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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by a Brahmin): Can anyone but a brahmin achieve perfection ?

Ramakrishna: 'Why should you ask that ? It is said that in the Kali-yuga the sudras achieve love of God. There are the instances of Sabari, Ruhidas, the untouchable Guhaka, and others.'

Brahmin: 'Can a man realize God in one birth ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Is anything impossible for the grace of God ? Suppose you bring a light into a room that has been dark for a thousand years ; does it remove the darkness little by little ? The room is lighted all at once. (To Atul) Intense renunciation is what is needed. One should be like an un-sheathed sword. When a man has that renunciation, he looks on his relatives as black cobras and his home as a deep well.

'One should pray to God with sincere longing. God cannot but listen to prayer if it is sincere.'

Question (asked by Atul): 'How can we keep our minds on God ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Abhyasayoga, the yoga of practice. You should practice calling on God every day. It is not possible to succeed in one day ; through daily prayer you will come to long for God.

'How can you feel that restlessness if you are immersed in worldliness day and night ? Formerly Jadu Mallick enjoyed spiritual talk ; he liked to engage in it himself. But nowadays he doesn't show that much interest. He surrounds himself with flatterers day and night and indulges in worldly talk.'

Question (posed by himself): 'Why does a lover of God retain the "ego of Devotion" ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'There is a reason. The ego cannot be got rid of ; so let the rascal remain as the servant of God, the devotee of God.

'You may reason a thousand times, but you cannot get rid of the ego. The ego is like a pitcher, and Brahman like the ocean—an infinite expanse of water on all sides. The pitcher is set in this ocean. The water is both inside and out ; the water is everywhere ; yet the pitcher remains. Now, this

pitcher is the "ego of the devotee". As long as the ego remains, "you" and "I" remain, and there also remains the feeling, "O God, Thou art the Lord and I am Thy devotee; Thou art the Master and I am Thy servant." You may reason a million times, but you cannot get rid of it. But it is different if there is no pitcher.'

Question (posed by himself): 'In samadhi man becomes one with God. Then he can have no egotism. Do you know what it is like?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Just at noon the sun is directly overhead. If you look around then, you do not see your shadow. Likewise, you will not find the "shadow" of ego after attaining Knowledge, samadhi.

'But if you see in anyone a trace of "I-consciousness" after the attainment of true Knowledge, then know that it is either the "ego of Knowledge" or the "ego of Devotion" or the "servant ego". It is not the "ego of ignorance".

'Again, jnana and bhakti are twin paths. Whichever you follow, it is God that you will ultimately reach. The jnani looks on God in one way and the bhakta looks on Him in another way. The God of the jnani is full of brilliance, and the God of the bhakta full of sweetness.'

Question (asked by Mahima): 'A lover of God needs Nirvana¹ some time or other, doesn't he?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'It can't be said that bhaktas need Nirvana. According to some schools there is an eternal Krishna and there are also His eternal devotees. Krishna is Spirit embodied and His Abode also is Spirit embodied. Krishna is eternal and the devotees also are eternal. Krishna and the devotees are like the moon and the stars—always near each other. You yourself repeat: "What need is there of penance if God is seen within and without?" Further, I have told you that the devotee who is born with an element of Vishnu cannot altogether get rid of bhakti. Once I fell into the clutches of a jnani,² who made me listen to Vedanta for eleven months. But he couldn't altogether destroy the seed of bhakti in me. No matter where my mind wandered, it would come back to the Divine Mother. Whenever I sang of Her, Nangta would weep and say, "Ah! What is this?" You see, he was such a great jnani and still he wept. (*To the younger Naren and the others*) Remember the popular saying that if a man drinks the juice of the alekh creeper, a plant grows inside his stomach. Once the seed of bhakti is sown, the effect is inevitable: it will gradually grow into a tree with flowers and fruits.

'You may reason and argue a thousand times, but if you have the seed of bhakti within you, you will surely come back to Hari.'

¹ Nirvana, or total annihilation of the ego, is the ideal of the jnanis, the non-dualists.

² The Master was speaking of Totapuri, whom he always referred to as 'Nangta', the 'naked one'.

ONWARD FOR EVER!

*Thank God, this is a dream!
Thank God, for it will vanish!
Thank God, there is death,
glorious death, because it ends
all this delusion, this dream,
this fleshiness, this anguish.
No dream can be eternal; it
must end sooner or later.
There is none who can keep
his dream for ever. I thank
God that it is so! Yet this
form of worship is all right.
Go on! To pray for some-
thing is better than nothing.
These are the stages through
which we pass. These are the
first lessons. Gradually, the
mind begins to think of some-
thing higher than the senses,
the body, the enjoyments of
this world.*

*How does [man] do it?
First he becomes a thinker.
When you think upon a pro-
blem, there is no sense-enjoy-
ment there, but [the] exquisite
delight of thought. ... It is that
that makes the man. ... Take
one great idea! It deepens.
Concentration comes. You no
longer feel your body. Your
senses have stopped. You are
above all physical senses. All
that was manifesting itself
through the senses is concen-
trated upon that one idea. That
moment you are higher than
the animal. You get the reve-
lation none can take from you
—a direct perception of some-
thing higher than the body. ...
Therein is the goal of mind,
not upon the plane of the
senses.*

Sri Krishna

SOME THOUGHTS ON ASSO- CIATING WITH THE HOLY

EDITORIAL

I

Plotinus, who can be called a Western Vedāntin, spoke of the essence of religious experience as the 'flight of the alone to the alone'. 'Always living in seclusion' is declared by Śaṅkara, in the *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, to be one of the first steps to Yoga or spiritual experience. The *Bhagavad-gītā* recommends to spiritual aspirants meditation in solitude and distaste for mingling with crowds. Sri Ramakrishna advised householder devotees to retire periodically to solitary places for prayer and contemplation.

There is undoubtedly a great need for solitude in spiritual life. The human soul should progressively feel its alienation from worldly objects, persons, and relationships, and affinity with the Divine which is non-dual. Solitude helps contemplation by minimizing external disturbances. As companionship in the worldly milieu generally means spiritually contrary influences which arouse hidden subliminal impressions, distaste for mingling with groups of people is a great virtue. As Sri Ramakrishna said, the pot in which milk is set for curdling should be left in one place and not moved about frequently. Similarly, a spiritual aspirant should keep his mind-pot undisturbed for the purpose of divine contemplation.

Solitude surely has a salutary influence on the spiritually blossoming soul. Not all aspirants, however, thrive in solitude. There are many—let us say many not-yet-so-steady aspirants—who would feel better and safer in some suitable, spiritually-stimulating company. That is because men in general are very susceptible to psychological influences. Just as evil company stirs up unwholesome impressions and retards spiritual growth, good company mobilizes the hidden good

impressions and expedites spiritual unfoldment. Even more beneficial than solitude or mere good company is the association with the holy. Holy men are those who have purified themselves, established God in their hearts, and become utterly unselfish. Even one moment of their company, it is said, becomes a ship to cross the ocean of relative existence. The company of such holy men will be beneficial for all, not excluding the sturdy, go-it-alone type.

When a devotee asked Sri Ramakrishna what was the good of holy company, he said, 'It begets yearning for God. It begets love of God. Nothing whatsoever is achieved in spiritual life without yearning. By constantly living in the company of holy men, the soul becomes restless for God.'¹

Swami Premananda, a very intimate disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was once seated in meditation under a tree in front of Swami Vivekananda's temple at Belur Math. With him were several young monks also meditating. At the close of meditation, one of the monks broke the silence by asking: 'Revered sir, why is it that the earnestness and enthusiasm which we feel at the beginning of spiritual life is not sustained? Why does it not continue always the same?' The Swami answered: 'Three things are necessary to strengthen our enthusiasm: association with the holy, devotion to the chosen ideal, and purity of conduct.'²

If we compare the words of Swami Premananda with those of his great Master, we find that they in essence mean the same. Holy company accentuates divine love and yearning in spiritual aspirants and undergirds their moral personality.

¹ 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1947) p. 21.

² *Vedanta for Modern Man* (Ed. by Christopher Isherwood, Pub. by Harper and Brothers, New York, first ed.) p. 176.

II

Study of holy books and scriptures and hearing religious talks and sermons can be considered as an important kind of keeping holy company. But the company of a holy man has a very different effect. In him the scriptural teachings become living, pulsating realities. When pundits see such a man, they exclaim, 'We have read about spiritual experiences in the holy books. But now we get a glimpse of their sublimity by seeing them actualized in this man.' Divine love, renunciation, dispassion, selflessness, compassion for all—these values remain merely verbal when we read or hear about them. But when a man practises and embodies them, they become living, dynamic, and transforming. It is like the power of the nuclear particles when they are passed into and accelerated by a cyclotron. In the holy man there is no hiatus between his precept and practice, and that is the secret of his power. As Sri Ramakrishna would say, in him 'there is no theft in the chamber of thought'. Sometimes the holy man's influence is quick and revolutionary. At other times it is imperceptible and very slow. In any case, as Nārada says in his *Bhaktisūtras*, the effect of holy company is infallible (*amoghah*). 'No scriptures or books,' said Swami Brahmananda to a disciple, 'can create such pure impressions on a man's life or transform him as vitally as contact with the enlightened.'³

Holy company affects people in many ways. As you go into the presence of the holy, you may find a strange feeling of harmony and peace stealing over you. It is like the coolness one feels as one nears a big lake or the sea. You heave a sigh of relief. A genuine holy man is a perfectly integrated person and is completely tranquil. His harmony and tranquillity spread around

³ Swami Prabhavananda: *The Eternal Companion* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1945) p. 232.

him like an invisible aura. Those who go into its orbit properly prepared, are involuntarily elevated to higher levels of consciousness, not experienced before.

Swami Brahmananda used to say that when one is in the society of holy men, one's passions remain apparently dead.⁴ The reason can be that in the presence of one who has conquered his passions, those of others are held in check. Further, the holy vibrations created by a saintly man rouse the dormant fund of noble impressions in others and these become dominant over the impure impressions. If one continuously associates with holy men and follows in their footsteps, in a spirit of openmindedness and humility, one can rise to great heights of purity and self-control.

Holy company, as Sri Ramakrishna pointed out, begets love of God and a deep yearning to realize Him. That is because the powerful mental states of great men induce similar states in others. Since love of God in a holy man suffuses his whole personality and goes out as a powerful current, it awakens the potential but dormant divine love in those about him. It can be compared to the process of magnetization by repeatedly rubbing a piece of iron with a good magnet. The disorganized magnetic forces in the iron-piece get arranged in one direction, thus changing it into a magnet. Similarly love of God exists already in man. Only it is scattered on a thousand worldly objects and persons, and centered on oneself. When all these scattered loves, including self-love, are brought together and directed to God, we say divine love has awakened. Holy company focuses all the scattered rays of the love-beam back to God from whom it originally emanated. --

In this context it may be worthwhile to recollect the remarks of Swami Vivekananda in a dialogue with Surendra Nath Das

Gupta. On listening to Swamiji's stirring and heroic words, Surendra Nath exclaimed, 'Oh, how we enjoy sitting before you, Swamiji, and hearing your life-giving words!' Swamiji, whose utter egolessness was rarely revealed, replied:

You see, in my travels throughout India all these years, I have come across many a great soul, many a heart overflowing with kindness, sitting at whose feet I used to feel a mighty current of strength coursing into my heart, and the few words I speak to you are only through the force of that current gained by coming in contact with them! Do not think I am myself something great!⁵

The greatest of such great souls, to be sure, Vivekananda had met at Dakshineswar. It had taken him many years to realize that Sri Ramakrishna was not a holy man but 'holiness itself'. Once in speaking of his marvellous purity, Swamiji incidentally referred to that highest order of holy men called *paramahansas*. He said:

'The purity of these few Paramahamasas is all that holds the world together. If they should all die out and leave it, the world would go to pieces. They do good by simply being, and they know it not; they just are.'⁶

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the wonderful devotional classic, has a statement regarding the greatness of holy men, and that is made by Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. It may be impossible to outdo that saying in exalting holy company. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava:

'With a view to purifying Myself by the dust of his feet, I always follow the sage who cares for nothing, is calm, bears enmity to none, and is even-minded.'⁷

⁵ *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas), Vol. V (1959) p. 331.

⁶ *ibid.*, Vol. VII (1958) p. 85.

⁷ निरपेक्षं मुनिं शान्तं निर्वैरं समदर्शनम् ।

अनुब्रजाम्यहं नित्यं पूयेत्यङ्घ्रिरेणुभिः ॥

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, XI. 14. 16.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 185.

III

Nārada, who owed his spiritual exaltation to the influence of sages in his early boyhood, says that holy company is very difficult to obtain and, when obtained, very difficult to comprehend. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna we get some instances in support of Nārada's statement. Some people thought that Sri Ramakrishna was mad and kept away. Some others thought that he was an impostor and despised him. We hear of a certain man who had something on his conscience and was afraid to go to him. He had heard that Sri Ramakrishna could read others' minds and would speak out frankly about it. This man feared that his secret would be made public by Sri Ramakrishna. But later, after Sri Ramakrishna passed away, when the man grew a little wiser, he regretted greatly that he had missed a wonderful chance of associating with a rare holy man who would have saved him from sin and a hagridden conscience. Of all such people, two who lived in close association and intimacy with Sri Ramakrishna and yet could not imbibe his holiness, renunciation, or divine love, should serve as warnings to all spiritual aspirants seeking to profit by holy company. The first one was Hriday, who lived as Sri Ramakrishna's constant companion for over twenty-five years. Instead of growing in unselfishness, humility, and devotion to God, he tended to become greedy, haughty, and extremely worldly-minded. Rather than serve Sri Ramakrishna, he at last began to boss over and torment him. He was later expelled, by the temple authorities, from the Dakshineswar temple for an act of indiscretion. The second example was Pratapchandra Hazra who lived with Sri Ramakrishna for some years. He was hypocritical and showy in his spiritual practices and considered himself a greater holy man than Sri Ramakrishna himself. After Sri Ramakrishna's death, he began to tell people that he (Hazra) was an incarna-

tion of God!

