can be done only by practising religion.

Indeed, religion is immensely practical. It does not consist in merely giving one's assent to a particular creed, nor in counting oneself as a member of any religious community. Real religion does not want us to live in perpetual terror of 'an almighty fiend, with a petty character and unlimited

power, spiteful, cruel, jealous, vindictive, and physically violent'. Nor does it teach us to concern ourselves only with sending our earnest prayers to Heaven for a handful of lollipops. God is in us and everywhere about us. Our unclean minds, like so many sooty chimneys, are obstructing the glorious realization of this truth, which alone can solve all our problems and bring to us peace eternal. तमेवं विदित्वाऽसिमृत्युमेति, नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय, realizing Him one can transcend death (i.e., all forms of bondage), for which there is no other way open. यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः, यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन गुण्यापि विचार्यते, getting which nothing more covetable remains to be gained and no sorrow, however acute, can shake one's mind. To attain this state of perfection, we have to cleanse our minds, and this is all that religion teaches us to do.

This is the essence of all real religions. The rest, namely, mythologies and rituals are non-essentials. They are no more than kindergarten lessons in the scheme of spiritual education. So long as they help us to purge our minds of impurities and manifest the Divinity within us, they are useful. None of these has any absolute truth-value: this is why they have scope for infinite variations. There is no reason why people should fight over the truth of any set of mythology and rituals. All sets have equal pragmatic value so long as they help individuals to purify their minds.

It is true that in the hands of unilluminated persons, posing as priests and preachers, real religion, as it has been taught by the seers and prophets of the world, degenerates into a mere creed, a bundle of crude dogmas and meaningless ceremonials. Its followers become wild and fanatic and make religion a cause for communal fight!



Instead of taking to religion for self-purification, the followers of different religions take delight in breaking one another's head in the name of religion! Such crude stuff naturally shocks the more sensible ones, and they give up religion altogether as something detestable, as the root cause of all *jehads* and crusades.

But this is not religion. The Vedanta teaches us to distinguish such crude stuff from real religion. It warns us of the danger of being led by impostors. Real religion is to be had from the source, from the original teachings of the seers and prophets. The essential

function of such religion is to teach us to purify our hearts and thus to manifest 'the Divinity that has been already within us'. The Vedanta holds that this is the path of religion, along which humanity has to march in its quest for perfection. Each step forward will be marked by a fresh triumph over the brute-in-man till mankind evolves definitely into a higher species, more akin to the Buddha or Christ than to the Napoleonic type of Superman conceived by Friedrich Nietzsche. During this epoch-making journey, it is religion, based on the realization of the fundamental realities, that promises to be the sole guide and incentive.

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## SWAMI SARADANANDA

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

### BOYHOOD

To a Ramakrishna Math, in North Calcutta, known as 'Udbodhan House' to the public or as the 'Holy Mother's Abode' to the devotees, there came a visitor some years back. As he entered the building, in a small room on the left-hand side he saw a burly-looking person sitting cross-legged—wrapped in his own thought. The visitor, quite a stranger to the place, inquired of him who he was. 'I am here the "gate-keeper"', came the grave reply. The innocent man believed this, and went to the next room, which was the office room. There in the course of conversation when he asked some one who the man was whom he had first met, he learnt that the grave-looking person was no other than Swami Saradananda, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The visitor felt so embarrassed at his foolishness to believe that he could be

a 'gate-keeper', that he at once left the place.

Yes, Swami Saradananda prided himself on considering himself a 'gate-keeper' of the house where the Holy Mother, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna lived, and every evening whoever visited the house was sure to see the Swami sitting there. Strangers would be scared away or frightened by his very grave appearance; but those who were bold enough to approach and mix with him, would know here was a man who had a mother's heart. Swami Saradananda lived in this house ever since he got it built for the Holy Mother to stay during her visit to Calcutta. Here he would be doing the onerous duties of the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, sitting in that particular room as a 'gate-keeper'.

Swami Saradananda came of a rich and orthodox Brahmin family, living

in the Amherst Street of Calcutta. His early name was Saratchandra Chakravarty. His grandfather was an erudite Sanskrit scholar—with greatly religious disposition. He lived in a village in the 24-Perganas, where he established a Tol, a Sanskrit school, and maintained many students. Saratchandra's father, however, removed to Calcutta, and became very rich by being a co-sharer of a medicine shop. But his wealth and religious nature existed side by side. He was known for his honesty, truthfulness, and large charity. He devoted much time to religious practices amidst the busy life he had to live. Saratchandra inherited many of the good qualities of his father.

Saratchandra was born in the month of December, 1865. But as he was born in a Saturday evening, many were alarmed as to the future of the child. But an uncle of Saratchandra, expert in astrology, after proper calculation removed all fears by the prediction that the new-born babe would be so great that he would shed lustre on his family.

From his very boyhood Saratchandra was known for his taciturnity. He was so quiet that some might mistake him to be not so intelligent. But soon he showed his extraordinary intelligence in class-works. In almost all examinations he topped the list of successful boys. He took delight in many extra academic activities. He was a prominent figure in the debating class, and developed a strong physique by taking various forms of physical exercise.

His deep religious nature expressed itself even in his early boyhood. He would sit quietly by the side of his mother when she was engaged in worshipping the family deity, and faultlessly repeat the ritual afterwards before his friends. On festive occasions he would go in for images of deities and not for the dolls which average lads

buy. Seeing this trait in his nature, his mother bought for him a set of utensils required in performing Pujâs. Saratchandra was greatly delighted, and for a long time the play which interested him most was to perform imitation-worship. After he was invested with the sacred thread, he was privileged to perform regular worship in the family shrine. This made him glad beyond measure. And he took full advantage of this opportunity by performing regular worship of the family deity. He was also strict about daily meditations required of a Brahmin boy.

Saratchandra was very courteous by nature. He was incapable of using any harsh word to anybody or of hurting one's feelings in any way. He had a very soft and feeling heart. He lost no opportunity to help his poor class-friends as far as his means permitted. The small sum of money which he got from home for tiffin, he often spent for poor boys. Sometimes he would give away his personal clothings to those who needed them more.

One who afterwards as Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission administered relief to millions of suffering people showed himself to be the embodiment of the spirit of service even in his boyhood. Relations and friends, acquaintances and neighbours, servants and housemaids—whoever fell ill, Saratchandra was sure to be by their sides. In cases of contagious diseases, when people would fight shy of patients, Saratchandra, prompted by a spontaneous feeling of love, would go to nurse the sick, without the least thought of the risk involved. Once a maidservant in a neighbouring house fell ill of cholera. The master removed her to a corner in the roof of his house to prevent contagion, and left her to die there. But as soon as Saratchandra came to know of this, he rushed to the spot and

all alone did everything that was necessary for her nursing. The poor woman died in spite of all his devoted service. Finding the master indifferent about her last rite, Saratchandra made arrangement even for that. This was but one among many instances of this kind.

For all these qualities of head and heart Saratchandra commanded not only the love but the silent admiration of one and all—including his friends and teachers.

As he grew up he came under the influence of the great Brahma leader Keshabchandra Sen. Those were the days when every educated young man became an admirer of that great orator. In the debating class of his school Saratchandra came into contact with some boys who were members of the New Dispensation established by Keshabchandra Sen. Through various discussions with these boys, Saratchandra felt drawn towards the New Dispensation. Gradually he began to study literature in connection with the Samaj and even practise meditation according to its system.

In 1882 Saratchandra passed the University Entrance Examination and the following year he got himself admitted into the St. Xavier's College. Being charmed with the deep religious nature of Saratchandra, the Principal himself undertook to teach him the Bible.

Though born in an orthodox Brahmin family where all the important Hindu rituals were observed, his mother a great devotee of the family deity, his father and uncle great followers of Tantrikism, Saratchandra became an admirer of Brahma Samaj and a votary of Jesus. But he did not lose the slightest faith in the system in which he was brought up. This speaks of the great catholicity and broad-mindedness of young Sarat. And soon he was to come under the

influence of one who practically demonstrated the underlying truths of all religions.

#### AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER

Saratchandra had a cousin—Sasi, who also stayed in the same family and read in the same college. Once a class-friend of Sasi told that there was a great saint in the temple garden of Dakshineswar about whom Keshabchandra had written in glowing terms in the *Indian Mirror*. In the course of conversation the three decided that one day they should visit the saint.

It was on a certain day in October 1883, that Sarat and Sasi found an opportunity to be at Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna received them with a smile and had a mat spread for them. After preliminary inquiries when he learnt that they now and then went to Keshab's Brahma Samaj, he was very pleased. Then he said, 'Bricks and tiles, if burnt after the trade-mark has been stamped on them, retain these marks for ever. But nowadays parents marry their boys too young. By the time they finish their education, they are already the fathers of children and have to run hither and thither in search of a job to maintain the family.' 'Then, sir, is it wrong to marry? Is it against the will of God?' asked one from the audience. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to take down one of the books from the shelf and read aloud an extract from the Bible setting forth Christ's opinion on marriage: 'For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs which have made themselves for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive let him receive.' And St. Paul's: 'I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them

if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry : for it is better to marry than to burn.' When the passage was read, Sri Ramakrishna remarked that marriage was the root of all bondage. One among the audience interrupted him saying, 'Do you mean to say, sir, that marriage is against the will of God? And how can His creation go on if people cease to marry?' Sri Ramakrishna smiled and said, 'Don't worry about that. Those who like to marry are at perfect liberty to do so. What I said just now was between ourselves. I say what I have got to say; you may take as much or as little of it as you like.'

Those stirring words of renunciation opened up a new vision to Sarat and Sasi. Both were charmed by the personality of Sri Ramakrishna. They thought if they were to seek God they must come to him for advice and guidance. They began actually to do that also. But afterwards they would not come to Dakshineswar together. Each kept his religious aspirations to himself, so the other did not know for a long time to come that he was so drawn to the saint of Dakshineswar. The St. Xavier's College, where Sarat was reading, remained closed on each Thursday. Sarat made it a rule to visit Dakshineswar every Thursday unless something very important stood in the way. As he came more and more in touch with Sri Ramakrishna, he was more and more attracted towards him. Saratchandra often wondered within himself, how was it that Sri Ramakrishna's love was stronger and more intense than anybody else's love which he had experienced in the world? The love he got from his friends, relations, and even parents paled into insignificance compared with what he had been receiving from Sri Ramakrishna. Yet he was absolutely unselfish. Sarat-

chandra was caught in the current of his love.

Sri Ramakrishna noticed the spiritual potentiality of the boy at the very first sight and was glad to see his stern spirit of renunciation. He began to give directions and watch the spiritual development of young Sarat. One day Sri Ramakrishna was seated in his room at Dakshineswar, surrounded by a group of devotees. Ganesh, the Hindu god of success, was the topic of conversation. The Master praised highly the integrity of character of this deity, his utter absence of passion and single-minded devotion to his mother, the goddess Durgâ. Young Sarat was present. Suddenly he said, 'Well, sir, I like the character of Ganesh very much. He is my ideal.' The Master at once corrected him saying, 'No, Ganesh is not your ideal. Your ideal is Shiva. You possess Shiva-attributes.' Then he added, 'Think of yourself always as Shiva and of me as Shakti. I am the ultimate repository of all your powers.' It is not for us ordinary mortals to understand correctly the significance of this spiritual prescription. But in later years whoever came into contact with Swami Saradananda did not fail to notice in him a serenity of mind, patience, fortitude, calmness, and a readiness to share the burden of others, which are the special characteristics of Shiva; verily he drank 'poison' from many a cup of life, giving others in return his heartfelt benedictions and blessings.

On another occasion the Master asked Sarat, 'How would you like to realize God?' Sarat replied, 'I do not want to see any particular form of God in meditation, I want to see Him as manifested in all creatures of the world. I do not like vision.' The Master said with a smile, 'That is the last word in spiritual attainment. You cannot have it all at once.' 'But I won't be satisfied

with anything short of that,' replied the boy, 'I shall trudge on in the path of religious practice till that blessed state arrives.' This clearly indicated the high spiritual aspirations of Sarat even in that early age.

Saratchandra had once met Narendranath—afterwards Swami Vivekananda—even before he came to Sri Ramakrishna. But at that time Saratchandra formed a very wrong impression about one whom afterwards he loved and followed as a leader. Saratchandra once went to see a friend about whom the report was that he had gone astray. Saratchandra went there to know for himself by personal inquiry about the real state of affairs. At the house of the friend Saratchandra met a young man who seemed to be self-conceited and whose manners were anything but decorous. By seeing this visitor in the house of his friend, Saratchandra came to the conclusion that it was by mixing with this young man that his friend had gone wrong. But in the course of the conversation which this young man had with his friend, when he showed his wide sweep of learning, deep breadth of thought and withal a great critical acumen, Saratchandra was a bit perplexed. Saratchandra, however could not change the first impression he had formed. He thought that the young man perhaps knew how to talk big but there was a great disparity between his words and actions.

A few months after this Sri Ramakrishna was greatly praising a young man named Narendranath. He was speaking so highly of him that Saratchandra felt tempted to have a personal acquaintance with such a person, and got his address from Sri Ramakrishna. And what was his wonder when on meeting Narendranath, Saratchandra found that he was none other than the young man whom once he had met at

the house of his friend and about whom he had formed such an uncharitable opinion. How deceptive sometimes is the external appearance!

The first acquaintance soon ripened into close friendship by the tie of common ideals and aspirations and the common love and reverence for the same saint, who was moulding both their lives equally. So great was the attachment for each other that sometimes Saratchandra and Narendranath could be found in the streets of Calcutta, deeply engaged in conversation, till one o'clock in the morning—walking the distance between their homes many times—one intending to escort the other to the latter's home. Saratchandra afterwards used to say, 'However freely Swami Vivekananda mixed with us, at the very first meeting I saw, there was one who belonged to a class by himself.' Sri Ramakrishna was glad beyond measure when he learnt that Saratchandra had not only met Narendranath, but there grew a deep love between the two. He remarked in his characteristic homely way, 'The mistress of the house knows which covering will go with which cooking pot.'

Saratchandra passed the First Arts Examination in 1885. His father wanted him to read medicine, specially as he had a pharmacy for which he had to employ a doctor. But Saratchandra had no aspiration to be a doctor as Sri Ramakrishna held very strong opinions against legal and medical professions. Saratchandra was in a fix. It was on the encouragement of Narendranath—his friend, philosopher, and guide—that Saratchandra joined the Calcutta Medical College.

But destiny willed that Saratchandra was not to become a medical man. Before he was many months in the Medical College, one day while along with some other devotees he was having a

dinner at the house of a common friend, Narendranath brought the anxious news that Sri Ramakrishna was ill—there was serious bleeding from his throat. The news cast a deep gloom over the whole party. And everybody was eager to do what best could be done to cure the disease.