The Holy Mother knew this human weakness and warned her disciples thus:

You see, one may commit a fault while serving a great soul. It happens in this way: while he enjoys the privilege of such service, his egotism increases. He then wants to control, like a doll, the person he serves. He wants to boss over the latter in everything....Such attendants become intoxicated with the enjoyment of their position and so pave the way for their own ruin. Tell me how many there are who can render service in the proper spirit.'⁸

With what attitude a man seeks holy company, therefore, becomes supremely important. If anyone seeks it with an attitude of reverential humility, he is sure to partake of the purity and divine love emanating from the holy. If a man seeks holy company with the attitude of an egotistic challenger—challenging the holy man to a spiritual sparring contest, as it were—he will encounter his own egotism and hollow swagger, and not holiness. 'To see evil', remarked Swami Vivekananda once, 'is to create it.' Similarly, to see holiness is also to create it. Not simply to create it, but to become imbued with it. However, when we meet genuine holy men, there is no need to create holiness. The need then is to prevent the blindness, caused by egotism and envy, from coming into the inner eye.

IV

Sat-saṅga or holy company is very difficult to come by in this world which is shot through and through with commercialism and competition. For every jewel of a holy man there will be a hundred imitation jewels of pseudo-holy men. Our duty then should be to derive full benefit from it when we get the company of truly holy men, while trying all the time to increase our own purity and

⁸ Sri Sarada Devi, *The Holy Mother* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4, 1949), p. 533.

godly love. How does a man become holy ? By struggling to live the holy life, by ceasing to be ego-centered, by becoming God-centered. Even the potent, purifying influence of holy men is on account of their constant communion with God. As the *Bhāgavatam* says clearly, the holy men purify even the holy places 'by God who is seated in their hearts'.⁹ The first duty of all spiritual aspirants should be to install God in the sanctuary of their own hearts.

An efficient way of doing it is by trying to live and work every moment for God, as pointed out by the *Gītā* and demonstrated in the lives of many saints. That real *sat-saṅga* means living a dedicated life, is pointed out by the *Gītā* in the last but one stanza of the seventeenth chapter. It says:

'Steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity, and gift is also called *sat*; as also action in connection with these (or, action for the sake of the Lord—*tadarthīyaṁ karma*) is called *sat*.'

Let us endeavour to cultivate this kind of *sat-saṅga* or holy company; that is, keep performing all our actions for God. If we persist in it sincerely and cheerfully, hardly

any need for external holy company will be felt. On the other hand, we ourselves will become centres of holiness where others may find peace and purity. Because, then God, the Purity of even the purest *paramahansas*, will have become enthroned in our hearts.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest of holy men that Modern India has produced. He urged every earnest spiritual aspirant to become a *ṛṣi*, a sage, himself. His exhortation should give us the key to unlock the treasure of holy company, hidden within each soul, by trying to realize the divinity potential in each of us:

'That is religion which makes us realize the Unchangeable One, and that is the religion for everyone. He who realizes transcendental truth, he who realizes the *Ātman* in his own nature, he who comes face to face with God, sees God alone in everything, has become a Rishi. And there is no religious life for you until you have become a Rishi. Then alone religion begins for you, now is only the preparation. Then religion dawns upon you, now you are only undergoing intellectual gymnastics and physical fortures.'¹⁰

⁹ *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, I. 13. 10.

¹⁰ *The Complete Works*, Vol. III (1960), pp. 283-4.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Almora,
25.11.15

Dear—,

Glad to receive your letter of the 18th inst. It is a matter of great joy that you have, after residing at the holy Varanasi and associating with holy men during your holidays, gone back and resumed your duties. I would have been very happy if I could see you here. Everything happens according to the will of the Lord. I am pleased to hear that you associated with Swami Adbhutananda and that for a while you met Swami Sivananda and were happy.

Magnu Brahmachari is no more in the *brahmacarya* stage of life, he has taken *sannyāsa* himself—that is, *vidvat-sannyāsa*.¹ I have heard him praised much. He has been staying at Varanasi for the past many years. Last time while I was at Varanasi and he had fallen ill, I had visited him with Durgacharan Babu twice or thrice. I felt he was a very good monk.

Dismissing a monk simply because he belonged to the *kṣatriya* caste [and not to the *brāhmaṇa*] does not speak in favour of one's generosity. It is good to be born in a *brāhmaṇa* family provided one has devotion to the knowledge of Brahman. If, on the other hand, one is void of devotion to Hari [God], 'though a *brāhmaṇa* he is worse than a pariah'.² If there are devotion and love for God, then 'even women, *vaiśyas*, and *sūdras* attain the highest goal'³: this statement [of the *Gītā*] is in agreement with the scriptures, and this idea we, having seen and heard our Lord [Sri Ramakrishna], have learnt. I am not ready to accept that Brahman is a sealed book to you, because you were not born of the *brāhmaṇa* caste. Rather it appears to me that those who say that non-*brāhmaṇas* do not realize God, are ignorant of the scriptural import!

On hearing that nothing interests you except holy company, my joy knew no bounds. If it is taken as a sign of our pride, still it is good. Because it [holy company] only has been lauded as 'the boat for crossing the ocean of worldly existence'.⁴ Let all penance be put in one pan of the balance and the result of a moment's holy company in the other; the beam will be tilted towards holy company—this is what I have gathered from the scriptures.

Why should the power of the brain to receive other things decline? Rather there is an increase in the power of discrimination between the good and the bad, and so there is no inclination to accept what is bad. Your humility no doubt deserves praise. But I do not find it reasonable if you say that you are still the

¹ Formal monastic vows taken after a spiritual aspirant attains self-knowledge.

² द्विजोऽपि स्वपचाधमः ।

³ स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् । *Bhagavad-gītā*, IX. 32

⁴ क्षणमिह सज्जनसङ्गतिरेका भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ।

same as you were twenty years ago. Of course, if you meant the Ātman, the self, when you said so, then your statement is correct indeed, as the self is changeless. Though both divine and worldly things may be useful to a monk, the worldly attitude does not redound to his glory. Only the *sāttvika* (serene) attitude becomes him. This impatience of yours will not persist long; it will disappear if you become a little more inward. Practice should be steady, step by step. You are going to have it that way. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'Thinking of the Lord while living in the world is like fighting from within the fort. There are many advantages in it. In the case of the others [that is, monks], it is a fight in the open. And that is not for all.' The main thing is—to fix the mind on God, whatever be the means. Then only life will be fruitful and will not go in vain. Subsisting with food and clothing is surely there, and that 'as long as the body lasts'.⁵ But Rāmprasād says, 'While eating, think you are offering libations to the Divine Mother.' One has to accept their counsel. In that case, the mind will be easily centred in God. Here is the song:

O mind, I tell you this:
Worship Kālī in any fashion you please,
Repeating day and night the mantra given you by your guru.

Consider lying down as prostration;
And sleeping as meditation on the Mother.
While eating, think you are offering libations to Her.

Whatever you hear by your ears, all that is the mantra of the Mother.
Kālī embodies the fifty letters (of the Sanskrit alphabet),
assuming names letterwise.

Rāmprasād is happy to proclaim that the
Mother pervades all beings.
As you go about the city,
Think that you are going round the Mother.

Can the knowledge of Brahman be anything superior to and different from this? Seeing Brahman everywhere, in all acts, in all beings, in all respects. Why alone in the code of Yājñavalkya? You will find this teaching in many books on right conduct, in Yoga books, Purāṇas and Tantras. The *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra* is an authentic book for guiding the householders to the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman. And by its help Raja Rammohan Roy founded the Adi Brahma Samaj. The Lord alone is the Guru; and He alone provides all the means according to people's needs. You please open your mind to Him; He will do what is necessary for you.

You have remarked rightly that, without [divine] grace, no one can do anything by spiritual practice. But then, if one sincerely strives, His grace reveals itself. The Lord alone is the Guru. He is the indweller. If one prays to Him without guile, He will fulfil all desires in due time. The more the yearning

⁵ *Bhakti-sūtras* of Nārada, I, 14.

OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

TEMPTATION—ITS INNER MEANING

Temptation is a universal phenomenon with every human being. Every conscious spiritual seeker knows from personal experience its bitterness, and has wondered about this problem in all seriousness.

Temptations were experienced not only by common mortals but even by those whom we worship as God-men, like Buddha, Jesus, Ramakrishna, not to speak of saints. St. Paul suffered a long spell of temptation, St. Anthony who went away to the Egyptian deserts to practise austerities, suffered temptations for twenty years.

Every spiritual seeker has wondered about the why and wherefore of temptations, and sought to know how to overcome them.

To a persistent question in regard to temptation, one answer, one most authentic answer we must say, comes from the Lord's Prayer in the Bible. The relevant portion of the prayer is: 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.'¹

This prayer, taught by Christ himself, by implication points out the source of temptation. Many persons, however, have found it hard to follow this portion of the Lord's prayer. They have asked: how is it possible for God to tempt men and for what would He do it?

The answer to this question comes to us from the mystics. We are quoting from a book of Christian mysticism, which is a 'collection of writings of Fathers of the Eastern Church from the fourth to the fourteenth century, who attained to the summit

of spiritual heights.' In the passage concerned, St. Issac is quoted (in the chapter 'Directions to Hesychasts'):

'Spiritual doers are tempted, that they may add to their riches; the weak—that they may protect themselves from harm; those who are asleep—to prepare them for awakening; those far away—to bring them nearer to God; those who are of God's own household (who dwell in His house)—that they may abide in Him with daring. A son who is not made to practise (carrying burdens) cannot profitably inherit the riches in his father's house. Therefore God first tempts and oppresses, and then reveals the gift of grace. Glory be to the Lord, leading us to the sweetness of health by bitterness of remedies! No man can pass the time of education without affliction; and no man, while drinking the poison of temptations, can fail to find it bitter. Yet without them it is impossible to acquire a strong constitution (of the soul). But again, to withstand them is not in our power. How could perishable clay withstand the action of water unless the Divine fire make it strong? If we submit to the yoke of God's will and pray with constant desire in humility, then through patience, we shall receive everything from our Lord Jesus Christ. In the book of the "Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach" it is also said: "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure and make no haste in time of trouble."'²

There is nothing exclusively Christian

¹ St. Matthew VI, 13.

² *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, translated by E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer, Faber and Faber, London 1951, p. 189.

about this concept of temptation. All that can be said about it is that it is a very ancient religious idea. In fact, according to Hindu conceptions, the whole universe is a gigantic temptation. Through His inscrutable power of Māyā God Himself has conjured up the fascinating magic of creation. Deluded by this Māyā man sees this manifold universe and gets attached to the things of the world and forgets God. He enjoys the things of the world with his outgoing senses, thus becoming a slave of temptations.

In the Gītā the Lord indicates the process through which temptation ruins a man:

‘Thinking about sense-objects will attach you to sense-objects; grow attached, and you become addicted; thwart your addiction, it turns to anger; be angry and you confuse your mind; confuse your mind, you forget the lesson of experience; forget experience, you lose discrimination; lose discrimination and you lose life’s only purpose and perish.’³

In the story of the Fall of Adam the Vedāntist reads an exemplification of the temptation of Māyā. It has been interpreted that:

‘Adam symbolizes the Ātman, the divine Self; Eve, the intellect of Adam; the Serpent, Māyā. As Eve the intellect yields to temptation, Adam also succumbs: he too eats the forbidden fruit. He forgets his divine nature, recognizes good and evil, and experiences, instead of Paradise, the universe of time, space and relativity.’⁴

In his prayers Sri Ramakrishna, like Christ, recognizes that temptation is from God in the form of Māyā. He prayed:

‘O Mother! I have taken refuge at Thy feet. I have sought protection in Thee. O Mother, I pray only that I may have pure love for thy lotus feet, love that

seeks no return. And Mother, do not delude me with Thy world-bewitching Māyā. I seek Thy protection. I have taken refuge in Thee.’⁵

The Upaniṣad teaches:

‘The Self-existent supreme Lord inflicted an injury upon the sense-organs in creating them with outgoing tendencies; therefore a man perceives only outer objects with them, and not the inner Self. But a calm person, wishing for Immortality, beholds the inner Self with his eyes closed.’⁶

The Supreme Lord ‘inflicting an injury’ upon the sense-organs of man would appear intriguing. The meaning of the statement is lucidly explained by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary on this passage:

‘The experience of outer objects, and not the inmost self, by the sense-organs is a kind of injury done to them by the Lord Himself when He created them and turned them outward. The word in the text, *vyatīnat*, also means “killed”. As long as the sense-organs experience outer objects, they are deprived of the knowledge of the Lord. This may be regarded as a kind of death for them. People with worldly desires do not even seek the knowledge of the Lord, and thus fall victims to ever recurring death.’

This explains temptation at its metaphysical roots. If the Lord inflicted the injury He, it would appear, did so in a sportive way in order make man seek deliverance. And He kept the way open, as is clearly indicated in the same verse, ‘But a calm person, wishing for immortality, beholds the inner Self with his eyes closed.’ How can one see with eyes closed? In expounding the passage, ‘with his eyes closed etc.’, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says:

‘That is to say by turning away the senses from outer objects. The eyes here

³ *Bhagavad-Gītā* II. 62, 63.

⁴ Swami Prabhavananda: *The Sermon on the Mount according to Vedānta*, Vedānta Press, Hollywood, 1962, p. 85.

⁵ ‘M’: *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1969, p. 242

⁶ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* II. 1.1.

represent all the sense-organs. It is not possible for a man to experience at the same time both the external world and the inmost self. The discipline of self-control, by which he realizes the inmost Self, may be compared to the turning back of the downward course of a swift river.'

Ramprasad, the great Indian mystic who was the worshipper of the Divine Mother Kālī, in a song pouring out the agony of a seeker's heart, beautifully pins down the divine responsibility in the temptations which assail man. Thus runs his song in translation:

'Mother, this is the grief that sorely grieves my heart,
That even with Thee for Mother, and though I am wide awake,
There should be robbery in my house.
Many and many a time I vow to call on Thee,
Yet when the time for prayer comes round, I have forgotten.
Now I see it is all Thy trick.

As Thou hast never given, so Thou receivest not;
Am I to blame for this, O Mother?
Hadst Thou but given,
Surely then Thou hadst received;
Out of Thine own gifts I should have given to Thee.
Glory and shame, bitter and sweet, are Thine alone;
This world is nothing but Thy play.
Then why, O Blissful One, dost Thou cause a rift in it?

Says Ramprasad : Thou hast bestowed on me this mind,
And, with a knowing wink of Thine eye,
Bidden it, at the same time, go and enjoy the world.
And so I wander here forlorn through Thy creation,
Blasted, as it were, by somebody's evil glance,

Taking the bitter for the sweet,
Taking the unreal for the Real.'⁷

This song provides us with a special insight into the phenomenon of temptation but does not answer our question as to why the Mother should play this painful 'trick'.

On the question why at all there is temptation Sri Ramakrishna gives a clear answer. A devotee asked the Master :

'Why has God created wicked people? Sri Ramakrishna answered : "That is His will, His play. In His maya there exists *avidya*, as well as *vidya*. Darkness is needed too. It reveals all the more the glory of light. There is no doubt that anger, lust and greed are evils. Why, then, has God created them? In order to create saints. A man becomes a saint by conquering the senses. Is there anything impossible for a man who has subdued his passions? He can even realize God, through His grace. Again, see how His whole play of creation is perpetuated through lust."'⁸

Śrī Kṛṣṇa analyses the problem of temptation from the psychological standpoint and suggests the remedy accordingly :

Arjuna asks :

'But impelled by what does man commit sin, though against his wishes, O Vārṣṇeya, constrained, as it were, by force?'

The Lord replies :

'It is desire, it is anger, born of the *guṇa*, rajas : of great craving, and of great sin; know this as the foe here (in this world).

'As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo by the secundine, so is it covered by that.

'Knowledge is covered by this, the constant foe of the wise, O son of Kunti, the unappeasable fire of desire.

'The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its abode : through these, it deludes the embodied by veiling his wisdom.

'Therefore, O Bull of the Bharata race,

⁷ Quoted in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 66.

⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

controlling the senses at the outset, kill it—the sinful, the destroyer of knowledge and realization.’⁹

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, of course, gave here the neatest possible solution of the problem of temptation. But he himself acknowledges elsewhere that it is not easy to cross over temptation conjured up by Māyā. He says: ‘Verily this divine illusion of Mine, constituted by the *guṇas*, is difficult to cross over; those who devote themselves to Me alone, cross over this illusion.’¹⁰

In ‘Directions to Hesychasts’ the monks Callistus and Ignatius teach aspirants to put their hope in God and expect all good things from Him. They say:

‘Firmly place the anchor of hope (Hebrews VI. 19) in God, who can save men, and expect from Him the ceasing of temptations in due time. For the Apostle (St. Paul) says: “[There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:] but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians X. 13)”’¹¹

The question may well be asked: how is it, then, that we find cases of persons being tempted above what they are able to withstand, and that they fall away from the path of higher life? The mystic’s answer to this pertinent question would be: the Lord sometimes strikes down one of his children in order to warn others against complacency. Others may be cleverly skating on thin ice, or hovering near the brink of a precipice. When they see another devotee fall, they receive a much-needed shock-treatment. It is not then the time to pity the fallen but to look within oneself and to thankfully acknowledge in all humility that God’s boundless grace alone has

saved one. There is no use in judging the fallen one if we would not be judged. God takes care of the fallen in His own great way: maybe His method is to heal him by performing a major operation on him. We do not really know. His spiritual enlightenment may be hastened through a fall. So God’s faithfulness is not contradicted by any one’s fall. All is encompassed within His grace.

RIGHT ATTITUDE TO TEMPTATION NEEDED

The most important thing needful in facing the problem of temptation in the personal context of strivings for higher life, is to fix the right attitude to temptation.

Next we need gather authentic knowledge as to how this problem has been faced and solved by the great masters of ages. In this, much helpful knowledge lies scattered in the vast religious literature of the world. For our purpose we shall have occasion to refer to teachings of mystics from both East and West. It will be seen, much detailed helpful knowledge comes to us on this problem from Western mystics, who faced the problem in a most thoroughgoing manner.

After we have known about the various methods of overcoming temptation, we should through due appraisal adopt methods suitable for our situation in the struggle, and enthusiastically and steadily apply them in our own lives.

But nothing can be really achieved without firm inner resolve to overcome temptations. And often we really do not have this. We toy with the idea on the surface of our mind and deep within we are really vile hypocrites. Indeed, in our spiritually unawakened state we long for them at heart while presenting a moral face to ourselves and others; for temptations are so luscious! We go about wearing masks and even start believing that these are our own faces! In St. Augustine’s confessions to the Lord there

⁹ *Bhagavad-Gītā* III. 36-42.

¹⁰ *ibid.* VII. 4.

¹¹ *Philokalia*, p. 189.

is a revealing portrayal of this inner human situation :

... But I a most wretched youth, most wretched from the very start of my youth, had even sought chastity from you, and had said, "Give me chastity and continuance, but not yet!" For I feared that You would hear me quickly, and that quickly You would heal me of that disease of lust, which I wished to have satisfied rather than extinguished.¹²

This deep-seated inner hypocrisy we must first get rid of through the power of discrimination and prayer. Then we need to learn carefully how we should look upon temptation.

There is nothing pernicious about temptations when we see them in true light.

Temptation may very well be described as God's strategy of redemption. As Sri Ramakrishna said, 'God created sins in order to create saints'. He tempts so that, horrified, we may rush towards Him. He exposes us to evil so that, lacerated, we may be driven to discover within us that which cannot be touched by evil. He tempts and oppresses, in order to reveal the sweetness of his grace.

Now, God's great purpose notwithstanding, in regard to temptations, they are very much one of the most troublesome facts of the aspirant's life.

Encounter with temptations is inevitable in spiritual life. No one can escape them for all times. No one, however lofty, is immune from temptation until and unless he has attained illumination and is confirmed in it. There is a saying in India: 'When shall I sing the praise of a holy man? Only when the ashes from his funeral pyre are blown by the wind.' The clear meaning of the saying is that even a holy man is safe from temptation only after he dies. Here the reference

is not to an illumined soul, but to struggling aspirants.

Says Thomas à Kempis:

'Some persons have their greatest temptation in the beginning of their conversion, some in the end, and some in a manner all their life time be troubled therewith, and there be many that be but lightly tempted: all this cometh of the great wisdom and righteousness of God, which knoweth the state and merit of every person, and ordaineth all things for the best, and to the everlasting health and salvation of his elect and chosen people.'¹³

When we live indifferent lives, not caring much for any ethical code of conduct, we may not so much feel the existence of the phenomenon of temptation.

It is only after the entry into what may be called interior life that we feel its impact upon us all the more.

And it is possible, and indeed common experience with mystics, that the purer the aspirant becomes, the greater the difficulties he encounters with temptations.

Temptations may come at any period of life and may last for any length of time. When we know how to deal with them, the length of their duration does not really matter.

It is strange justice of God, the more you love Him, the more bitter are your trials, and His tortures upon you.

In the *Imitation of Christ*, in the section 'The Inward Speaking of Christ to a Faithful Soul', these words are put in the mouth of the Lord:

'Do you imagine you will always have spiritual comfort whenever you want It? That was never the way of my saints; what they had was a world of trouble, trials innumerable, utter desolation, Yet for all that they held out patiently in all that befell them,

¹² *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, translated by John K. Ryan, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1960, p. 194.

¹³ Vide *The Imitation of Christ*, Templegate, Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A., p. 23.

trusting in God and not in themselves; they knew that they did not count these present sufferings as the measure of that glory which was to be revealed, the prize they hoped to win.'

In explaining the rationale of this dispensation of God St. Paul says: 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.'¹⁴

The same idea is emphasized in the first chapter of the General Epistle of James: 'A man who has not endured temptation has not been tried.'¹⁵

Thomas à Kempis says: 'The fire proveth gold, and temptation proveth the righteous man.'¹⁶

'St. Elias Ekdikos says: "No Christian believing in God, should be careless, but should always expect temptations and be ready for it, so that when it comes, he may not think it strange and be confused by it but suffer the burden of affliction with gratitude remembering the words of the prophet, 'Examine me, O Lord, and prove me' (Ps. XXVI, 2) and 'Your chastisement will correct me in the end' (quotation not identified); he does not say, your chastisement will destroy me, but that it will correct me in the end.'"'¹⁷

So these temptations are some of the potent facts of spiritual life and they should be viewed accordingly.

Instead of being emotionally disturbed by them, we must have the mystic's approach to them. They should be studied and handled as facts of inner life, full of great and helpful meaning for us.

HINDU TEACHINGS ON OVERCOMING TEMPTATIONS

In Hinduism, temptations are included in

the general term Maya. Maya is the power of God. It deludes the jiva and makes him forget God. Though he may be deluded, the embodied being never loses his divinity.

In Indian systems of spiritual discipline, desire is analysed to be the root of felt temptations, the root of desire being *ajnana* (not-knowing), ignorance, about the true nature of the Self or one's relation to God.

The problem of temptation is taken care of in integrated systems of the disciplines of Yoga, without making it an independent issue.

Our spiritual masters view all spiritual problems as the product of impurities of the mind. Their simple solution, therefore is attainment of *chitta-suddhi*, purification of the mind.

Different Yogas handle this problem effectively but in different ways, sometimes not so much as even perceptibly-distinct ways.

For overcoming temptation you do not do anything outside, but you do everything inside. The work is done inside the mind. In order to become holy, men do not remove all women from the world, or women all men. What they do is to purify their own minds by various methods.

Three methods are discernible in operation in Indian disciplines for overcoming obstacles: prayer, thought-control, and restraining outgoing senses.

For the men of restrained senses temptations do not exist in the sense they do for the men of unrestrained senses.

'*Visuddhimagga*, a Buddhist scripture, gives a story which illustrates the view of the body as a citadel of bones. The hermit Maha Tissa was walking near Anuradhapura meditating on the transiency of life. A woman who had quarrelled with her husband passed him, gaily dressed, and smiled at him, showing her teeth. When the husband, who was in pursuit, asked him whether he saw a woman pass by, the sage replied: "I saw

¹⁴ Hebrews XII. 6.

¹⁵ Vide *Philokalia* p. 188.

¹⁶ Op. cit. XII. p. 22.

¹⁷ Vide *Philokalia* p. 188.

only a skeleton, whether it was man or woman, I know not." 18

Prayer has always been considered as one of the most potent disciplines for overcoming temptations. From Rigveda to Ramakrishna, people have been taught to pray fervently for the illumination of consciousness, for being protected from evil and sin, for not being deluded by Maya. And these, in effect, are prayers for being enabled to overcome temptation.

The greatest prayers of the Hindus, known as *Gayatri*, occurs in the Rigveda. It was revealed in the form of mantra to sage Viswamitra. The very name of the prayer *Gayatri* means 'the saviour of the singer.' When imparted to one, it gives one a fresh spiritual birth and thus makes him a 'twice born'. It constitutes the spiritual power (*tejas*) that an aspirant gains by reciting and contemplating upon it daily, at the three junctions, morning, noon and evening.

The prayer in translation, which can hardly convey its inner power, is: 'We meditate upon that adorable effulgence of the resplendent vivifier, Savitar; may He stimulate our intellect.' 19

By implication this prayer takes care of all fundamental inner requirements: quickening of the intellect, right understanding, and illumination of consciousness. Those who regularly repeat *Gayatri* in right earnestness are saved from those inner cravings which leads a person to temptation; their minds become pure. This is how through prayer temptations are overcome.

It is a great pity that Hindus are developing more faith in morning radio songs than on repetition of *Gayatri*. We are not asking you not to listen to uplifting songs over the radio, but what we urge is that such

songs should not come in the way of repeating *Gayatri* regularly. *Gayatri* has the power to save us from dire inner calamities. If we want to save ourselves from those mental maladies, which are turning some societies into psychiatrists' heaven, we must turn this tide and return to regular repetition of *Gayatri*.