Sri Ramakrishna was removed to Calcutta for better facilities of treatment. Under the leadership of Narendranath, devotees and disciples began to attend Sri Ramakrishna day and night. At first Saratchandra used to come to Shyampukur—where Sri Ramakrishna stayed—daily from his home, but soon he began to stay there day and night. Sasi, his cousin, also did the same. When Sri Ramakrishna was removed to Cossipore, they followed him there.

Saratchandra had a natural bent of mind towards serving the sick and the diseased. Now with his characteristic zeal he began to do all that lay in his power to nurse back to health one who was the guiding star of his life. To serve Sri Ramakrishna became the only concern of his life. It was not only a matter of love and devotion with him, but he had the spontaneous belief that thereby he would get the highest that can be aspired after in spiritual life. On the first of January 1886, Sri Ramakrishna in an ecstatic mood blessed many a devotee with a touch which lifted their minds to a great spiritual height. Finding that attitude of Sri Ramakrishna, all who were nearby rushed to the spot to receive his blessings. Saratchandra at that time was engaged in some duty allotted to him. But even the consideration of spiritual windfall could not tempt him away from his duty. Afterwards when asked as to why he did not go to Sri Ramakrishna at that time when there was the chance of getting a highly cove-

table spiritual experience, Saratchandra replied, 'I did not feel any necessity for that. Why should I? Was not Sri Ramakrishna dearer than the dearest to me? Then what doubt was there that he would give me, of his own accord, anything that I needed? So I did not feel the least anxiety.'

#### THE CALL OF SANNYASA

One day the Master commanded the young disciples, in preparation for the prospective monastic life, to go out and beg their food. They readily obeyed. Boys coming from respectable families went out to beg their food just to get themselves trained as to how to depend for everything on God and also to crush their pride of birth. But with their nice appearance they could hardly hide the fact that they belonged to good families. So when they went a-begging, they had varied experiences: some were pitied, some were abused, some were treated with utmost sympathy. Saratchandra would afterwards narrate his own experience with a smile thus: 'I entered a small village and stood before a house uttering the name of God just as the begging monks do. Hearing my call an elderly lady came out, and when she saw my strong physique at once she cried out in great contempt, "With such a robust health are you not ashamed to live on alms? Why don't you become a tram conductor at least?"' Saying this she closed the door with a bang.'

It is doubtful whether the young aspirant after the Sannyasin life felt sorry at this experience or enjoyed it as a great fun.

Sri Ramakrishna's condition began to be worse and worse as days passed on. Best medical aid, most devoted nursing, and the earnest prayer of all proved of no avail before the will of the Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna entered into

Mahasamadhi after fulfilling his divine mission on earth.

The young disciples who banded together under the paternal care of Sri Ramakrishna at Cossipore garden had now no shelter to lay their heads in. Many of them had to go back home. But that was only temporary. The monastery at Baranagore was established within a short time and one by one they began to join it.

When Sarat returned home, his parents were at rest. They thought Sarat had changed his mind, and they were dreaming of the future worldly life of Sarat. But though staying at home Sarat's whole mind centred on the life and teachings of the Master who had opened up a new world for him. At this time Narendranath and Rakhal would come to his house now and then, and the subject of conversation was only how to build up life in the light of the message left behind by the Master.

Saratchandra would visit the monastery now and then, impelled by a burning longing for the Great Unknown. This alarmed the father of Saratchandra. Was his son planning for a life of renunciation? The father began to reason with Sarat, 'So long as Sri Ramakrishna was alive, it was all right that you lived with him—nursing and attending him. But now that he is no more, why not settle down at home?' But seeing that arguments had no effect, he locked Saratchandra within closed doors, so that he might not go and mix with other young disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Saratchandra was not perturbed in the least. He began to spend his time in meditation and other spiritual practices. But as chance would have it, a younger brother of Sarat opened the door of the room out of sympathy for his elder brother, who then came out and fled to the monastery at Baranagore.

A few days after this some of the young disciples headed by Narendranath went to Antpore, the birthplace of Baburam (Swami Premananda), in the district of Hooghly. There one evening round a sacred fire, the disciples sat and spent the whole night in vigils, and under the inspiration of Narendranath they all took the vow of Sannyasa before God and one another. Sarat also was in the party, and after returning from Antpore he permanently joined the monastery at Baranagore.

At Baranagore they all passed strenuous days devoting themselves to hard Tapasyâ. Consideration of food and drink was nothing, the thought of realizing the Highest Beatitude was everything with these young monks. The whole day and even a long part of the night would be spent in study, meditation or discussion about spiritual matters. Now and then, when it was dead of night Narendranath and Saratchandra would secretly go out to the place where the body of Sri Ramakrishna was cremated or some such spot and practise meditation. They would come back before others woke up from sleep. Sometimes they would spend the whole night in spiritual practices. Narendranath often spoke highly of Sarat's meditation and spiritual fervour. At times Saratchandra would go to Dakshineswar and sitting under the Panchavati, where Sri Ramakrishna had so many spiritual experiences, practise Sadhana.

Though so much inclined towards meditative life Saratchandra was ever ready to respond to the call of work. Sweeping the rooms, cleansing dishes and utensils, preparing food—in all these works Saratchandra was in the forefront. And with his innate spirit of service he was sure to be found near the sick-bed if any of the Gurubhais fell ill.

Saratchandra had a good musical

voice. Under the guidance of Narendranath he further developed the art of singing. His voice was so sweet, that from a distance his songs would be mistaken as being sung by a lady. This fact led to an interesting incident in the monastery. One night Saratchandra was singing. This created a curiosity in the mind of some young neighbours as to how a female voice could be heard from a monastery at such an hour. Led by suspicion they scaled the walls and came to the hall where songs were going on. When they saw what a devotional atmosphere was created there by the singing of a young monk, they felt ashamed of their suspicion and one actually apologized.

With such a good voice when Saratchandra would recite Sanskrit hymns

or read the *Chandi* in his faultless pronunciation, the bystanders would feel lifted up to a higher plane of existence. Afterwards even in his advanced age, when, on the occasion of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda, he would sing one or two songs, out of overflowing love and devotion, those who had the privilege of listening to him, would feel a sort of ecstatic joy.

When the young disciples ceremonially took the vow of Sannyasa after performing the sacred Virajâ Homa, and changed their family names, Saratchandra became Swami Saradananda. We do not know whether there is any special significance in the name he took, but we shall afterwards see his devotion and service to the Holy Mother—whose name was Saradamani—was unique.

(To be continued)

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## THE HERMIT LIFE

BY WOLFRAM H. KOCH

To uphold the lives of religious recluses and hermits in times like the present when the collective tendencies in mankind seem to gain the upper hand, must appear to many readers as the hobby of an antiquarian neatly arranging psychological curios and hopelessly buried in his investigations of the past blinded to the needs and achievements of his day. In spite of that, institutional Christianity partly owes its degradation to the fact that since the Reformation it has more and more lost the sense of the necessity and value of the contemplative life, stifling it under the weight of the manifold restless activities of its more corporate aspect. It has increasingly failed to realize that true and enlightened service can only be the

outcome of a life of deep inwardness, dispassion, and inner withdrawal into the silence of contemplation, a life of solitude and absoluteness in its dedication to the Divine. By failing to recognize that only such a life can ever attain the intensity and illumination required for influencing the laity and peoples towards good and real charity, it has unconsciously opened the door to the nihilistic mass-tendencies which rule our day in whatever garb they may dress themselves outwardly in order better to allure those whose lives have lost the firm basis of the non-relative. The Reformation, necessary as it was, by overlooking this fundamental truth of spiritual life, stopped the spring of spiritual knowledge which can



only be kept flowing through the contemplative life, and it thereby deprived the human soul of the certitude of higher inner guidance. Well-intentioned activities, social or ethical, without this frequently lead their promoters and others into greater darkness, although for a moment they may seem to bring a ray of light to bear on some aspects of life which do need help and reform and better adjustment.

All religions with the gradual drying up of hermit life as one of their expressions have lost untold driving power and blessing, and shown that, as times went on, they even crippled the inner awareness of the needs of a truly spiritual life. Especially in the West the almost complete shrivelling up of the tree of the contemplative life as represented by the hermits, has very greatly impoverished spirituality and replaced it by the shallow cocksureness of intellectualism and social creeds on one hand, and by the irrationality and greed of power and animal impulse on the other. In place of the absoluteness of the demands on the human soul of what transcends all relativity, there has come upon man the baneful sham-absoluteness of the demands of brutal self-assertion and national vanity and megalomania, bringing in their wake ever growing misery, untruth, and frustration, and degrading men to the level of a herd of cattle helplessly driven by power-mad individuals. The human soul is so constituted that it feels the need of some absolute demand to give direction and aim to its life, and as soon as the absolute demand of spiritual values has become watered down into mere outward social and corporate activities, the door is opened to other pernicious influences which, gradually, with ever-increasing power, gain control over the soul of

man and finally draw him into the vortex of destruction and the insanity of self-aggrandizement in his group or race.

Modern life, by no longer taking account of the necessary ripening period of the soul's higher awareness through the life of contemplation and prolonged spiritual disciplines has fallen into the blindness of lower impulses and lower intuitions, and betrayed itself into beliefs which belong to the level of the savage and the brute. It thus shows a retrogression, not a progress in humanity. Group, class, or race idols are worse than the stone or wooden fetishes of the so-called savage at which institutional Christianity shudders, and they are infinitely more harmful.

Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, 'Whatsoever form any devotee seeks to worship with Shraddhâ, that Shraddhâ of his do I make unwavering. Endued with that Shraddhâ he engages in the worship of that, and from it gains his desires, these being verily dispensed by Me alone.'

Praying with sincere faith and dedication to the fetish so looked down upon by the enlightened materialist may evolve the finer sense of religious feeling in the human soul, for every prayer ultimately goes out to the same Divine Principle, however crude, for the time being, the conception of the praying may be. But the modern dedication to group, class or racial ideals and doctrines, which have become the idols of the modern idolator, making them the end and aim of life, only waters the poisonous roots of vanity and brute force in the individual caught by its lure.

There is an old legend which, extreme and one-sided as it may be, contains a deep truth which the modern world should again come to recognize if it

hopes to gain new light and deeper knowledge of Life. It is said that many centuries ago, there were three monks who sincerely sought to realize their spiritual ideal of life, each in a different way. One took the part of peace-making between men, for peace-making and brotherhood were to him the most perfect expression of the message of Christ. The second wished to nurse the sick, seeing in the alleviation of pain and suffering the greatest duty of a Christian life. The third after having deeply pondered the problem, chose to dwell in solitude and contemplation in the desert, cherishing in his heart the example of Mary and Christ's mild rebuke to Martha. After some time, the first two, having found the fulfilment of their tasks impossible, went and told their failures to their brother in the desert. He quietly suggested that each of them should go and fill a jug with water and pour it into a basin. Then he bade them tell him what they saw. They replied that they did not see anything. So he asked them to wait a little till the water had become still again, and then to look once more. They did so, and after the surface of the water had become perfectly still, they were able to see their faces reflected clearly. 'You see, my brothers,' said the monk who dwelt in the desert, 'thus it is with you and me. You who have chosen tasks in the world and live in the world,

can see nothing because of the activities and restlessness of men. I who live in solitude and peace can see both God and men.' And this 'seeing both God and men' is the invaluable contribution the hermit and contemplative has to make to the life of man, and which to-day more than ever, is needed by the world if it is to regain true insight and balance and come back to truer valuations of life. Through it alone can activity be put on a safe foundation and become fruitful, and without it all activity will always be blinded by self-will and impulse and remain cut off from the roots of Life.

In spiritual life renunciation and dispassion are the two most important factors without which nothing can be achieved. And in the beginning these are very tender plants which should be hedged round and protected from all strong gusts of wind and frost, otherwise they can never grow into sturdy trees which no storm can shake. And insight comes only to man to the same extent to which he himself becomes freer and freer from all personal relations, reactions and attachments.

'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life,' says Christ (St. Matthew XIX. 29).

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## TAGORE, THE POET OF LOVE AND BEAUTY

BY DAYAMOY MITRA

The poet Rabindranath Tagore has passed away. His poetic genius was many-sided and his works have now become a part of the literature of the world. It is difficult to adjudge his

merits properly at this moment. That will require a perspective of time; but his greatness is unquestionable. In a very special sense he is the future Poet of Humanity, and not of the East only.

In him we find that the tendencies of both the East and the West have mingled harmoniously yielding a product of great value to their spiritual interests. His *Gitanjali*, 'Song Offerings', the book that brought him the Nobel laureate is an illustration of this. Tagore's contribution in bringing different parts of the world together in the worship of Ideal Love and Beauty through his lyrics has been a unique one.

Though he wrote surprisingly well in many different forms—Novels, Short Stories, Criticism, Drama, Sermons, Grammar, Philology, Political Philosophy, and even Science and Psychology—his name will be for ever associated with his wonderful lyrics, in which his genius manifested itself at its best. Talking of his own small poems, he once said: 'The epic broke into many-coloured fragments in my mind changing the big into the small.' These lyrics that he wrote have assumed, therefore, epic proportions in the importance they hold for us both in the East and West alike.

It is in these that Tagore stands revealed before us prominently as the Poet of Love and Beauty. His mysticism—his religion—is not separate from his conception of Love and Beauty; in fact they are one and the same. Tagore in his religious faith belonged to one particular wing of the Brahmo Samaj—the 'Theistic' Church of India—of which his father Devendranath was one of the chief leaders, and to a very great extent his heredity was responsible for the predominantly religious and yet never narrowly puritanic tone of his writings. Like all true poets he soared above church dogmas. He has written any number of sermons and has joined issue with his own countrymen in many points of their orthodox faith in stinging words of satire. Some of his dramas and some of his small poems have a core of concentrated bitterness in them—per-

haps justifiably so—but these form comparatively a less powerful portion of his writings. The true *métier* of his life lay in lyric poetry. There are passages in his prose writings where rationalism flaunts its red flag of challenge but the doctrinaire in him is always submerged in the outpourings of his heart in poetry.

His songs at once made their influence felt as revelations of great beauty. The very tunes to which he set them produced a sense of wonder and mystery such as songs had never done before in Bengali Literature. Translations in a foreign medium are never happy. His magic witchery of words and sounds is the most untranslatable part of him. That is why when the people of Bengal read his *Gitanjali* rendered into English, they are disappointed. For them the one is not at all a good substitute for the other, though it has its own signal merits. His English renderings are beautiful—that does not escape observation—but they find they have to bring another frame of mind in judging their excellence and appraising their value.