In the *Sukla Yajurveda* (XXXIV) there is Hymn of Good Intent or *Siva-kalpa* 'This hymn on Mind and goodness of its intentions has been placed in some of the later manuals on a par with *Purush Sukta* and *Saturudriya*. Manu mentions this hymn in his Lawbook (XI. 250) for its potency as an expiation (*prayaschitta*) for heinous sins.' 20

In translation the hymn runs as follows :

'That mind, the divine, which when one is wakeful or asleep, reaches far, which is far-reaching light of lights, may that mind of mine be of good intent.

'By which the active and the wise perform the duties in sacrifice and intellectual activities, that which is wonder-being inside the beings, may that mind of mine be of beautiful intent.

'That which is knowledge and fortitude, that which is the immortal light within all beings, without which no act is done, may that mind of mine be of auspicious resolve.

'That immortal by which that which is dead is to be that which is and which is to be comprehended, with which the sacrifice with its seven priests grows, may that mind of mine be of good intent. 'In whom Rik, Sama and Yajur are established, like spokes in the hub of the wheel, in whom all the thoughts of beings are woven, may that mind of mine be of good intent.

'That which directs men like a good charioteer directing the horses with reins, that which is established in the heart, is immortal and swiftest, may that Mind of mine be of good intent.'

18 Quoted by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his translation of the *Dhammapada*, Oxford University Press, London 1966, p. 109.

19 Vide *Rgveda* III. 62.10.

20 Vide Dr. V. Raghavan, *The Indian Heritage*, The Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore, 1958, p. 27. The translation of the hymn quoted here is from the same book.

In the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* (X. 66) there is a prayer for self-purification, in which purification is sought for every part of one's body, mind and faculties.

In the Upanishadic *shanti-mantras* (peace-prayers) there are prayers for being able to see and hear what is auspicious and whatever is needed for being saved from temptations.

In all religious literature are strewn such prayers as are helpful for being saved from temptations and sin.

In summing up the spirit of these prayers Tulsidas, the illumined devotee of Rama, implores :

'O Lord, O Thou the inmost self of all, I tell Thee the truth : I do not cherish any worldly desire in my heart. Do Thou grant me intense devotion unto Thee. Do Thou also free my mind from passions and other impurities.'

The earnest spiritual seeker prays fervently to be saved from temptations. One can easily choose from the scriptures a few prayers suitable to one's temperament, and practise them regularly. What is important in prayers are not the words but the innermost anguish of the heart placed before God through them.

In their various yogas Hindus have devised different techniques of dealing with the outgoing senses and the phenomenon of temptations.

We may here only mention very briefly the different techniques adopted in different yogas without going into details :

In Raja-yoga, the aspirant by the power of concentration isolates the spirit from matter. When this isolation becomes a fact of experience, then temptation as part of

matter and a product of it, cannot any more affect or hurt the Yogi.

In Jnana-yoga, the aspirant, through the process of discrimination between the real and the unreal.—'not this' 'not this', 'I am not the body, I am not the senses, I am not the sense objects'—ultimately experiences the fact of Atman, as his essential being, which is identical with the Supreme Spirit. Temptations which belong to the body and mind, then cannot affect him any more.

The Karma-yogin views himself as the instrument and the Lord alone as the doer. When this concept of one's own instrumentality becomes a fact of experience then the aspirant is free of responsibility for what the doer gets done through Him. His complete detachment from the fruits of action saves him from temptations.

In Bhakti-yoga the devotee looks upon everything as the *leela* (divine sport) of the Lord. In and through everything he seeks to love God alone. And as his love for God grows, all other relishes drop off from him. This is why the Gopis, separated from Sri Krishna, describe the sweetness of his beauty in the *Bhagavatam* (X. 31.14) as 'that which makes one forget all other attractions'. This is why Sri Ramakrishna compares bhakti to a tiger which swallows up all other passions in a man. The devotee of the Lord does not fight frontally the temptations, he turns the direction of his senses to God. Thus temptations are overcome without a fight.

So it can be said that the Hindu method of overcoming temptation is to earnestly practise the disciplines of yoga, as taught by authentic scriptures and spiritual masters.

(To be continued)

EXCURSIONS INTO *UDDHAVA-GITĀ*

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

GIVE UP THE IDEA OF POSSESSION

The story of the osprey¹ is similar to the one which Sri Ramakrishna used to narrate. A kite with a fish in its beak was harried by crows wherever it flew. Finally, when the fish fell from its beak, all the crows dived after it, leaving the kite in peace. The moral of the story is clear. All human worries are caused by attachment to sense-objects. This leads to competition, hoarding, misery. If you want to keep money and other goods, do it without attachment. In place of the sense of possession there must be the sense of trusteeship. Some may have possessions and keep them, some give up everything. But all should have non-attachment. Everyone should practise inner detachment. One can be very wealthy and have many possessions and yet be perfectly non-attached. Another may be a beggar and yet be terribly attached to his rags and bits of things.

The central idea is the elimination of egoism. The sense of 'me' and 'mine' should be given up with regard to objects of the world. It was this absence of egoism that made the royal sage Janaka exclaim: 'Even if the whole of Mithilā (his capital city) is burnt to ashes, nothing that is mine is burnt up.' This should not be compared to Nero's playing the fiddle while Rome was burning. Janaka was the king of Videha. So he was also called Janaka Videha. The word *videha* literally means 'one who has no body-consciousness'. His attitude is not self-indulgence or callousness. It is a very

lofty attitude born of the realization of the unreality of this world.

The sense of non-possession should be extended to our own body and mind. We should stop identifying ourselves with our man-body or woman-body, or with the group of ideas that aggregate to form our ordinary 'I'. We should renounce all outside things and desires and seek our innermost Self, the only eternal unchanging reality. Dwell constantly on the meaning of such passages as Śaṅkara's *Nirvāṇa-ṣaṭkam* ('Six Stanzas on Nirvāṇa') beginning with 'I am not the mind, intellect, ego, mindstuff,' This practice of inner dissociation is very important. It becomes natural after long practice, through higher realization. Then we become truly simple and childlike. All the great ones—Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna, and such others—showed childlike simplicity in their lives.

WHY THIS FEAR OF SOLITUDE ?

There seems to be in many people an inherent fear of remaining alone. They always need company of some sort or other. People are eager to talk to others and make others talk to them. The main cause of this tendency is the clinging to one's own little self. The ego is a complex, a bundle of ideas, memories, and impulses, and therefore needs some kind of support. Ordinarily people try to hold together the ego with the support of others. But those who have succeeded in integrating their personality from within do not need such external supports. The centre of gravity of the personality in their case lies wholly within. The higher Self is the best integrating power known to man. There is no need to run after this

¹ *The Last Message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa* (Tr. by Swami Madhavananda, Pub. by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, 1956), IV. 2.

man and that for one's peaceful existence.

Remain alone in peace. Remain alone with the Divine. The Divine within is company enough for us all. There is a famous Sanskrit passage which says:

'O Lord, Thou art my mother, Thou art my father; Thou art my relative and my friend; Thou art my learning, and my wealth; Thou art indeed my all.'²

There is a Bengali song which Sri Ramakrishna used to sing, beginning with 'Thou art my All in All, O Lord!—the Life of my life, the Essence of essence;...' You will find it in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

Remember Buddha's instruction: 'Roam about free and alone like the rhinoceros.' This idea is conveyed through the simple story of a maiden who received some guests in her house. There was no ready rice available for cooking and she started husking the paddy. But the bracelets on her wrist made a great noise, which she thought would betray her family's poverty. So she removed the bracelets one by one till only one was left on each arm. Our keenly observant Avadhūta learnt from this the following moral:

'Where many dwell there is quarrel, and even between two people there is a chance for talk. Therefore one should live alone, like the bracelet of the maiden.'³

The spiritual aspirant should be especially careful in the company of members of the opposite sex. If we do not stress dignity of conduct and aloofness, and allow ourselves to lapse into familiarity, purity can never be maintained. Others should always be kept at a certain distance, but even more so in the case of the relation between men and women. Very often people are not careful and dignified enough in this. Their discriminating faculty is clouded. The West

has mostly lost the idea of true purity. That is the whole trouble.

BE ABSORBED IN THE SELF

In the highest state of spiritual consciousness the phenomenal world disappears altogether. It is this idea that is conveyed by the example of the arrow-maker who was so much absorbed in his work that he forgot to notice the noisy procession of the king and his retinue which went by his shop.⁴

It is a fundamental law in spiritual life that whatever we take to be real draws our whole energy—our intellect, thoughts, and actions. If we take this world to be real we become preoccupied with it. The scientist is intensely preoccupied with abstract ideas of the universe. If you want to turn to spiritual life, this world should cease to be more real than the Spirit. One cannot be even a dualist unless one believes that God is more real than the whole world. Even the dualist regards the world as of a lower order of reality than the Divine. The Divine alone is eternal and immortal. No religion gives to the world the same status in reality as to the Divine.

Monism asserts right from the beginning that the world is unreal and that the Divine alone is the only reality. But when the superconscious dawns upon the aspirant, whether he began as a dualist or a monist, the phenomenal world disappears from his consciousness. Dualism and monism are terms which refer to the relationship between the soul and the Divine. This is an important point to note. Whether the world is real or unreal is not the question in point. What is more important is to stress the greater reality of the Divine and establish a contact with it.

How to connect our individuality with the Divine? How to connect the part with

² *Prapanna-gītā*, 28.

³ *ibid.*, 10.

⁴ *ibid.*, 13.

the Whole? This is our task in spiritual life. And to the extent we succeed in doing that, we become more spiritual, illumined, free.

The secret lies in changing one's concept of oneself. If we identify ourselves with our bodies, then this world and everything connected with it come to us as a matter of course. The Divine becomes real to us only when we regard ourselves as the Self. How to counteract the thought that we are bodies, that we are men and women, that we are doers and enjoyers? Raise a strong contrary thought current. Make this so intense and vivid that all other wrong thoughts fade away. Every spiritual aspirant, whether he is philosophically a monist or a dualist, must do this. He must regard himself as the self-luminous Ātman unattached to the body and mind. He should reflect deeply on this until the truth sinks deep into his personality and transmutes his outlook on life.

The secret of attaining purity lies here. The Ātman is eternally pure and is our real nature. Without realizing our true nature we cannot attain real purity however much we may try. In fact it is the identification of the Ātman with the mind, senses, and body that is the very basis of all impurity.

COSMIC ENERGY FLOWS THROUGH YOU

Really speaking, do you keep your body alive, or is the Divine Energy working through you? You are in dynamic contact with the cosmic forces at different levels of your personality—the physical, mental, and spiritual. Just as the body is maintained by energy derived from food, so also the soul is maintained by cosmic spiritual energy. The moment this energy is withdrawn you become lifeless, inert. So never attribute anything to yourself, but learn to attribute everything to the Divine Energy. Try on the other hand to become a fit channel for the expression of that Energy. Develop in yourself this capacity by prac-

tising humility and self-surrender. But this needs constant effort. Egoism obstructs the free flow of the Energy, cuts us away from the divine source. That is why we suffer.

Actually we are only instruments in the hands of the Divine. Don't you remember Swami Vivekananda's experience in Kashmir? While in a temple which bore the marks of Muhammadan vandalism, he said to himself that he would not have allowed that to happen had he been alive then. Suddenly there came to him the voice of the Divine Mother: 'Am I protecting you or are you protecting Me?' Swamiji was a realized soul and so he could hear the divine voice.

What is important for us is consciously to strive to connect our little selves with the Divine. As long as we remain awake let us strive for this to the utmost, and when we go to sleep let us think that the Divine Power supports us during that period. We constantly repeat 'I', 'I', 'I'! But then, when this wonderful 'I' sleeps, who protects it? What keeps the body alive then? Our trouble is we think that this little individuality is an independent entity. No, it is not. It is only a part of an Infinite Existence.

Just as it is possible for us to react to our little self, or ego, it is possible for us to react to our higher Self. Just as it is possible for us to react to our individuality, it is possible for us to react to the Principle. Just as we can love a human being we can love the Principle. This love is very different from our human love though.

The idea of God as Energy or Power may appeal to you more than the idea of an Impersonal Absolute. But we should learn to establish ourselves in that idea also. It will become easy if we regard ourselves as the soul and God as the sum total of all souls, or the Soul of all souls.

THE FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF EXISTENCE

This idea of the basic solidarity of the universe in an infinite divine Existence cal-

led Brahman is a very ancient conception in Hinduism. The whole universe has come out of That and into That will it resolve back after aeons of time. The universe is never separate from Brahman which forms its basis and support. This idea is conveyed through the analogy of the spider and its web—a well-known imagery of the Upanisads—in stanzas 16 to 21 of the fourth chapter of *The Last Message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa*.

The phenomenon must serve as a stepping-stone to the noumenal Reality upholding it. Taking hold of the known we have to proceed to the unknown. You must take hold of the cobweb to reach the spider. That is the purpose behind describing all these cosmological processes. Neither in the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*) nor in the path of devotion (*bhakti-yoga*) has this phenomenal world any place other than as a means to reach the Divine.

The cosmological processes of evolution and involution, or projection and dissolution, were originally worked out by Sāṅkhya philosophers but have since been accepted by almost all the systems of Indian philosophy. This concept forms the background of all Indian speculation about the nature of the world, the destiny of man, and his outlook on life.

Yoga is the process by which one goes back to the Ultimate Cause, following the trend of involution consciously. By conscious striving one has to trace back to the processes which produced this phenomenal universe. Normally, involution is an unconscious process, akin to sleep, carried out on a cosmic scale. Yoga is, on the contrary, a fully conscious process by which one controls the modes of nature, and discovers the immutable consciousness which lies at the back of all the cosmological processes.

It is important to note that evolution and involution are processes that affect only *prakṛti*, the primordial source of material objects. The Ātman, as pure consciousness,

is separate from it and unaffected by its changes. Mind and matter evolve but the Ātman remains unchangeable for ever, the witness of all the phenomenal changes. Mind and matter are evolutes of *guṇas*. By *guṇa* is meant both substance and attribute of *prakṛti*. Every object in the phenomenal universe is constituted of three *guṇas*: *sattwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The Self, which is the eternal Subject, is beyond the three *guṇas*. Ordinary life is the interplay of the three *guṇas*. And spiritual life is the attempt to transcend the *guṇas* and realize the true Self—which is the goal of all spiritual striving.

BY THINKING OF THE ĀTMAN WE BECOME THE ĀTMAN

The mind is not something conditioned once for all by heredity. Its nature is dynamic and can be changed by proper discipline. It has the tendency to record every form of experience that passes through it until the recorded part becomes our nature, so to speak. By thinking about a bad person we imbibe his attributes and become bad ourselves. By meditating on a holy personality we imbibe his virtues and purity and become holy ourselves. This is a psychological law operating in all human beings. This law was discovered in India long ago and has come to form the basis of all types of spiritual meditation. Even the monist recognized the value of thus transforming the mind by dwelling on the nature of the higher Self. So you find the follower of the path of *jñāna* meditating on the great Upaniṣadic dicta like 'That thou art' and 'I am Brahman', or the stanzas describing the non-dual experience written by Śaṅkara and other masters.

By intensely concentrating the mind on the nature of the real Self one can awaken in oneself the forgotten memory of the Self. But intensity of concentration should be there. The whole mind should flow towards

the goal aimed at. However, this is not possible unless we have previously purified our mind and brought about a total change in our outlook on the phenomenal world. Without intense dispassion for the world and its pleasures, one cannot turn one's whole mind towards the Ātman.

The mind in ordinary people is restless. It is being continually drawn out in different directions by the sense-objects and is itself driven hither and thither by impulses and desires. Whatever excuses we may put forward for our actions, we have to admit the power of attachment to sense-objects. A man who is perfectly unattached to the world can instantly turn his whole mind towards the Ātman. He realizes that he is the Ātman and not the mind and body.

When a man dies the resultant effect of all his desires and accumulated tendencies make the soul gravitate towards different planes of post-mortem existence. That is why in India great importance is attached to a dying man's thoughts. But holy thoughts can arise in a dying man only if he had lived a holy life throughout. And this means life-long practice of self-discipline.

The above ideas are conveyed through the lesson that the Avadhūta learnt from the cockroach and the wasp.⁵ It is well known that the wasp carries cockroaches, caterpillars, spiders, etc., to its nest after paralyzing them with its sting. It then lays eggs near these helpless victims and seals the nest. The grubs that hatch from the eggs eat the insects and grow into wasps. The whole cycle of the wasp's life was not probably discovered in India but the presence of cockroach, etc., in its nest was well known and this has given rise to the popular belief that the cockroach, by intensely meditating on the wasp, becomes the wasp itself. This

forms the basis of the allegory widely used in Hindu literature.

GIVE UP ATTACHMENT TO THE BODY

'That very body for the welfare of which a man adds unto himself and maintains a wife, children, sense-objects, domestic animals, servants, home, and relatives, and painfully amasses wealth, withers at the end of its term like a tree, creating the seed of a fresh body for the man.'⁶

The last lesson that the Avadhūta learned was from his own body. After wandering here and there he at last came to himself. In fact all the lessons we need for our spiritual life can be learnt from ourselves. The mind is its own teacher. The purified mind guides us like a teacher. When the power of intuition awakens in us, our power of discrimination increases sharply. With its help we can cut off our attachment to the body.

The goal of life is not bodily enjoyments. In the famous story in the *Kaṭha-upaniṣad*, the boy Naciketas is tempted with many kinds of worldly pleasures. But unaffected by all that, Naciketas replies:

'But, O Death, these endure only till tomorrow. Furthermore, they exhaust the vigour of all the sense-organs. Even the longest life is short indeed. Keep your horses, dances, and songs for yourself.'⁷

The goal of human life is Self-realization. It is most unfortunate not to attain it in this very life.

[The story of the Avadhūta and his twenty-four teacher ends here. It will be remembered that the story was narrated to Yadu, the son of Yayāti and grandson of Nahuṣa—powerful kings of the Lunar Race and ancestors of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As a sequel to the above narrative, it is further mentioned that the Avadhūta, after accepting the wor-

⁵ *ibid.*, 22-23.

⁶ *ibid.*, 26.

⁷ *Kaṭha-upaniṣad*, I. i. 26.

ship of Yadu, left him and continued his joyful wandering as a free soul. The king, too, meditating on the teachings was freed from attachments and attained to supreme peace. In the next chapter Śrī Kṛṣṇa continues His advice to Uddhava about the need for devotion, discrimination, and detachment in spiritual life.—ED.]

(To be continued)

(Continued from p. 169)

increases, the nearer His grace approaches. May you have great yearning—this is my earnest prayer to Him.

At present my health is so-so. All the complaints persist, and particularly ...is causing much trouble. Let the Lord's will be done! Brahmacharins K. and S. are well. Please accept their good wishes, etc. I feel glad to read your letter. Why should it be a botheration for me? Make me happy by writing letters oftener. Please accept my heartfelt love and good wishes. What more to write?

SRI TURIYANANDA

Love consists not in feeling great things, but in having great detachment and in suffering for the Beloved.

* * *

The purest suffering bears and carries in its train the purest understanding.

* * *

He that with pure love works for God not only cares not whether or not men know it, but does not even do these things that God Himself may know it. Such a one, even though it should never be known, would not cease to perform these same services and with the same gladness and love.

—ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

VIVEKANANDA IN SWITZERLAND, 1896

SWAMI VIDYATMANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

We now come to a place in the biography which leaves the movements of the party obscure and where once more 'educated guessing' will have to substitute for facts. The biography indicates that after Chamonix the party 'next wandered on to an interesting retreat some miles away, where a sojourn of two weeks was made'. This must have been Saas-Fee, as we shall see. Toward the end of Chapter xci a mention is made of Zermatt and of how Mr. Sevier climbed the Gornergrat (not Konergrat, as the biography has it). This stop is supposed to have followed the sojourn in Lucerne. But Zermatt is between Chamonix and Saas-Fee in the Valais, far from Lucerne. If Zermatt was visited, it must have been visited directly after Chamonix, in the first days of August. Additional evidence of this comes from the letters. There is an undated letter to Swami Kripananda in which Swamiji speaks of having 'yesterday' visited the glacier of Monte Rosa (which is at Zermatt) and having plucked some mountain flowers, one of which he enclosed in the letter. A letter to Mr. J. J. Goodwin, dated August 8 (presumably written from Saas-Fee) speaks of his having written Kripananda 'a few days ago' and having sent him flowers 'gathered near the glaciers'. From such evidence we may take it that Zermatt was the next stop after Chamonix.

In 1896, to go to Zermatt from Chamonix required one and a half days. The normal route was to take a diligence from Chamonix to Martigny by way of a pass called the Tête Noir. This was only twenty-six miles, but it was a rough uphill road that required eight and a half hours. The next day one took the train from Martigny through the

Rhone Valley forty-two miles to Visp, then shifted to the new mountain railway, completed in 1891, that took one up to Zermatt twenty-two miles farther. This trip is all gorges and waterfalls, the terrain being extremely steep. As Baedeker says, one hamlet along the way is situated on so shelving a pasture that, according to the local wits, even the barnyard fowls must be shod with iron to enable them to keep their footing. The group should have been able to arrive by mid-afternoon of the second day.

Zermatt, at 5,315 feet, was a favoured resort of the late 1800's, as it is today. It is in the midst of glaciers and the beautiful Monte Rosa and the famed Matterhorn are close at hand. 'In no other locality', Baedeker tells us, 'is the traveller so completely admitted into the heart of the Alpine world, the very sanctuary of the "Spirit of the Alps".' Above Zermatt there were two high mountain spots to which one customarily went on excursion—Hotel Riffelberg at 8,352 feet above sea level, which gives a splendid view of the Matterhorn, and the Gornergrat. Probably the party mounted on muleback to Riffelberg; from there Swamiji could easily have walked on mildly sloping ground to the lower edge of the Monte Rosa glacier, searching Alpine flowers. The Gornergrat is a look-out spot with an old hotel, higher up, at 10,290 feet, at which one finds oneself surrounded by a dozen snow peaks of from 13,000 to 15,000 feet. 'Of the party,' says the biography, 'only Mr. Sevier succeeded in reaching the summit, the air being too rarefied' for the others.

Although we had the help of the Development Society of Zermatt, and the co-operation of the Seiler Hotel people—the Seiler

family launched Zermatt in 1855 and has ever since maintained several big hotels there—we found the usual situation with regard to hotel registers: misplaced, burned, discarded. The Alpine Museum of Zermatt contains many relics of mountaineering exploits and photos of Zermatt at the turn of the century, but nothing specific about our travellers.

Up to now the group had been travelling quite hard for more than two weeks. They were seeing a great deal, but Swamiji's hope of finding a really peaceful retreat had not yet materialized. We may guess that what was wanted was a quiet village where there were adequate accommodations, the snows and glaciers near, wooded trails for promenading, and upland meadows for sitting. Baedeker's description of Saas-Fee was inviting, and since it met the requirements and could be reached from Zermatt in less than a day, it was a natural choice.

To go to Saas-Fee from Zermatt, one descended by the mountain railway to Stalden, a matter of a couple of hours, and from Stalden went up on muleback the dozen miles in three or four hours. According to my calculations, the party reached Saas-Fee about August 5 and remained there until about August 19. Since one of Swamiji's letters of the period is headed 'Grand Hotel, Saas-Fee', and another 'Grand Hotel, Valais', it is safe to assume that the party stayed at this hostelry. The Grand Hotel had been completed in 1893 and was, according to Baedeker, 'well adapted for a stay of some time'. It was five stories tall and had room for a hundred guests. A covered verandah along the south facade allowed people to sit or dine directly facing the mountains and the three glaciers visible from Saas-Fee. The Grand Hotel is still in existence, although parts have been considerably modified. But visits to the hotel and talks with the present management failed to produce any old records. All that remains

of a historical nature is a painting of the hotel as it was when first completed.

The language of the Valais is a dialect of German. In this tongue the name Saas-Fee means 'cattle prairie'. This is what the place was for centuries before people began to live there—a high, relatively flat grassy land closed in by forested mountains. Northern Italy is only a half-dozen miles away as the crow flies on the other side of the mountain range. In winter the shepherds with their herds went down to Saas-Grund, some eight hundred feet lower, at that time the principal town of the region. By 1896 Saas-Fee had about 350 residents and four good hotels. Baedeker's description: 'charmingly situated among pastures, with a magnificent view of the Fee glacier; surrounded by—' and here he mentions the names of eleven peaks. Two other glaciers descend toward the town, the Bider and the Hofbhan.

At last Swamiji had what he had been looking for, and as this passage from the biography shows, he made the most of it:

The Swami was at his best in this village, nestling in the innermost recesses of the Alps. [In another place the biography calls it an 'out-of-the-way village'.] On all sides rose the snow-capped peaks; all about was the silence and peace of the village life. No rude note of worldliness crept in here. It was here that the Swami attained some of the most lucid and luminous spiritual moments of his life. A strange quiet obsessed him. He seemed far, far away from all worldly concerns. World and all thought of work were as if forgotten entirely. He was not even the teacher. He was, as it were, the silent, meditative monk of old. Many times he walked silently on the mountain paths and his friends seemed to be caught up with him in a world of meditation and peace. One of those who were with him in this wondrous fortnight says, 'There seemed to be a great light about him, and a great stillness and peace. Never have I seen the Swami to such advantage. He seemed to communicate spirituality by a look or with a

touch. One could almost read his thoughts which were the highest, so transfigured had his personality become!

Of the sixteen known letters Swamiji wrote during his two-months' continental holiday, ten appear to have been written from Saas-Fee. In several of these letters he spoke of how well he felt and in one or two he expressed a superb mood of inwardness. That he intended the trip to be a period of spiritual refreshment is apparent in this brief note to Mrs. Sara Bull: Letter CIV in Vol. VI. (The numbers used for letters cited in this article are in accordance with the numbering system employed in the latest editions of volumes of *The Complete Works* printed prior to 1972.) It is dated July 25 and headed Saas-Grund. Since Swamiji is believed to have been at Chamonix on July 25, one assumes that he wrote the letter there on that date and mailed it at Saas-Grund on the way up to Saas-Fee. (Without seeing the letter itself and the postmark on its envelope, one is reduced to this speculation.)

I want to forget the world entirely at least for the next two months and practise hard. That is my rest. The mountains and snow have a beautifully quieting influence on me, and I am getting better sleep here than for a long time.

Now follow four letters, of which three, and probably the fourth, were written on August 5 at Saas-Fee.

The first, from the Boshi Sen collection at Almora and heretofore unpublished, is to Sister Christine. It is dated 'Switzerland, August 5' and the envelope was postmarked at Saas-Fee the following day. A post office had been established at Saas-Fee in 1871. This letter gives a good idea of Swamiji's mood and how the mountains were associated in his mind with *advaitic* ideas.