Tagore has all the elements of Love and Beauty in his songs and lyrics—sensuous, imaginative, intellectual, and spiritual. There was a time in his life when he was considered the Shelley of Bengali Literature; but that judgement was a little crude in that Shelley himself was associated with nothing but vague and woolly thinking, all moonlight and song and despair and love. He was certainly charmed by Shelley at a particular stage, but he appreciated the finer and more philosophic side of Shelley as well. He outgrew his Shelley as he had to outgrow so many other elements in his life, but not entirely without some definite impression that Shelley had fixed in his mind. It was not for nothing that he said: 'The *Ode to Intellectual Beauty* is a poem which I feel I could have written myself.' This writer believes

that Shelley's Ideal in that poem, the neo-Platonic Ideal of the quest of Beauty, has contributed its share in the development of Tagore's doctrine of 'Jivana-Devatâ', the God of Life, which is one of the main inspirations of his song. Apart from this, in his earlier phase, we find, he reproduces much of Shelley's usual imagery, his poetic 'henotheism', the tendency that makes him identify his own self with the things he sees and loves. There can be no doubt that Shelley's was a poetic mind of a very rare order; but what was in Shelley a mere indistinct ideal has been made distinct and vocal through Rabindranath. Shelley died too early for it. Similarly, we witness in Tagore a riper poetical growth of many other different tendencies. A detailed study of his works on these lines is likely to be of much interest and may incidentally shed a good deal of light on the growth of a poetic mind of the utmost complexity and range, the like of which is very rarely seen in the history of world's literature. His countrymen—English-educated Bengalees especially—were at first powerfully attracted towards him thinking that they had discovered in Tagore one equal to some of the poets they had read in the universities. But though Tagore has much that the others have, he stands in a class by himself. Here is Wordsworth's depth of vision, simplicity, and intense fervour of the mind wedded to Shelley's lyric sweetness of extraordinary subtlety. Here are echoes of Goethe and Maeterlinck, De Gourmont, Mallarmé, and Baudelaire, the poets of the Celtic school, Whitman, and all the rest; but here also at the same time we have the faith and the vision of the Rishis of the Upanishads and the great mystic poets of his own country and of all times. If he has Wordsworth's vision he has nothing of Wordsworth's lament for the failure of

the light within; shades of the prison house never close about him. If there is darkness, a moment of gloom and despair, that is quickly reviewed in the light of the vision transcendent: one moment, and it is gone. The poetic temperament is so constituted that it is bound to have its rise and fall, now it is up at the heights and now again in the dark valleys below; but if the visionary in the poet is always awake he can never thoroughly lose himself. Tagore shares to the full Shelley's aspiration for Ideal Beauty but his realization of it does not leave him dizzy, panting, and bewailing. We hear nothing like Shelley's heart-rending cry of the 'desire of the moth for the star'. The fact is, Rabindranath had crossed the wilderness and made his acquaintance with the 'King of the Dark Chamber'. Shelley's failure seemed inherent in a dualism of flesh and spirit which was continually leading him astray. For Rabindranath that dualism was not apparent because his vision made him realize the flowering of the flesh in blossoms of spirit. At a later stage Tagore showed greater affinities with Browning too. He delighted in Browning and we catch many echoes of the elder poet in this hall of thousand echoes, his poetry. But no one of these represents him fully because it is his own voice that submerges them all. Here is Browning's 'hope for the best that is to be', a cry of unfulfilment changing into a paean of triumph in the end—the hope for all earth's warpedness made into a 'rounded whole' and 'the moment made eternity'. But Browning's hopes seem to find their fulfilment in Tagore. His realization is here and now, as it is going to be in the Beyond. Besides, he was a thorough master of harmonies like Browning's Abt Vogler and as a musician 'he knew'. The secret of the science of sounds he had mastered so thoroughly that it took

him beyond himself, beyond the limitations that Browning too had placed for himself, and made him taste a cup of bliss,—and his readers and hearers with him—which was beyond the reach of the other poet. The present writer holds strongly to the belief that Tagore as a musician has helped Tagore as a poet much. Where song passes into music out of pure spontaneity, without any effort, deep answers unto deep in a way that it never can when we play with words only. That all art in its perfection approaches music is a truth well illustrated in the case of Tagore, to which one should like to add that all art in its perfection is Religion, is an act of worship. This is our Indian faith and this explains the appeal of Tagore's poetry in which we have a combination of Poetry and Music and Religion.

Almost each song, each lyric that he wrote—and he wrote an immense number—opens a new approach to Beauty. It is easy of course to mark out gradations in them and certainly all are not of equal worth. There are so many that are of the purely conventional or traditional kind, faint rippling songs of love, passing sentiments or fancies woven in threads of rime, songs of a purely churchian type, the traditional hymnological kind, even songs written in a mood of facetious humour; but there is always something new in them, always a touch of art even when the sentiment is a most common one. After the juvenile and adolescent phases were over, when he seems to find himself, his songs took a deeper and deeper tinge from the struggle that was going on within his mind, and he began to sing of his exultations and agonies in the presence of the great truths of Nature and Life and God.

One most remarkable characteristic of these later songs, apart from their sweetness and simplicity, their passion

for the True and the Beautiful, lies in their intense closeness and identification of his own self with that of Nature. His higher aspirations for the Infinite are so closely linked with Nature that it is difficult to separate the one from the other. Nature is not brought in as something alien to be worshipped, something with which we have to make our terms first. There is no straining here to establish a bond or link with it. The affinity between man and Nature is a biologico-psychological fact, which the poet's vision easily acknowledges since his own inner experience emotionally testifies to its truth. Here the two together move in accepted harmony towards their goal—the Infinite of Love and the Infinite of Beauty. The sky heavy with clouds, the distant rumblings of thunder, the deep forests beyond, the music of the rains that fills the mind with passionate yearnings, the night-sky with her stars, the blue depths of the autumnal sky, the spring with her cornucopia of gifts, are all part and parcel of the poet's own existence and all in travail for the birth of the Greater Being in the poet's own soul. To quote but one passage, the poet sings:

My mind is not here  
 O thou Remote, I thirst for thee.  
 All through the sunlit idle noon  
 In its murmur of trees, in the play  
 of shadows  
 O what fairy form of thine I see  
 In the blue depths of the sky thou  
 liest beautifully.  
 O thou Remote,  
 I thirst for thee,  
 O Far-off, O Great Far-off, how thou  
 dost play  
 On thine own flute  
 Those touching tunes  
 That call for me!  
 My doors are shut  
 And I forget

I am not free.

Andrew Marvell's identification of human soul with Nature approximates this; but there we do not find the higher striving for the Infinite—there it is only a truth of the intellect and passion, 'fancy' and not 'imagination' in the Coleridgean sense. The poet never finds himself an alien anywhere in the universe. The changes that accompany us from youth to old age all have their correspondences for him in the changes that overtake Nature in different seasons. The play of spring in Nature, he held, is the counterpart of the play of youth in our lives. Human life in his songs, therefore, mingles 'with the heart of the world, with the music of the cloud and the forests'. It is thus that the poet adores the Beauty that is beyond in the Beauties that Nature unfolds before him.

In that poem of marvellous workmanship *Urvashi* which has been praised as the greatest lyric in Bengali Literature and one of the best in world's literature, we find Rabindranath talking of both Beauty in the abstract as well as Beauty as fabled to have been incarnate in *Urvashi*, the principal *danseuse* in the court of Indra, the Indian Jove. Here the two conceptions, the metaphysical and the physical have been combined into one. It is difficult to give an accurate representation of the force and grandeur of this poem in English translation. The poet did not translate it himself. Mr. E. J. Thompson has attempted one. I give below the last stanza only from a version made many years ago. *Urvashi* was born of the churning of the sea by the gods and Titans of Indian mythology. There are parallel stories of the birth of Beauty in a human-divine form in other mythologies too. The Greek Aphrodite sprang from the waves of the sea. *Urvashi* is the centre of a tragic

story in the *Rigveda*, where we see her, the Immortal, leaving her human husband *Pururava* because human longings were always below the level of her desires. Another great poet of India, *Kalidasa*, has told us her story in a drama of great beauty. *Rabindranath*, evidently, has all these in the background of his mind but his is entirely a new creation. Here we witness a transfiguration of her power and influence, of which the secret lies in his own romantic imagination. The language and versification he adopted in this poem remind us of *Keats's* stanza-form in his odes and *Keats's* own turn of phraseology. The grandeur of sentiment and lavish richness of design and execution keep one spell-bound. Both *Shelley* and *Keats* would have loved to read this poem, 'Beauty-mad' as both of them were. The poem portrays for us first a vision of the primal dawn of creation when *Urvashi* was born—such as the ancient poets imagined her to have been but did not try to delineate—and then she is represented as the symbol of that elusive sensuous beauty that maddens the gods and men alike, dealing out nectar and poison both, now loved, now lost, always eluding, always followed—the heart of humanity bleeding for her, the heart out of which always rises the anguished cry: 'Will she not come, will she not come once more?'

'Twill not return, 'twill not return, for  
ever set that glory's moon for ye—  
That moon-set mountain's dweller,  
*Urvashi*!

And so, to-day, on face of earth,  
along with breath of festive vernal  
day,

From some one sever'd long from  
love, a long-drawn sigh,

All mingled, comes this way.

When on the full moon's sheeny

night, the quarters ten are filled  
with smiles all o'er,

A far-off memory from somewhere  
doth play a pipe that saddens ever-  
more,

And showers of tear-drops pour:

Still hope doth keep awake within  
the soul's outcry,

O thou with bands put by!

In Rabindranath's imagination the human and the divine have coalesced as everywhere. She is there, the eternal feminine, a problem and a puzzle, a seduction, the 'Mohini Shakti' of the Hindus, the 'Venus Verticordia' of the Latins, she stands 'clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment and fair as the foam', who can never lose her power over the human heart, but behind it all there gleams and flashes the suggestion of another Beauty that does not delude, that shorn of all dross, remains perpetually what it is, for which human beings must ever aspire rising on their dead selves that but fall below in their effort to seize her and hold her. She is gone, but she has left the heart's aspiration for her. The fact that we are conscious of her existence all the time, is, according to Tagore's philosophy, proof positive that she has a true and truer existence in us in a more sublime sense than ever before. She still sends her thrilling messages of delight to Nature outside and to the human heart that wants to fathom the secret of her charm and comes back baffled every time. Her secret is the secret of all beauty that steepens our senses with pleasure. The poet's undertone of despair typifies the soul's movement towards a greater self-realization. 'Why else was the pause prolonged but that music might issue thence?' Later, in the *Balâkâ* stage, he breathed life into his Urvashi again to juxtapose her sensuous charm with the spiritual beauty of Lakshmi Herself; she, who, as one

that followed her, was also born of the churning of the sea, out of the collective effort of both gods and Titans. Beauty that is sensuous charm finds her complement in Beauty that is Grace and Benediction, though the mystery of both remains for ever for the human heart. The poet's imagination here closely follows Hindu mythopœic vision.

The rich harmony, the exquisite orchestration of sounds, the luscious ornate language, 'jewels five words long that on the stretched forefinger of time will sparkle for ever', and the passionate rapturous strain which he has employed in *Urvashi* testify to his supreme power as a wizard with words.

The poet's soul takes delight in the varying forms of Beauty through love. For him to live is to love. This love is the greatest truth of our human personality and the poet has made this clear in his two famous books of philosophical disquisition, *Sâdhanâ* and *Personality*. Through love we are made one with all that is outside. Love may be of the individual; it very often is so, but love expands or should expand and embrace the whole movement of our earthly career. Love was given to us for that purpose. In one of his finest poems, addressed to the portrait of his wife, included in the *Balâkâ*, we find the poet's love in its onward march. He lost his wife early in middle age—does he remember her now? He does. Where formerly her physical presence connoted her existence, now it is her spiritual presence that gives meaning to his life. That which apparently means forgetfulness is not really so. He walks abstracted in the path of his life, he forgets the stars and flowers; but they make their presence felt in him. He knows they exist in him because they exist *outside* him, otherwise his life would have lost its sense of beauty and rapture; and the artist's picture is only a reminder

to him, who lives thus abstracted, that the one from whom he has parted still exists, that love exists, that beauty exists, that the life in the portrait has gone on expanding itself in the life of the poet in which it has found its greater being and existence. She has become one with the very breath of his existence and, just as, because we take no notice of our breathing, we do not therefore cease to breathe, she is still a living reality to him, perhaps more so in her death than when she was alive. The physical has found its meaning in the supra-physical. Love and existence have become synonymous and Beauty is the finest flower of that blended harmony. Beauty is not an accident of existence; it is wrapped up in all existence and goes beyond existence itself. Where our deeper consciousness registers 'existence' our mind and heart acknowledge Beauty.

The poem of poems in this book and the one that deals with this aspect of Love and Beauty is his *Shah Jahan*, a very well-known piece, originally called the *Taj Mahal* when it was first published in the Bengali Journal, the *Sabuj Patra*. In this poem the sentiment he attributes to the Emperor-Builder that will always remain classic in their penetrating insight. The poem, in its architecture of words vies with the beauty of the architecture of the marble itself. He apostrophizes the Great Moghul towards the end and remembers that his personality is greater than his deed of glory. His work done, the 'chariot of his Life', his soul, goes on its way further forward. For him there is no perpetual clinging round that which is of this earth alone.

The Emperor's dream of Love and Beauty has here found its highest consummation in this great work of art of all-surpassing loveliness. The dream has taken the shape of a marble memo-

rial which is his gift to all lovers of the world for all time to come. And yet when all is accomplished, what does it amount to? Art, Beauty give us the soul's breathing spaces, the tense moments when we seem to live more deeply, more truly than in the ordinary moments of our life, 'the moments made eternity'. And the reader and spectator too hold their breath in wonder before such moments of visitations from Living Reality; but the life of the soul is not confined to this. These constitute for men the stepping-stones only to a Higher Reality. Through the portals of sorrow and joy connected with Love and Beauty we make our exit from this into a world where the call of the unknown takes us, to the 'Gateway of the Morning' that is yet to be. All scattered love and beauty make only the poet's path smooth for going further up and on. If ever there were poets who took the cry of going forward earnestly, surely Rabindranath Tagore was the best of them. Love and Beauty, more Love and more Beauty, as our personality grows and develops, are his ideal. They do not allow him to rest anywhere. He goes on from form to form, rejecting none, denying none, so that his soul might grow—and his realization is never complete. Though philosophically his ideas have been held to correspond partly to those of Heraclitus, Hegel, Bradley, and Bergson, it is difficult to comprehend them under any set form of philosophic dialectic. No 'vicious intellectualism', to use the late Professor William James's graphic expression, clings to Rabindranath's vision of the mighty movement of the soul; and poetry differs from metaphysics in this that the living impulses of life enter more into the former than into the inertia of intellectual thought, however seemingly dynamic. It is a great truth, this about the incapacity



of art, even at its best, for giving expression to our soul and all that it stands for. It has not been expressed so powerfully by our poet anywhere else than in this superb poem.