Switzerland
5th August '96

c/E. T. Sturdy Esq.
Highview Caversham
Reading, England

Blessed and beloved—Surrounded on all sides by eternal snowpeaks, sitting on the grass in a beautiful wood—my thoughts go to those I love—so I write.

I am in Switzerland constantly on the move getting a much needed rest. It is a miniature Himalayas—and has the same effect of raising the mind up to the Self—and driving away all earthly feelings & ties. I am intensely enjoying it. I feel so uplifted. I cannot write but I wish you will have the same for ever—when your feet do not want as it were to touch the material earth. When the Soul finds itself floating as it were in an ocean of spirituality.

Prof. Max Muller has written in the 19th Century an article on my master—read it if you can. August number. I hope you are enjoying this beautiful summer and are perfectly rested after hard work. My love to all. Blessings to all.

Yours ever with love and blessings.
Vivekananda

On the second page Swamiji noted that he was enclosing some Alpine flowers.

Saas-Fee had apparently been on the itinerary for some time, since the party found letters waiting for them there when they arrived, forwarded from London.

The next, Number LXXX in Vol. VIII, was a letter to Swamiji's New York disciple, Leon Landsberg, who had become Swami Kripananda. In *The Complete Works* the date is not given, only 'Switzerland, August 1896'. As we have already seen, it was written 'several days' before August 8 and after sightseeing at Zermatt: 'I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life.' The flower enclosed in the letter to Christine was presumably plucked at the same time and in the same place. The various points suggest that the letter to Kripananda was written on August 5 from Saas-Fee.

The third letter of August 5—Number LXXIX in the same Volume—was to E. T. Sturdy. It is a businesslike communication about publishing matters and demonstrates that his inspired state of mind did not interfere in the least with Swamiji's usual level-headedness.

The fourth—Number cv in Vol. VI—is a letter to Lala Badri Sah and reveals the development of Swamiji's determination to found a monastery in the Himalayas. For the first time he takes a definite step toward that end. Urged no doubt by his delight with Saas-Fee and perhaps the enthusiasm of the Seviars: 'I want to start a Math at Almora or near Almora rather .. Do you know of any suitable place near Almora where I can build my monastery with a garden etc.? I would rather like to have a hill all to myself.'

On August 6 Swamiji wrote to Alasinga Perumal—Number LXIV in Vol. V—about the *Brahmavadin*. 'I am, as you see, now in Switzerland, and am always on the move. I cannot and must not do anything in the way of writing, nor much reading either.' Why *must not*? His intention to devote himself himself to 'practising hard', one presumes.

No more letters were written during the next two days, and we can visualize how the time was passed: walking in the forests, sitting in the meadows, sauntering along the romantic gorge of the Feevispa Torrent, perhaps climbing up to some high lookout spot. When the cows marched down to their barns in the village at the quiet sunset hour, their bells clanging, and the peasants behind directing them with staffs and cries, Swamiji must have felt himself in India.

On Saturday, August 8, Swamiji wrote three more letters. One to Sturdy—Number LXXXI in Vol. VIII—is headed 'Grand Hotel Saas-Fee, Valais, Switzerland'. It was a follow-up of the subject mentioned three days before. A postscript added on the 9th

stated that he would be meeting Paul Deussen, Orientalist and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kiel, Germany, on September 10.

The second letter of August 8—LXXX in the same Volume—was to J. J. Goodwin: 'I am much refreshed now. I look out of the window and see the huge glaciers just before me and feel that I am in the Himalayas. I am quite calm.... This rest, eternal, peaceful rest, I am catching a glimpse of now in this beautiful spot.' The letter goes on to express Vedāntic ideas in a fresh and magnificent way—one of Swamiji's best letters: 'The only knowledge that is of any value is to know that all this is humbug.' He concludes by mentioning that 'a few days ago' he had written Kripananda and sent him flowers 'gathered near the glaciers'.

On Wednesday, August 12, Swamiji wrote Sturdy anew—Letter LXXXII in the same Volume—on various matters connected with the London work, adding, 'We will start from here towards Germany next week Miss Müller goes to England as soon as we have crossed over to Germany.' The words 'next week', plus the various mentions that the Saas-Fee sojourn occupied a fortnight, lead me to conclude that the party stayed in this mountain village until about August 19.

One more letter to Sturdy from Saas-Fee is reproduced in *The Complete Works*, Vol. VIII—Number LXXVIII. It is without date but is headed 'Grand Hotel, Valais, Switzerland'. Swamiji's friendship with Sturdy was quite close, to write him four times in two weeks:

...I am reading a little, starving a good deal, and practising a good deal more. The strolls in the woods are simply delicious. We are now situated under three huge glaciers, and the scenery is very beautiful.

By the by, whatever scruples I may have had as to the Swiss-lake origin of the Aryans have been taken clean off

my mind. The Swiss is a Tartar *minus* a pigtail....

That Swamiji profited from the trip to tone up his physical state is seen from something he wrote to Mary Hale on the day he returned to London, September 17: 'One good it has done me—a few pounds of unnecessary adipose tissue have returned back to the gaseous state.'

In Vivekananda's time the opinion of many scholars was that the Aryans who came into India had their origin as Swiss lake dwellers. Swamiji's reference apparently reflects his admiration for the sturdy, indomitable Swiss citizens he had occasion to observe at close hand in the Valais.

There exists at Saas-Fee an extraordinary trail called the Kapellenweg, or Chapel Walk. It is a rocky pathway running downhill from Saas-Fee to Saas-Grund, leading through woods, along the edge of a precipice skirting the Feevispa Torrent. At the upper end of the descent there is a small church called the Zur Hohen-Stiege, built in 1687. One side of the edifice is constructed in the ordinary way, while the other half is sunk into the living rock. It contains a few hand-made pews and a splendid altar in the baroque style, representing the Virgin Mary standing, holding the Baby Jesus, her two hands making what can only be described as an *abhaya mudrā*, 'Be without fear'. Two sculptured angels face the Virgin and Child, and a profusion of cherubim—twelve if I have counted them correctly—float about, looking smilingly at the holy pair and the worshipper.

The path continues to descend. Alongside it, at various intervals, are fifteen small stone chapels, constructed in 1709. These represent the fifteen mysteries of the rosary. Each chapel houses a considerable number of polychromed wooden figures presenting a scene from the life of Jesus. The style is like that of an old-fashioned Christmas crèche, the figures perhaps half lifesized.

On holy days, devotees make the circuit of the chapels, praying before each scene.

I cannot prove it, but I believe it is the Chapel Walk and the Zur Hohen-Stiege to which the biography has reference in the following passage:

Two weeks of this quiet life completely restored the Swami. There was only one incident of a slightly disturbing character. He had been walking one morning with his friends, reciting and translating passages from the Upanishads, thus creating in the Alps at least for his companions, an Indian atmosphere. On this morning, as on many others, he gradually dropped behind, being lost in reverent contemplation. After some short time, they saw him approaching rapidly, calling out in great excitement, 'I have been saved by the grace of the Lord! I nearly fell over the precipice. I was walking along, placing my alpenstock firmly on the ground. Suddenly it sank through a deep crevice and I almost fell over the precipice. Certainly it was only a miracle that saved me!' His friends were greatly agitated when they heard this and congratulated themselves and the Swami over his marvellous escape. Thenceforth they took special care never again to leave him alone.

On the way homewards, there was a little mountain chapel. As the Swami saw it, he said quietly, 'Do let us offer some flowers at the feet of the Virgin!' His face shone with great tenderness and he went forth, one of the party accompanying him, and gathered some of the sweetest Alpine flowers. 'Offer them at the feet of the Virgin,' he said to Mrs. Sevier, 'as a token of my gratitude and devotion.' He would have offered them himself, but lest the fact that he was not a Christian might cause objection, he had entrusted the flowers to her. And with a strange note of religious certainty he added, 'For She also is the Mother.'

Although Swamiji was now eager to get on to Kiel and meet Professor Deussen, his travelling companions—so says the biography—persuaded him to see some more of Switzerland before leaving the country, and

to visit the principal places of interest in Germany on the way. Accordingly, we find the party next at Lucerne in central Switzerland. Letters written from Lucerne on August 23 and a letter dated the 26th, probably from there, suggest that a fairly long stop was made at this popular resort.

To go from Saas-Fee to Lucerne in 1896 was a real expedition. It required probably three, certainly two, days of hard travelling. The more difficult parts had to be done by diligence, going up over high passes. It is likely that Swamiji, the Seviars, and Miss Müller started from the Valais about August 20 and arrived at Lucerne about the 22nd.

From Saas-Fee they would have gone down to Stalden on muleback, a matter of three or four hours. There they would have taken the Zermatt mountain railroad five miles down to Visp. Here they could have shifted to the Rhone Valley rail line, travelling to its terminus at Brig five miles on from Visp.

The route from Brig to Lucerne was as follows. By diligence up the Rhone Valley to the Rhone Glacier. This was a matter of only thirty-one miles, but as it was uphill all the way, the trip required seven and a half hours. Even today, with modern snow-clearing equipment, the railroad line traversing the same route is open only until October 15 at the upper end, due to impassable snow.

From the Rhone Glacier one high road went on over the Furka Pass to Göschenen, where one could make a connection with the new St. Gotthard railroad line leading north to Germany and south to Italy. From the Rhone Glacier another high road went north over the Grimsel Pass (7,103 feet) to Meiringen, where one could catch the train twenty-eight miles to Lucerne. The journey by diligence from the Rhone Glacier to Meiringen was a matter of twenty-three miles and five and a half hours. Even today no railroad traverses this route.

The Hotel du Glacier du Rhône, a mile above sea level, was famous as a terminus and starting point for diligences, and we may speculate that our party stopped there for the night about August 21. If so, they probably did what was usual with visitors; they took a few minutes' walk to the beautiful vault of blue glacier ice from which issues the Rhone River.

I have checked with the Hotel du Glacier du Rhône and the old hotels at Brig, Fiesch (between Brig and the Glacier du Rhône) and Meiringen, but as usual have not succeeded in uncovering any trace of the travellers.

The city of Lucerne was quite different from the rugged regions in which the party had passed its time during the previous four weeks. In 1896 Lucerne was a cosmopolitan city of about 25,000 population. It is beautifully situated on a chain of lakes at a fairly low altitude, with snowy mountains on all sides. The setting is romantic and becomes more so when summer storms strike the area. Some of Wagner's music was inspired by these displays. Long before Swamiji went there Lucerne had been a flourishing tourist centre, especially popular with the English. Wordsworth was an admirer of the region, and Queen Victoria had spent a vacation at Lucerne. Hotels and restaurants were good and numerous. There were hills to climb, boat rides to take, old churches to visit, and the quaint old city itself to explore.

The biography gives a full page to the Lucerne stop. Our travellers seem to have seen the prescribed sights and made the usual excursions.

They went to see the famed Lion of Lucerne, a sculpture executed in 1821 in memory of some hundreds of members of Louis XVI's *élite* Swiss Guards, who died defending the Tuileries against a French mob at the beginning of the Revolution. Mark Twain stayed a long time in the

Lucerne area, and *A Tramp Abroad* contains many illuminating remarks about things there. Twain asks himself, in seeing this sculpture, why it was heroic for Swiss citizens to die defending a French throne that the French themselves had determined to topple. Nevertheless, the tragic event is feelingly commemorated here.

Organ concerts were held every evening in the Hofkircke, Lucerne's biggest church. This organ contained a *vox humana* stop which produced a sound so realistic that when the stop was used Swamiji thought he was hearing a real human voice.

They took a steamer ride on Lake Lucerne, a splendid means for enjoying its lovely scenery. This tour must have taken most of a day, since they went as far as Tell's Chapel. This is an old structure reconstructed in 1880, supposedly built where William Tell evaded his captors after the apple incident. While there, it is said, Swamiji reflected on the career of that great patriot. One of Mark Twain's jokes about this landmark is that he met an American tourist who presumed that the shrine was called Tell's Chapel because a minister of that name preached there.

Lucerne is built on both sides of the River Reuss where it enters Lake Lucerne. The two parts of the city are connected by bridges; two are old, constructed of wood, having peaked roofs. One of these, the Spreuerbrücke, contains forty seventeenth century paintings on the subject of the Dance of Death. Such frankly didactic pictures were often used as a means of bringing moral education to the populace. The painted panels, triangular in shape, following the line of the gables, pointed out death's ever-constant proximity. The scenes show people in all stations of life, in their normal environment, being snatched away by death. The subjects are explained in rhythmic texts. For example, a rich trader is being torn away by a skeleton from a wharf where his goods

are being unloaded. The text reads:

Merchant, thou hast plied well thy trade.
Thy wares are sold and richly paid.
Now I to ply my trade begin:
'Tis such as thee I traffic in.

Swamiji would have regarded these panels and messages with profound interest.

Finally at Lucerne, Mount Rigi. 'With the exception of Mr. Sevier, all made the ascent of Mount Rigi by the mountain railway, a fascinating experience,' is what the biography says. This excursion would have consumed another full day. The attraction of this mountain is that, although not high, it stands alone, and from its summit one can see not only the lakes that surround it, but a whole range of snow-clad Alps a hundred miles in length. There are hotels at the summit, and it was the custom for those staying there to assemble before dawn facing the east—as at Darjeeling—to see the sunrise. For generations of travellers the sunrise seen from the Rigi summit was the climax of a visit to Switzerland. An alpenhorn was blown a half hour before the sunrise and everybody scrambled toward the summit, often shrouded in bed blankets. The alpenhorn also sounded a half hour before sunset.