And now he, too, has passed away like his own Emperor, leaving behind him his work which will crown him perpetually in the memory of men. To

what new destiny his 'Jivana-Devata', the God of his Life, has called him we do not know. But so long as in Nature the grass has its greenness, the sky its play of colours, the clouds their veils of mystery, the change of seasons their ravishing poetry, and within us there is the living heart of man with 'blood that freezes, blood that burns', the poet will live for us, the poet will not die.

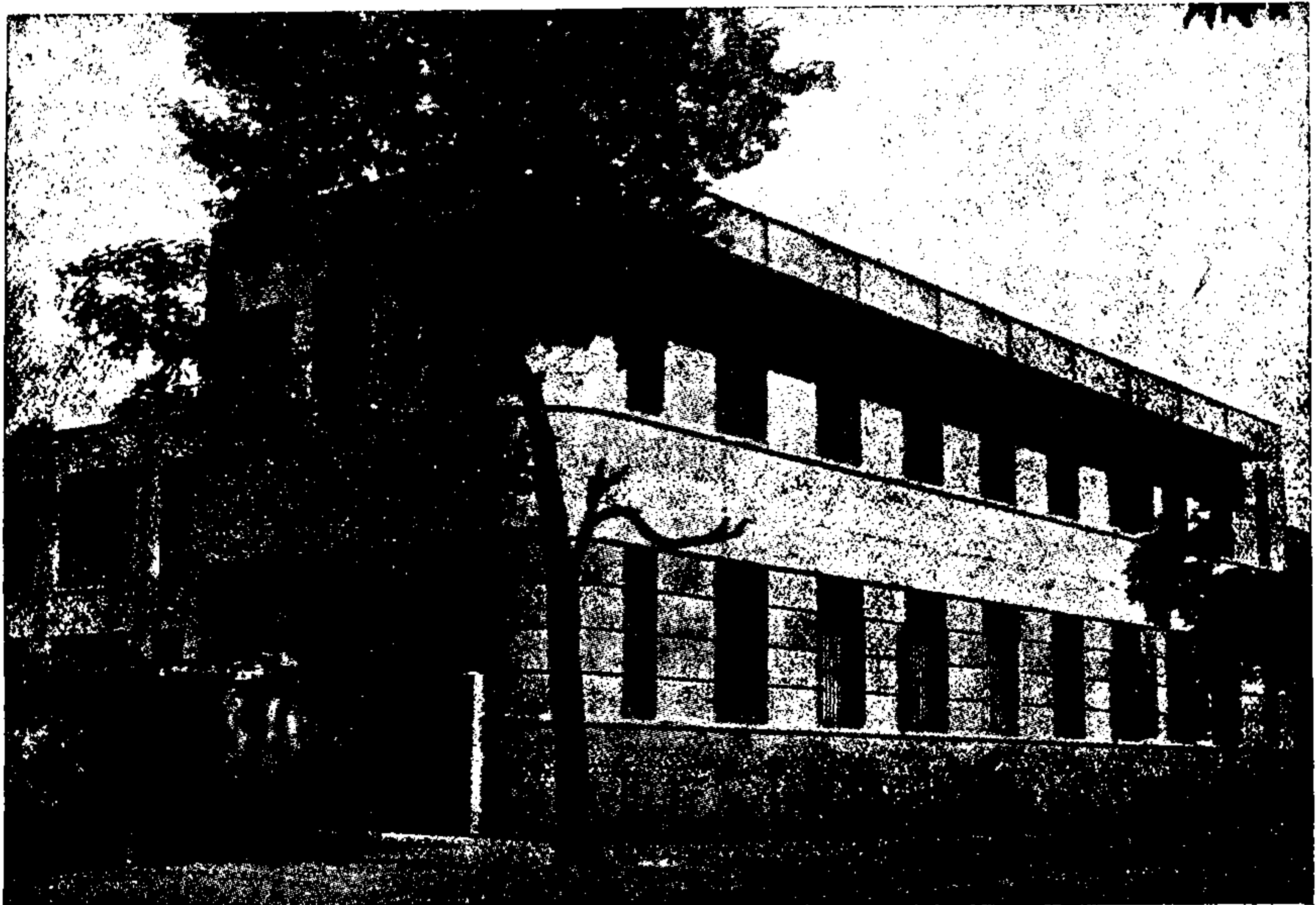
## MATERNITY WORK AND THE SHISHUMANGAL PRATISHTHAN

BY BIRENDRA NATH DE, C.I.E., I.C.S., (RETD.)

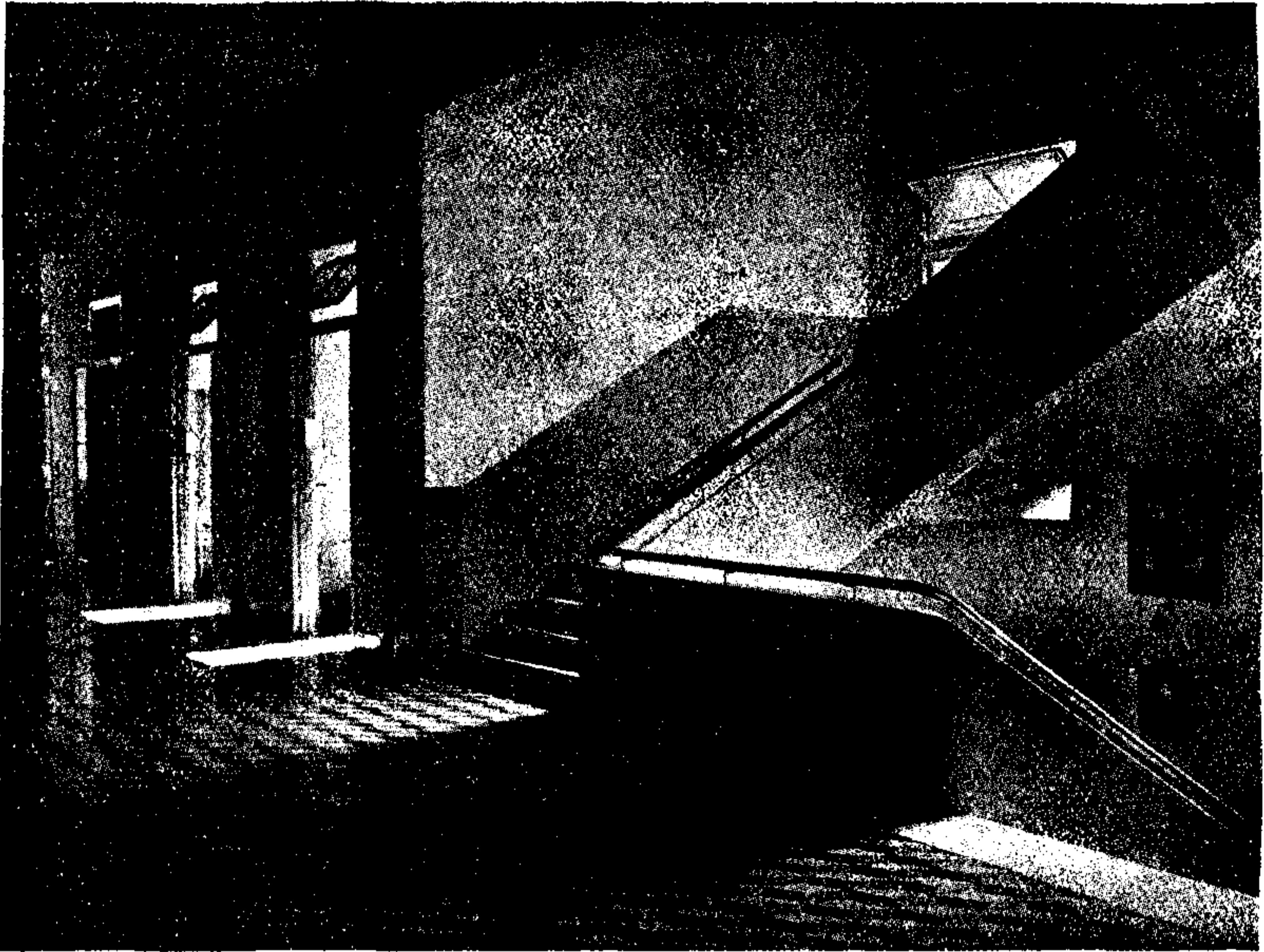
Nowhere perhaps has motherhood been more succinctly defined without loss of accuracy and precision than where Coleridge refers to a mother as 'the holiest thing alive'. This identification of a not uncommon human phenomenon with one of the attributes of divinity has been the most common feature of philosophical thought throughout the

ages. It is a little surprising, therefore, that until recent years no attempt has been made to descend from abstract speculations upon a metaphysical plane to the practical side of this highly intriguing mystery of human psychology.

The machine age coming in the wake of modern scientific researches has marked the beginning of an open revolt



THE NEW HOME OF THE INSTITUTION



EAST CORRIDOR, STAIRCASE AND CABINS

of the human species against the established natural tendencies of mankind. The emergence of a new man, drifting sharply away from nature and growing gradually less sensitive to the mere

subtle of nature's controlling agencies, has been a feature of the modern age. To-day, therefore, we have a human race more subservient to the machines—the veritable Frankenstein of its own



ANTENATAL WAITING AND CLASS ROOM

creation—than the machines to their creators, and, moreover, fearful of every natural reaction on the human species.

In consequence of this startling and 'unnatural' human development, the most natural functions are often complicated and distorted out of all proportions. Instincts and former gifts of nature have with the advance of 'civilization' gradually declined so that formerly normal reactions consequent upon

less have been the indigenous systems of midwifery, that a strictly natural child-birth is rare enough to be labelled as an almost unnatural phenomenon of modern city life.

Apart from the practical difficulties in the most important sphere of life, viz., reproduction and preservation of species, there arises simultaneously the problem of preserving the instincts and attributes of maternity and, if possible, restoring them to the same lofty level



MOTHERS' WARD

the subjection of man to natural changes have become foreign to the modern human constitution. The most common and the most glaring example of this state of affairs is found in maternity.

Nature's reply to the revolt of man against its sovereignty seems to be an attack upon the whole system of reproduction and preservation of species—a system almost entirely dependent upon the forces of nature. So relentless has been nature's revenge and so resource-

where they could command the same ideological respect, so often paid them by philosophers and poets of the past. It is doubtful whether the latter could be achieved without a thoroughly practical scheme for the restoration of maternity to its most natural and what used to be its most 'primitive' aspects. Since retrogression is impossible, we must devise plans which, though conforming with our most unnatural modes of life, would give to this world mothers

and children approximating as nearly as possible to their forbears of the distant past.

Modern civilization, in common with its predecessors, has been slow to notice the writing on the wall, but at long last ways and means are being tried to eliminate as far as practicable the ghastly spectres of high infantile and maternal mortalities and unnatural child-births with their disastrous repercussions on human life. Numerous institutions—mostly founded or controlled by philan-

sion which is controlled and guided by Sannyasins imbued with the highest principles of self-sacrifice and working with the ultimate object of building up a nation in every sense of the term. Swami Dayananda, an ardent member of this Mission with all his valuable experience of American institutions, is the organizing secretary of the Pratishtan. With true scientific insight this institution has commenced its task with the future parents of the nation at their earliest stages of



BABIES' WARD

thropists—have sprung up all over the country and for the most part function with all the zeal of proselytes to a new faith. A few of these institutions, keeping ever before them the ideal of universal service, are striving with all the equipment of modern science to extricate from the curse of nature the future of the human race.

Such an institution is the Shishumangal Pratishtan, Calcutta, conducted by the Ramakrishna Mis-

existence. It is undoubtedly in keeping with the maxim, 'childhood shows the man', that this institution is diverting a large part of its activities towards ensuring a healthy baby fully equipped with all the resources it could possibly command.

Eulogies on such institutions would be more appropriate in medical treatises than in the proposition discussed here. It would be sufficient for our purpose to point to certain salient features of an institution with which we are most

closely acquainted and to endeavour to show thereby how near to, or *per contra*, how far from the ideal are the best human efforts.

The striking feature of the Shishumangal Pratishtan is the system of smooth co-ordination of the activities of the institution in relation to the patients generally, viz., antenatal care, confinement (Home and Hospital), and post-natal care. Side by side with the above, the institution also undertakes gynaecological cases and trains midwives primarily for assimilation by the institution itself. Besides clinical efficiency, the institution lays great emphasis upon antenatal care, so much so that practically no case is undertaken without a proper course of antenatal treatment. More alive to its responsibilities, perhaps, than the majority of such institutions, the Shishumangal Pratishtan follows up every maternity case whenever possible until the child is of school-going age. This demonstrates the almost Teutonic thoroughness with which this institution pursues its aim of building up a nation with both the advantages which nature itself ought to bestow and those which modern scientific progress brings within our grasp.

Little indication of the organized efficiency of the Shishumangal Pratishtan has been given, and a layman cannot do better than examine the figures of this ten-year-old institution and compare them where possible with similar figures elsewhere. The numbers of maternal deaths for 1,140 hospital deliveries and 140 home deliveries in 1939 were 2 and nil respectively. In 1940 there were 1,574 hospital and 119 home deliveries and maternal deaths were 4 and nil respectively. The neonatal infantile deaths for 1939 and 1940 were 84 and 89 respectively. The mortality rates of Calcutta, viz., nearly 25 per 1,000 for mothers and 250 to 350

per 1,000 for infants compared with those for this institution for 1939 and 1940, viz., 1.75 per 1,000 in 1939 and 2.5 per 1,000 in 1940 for mothers, and 80.7 per 1,000 in 1939 and 26 per 1,000 in 1940 for infants respectively, speak for themselves. Furthermore, when it is considered that of 86 and 40 operations in 1939 and 1940 respectively in connection with gynaecological cases all were cured and discharged, nothing remains to be said by a layman in support of the medical side of this institution.

In absolute consistency with the principles followed by the Ramakrishna Mission, the Shishumangal Pratishtan opens its doors to all, irrespective of race, religion, colour, or creed, and caters as far as possible equally for the needs of the rich and the poor. In order to keep itself free from overcrowding, which is the bane of popularity, this institution refrains from advertising its wares, and, moreover, includes in its constructive programme a scheme for steady expansion so as to be able to cope with the evergrowing demands of the public. Its aim is to maintain its high degree of efficiency without in any way lowering its standard as a result of expansion. The training and recruitment of midwives is carried on with a double purpose—to train efficient midwives and to inculcate the spirit of service and self-sacrifice among an ever-widening circle of national womanhood.