The railway which takes people up the Rigi was built in 1871, the first rack railway in Europe. The biography speaks of the ascent by this railway as fascinating. Mark Twain's description of his own ride on the train is useful in visualizing the experience of Swamiji, Miss Müller, and Mrs. Sevier:

The train came along about the middle of the forenoon, and an odd thing it was. The locomotive boiler stood on end, and it and the whole locomotive were tilted sharply backward. There were two passenger cars, roofed, but wide open all around. These cars were not tilted back, but the seats were; this enables the passengers to sit level while going down a steep incline.

There are three railway tracks; the cen-

tral one is cogged: the 'lantern wheel' of the engine grips its way along these cogs, and pulls the train up the hill or retards its motion on the down trip. About the same speed—three miles an hour—is maintained both ways. Whether going up or down, the locomotive is always at the lower end of the train. It pushes in the one case, braces back in the other. The passenger rides backward going up, and faces forward going down.

We got front seats, and while the train moved along about fifty yards on level ground, I was not the least frightened: but now it started abruptly down stairs, and I caught my breath. And I, like my neighbours, unconsciously held back all I could...

Swamiji wrote three letters from Lucerne, dated August 23. We may guess that the letters to which he replied were waiting his arrival, having been forwarded from London, and that his responses were written in a single sitting. They are extraordinarily different in what they express, reflecting the 'contradictory' aspects of his personality.

One—Number CVI in Vol. VI—was to 'Shashi' (Swami Ramakrishnananda) about the fact that someone had written from India complaining that no effort was made to keep women of questionable character from attending Ramakrishna's anniversary celebration at Dakshineswar. In very strong words, taking the position of the leader of the brotherhood—('My decision ... is this:')—Swamiji recommended a little vigilance, but declared: 'Ours is a gigantic City of Jagannath' to which all are welcome. The organizers' responsibility was to create such a wave of spirituality that anyone coming to the function would be reformed.

A second letter—CVII in the same Volume—was to Mrs. Sara Bull, and in it Swamiji abdicates responsibility for the leadership of the work and the brotherhood and expresses his expectation of an early death. The

money talk and personality questions touched upon in her communication to him must have appeared trifling after his experiences at Saas-Fee. Here we find new evidence that the *advaitic* ideal was impressing itself strongly on his mind at the time, bringing a nostalgia for retirement from the scene. He had first touched on this subject two weeks before to Goodwin. To Sara Bull he said, 'Now I am sure that my part of the work is done.... I am getting ready to depart.... These works ... are just a little exercise to cleanse the mind.'

Swamiji once said that greatness consists in doing little things well. In the third letter of August 23—LXVI in Vol. V—to Sturdy, he showed that like his Master he could concern himself with pedestrian details. Swami Abhedananda was soon to arrive in London, and practical arrangements would have to be made to receive him: 'at least some [warm] underwear and an overcoat.' He ends, hinting that after the hard trip from the Valais he was a bit weary of tourism: 'I have not yet been able to write even a line [of the article Sturdy had requested]. I had not a moment's time even to read, climbing up hill and going down dale all the time. We will have to begin the march again in a few days.'

The last line helps us to determine the length of time of the party's stay at Lucerne—a few days after the 23rd—and identifies Lucerne as the probable place from which Letter XLVII—in the same Volume—of August 26 to Dr. Nanjunda Rao was written. In it he clarified something he had said in a letter written from London on July 14 about the 'simply barbarous' cover design of the new *Prabuddha Bharata*. To have received a reply in Switzerland by August 26 to a letter written from England only six weeks before reveals the swiftness of surface mail to and from India in 1896—a speed not nearly matched at the present time. Swamiji reported: 'I have been doing a good deal

of mountain climbing and glacier crossing in the Alps.'

Baedeker gives the names of numerous hotels in Lucerne. Of those existing in 1896, some half-dozen remain. Not one of these had preserved its guestbook for the year in question. Newspaper archives of the city gave nothing on the party.

The last stop in Switzerland, according to the biography, was Schaffhausen, north of Zurich, almost to the German border:

'The next move was made to Schaffhausen, where the Falls of the Rhine are seen at their best. The Swami spent some time musing at the scene, which reminded him of the gorgeous cascades of the Himalayas. Oftentimes, both in Zermatt and at Schaffhausen, a quiet and deeply spiritual mood came upon him. Was it that he felt here the solitude and peace of the distant Himalayas, sacred in his memory with many spiritual experiences?'

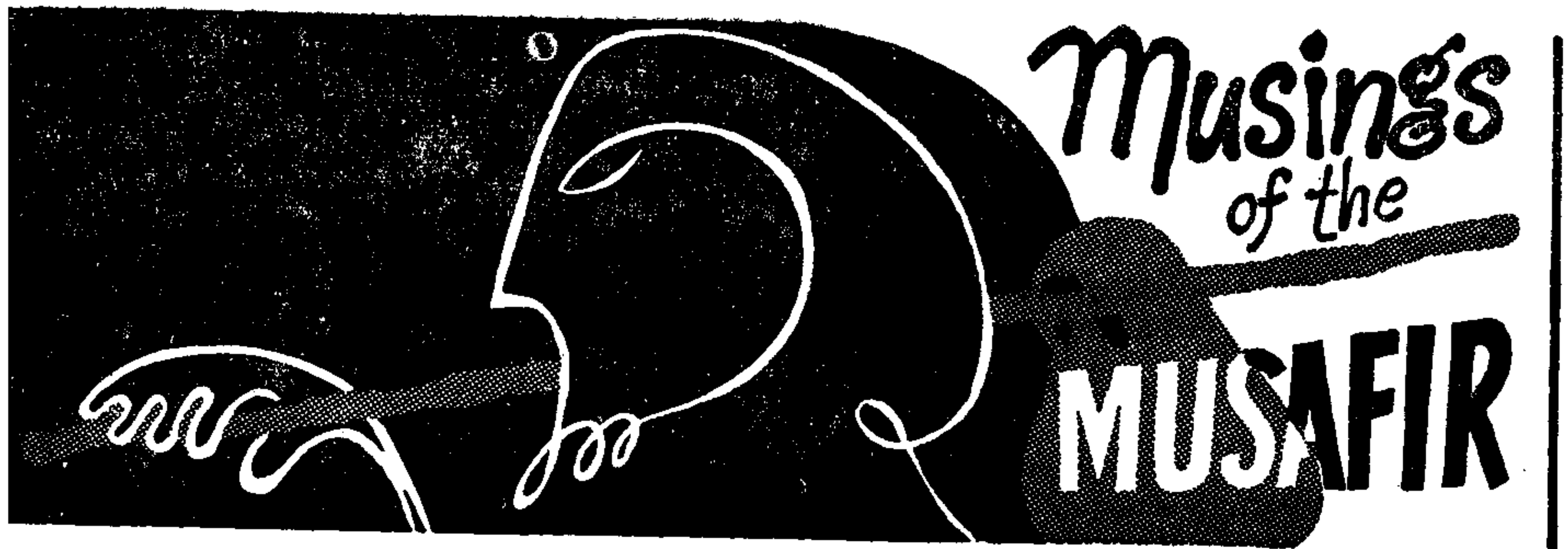
Nearly three-fourths of the tour was now finished, and certainly its most difficult—and inspiring—parts. From Lucerne to Schaffhausen was an easy train trip of seventy-five miles and some five hours, probably with a change at Zurich. And throughout Germany and back to England via Amsterdam there were no more hard trips in diligences or journeys on muleback.

Schaffhausen is picturesque in the Bavarian style, having tall houses with peaked roofs and facades decorated with painted scenes, flowerboxes hanging from every window. The city grew important because it was here that merchandise going up or down the Rhine had to be reloaded, as boats could not navigate the falls.

Whether the group stayed at Schaffhausen or at one of the many hotels at the falls itself, three miles from Schaffhausen, is not known. Hotels in neither place were able to offer any trace of the travellers.

The Rhine Falls was considered a great spectacle of romantic Switzerland and was a sight one could not omit. A great stream of water plunges down a hundred feet, creating a loud roar and producing many rainbows. One could go very close to the cataract, waterproof coats being available. In summer the falls were illuminated at night with electric bulbs and 'Bengal lights'—that is to say, fireworks.

It is true that there were shady walks on both sides of the falls; what the biography says about Swamiji's mood may well have been true. In many of his letters of this period he spoke of his decision to return to India that winter, which we know he did. Swami Vivekananda's vacation trip to Switzerland may be seen as 'tiding him over' until that return could be realized.



THUNDER YOUR UNITED PROTEST AGAINST THIS WORST OF CRIMES

The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, October 23, 1972, carried the following news-item :

PARALYSIS HITS 400 IN DUM DUM
 Calcutta, Oct. 22 (UNI) About 400 people in Dum Dum, a northern suburb, have been struck by paralysis after consuming adulterated mustard oil, according to an official spokesman. He said the substance which caused the paralysis has been identified as tricesylphosphate, a plastic mixture which was found in the oil.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, March 9, 1973 carried the following news items:

**REMAND ON CHARGE OF 'JIRA'
 ADULTERATION**

Following the seizure of 56 bags of adulterated "jira" (Cumin-seeds), a variety of spices, from the first-floor of a house on Digambar Jain Temple Road, Burrabazar, North Calcutta, on Wednesday, Ram Swarup Ram, who was arrested by the Enforcement Branch of the Calcutta Detective Police on charges under sections 120B, 269, 272, 273, 328, 440, and 420 I.P.C., was produced before Mr. G. B. Ghosh, Additional Chief Presidency Magistrate, Calcutta.

It was alleged that the accused was found in manufacturing adulterated and spurious "jira" from "ghash jira" which were imported from outside Bengal by

mixing with a chemical powder when the police raided the house on receipt of a secret information.

It was further alleged that the accused knew that these adulterated jira would endanger the public life if they were consumed by the public.

Praying for the remand of the accused in their custody, the Court Inspector, stated that another principal accused was still at large and interrogation of the accused would lead to apprehend the absconding accused and other members of the gang, the accused was remanded in police custody till March 21 pending further investigations.

NOW STORY OF ADULTERATED 'KHAIR'

A factory for manufacturing adulterated catechu (Khair) was discovered by the Calcutta Enforcement Branch Police at Netaji Subhas Road near Barabazar Calcutta, on Thursday.

Police arrested three persons in this connection. Police recovered also a huge quantity of China-clay, coloured stone powder araroot red-powder, coloured earth, zinc oxide and about 30 kg of finished adulterated catechu from the factory.

According to Enforcement Branch Police, adulterated catechu used to be manufactured in the factory by mixing these materials together.

Some earthen and wooden containers with liquid araroot and a pressing

machine were also found in the factory according to Police.

Police said that the adulterated catechu was being sold in the market at Rs. 5 per Kg.

The Statesman, Calcutta March 11, 1973 carried the following news item:

63,00 KG OF ADULTERATED TEA SEIZED HOWRAH, March 10.—The police allegedly seized 63,000 kg of adulterated tea from a big factory on J. N. Mukherjee Road in the Malipanchghara thana area on Saturday. According to the police, the tea was a mixture of various kinds of dust, including leather, wood, sand, straw and cowdung. It was finally soaked in a famous ayurvedic tonic for flavour and taste. The police allegedly found 29 women working in the godown. The local manager of the factory was arrested. The police are on the look-out for the proprietor.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, March 23, 1973 reported the following:

ADULTERATED STUFF SEIZED IN RAIDS

Not Big Powers nor people of other lands, but a small minority of our countrymen are now paving ways to disease, slow death and destruction for the masses—just in their craze for amassing wealth at any cost.

The ingenious method adopted for sapping out the health and vitality of a generation of a race by these anti-socials, worse than murderers, consists of manufacturing and marketing for mass consumption spurious drugs, surgical goods or essential building materials, adulterated foodstuffs, edible oils, ghee etc. Facts stranger than fiction, indeed, have been brought to light by the Enforcement Branch of the Calcutta Police in a series of raids and seizures of spurious and adulterated stuff from different areas of the city.

In their latest raid on two adjacent oil mills on Strand Road near Jagannath Ghat on Thursday they seized huge quantities of mustard oil and rape seed oil—apparently mixed with linseed oil. Linseed oil drums—one containing about

188 k.g. of linseed oil and another holding about 94 k.g. of linseed oil were recovered from the two places. At one of these places, a big cemented cistern containing a huge quantity of mustard-linseed oil mixture was also discovered. The proprietors of both the oil mills were arrested by the police.

But as the recent raids and arrests have proved, neither measures has proved to be a real deterrent and so the men with criminal intent to defraud the society and amass wealth at its cost have gone heedless in their commercial mission. The Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, Mr. Sunil Chaudhuri—realising the inability of the police to deal with this particular crime and the criminals directly under the provisions of the prevailing Prevention of the Food Adulteration Act, the Drugs Control Act and other relevant Acts, has already advised the police to make maximum use of the existing provisions of the Indian Penal Code (particularly Sec. 420 I.P.C.) and carry on a relentless drive against these anti-social adulterators and stop this crime against humanity. The West Bengal Food Minister, Mr. Kashi Kanta Maitra has, meanwhile, emphasised the necessity for an amendment of the existing laws including the PFA Act for effectively tackling the crime.