Great as the progress of this institution may be, we feel that there is yet a long way to go before its final objective is reached. Unless and until the attainment of natural motherhood can be demonstrated throughout the country, and particularly to the rural communities, as something capable of achievement, the noble mission of this great institution will remain incomplete.

Lastly, an institution such as the

Shishumangal Pratishtan deserves the gratitude of the nation for its effort to revitalize the nation through the resurrection of 'motherhood' in the fullest sense of the term. Service, self-sacri-

fice, and sympathy for the human race seem to be the mainsprings of the principles of this institution, and every true national cannot but pray for the success of this gigantic enterprise.

## THE LEADERSHIP OF YOUTH FROM HERDER AND BENTHAM TO LENIN AND TAGORE

BY DR. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

### YOUTH AS CREATOR OF 'AS-IFS'

The entire conception of progress might be treated, if so desired, in a sense as a fiction. According to Hans Vaihinger's *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob* (The Philosophy of 'As-if', 1911) almost every thought or idea is a 'consciously false acceptance' (*bewusst falsche Annahme*).<sup>1</sup> We live in a manner 'as if' the world corresponds to or agrees with our artificial fictions. Mankind deals with the world 'as if' a higher spirit has created it. *Eine Welt des Irrealen* (a world of unreal things) is thereby constructed over or superimposed upon a world of realities, such as the sensations, the physical attributes, the human body, etc.

As long as progress is eternally nothing but conflict-situations,—a series of right-wrong or good-evil, *sat-asat* or *dharma-adharma* complexes,—the concept of progress can very justly be regarded as an *Irreal*, a fiction, an 'as-if' of Vaihinger. The positivist is at liberty to deny the fact of progress unless he be an idealist at the same time. But the 'as-if' philosophy calls itself idealistic positivism or positivistic idealism. Progress does not, therefore, have to be negated as a category in

this system. At every stage it is possible to believe, on the strength of the objective data of the past, in the fiction that some improvement has been consummated, although at the same time certain evil elements are unquestionably in evidence.

We shall now analyse the spiritual agents in the making of these 'as-ifs' in progress, *bâditi*, improvement, *unnati*, or civilization. How are the 'fictions' being generated? The problem is to ascertain the forces that enable the world of ideals,—which are really the unrels,—to be superimposed on the positive, the factual and the real. The secret is to be found, as it appears to me, in the eternal youth of mankind. It is youth that creates the 'as-ifs', the *Irreals*, the ideals. Let us examine the position in a concrete manner.

In every social pattern of to-day as of yesterday,—in the rural areas as in the urban,—it is not the 'haves' but the 'have-nots' who create culture or civilization, i.e., the 'as-ifs', fictions, ideals in progress. The 'haves' represent the *status quo*, the 'have-nots' embody the creative disequilibrium that challenges the *status quo*. In the 'haves' the world sees the fatigue of age and the inertia of tradition. The 'have-nots', on the contrary, exhibit the creativities of youth and the dynamics of adventure. The 'haves' repre-

<sup>1</sup> R. Mueller-Freienfels: *Die Philosophie des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1923) pp. 78-80.

sent the Bastille of conservation in possession, wealth, domination, imperialism, power. In the 'have-nots' are concentrated the strivings after possession, the urges for wealth, the yearnings after conquest, the pressure of expansion, and the revolt against the powers that be.

It is the triumph of 'have-nots' over the 'haves' that constitutes progress in every region or race as well as in every epoch. The remakers of mankind are the 'have-nots'. The world, therefore, belongs always and everywhere to the 'have-nots', the poor and the pariah.<sup>2</sup> It is in this eternal and universal series of achievements that the spirituality of world-history or human progress is to be found, and it consists in the subversions of the 'haves' by the poor and the pariah. The perpetual situation which enables the poor and the pariah to function as world-remakers and world-conquerors is the cardinal principle in the doctrine of creative disequilibrium.

The 'haves' and 'have-nots' are, as a rule, treated by Marxists and socialists generally as economic categories. In contemporary international politics these categories are being used as colonialists *vis-à-vis* non-colonialists among the great powers. But it is possible to employ these categories in a more extensive and fundamental sense.

Biologically considered, it is the young that are the 'have-nots' *vis-à-vis* the adults or the old who are the 'haves'. The key to progress lies, therefore, in the hands of the young, as I have said in my Bengali essay, *Unnatir Châbi Kâhâr Hâté?*<sup>3</sup> (In

<sup>2</sup> B. K. Sarkar: *The Sociology of the Poor and the Pariah (Man in India, Ranchi, July-September, 1940)*.

<sup>3</sup> Published in the monthly *Suvarna-bhumi* (Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Academy of

Whose Hands lies the Key to Progress)? Young men and women may be divided into two groups. The first are those who are between 16 and 20. They may be generally taken to be the pre-university school boys and girls. It is the dreams, visions, intuitions, pious wishes, and ideals of this group that constitute the most creative ideologies of the world in East and West. Unpractical and impracticable many of these ideologies are. But they are the products of unsophisticated heads and hearts and they are untrammelled by the *contrainte*, compulsion or control of any bosses or superiors. Autarchy, autonomy, independence is the stuff of which they are made. They are essentially spiritual and profoundly moral. If freedom of expression can at all be experienced ever by any individual it is between the ages of 16 and 20. It is the observations and criticisms of this group about the society and the tradition that contain the only sincere or honest and 'irresponsible' or free-lance view-points in regard to culture and the world as well as the future of mankind.

The religion of adoration or the mysticism of respect is not in the blood of these youngsters. They do not 'look before and after' and are not interested in taking their cue from others. It is these raw, untried, and inexperienced individuals who dare undertake adventures and take the law into their hands. Their thoughts and activities cannot yet be ruthlessly controlled by men of higher salary and higher rank. Meanness and treachery have not yet possessed the atmosphere of their chums and comrades. This is the age at which human beings can defy both money and social position and consider the entire world as being rotten from

Bengali Literature, Rangoon, Burma, January, 1941).

top to bottom and waiting for totalitarian reconstruction at their hands.

Authority, law, order, material prosperity, worldly reputation,—all social items are the permanent targets of youth between 16 and 20. Theirs is the world of non-material, transcendental, and spiritual values,—the kingdom that is not of this world, the really 'classless' society, i.e., the society which ignores the income-distinctions and rank-distinctions. The world, therefore, is being remade by them to-day and to-morrow as it was remade by them yesterday and day before yesterday. And this in the East as much as in the West.

It is for youngsters between 16 and 20 to sing, like Louis Untermeyer, the American poet, the song of world-remaking liberty. *These Times* (New York, 1917) of his embodies the eternal challenge of the young, as follows :

This is my hour, the sum of tireless  
ages;  
These times are those which all time  
prepared;  
And as I come, the old accounts are  
squared;  
Creation smiles, accepting me as  
wages,  
Not to make good the dream of gods  
and sages,  
A pat millennium, a world ensnared;  
But with great boast that none has  
ever dared,  
I come; a challenge hurled at creeds  
and cages.

It is not to be understood, however, that every youth between 16 and 20 throws out a challenge like this. Nor is it implied that none but such youths are capable of this kind of world-transforming challenge. In this psychology as in other social phenomena the student of science must have to avoid hasty universalization, or monocracy of all sorts.

The second group comprises those men and women who are between 26 and 30. As intellectuals they have left the period of academic pupillage and are in the prime of manhood and womanhood. They are perhaps no longer as free, irresponsible, autonomous, or autarchic as they were between 16 and 20. But they are still in a position to look at the world through their own eyes and orientate themselves to society and tradition without being helplessly dominated by the bread-givers and the legal superiors. They can still treat money, official hierarchy, and worldly position with contempt. The spiritual *Swaraj* or autonomy of personality is still somewhat in their own possession. It is still possible for them to deal with the pioneers, veterans, and authorities on terms of human equality. Dignity, i.e., man to man respect can still be demanded by them from the highest. The questions of bread and butter, family maintenance, social prestige, class-consciousness, and other items of material appraisal do not as yet compel this group to sell themselves off to the powers that be. The conventional superiors in morals, manners, sentiments, standard of justice, and evaluation of truth, beauty, and good cannot yet terrify them into subjection. It is such youths that can venture to challenge the *status quo* and defy the existing measures of value and go on cultivating the ambition of creating new worlds and new societies. Mankind continues in great proportions to be remade and officialdom transformed, even from a distance, by their very existence.

Creative disequilibrium depends for its functioning on the spiritual urges of these two groups of young men and women or rather this single group of persons between 16 and 30. The



quality, number, and variety of such individuals set the limits within which the social patterns can be remade or new ones established, i.e., the 'as-ifs', unrealed or ideals, manufactured and rendered current coins.

While discussing the relations between science and morality in *L'Evolution des Valeurs*<sup>4</sup> Bouglé observes that *ruiner le préjugé, pour ruiner le privilège, tel fut bien en effet le programme central de la philosophie française du XIIIe siècle* (the overthrow of prejudice in order to destroy privilege was in reality the programme of French philosophy in the eighteenth century). We shall go farther and observe that 'the overthrow of prejudice in order to destroy privilege' is the programme of every progress movement in every age and clime. The greatest obstacle to progress is privilege, *status quo*, tradition, prestige. The first step in the destruction of privilege or prestige is the overthrow of prejudice, superstition, and custom. It is the function of reason or science based on reason to demolish prejudice, superstition, and custom and render possible the regime of 'liberalism'.

In my analysis of the social patterns it is, as a rule, not possible except for

<sup>4</sup> Paris, 1929, p. 229. See also A. Liebert: *Der Liberalismus* (Zurich, 1938).

the young to command this prejudice-destroying reason. Age is prejudice, age is superstition, age is custom, age is tradition. It is youth that can *ruiner le préjugé*, and thereby overthrow prejudice, prestige, custom, superstition, and tradition. As indicated above and elsewhere the 'youth interpretation of history' or culture is not to be taken in a monocratic, or dogmatic manner.

It is the function of youth to demolish the region, the *milieu*, the society, the tradition, the epoch. Youth is nurtured on anti-society urges like those in Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808).<sup>5</sup> In the fourteenth address Fichte declares: *Nicht die Natur ist es die uns verdirbt, diese erzeugt uns in Unschuld, die Gesellschaft ist's* (It is not nature that spoils us. Nature creates us in innocence. It is society that is the cause of our degradation). In this revolt against society is to be found the creed of youth. Now, the world's progress is consummated by the overthrow of the influences of the region, the *milieu*, the society, the tradition, and the epoch. This is why the youth is almost invariably the leader of the world, the driver of its car of progress. The interests of human progress coincide very often with the activities of youth.

<sup>5</sup> Leipzig, Reclam Edition, p. 244.

(To be concluded)

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

With this issue the *Prabuddha Bharata* commences its forty-seventh year; and we take this opportunity to offer our cordial greetings to our friends and readers. We have tried to make

the present issue attractive in many ways: our only regret is that war conditions did not allow us to make it better. This number opens with the translation of *Kathamrita* or the *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* from the original Bengali by Swami Nikhilananda, President of

the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Centre of New York, U.S.A. About this book and the translation Aldous Huxley writes in the *Vedanta and the West*: 'M., as the author modestly styles himself, was peculiarly qualified for his task. To a reverent love for his master, to a deep and experiential knowledge of that master's teachings, he added a prodigious memory for the small happenings of each day and a happy gift for recording them in an interesting and realistic way. Making good use of his natural gifts and of the circumstances in which he found himself, M. produced a book unique, so far as my knowledge goes, in the literature of hagiography. No other saint has had so able and indefatigable a Boswell. . . . To read through these conversations, in which mystical doctrine alternates with an unfamiliar kind of humour, and where discussions of the oddest aspects of Hindu mythology give place to the most profound and subtle utterances about the nature of Ultimate Reality, is in itself a liberal education in humility, tolerance, and suspense of judgement. We must be grateful to the translators for their excellent version of a book so curious and delightful as a biographical document, so precious, at the same time, for what it teaches us of the life of the spirit.' Our readers will have the delight of reading these conversations in the future issues. . . . In our own article *Must India Accept Socialism?* we have shown that India must seriously strive for re-invigorating her own ideals, which are quite adequate for our purposes, before she thinks of strutting in borrowed feathers. . . . The reader may begin the Sister's letter on *The Education of Indian Women* after studying Sir Jadunath's and Lady Abala Bose's remarks at the end of these Notes. The Sister's love for India and her unique capacity for inter-

preting Indian ideals were, perhaps, excelled only by her devotion to the self-imposed task of the education of women. The Ramakrishna Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School is a standing memorial to her noble effort. . . . *Swami Vivekananda's* eightieth birthday will be celebrated on 9th January. But the world of light and leading knew him first at Chicago on 11th September, 1893. Dr. Nag sends an appeal for celebrating the jubilee of that epoch-making event in a fitting manner. Brahmachari Narayana through his vivid description, leads us to the holy temple of *Amarnath*. Alas, we are carried only on the wings of imagination! . . . Principal Sarma has specialized in the study of the Gita, and his *Shraddha and Jnana* will, we hope, inspire faith in one who has none. . . . Swami Nirvedananda writes rarely; but when he does, one admires his depth of thought and the art of expression. How beautifully he answers the question, *What is Religion?* . . . In *Swami Saradananda* we meet with the future leader who successfully held the reins of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for about three decades. . . . Wolfram H. Koch has the privilege of sitting quietly in Switzerland, the only peaceful retreat in the present-day Europe, and thinking of *The Hermit Life*, the lack of which seems to spell disaster. . . . In *Tagore, the Poet of Love and Beauty* Dayamoy Mitra of the Lucknow University shows how Tagore's poetic genius left the sensuous levels of love and beauty and soared to mystic heights. . . . Worship of the Divine Mother takes many forms: and in *Maternity Work and the Shishumangal Pratishthan* B. N. De shows how one of these modes has taken practical shape. . . . Dr. Benoy Kumar Sarkar's genius excels in original thinking, and under his inspira-

tion we must accept the *Leadership of Youth*.

#### SISTER NIVEDITA

We reprint the following passages from the Puja number of the *Hindusthan Standard*.

'In 1900, two weeks before the Dusserah holidays, there assembled in the guest-house of the Mohant of Bodh-Gaya Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose and Rabindranath Tagore, Sister Nivedita and Swami Saradananda, and two other Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission, namely "Gupta Maharaj" and his nephew. I joined the party on a three days' leave from my college in Patna. We used to walk to the neighbouring villages and fields in the afternoon and sit down and meditate under the Bodhi tree at sunset; thereafter on return to the guest-house we had readings and discussion.

'Sister Nivedita was deeply grieved at the moral stagnation of Bengal—the people's seeming deadness to all higher appeals, their lack of a burning patriotic fervour and spirit of self-sacrifice. She cherished the highest admiration for ancient India's achievements and a burning desire to see those glories revived in our own days and our people rising by *their own efforts* to the full stature of an independent nation standing shoulder to shoulder with the nations of the West. When we visited the site

of the village of Urvil, where once had dwelt Sujâtâ—the village headman's daughter who had offered the famished Lord Buddha a pot of milk-pudding just after he had attained to Enlightenment,—Sister Nivedita praised the long long extinct family as ideal householders (*Grihastha*) and naturally her mind turned to modern times, by an inescapable contrast.'—Sir Jadunath Sarkar.

'... Men and women in India have been doing what the State has failed to do. It will not do, however, to ignore or forget that non-Indian men and women have been pioneers of new education in the country. It may be that many of them were moved to start schools in India to "Anglicize" the Indian, to produce a race "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals, and in intellect", to quote Macaulay's famous words. Amongst the few, the very few, who thought otherwise and worked for the love of India, impelled by respect for Indian traditions, the names of Mrs. Annie Besant, of Margaret Noble (better known as Sister Nivedita), of Sister Christine (Nivedita's colleague), have to be gratefully remembered. It is the example of their work that has inspired many amongst the living workers in the field of female education in India to chart their movement.'—Lady Abala Bose.

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'What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose love is one burning love—selfless. That love will make every word tell like a thunderbolt. Awake, awake, great souls! The world is burning in misery. Can you sleep?'

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE DVAITA PHILOSOPHY AND ITS PLACE IN THE VEDANTA.** BY VIDWAN H. N. RAGHAVENDRACHAR, M.A. WITH A FOREWORD BY PROF. A. R. WADIA. *Published by the University of Mysore. Pp. 282. Price Rs. 3.*

It is to be regretted that, although English education began in India long ago, a vast philosophical literature remains still unknown to those who do not study Sanskrit, with the result that uninformed criticism has greatly multiplied. The Acharyas of the three great systems of Vedantic thought—Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Dvaita—are thus considered more as theologians than as philosophers. They are supposed to be mere interpreters of the Upanishads. But Vidwan Raghavendrachar rightly argues that 'a scientific study of the three systems shows that each of the Acharyas is equally a philosopher.' Though each of them has an extraordinarily strong scientific sense, each arrives at a different conclusion because in the course of his philosophy he develops an interest in a particular aspect of reality.

It is true that a mere interpretation of the Vedas cannot be called philosophical. But the exposition of the philosophical implications of the Vedas is certainly good philosophy. A poet is not necessarily a philosopher, though there may be such a thing as a philosophical study of a poetical work. Theoretically, therefore, there is no reason why the Acharyas should be dismissed as theologians; and practically too, Vidwan Raghavendrachar shows that they are genuine philosophers. Madhvacharya is a philosopher of the highest order; but unfortunately the Dvaita system is not as widely studied as the other two. 'A work that would do justice to Madhvacharya as a philosopher', as Prof. Wadia points out, 'has been badly needed.' The present book, therefore, is quite a timely one.

The book is mainly a study of the Dvaita philosophy. But actually its scope is much wider. It consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the Brahmasutras and the three Acharyas, and removes certain misconceptions. The second, third, and fourth chapters faithfully summarize the main conclusions of Advaita Vedanta, Vishishtadvaita Vedanta, and Dvaita

Vedanta. 'Trained in the old, time-honoured, punditic traditions of Sanskrit learning', the author has proved that he is eminently fitted for such a task. In the concluding chapter which is also the most interesting part of the book, there is a learned criticism of the other two rival systems. It cannot be expected that the monists or qualified monists will agree with the conclusions of the author, nor can it be said that their philosophies have been fairly evaluated here. No Advaitin will accept the theory that 'Pratyaksha is superior to all reasoning and verbal testimony.' And it is hardly true to say that Shankara's philosophy negates the Jivas. But these faults must be ascribed to the Vidwan's enthusiasm for proving that the 'best Indian thought is prescribed in Dvaita Vedanta.' Pioneering cannot be successful without whole-hearted devotion, and we have to remember that the Vidwan has the distinction of being the first to bring Madhva's philosophy to the forefront in such an able and scholarly manner. The glossary at the end is a proof of the vast erudition of the Vidwan. In recommending the book to all lovers of Indian philosophy we are confident that the followers of all schools of thought will be benefited by its perusal.

### SANSKRIT-BENGALI

**UPANISHAT GRANTHAVALI, PART I.** EDITED BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA. *Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Pp. 474. Price Rs. 2-4 As.*

It contains nine of the principal Upanishads, namely, Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, and Shvetashvatara. The book opens with a learned introduction which deals in a brief but comprehensive manner with the main themes of the Upanishads. A running translation preceded by a word-for-word Bengali rendering of the component words of each Shloka is given. Critical and expository notes constitute a special feature of the book. Two indexes, one of the Shlokas and the other of the principal subjects, are added at the end. The print and get-up are quite attractive.

# NEWS AND REPORTS

## SWAMI MADHAVANANDAJI'S TOUR

Srimat Swami Madhavananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, visited three branch centres of the Order in the Dacca District in November, 1941. Leaving Belur on the 22nd November, he reached Narayanganj the next day, and was received at the steamer Ghat by the gentry of the town. The following morning he performed the opening ceremony of the new two-storeyed annexe of the Mission Students' Home, called the Raja Sreenath Chhatra Niketan, the generous gift of Kumar Pramathanath Roy of Bhagyakul. The Swami also presided over a public meeting held in this connection at the Ashrama, in which he was given an address of welcome by the Local Committee of the centre, and two more—one in Bengali, and the other in Sanskrit verse, which was sung by the boys of the Mission Students' Home. In the course of his reply he spoke on the educational ideals of the Ramakrishna Order. In the afternoon he was accorded a reception at the same place by the public of Narayanganj, in a meeting presided over by Professor Haridas Bhattacharyya of the Dacca University. On the 25th, among other things, he gave a talk to the ladies in the morning at the Ashrama.

The next morning he left by car for

Dacca, where in the evening he delivered a lecture at the Lytton Hall to the students of the Dacca University on "Vedanta as a Universal Religion." In the afternoon of the 27th he gave a short discourse at the Mission centre on Srimat Swami Premanandaji Maharaj, whose 81st birthday fell on that date, and in the evening he gave a second lecture to the University students at the Jagannath Hall on "Swami Vivekananda and Indian Problems." On the 28th the Swami returned by car to Narayanganj in the evening.

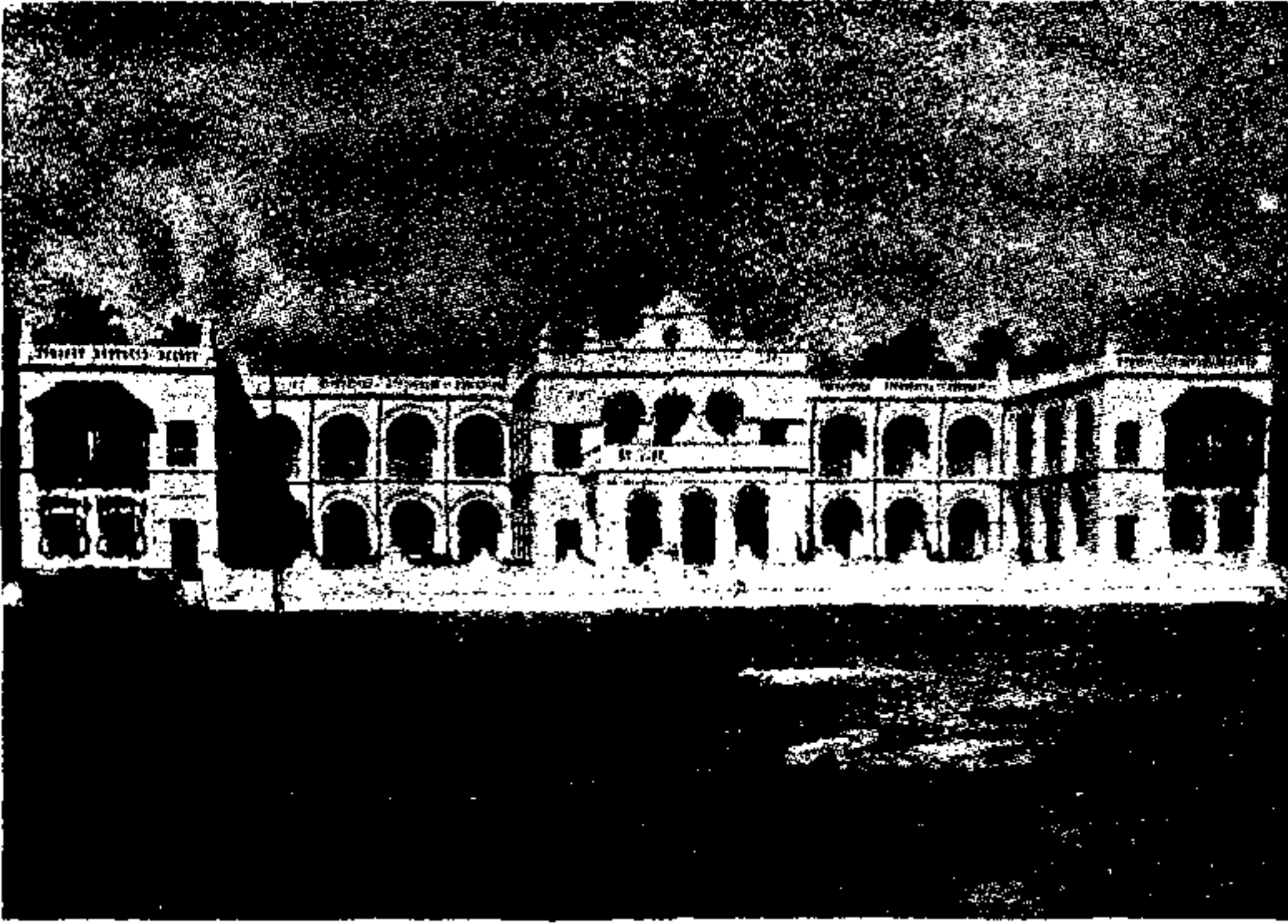
The next morning he left for Sonargaon, seven miles from Narayanganj. He was enthusiastically received at a place two miles from the village, and led in procession to the Ashrama, where in the afternoon there was a large gathering of ardent devotees of both sexes, who came from the villages around to meet the Swami. On the 30th a public reception was given to him in the afternoon at the Ashrama premises.

The Swami returned to Narayanganj the next morning, laid the foundation of a building for the Dispensary run by the Ashrama, and left in the afternoon for Belur, where he arrived in the morning of the 2nd December. He had a good appreciative audience at every meeting he addressed. The number of those who sought interviews with him was also considerable.

## THE "STUDENTS' HOMES" OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

It was realized long ago by Swami Vivekananda that mere academic education was not sufficient for our boys and girls. And changed environment has made it imperative on educationists to organize various extra-academical activities. Due to economic pressure and social pre-occupations, many homes, which should have been the natural field for such training, are no longer fitted for this purpose. Besides, from the hoary past, India recognized that the true aim of education should be man-making and not mere imparting of information. In order to achieve this, 'One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is a blazing fire and should have before him

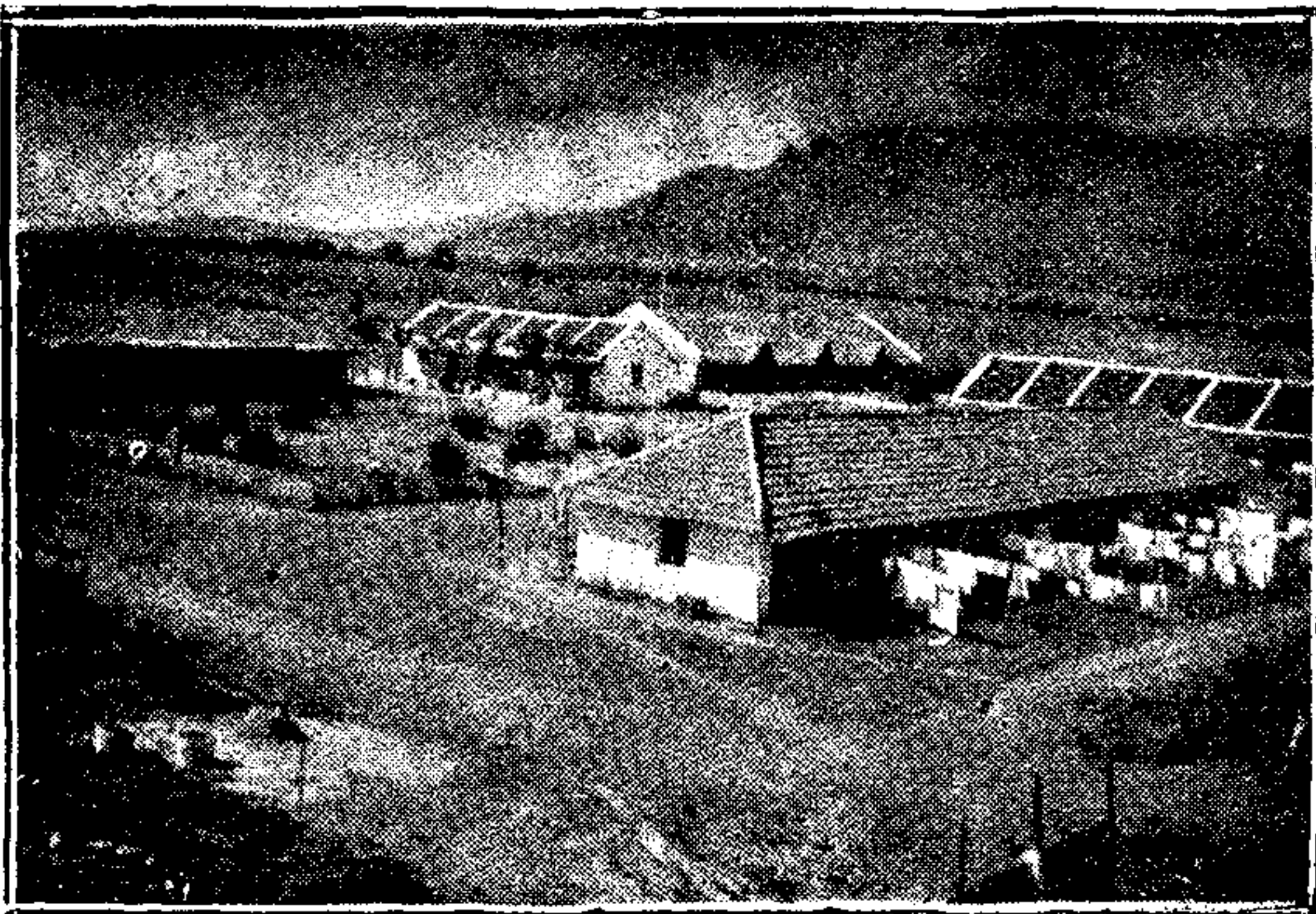
a living example of the highest teaching.' (Swami Vivekananda). In such a homely atmosphere the students can imbibe many ideas and learn many things without the least conscious effort. When, however, this opportunity is lacking, schools and colleges develop a tendency to multiply the contents of formal education, with the result that the students are literally oppressed by the burden of text-books. Training in such simple subjects, as hygiene, physical culture, manual work, religion, etc., can best be imparted as pastimes outside school hours. They should not form part of the regular curriculum, nor should any formal examination be held on such subjects.



STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

With a view to minimizing the evils of the unnatural educational atmosphere that prevails in our schools and colleges and for supplying a healthy background for the self-expression of the rising generation the Ramakrishna Math and Mission have organized many "Students' Homes" in India and Ceylon. The Homes under various names accommodated about 1,400 students (in round number) in 1941. Though the main features of these Homes are the same, they differ from one another in important details. For convenience of treatment we may divide them under the following headings :

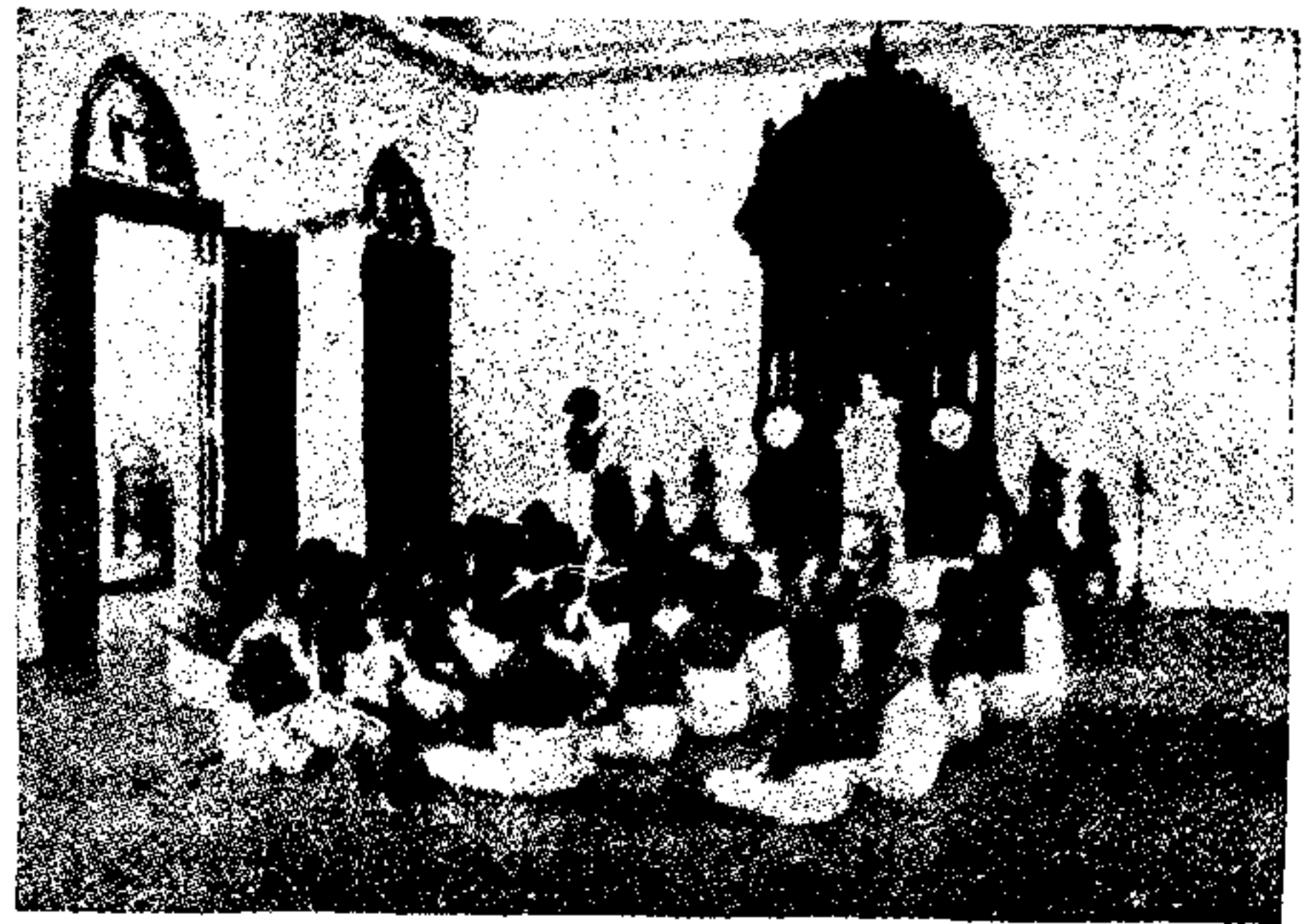
- (1) Homes for College Students;
- (2) Residential Colleges ;
- (3) Homes for College Students and School-boys;
- (4a) Homes for School-boys attached to Math and Mission Schools; (4b) Unattached Homes;



VIDYALAYA (COIMBATORE)

## (5) Homes for girls.

(1) *Homes for College Students* : The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, situated at Gouripur (P.O. Dum Dum), near Calcutta, celebrated its Silver Jubilee in October 1941. Beginning with coaching classes in a rented house in 1916 the institution crystallized into a Home for College Students and became a recognized centre of the Mission in 1919. It continued in rented houses in Calcutta until it was shifted to its present picturesque suburban area, away from the din and bustle of the city. The extensive land, the fine houses, the



PRAYER HALL, STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

high religious and academic atmosphere, and the brilliant achievements throughout its existence have gained for the Home well-deserved encomiums from the educationists of Bengal. This institution is typical of the

other Homes described below. The R. K. Mission Ashrama in Bombay, the R. K. Mission Institute of Culture in Calcutta, and the R. K. Mission at Barisal also accommodate some College students. The R. K. M. Home of Vizagapatam is the latest addition to these Homes.

(2) *Residential Colleges* : The R. K. Mission Vidyamandira at Belur, the Headquarters of the Mission, is the youngest institution of the Mission, being started in July 1941. The public appreciation is encouraging as is evidenced by the progress made during this short period. It is the only College of its type



SCRIPTURE CLASS, STUDENTS' HOME (DUM DUM)



BOYS AT GARDENING, STUDENTS' HOME (DUM DUM) -



STUDENTS' HOME, CHERRAPUNJI

in Bengal and bids fair to remove a long-felt want. At present it teaches only up to the I.A. standard of the Calcutta University, but further development will take place in the near future. The Ramakrishna Vedanta College of Bangalore imparts religious and philosophical education.

(3) *Homes for College Students and School-boys*: The R. K. Mission Students' Home of Madras, plays an important role in the educational field of the Presidency. We are justly proud of this premier institution of the Mission and shall have occasion to write about its other activities in a subsequent issue. In the Home are accommodated some College students and the boys of the attached Residential High School and the Industrial School. The Home attached to the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Mysore, though a small institution, is run very efficiently.

(4a) *Homes for School-boys attached to our Schools* are either attached to (i) Day-Schools or (ii) Residential High Schools. The Homes attached to the R. K. Mission High School at Cherrapunji (Khasia Hills) and the Ramakrishna Gurukula at the Villangans (Trichur) deserve special mention as these institutions are devoted to the service of the backward classes and thus have to work under a great financial strain. There are also Homes attached to the R. K. Mission High School at Thyagarayanagar (Madras), the R. K. Mission Industrial School, Belur (Howrah), the R. K. Mission High School, Chingleput (Madras), the R. K. Mission High School, Mansadwip (Midnapore),

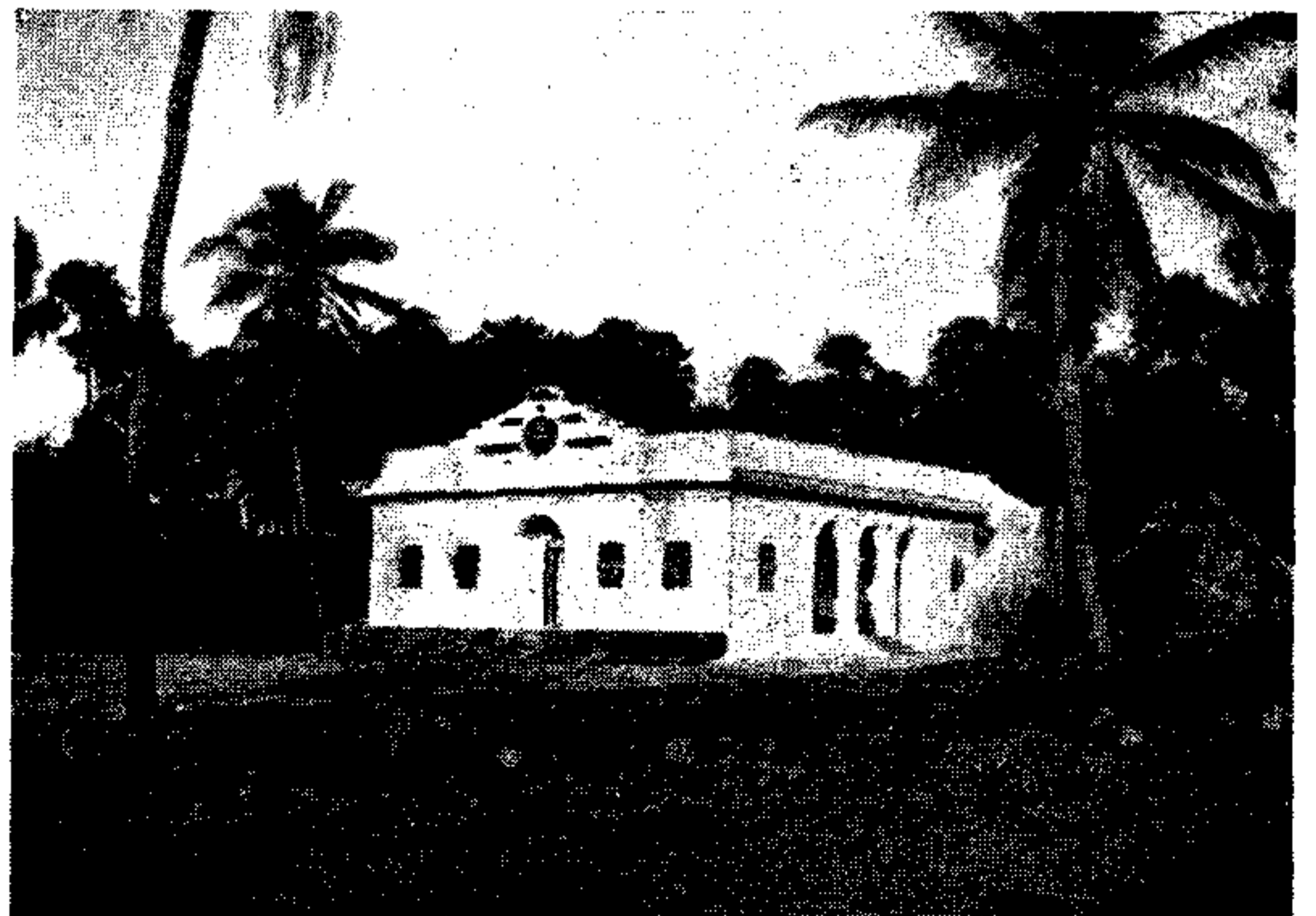
and the Ramakrishna Ashrama Gurukula at Rajkot. Mention should also be made of the Home of the Sanskrit School at the Gadadhar Ashrama, Calcutta. Of the Residential Schools, reference has already been made to that at Madras. The Vidyapith at Deoghar (S. P.) and the Vidyalaya at Coimbatore are the other two important Residential High Schools.

(4b) *Unattached Homes*: Of these the R. K. Mission, Vidyarthi Bhavan at

Narayanganj has been making rapid progress in recent years, proving thereby that it serves a real need of the locality. The R. K. Mission Ashrama, Baranagore (24-Pergs.), the R. K. Mission Sevasadana, Salkia (Howrah), and the R. K. Mission Ashrama, Taki (24-Pergs.), accommodate many poor students, supplying them with all educational necessities. The R. K. Mission Home for students at Batticaloa (Ceylon) can justly be proud of its excellent work. There are also many other Math and Mission centres which according to means accommodate a number of students. The following list will give the figures for the main institutions mentioned above:

*Group (1)*

R. K. M. Students' Home, Calcutta ...	43
R. K. M. Ashrama, Bombay ...	31
R. K. M. Institute of Culture, Calcutta ... ..	13
R. K. Mission, Barisal ... ..	10

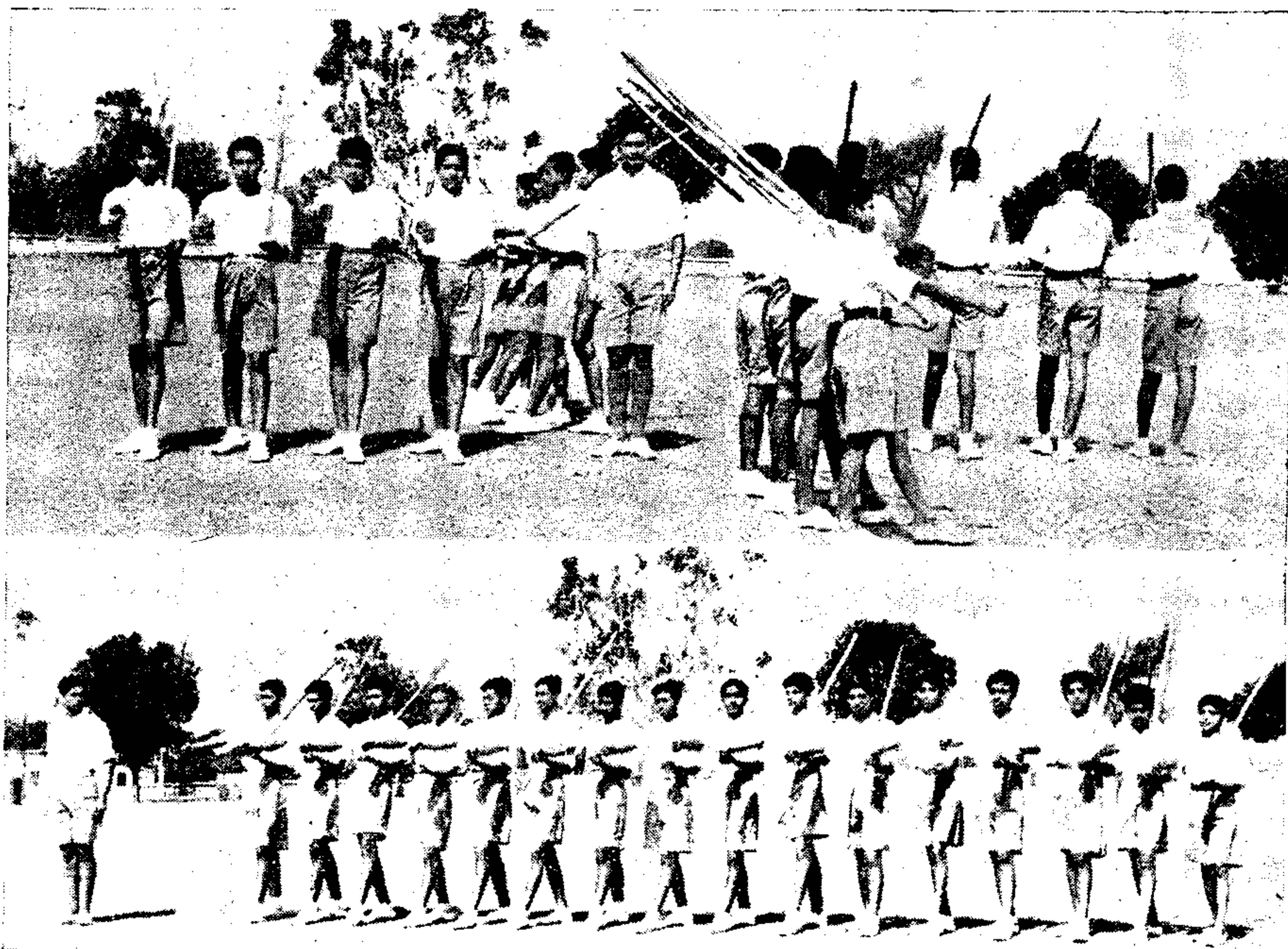


STUDENTS' HOME, VIZAGAPATAM





VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR



BOYS AT DRILL, VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

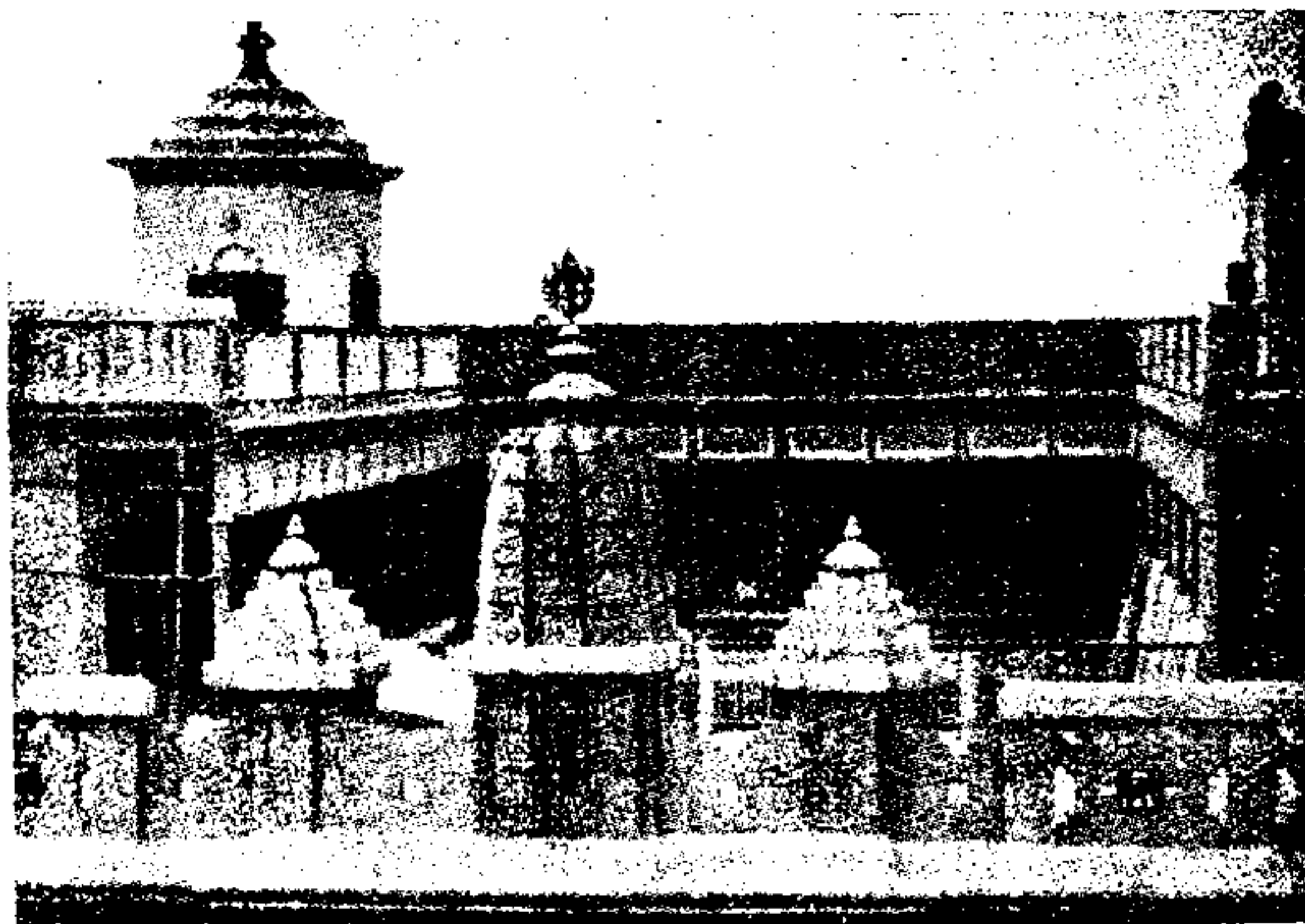


HOSTEL, VIDYAMANDIRA, BELUR

R. K. M. Home, Vizagapatam ...	14	R. K. M. High School, Cherrapunji ...	32
<i>Group (2)</i>		Ramakrishna Gurukula, Rajkot ...	25
R. K. M. Vidyamandira, Belur ...	22	The Gadadhar Ashrama, Calcutta ...	8
R. K. M. Vedanta College, Bangalore	39	R. K. M. Vidyapith, Deoghar ...	147
		R. K. M. Vidyalaya, Coimbatore ...	100
<i>Group (3)</i>		<i>Group (4b)</i>	
R. K. M. Students' Home, Madras	198	R. K. M. Vidyarthi Bhavan,	
Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore ...	20	Narayanganj ...	35
<i>Group (4a)</i>		R. K. M. Ashrama, Baranagore ...	36
Ramakrishna Gurukula, Trichur ...	40	R. K. M. Seva-Sadana, Salkia ...	16
R. K. M. High School, Madras ...	57	R. K. M. Sevashrama, Silchar ...	16
R. K. M. Industrial School, Belur ...	28	R. K. M. Seva-Samiti, Karimganj ...	8
R. K. M. High School, Mansadwip ...	21	R. K. M. Ashrama, Taki ...	12
R. K. M. High School, Chingleput ...	20	R. K. M. Students' Home, Batticaloa	128



VIDYARTHI BHAVAN, NARAYANGANJ



SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL AND SARADA MANDIR

(5) *Homes for Girls*: Due to the paucity of competent women workers, the Math and Mission have not been able, so far, to make much headway in this direction. But the work already done is not inconsiderable. The Sarada Mandira attached to the R. K. M. Sister Nivedita Girls' School which has been alluded to in our Notes, the R. K. M. Sarada Vidyalaya of Madras, and the R. K. M. Ashrama of Sarisha (24-Pergs.) deserve all possible encouragement for the success attained so far. The Matri-Mandira of Trichur and the Home of Batticaloa also accommodate some girls, specially of the poorer classes. The figures for these institutions are:

R. K. M. Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta	...	...	45
R. K. M. Sarada Vidyalaya, Madras			78
R. K. M. Home, Batticaloa	...		10
Matri-Mandira, Trichur	...	...	28
R. K. M. Ashrama, Sarisha	...		15

These Homes have much to give to the nation. The students live there in an environment of discipline, co-operation, service, self-sacrifice, purity, and practical idealism that help an all-round development. Manual work is taken up spontaneously, and the best possible arrangements are made for physical exercise. The students are encouraged to manage their own affairs. And love for the country and devotion to God come naturally.



GIRLS AT PLAY, ASHRAMA, SARISHA

## HER EXCELLENCY LADY LINLITHGOW'S VISIT TO SHISHUMANGAL PRATISHTHAN

Her Excellency the Marchioness of Linlithgow paid a visit to the Shishumangal Pratishthan, run by the Ramakrishna Mission, on the morning of the 19th December, 1941.

An address of welcome was presented to Her Excellency on behalf of the institution by its President Sir Manmatha Nath Mookherjee. . . .

In course of her speech, Her Excellency said: "This is not my first visit to Ramakrishna Mission centres. When I visited the Ramakrishna Mission centre in Benares, the work of the Mission there made a great impression on my mind. It is obvious that the work had been undertaken for the love of the work itself. Next time my visit was to the Ramakrishna Sevashram centre in Rangoon, and it was run by the authorities there to the best of the standards. In the Delhi T. B. Clinic centre which also I visited, they were carrying on the work of the clinic magnificently. It is proposed to build new premises for the clinic there, which I hope to visit very soon. It is work of this kind,—humanitarian work—that I

think we all of us should patronise, all of us should encourage. . . ."

Referring to her visit to the Ramakrishna Mission Shishumangal Pratishthan, Calcutta, Her Excellency said: "It is the first time that I have seen the work of the Mission for women's cause and it is this work which particularly interests me and on which I think the future welfare of the people as a whole depends a great deal. People, I think are gradually coming to realize the importance of this kind of humanitarian work. I feel sure they will eventually realize this at heart and it will get the support of the public of Calcutta as also of Government."

Concluding, Her Excellency said, "Some people may have the impression that I have only to say the word and lakhs will be rolling in. I very much wish it were so. I think I can assure you of my permanent support and interest in this institution and whatever influence I may have I will be only too happy to use it for the benefit of such an institution."

—*Hindusthan Standard.*

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## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 9th January, 1942.

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## FRONTISPIECE

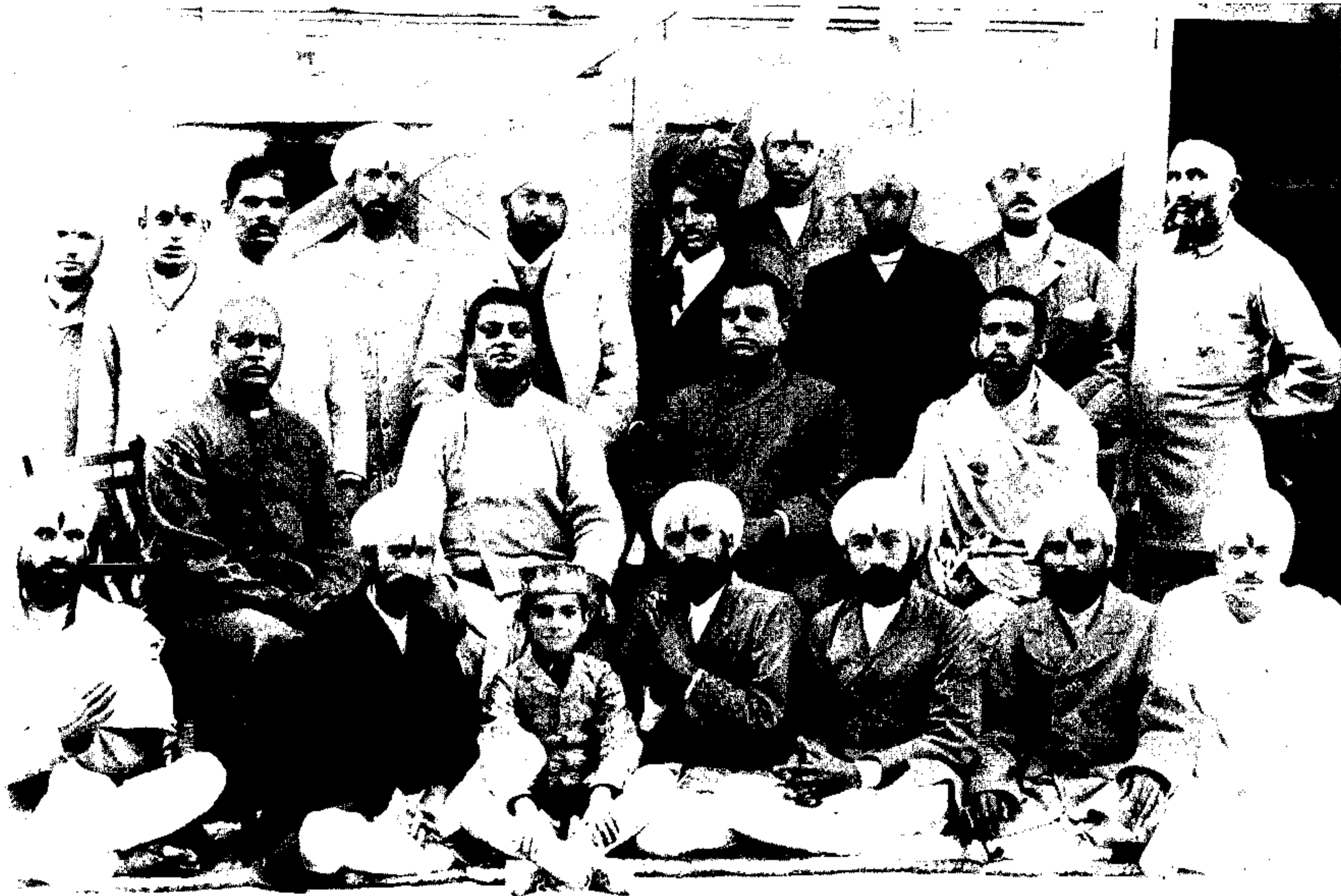
This illustration, drawn by the celebrated artist Sjt. Abanindranath Tagore, depicts Umâ in meditation. Giving up her royal style and not minding her tender age, she leads an ascetic life, desiring to attain her lord through Tapasyâ. Uma's perseverance and sincere devotion please Shiva who fulfils her desire.

As a result of her intense love for Shiva, and her deep meditation on His divine form, she has become so completely merged in the thought of Shiva that her own person bears a close resemblance to that of her lord.

(Adapted from Kalidasa's *Kumârasambhavam*)

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Swami Vivekananda in Kashmir

(Hitherto unpublished)