ALARMING FACTS

The public, in the meantime, should know what are the commodities they are buying, using and consuming daily to the peril of their health and life. As the recent police raids reveal, the liquid "Khayer" (Catechu) used mostly by the pan shops, may well contain china clay and a whitish powder with a mixture of decoction of rotten arrowroot, "jira" (cumin seeds) may be nothing but "ghas jira" imported from Nainital, "pure coconut oil" may contain a large dose of mineral oil (damaging to hair) while powdered spices like turmeric, chilli and "dhanian" (coriander) may turn out really to be nothing but spices dyed with harmful chemicals and mixed with saw dust, earth dust and even rotten cow dung! The raids also unearthed unsterilized

“surgical gauze” marked “sterilized”, huge quantity of adulterated cement bags—mixed each with a large quantity of mud or river silt.

It is no wonder that some of our newly constructed bridges or Government hospital buildings and offices are found to be cracking rather too soon after their inauguration, police said.

If you make a list of such news items which occasionally appear in Indian newspapers, you get a glimpse of a thriving killer industry merrily progressing in the country with an enormous money power behind it—and this notwithstanding lawfully constituted Governments in the States and at the Centre. Who is answerable to society for this continuing crime in the country? Perhaps everyone of us—we singularly lack civic consciousness. We take criminals’ invasion over our lives lying down. We do not protest in a manner which will enforce prompt attention and remedy. We have no united voice against even culpable vices perpetrated in society, like slow deliberate killing of people. Our ethical standards are so low that we can purchase or sell conscience for money. Otherwise crimes like adulteration of food can be obliterated from the country in no time. Well, well, if the people get the Government they deserve, they also get the food they deserve! Deserve better food, ask for unadulterated pure food, you will get it. But your asking must be so powerful that it should reverberate throughout the whole country. The administrators of the country must know that people are awake and that they are answerable to the people. It is the women in the country who should take the lead in this particular matter and awaken the conscience of the people.

Imagine the perniciousness and horror of it all! It should be realized that these adulterators of foodstuff who for the sake of filthy profit can in a planned way poison the very springs of the life of a nation belong to the most abominable class of the

enemies of society. No punishment meted out to them according to law can be too severe. And if there are no sufficiently deterring laws in the statute books to crush these vipers, such laws should be enacted. Carnivorous animals are adorable creatures in comparison to them. These animals kill other animals to satisfy their hunger, but these bipeds miscalled men, kill or do worse—for causing paralysis may well be worse than outright killing—for profit. There are not enough words in the human vocabulary for sufficiently condemning these criminals.

The 400 unfortunate people in Dum Dum struck by paralysis—who knows what dire future stares them in their faces? Maybe some families will be devastated as a result of the only earning member of the family being struck down. Maybe a rising young man, the only son of a widow and the hope of the family, will have to count his days in an invalid’s bed while his mother sheds unending streams of tears by his side. Maybe a young girl who was to be given in marriage will have to be maintained all her distraught life by her underpaid underemployed sick father. Maybe a mother of a very young child will have no way of taking care of her crawling babe. Maybe some children will remain lifelong cripples. It needs only a grain of human sympathy to be able to imagine what a variety of unreckonable tragedies will have ensued from the black deeds of these adulterators of food.

It should be adequately realized that the state, particularly the Food and Health Ministries have a special responsibility in the matter. In a sense it is the failure of these Ministries in an important area of their duty that makes possible the perpetuation of such crimes in society. Therefore, the State owes it to the people to haul in these criminals. Everyone connected with these crimes in anyway should be severely punished.

There should be no hush-hush business about this at all. Such crimes need glaring exposure to the ire of society and impartial justice. No doubt the police have started doing commendable work in tracing these criminals, but more energetic, determined and concerted action is needed throughout all India.

If the family members of these criminals have been supporting these deeds of their family heads, then they should be considered and dealt with as abettors in the crime. And these families should be exposed as families of the enemies of society. Unless the whole family of these criminals is made answerable, it will not be easy to check these crimes, for these profiteers will then escape with only a scratch and a brand on their skin with all their accumulated money left intact to restart the same deeds in a more pernicious manner.

It is indeed said that in India our social consciousness is so steeped in *tamas* that such monstrous crimes against society tend to go unnoticed and unprotested. The Munich Olympics have proved to the hilt where Indians stand among the nations of the world in point of physical fitness and

efficiency, and at home we have such criminals who will stop at nothing to undermine the health of the nation further for selfish gain. Those who have no social consciousness or even no moral sense, could be ignored if they stopped by only maiming themselves. But when they do things which devastate the health, happiness, and hopes of other people, people must ask their Government what they are doing with the trust the electorate has solemnly laid on them. Let the people ask them to prove their credibility by effective deeds and not by mere eloquence.

It is not as if those who adulterate goods other than foodstuffs and drugs are less of criminals. Take for example those who adulterate cement with river silt. In laying the foundations of future prosperity in the country, much work is being done with cement. How long will the foundation laid with adulterated cement take to give way and with what effect on our economy?

In this vital area of national emergency the Parliament of the country has yet to show adequate concern.

24 March, 1973

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1947. References: Questions 1, 2, and 3, p. 678; Question 4, p. 683; Question 5, p. 747; Question 6, p. 760.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from *The Complete Works*, Vol. VI (1963), p. 68,

Holy company, as a stimulating influence on a spiritual aspirant's life, has been eulogized in almost all religious traditions, both Eastern and Western. Without proper preparation on his part for receiving its influence, an aspirant may find it sterile and time-consuming. With the requisite preparation, he may find it highly elevating and purifying. The *Editorial* of the month discusses this theme in the light of received teachings while advocating an earnest attempt to develop 'self-sufficiency' in holiness,

All human beings know from experience what temptation is—its alluring sweetness and deadly bitterness. What is not known to all is how to overcome it. For authentic guidance on this very important aspect of inner life we have to turn to the saints of the world. Swami Budhananda presents here such of their teachings on overcoming temptation as may be of help to followers of all faiths.

In this instalment of the 'Excursions', Swami Yatiswarananda emphasizes a few fundamental virtues necessary for a successful spiritual life. His comments on non-attachment, Ātman-consciousness, and humility, in particular, are very illuminating.

We are offering to our readers the second and concluding part of 'Swami Vivekananda

in Switzerland, 1896' in this issue. This part traces Swamiji through the rest of his Swiss visit. Of course, the tracing in details is what the author rightly terms as 'educated guessing'. As the readers will notice, this instalment of the article is also suitably illustrated. We are very grateful to Swami Vidyatmananda for enabling us to do so. The Swami is the assistant minister at the Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna, Gretz, France.

The Musafir muses on the large-scale adulteration of foodstuffs and other essential commodities, and draws attention to its tragic consequences especially for the poor. He also points out that it is the bounden duty of the Indian people and of the governments concerned to eradicate completely this terrible evil.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PSYCHOLOGY: EDITED BY A. K. SINHA, Published by Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1, 1971, pp. 179, Rs. 30/-.

This is a 60th birthday volume presented to Dr. B. Kuppaswamy who made significant contributions to psychology in India, specially to the experimental and social divisions of the young science. Thirteen papers contributed by eminent psychologists have been included in this volume. Ten of those are from abroad, and six from our own country. Only in one instance do we have a paper of joint authorship.

Gardner Murphy, the doyen of American psychologists, concludes from his *experimental* studies that scientists 'Can learn where their prejudices lie and where their own scientific judgements are befuddled by *partisanships* ... (and if they) wish to do so, they can begin to free themselves from their own misperceptions'. (p. 6) This is indeed a striking conclusion of which, not only psychologists, but particularly *physicists* should take note.

Osgood leads a small group of investigators delving into psycholinguistics using semantic differen-

tials. These are a new field and a new technique, and it is hoped they will prove their worth. Osgood's study shows that human beings the world over, whatever language they use, share a common meaning system, and to that extent all languages have at least one universal element. (p. 15)

Jackobovits, in his paper 'Words, Words, Words', summarizes the results of quite a few studies and remarks, 'that cognitive activity in thinking and problem solving consists of manipulation of symbols, ... and that *symbols used too often* become satiated and acquire inhibitory propensities ... a message played on a tape and repeated too often will yield ... poorer understanding and recall'. (p. 25) This conclusion has far-reaching educational and therapeutic implications.

In his theoretical paper on 'Creativity' Johnson studies the impact of modern science and technology on human society. The really valuable part of the paper is at its close. The author concludes by saying that 'we are devoting an inordinate amount of our creative talent to military and space exploration programmes and far too little to ... socially beneficent purposes. ... Millions of people

need more food, shelter, clothing, medical care, sanitation and education. ... Perhaps our greatest challenge today is not how to find ways of reaching the moon, but how to ... divert the wonderful creative power of human minds from the instruments of violence and vanity to the more humane purposes of social betterment'. (pp. 70-1) True! But the author has missed the most disastrous impact of science and technology on man, and that is the perversion of the human mind by feeding it on a perverted scale of values which presents *violence and vanity* as more important than peace and humility! Science alone is to blame for this perversion.

Takdir Alisjahbana also highlights the severe limitations of science in his paper. He draws attention to the prevalent misconceptions in science: '... Our scientific knowledge of nature is nothing else than our *human* knowledge of the external world. ... The knowledge of the physical sciences does not provide absolute knowledge of nature ...' (pp. 80-1) The method of science can never provide an ultimate knowledge of nature. In other words science provides knowledge which is based on purely *subjective data*.

Dr. A. V. Shanmugam's study of mediated generalization (pp. 87-102) is of value to teachers in high schools and colleges. T. K. N. Unnithan's study of self, self image and societal image (pp. 103-8) is of interest to sociologists and social psychologists. N. R. W. Pande's validation and standardization of G-4 (Non-verbal paper and pencil) test will be found useful to those needing a tool for measuring intelligence. The other papers are of value to investigation in applied psychology.

The volume concludes with a biographical sketch of Dr. B. Kuppaswamy and a list of his publications.

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

LAGHU-YOGA-VĀSIṢṬHA: TRANSLATED BY K. NARAYANASWAMI AIYER, Published by Adyar Library and Research Centre, Adyar, Madras 20, 1971, pp. 479, price not mentioned.

The book under review is an English translation of *Laghu-Yoga-Vasishtha*, an abridgement of the larger or *Brihad-Yoga-Vasishtha* by Abhinanda. The translation was first published in 1896 (Thomas & Co., Madras), reprinted in 1914 (Hoe & Co., Madras) and now brought out by the Adyar Library. Bihari Lal Mitra was the first to publish an English translation of the *Yoga-Vasishtha* in four volumes in 1891 and this was followed by the first

publication of the book under review in 1896. The most systematic, scholarly and satisfactory from the point of view of philosophical exposition, is Dr. B. L. Atreya's *The Philosophy of Yoga-Vasishtha* (The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1936).

'The *Yoga-Vasishtha*', as our author says in the Preface, 'is a popular work on Advaita Vedanta, Puranic in form and philosophical in content.' In the *Yoga-Vasishtha*, the sage Vasishtha propounds a sort of Idealism whose central tenet is this that the entire visible universe, inclusive of the 'I' or the individual self, is an exfoliation or exteriorization of mind born of the Eternal Brahman. The following quotations from the book under review will, we hope, express the whole philosophy in a nutshell:

'This ever-agitated *manas*, having come into existence out of the ineffable Brahman, creates the world according to its own *sankalpa*.' (pp. 54-5).

'The origin and dissolution of the universe (which is nothing but a mode of consciousness) take place with the origin and destruction of the *sankalpa* of the mind.' (p. 101).

'Liberation attained, all visible objects are merged in the seer without again manifesting themselves.' (p. 55).

The book contains an Introduction and six chapters entitled 'Vairagya-prakarana', 'Mumukshu-prakarana', 'Utpatti-prakarana', 'Sthiti-prakarana', 'Upasanti-prakarana', and 'Nirvana-prakarana'. In all these chapters Vasishtha illustrates the truths of his philosophy by means of stories in the puranic style. He lays stress on the cultivation of four cardinal virtues for the realization of Truth, namely *santi* (peace of mind), *vicara* (rational reflection), *santoshā* (contentment) and *sadhu-sanga* (association with holy persons). According to the teaching of Vasishtha, the man of truth-realization can participate in the activities of life with a calm and detached mind.

The author commands a bracing style and the translation is well done. Every lover of the *Yoga-Vasishtha* will find the volume inviting and delightful fare.

The book is printed in bold and clear type.

DR. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA

A THEORY OF THOUGHT PROCESSES: BY ROBERT OWEN JONES, Published by the Philosophical Library, New York, 1969, Pages 159+xiv, Price \$ 7.50.

How does the human mind record thought-processes? How does it relate the thought-processes and the emotions? These are provoking questions because there is a peculiar relation between the

mind and the environment. In earlier times questions like these were debated by psychologists and philosophers and have had theories like parallelism and interaction. Dr. Jones from the medical profession offers a theory based on recent psychological and neurological research. In diagramming thought-processes, he claims, he enables us to understand ourselves and our environment. He starts with the assumption that concepts of whole objects have a relative value scale. He also assumes that environmental motion is interpreted by the mind as relative motion. In explaining how concepts are formed recourse is taken to the causal law, though the wording is outlandish. In spite of the terminology which is foreign to the lay reader, the book reveals at places that the author is almost restating some of the ideas of Kant and Hegel. The book is for the specialist in psychology and neurology. But such a specialist can evaluate it better when he is aware of the works of the great metaphysicians.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

WITH CHARITY TOWARD NONE: BY WILLIAM F. O'NEILL, Published by Philosophical Library, Inc., New York, 1971, pp. 233, price \$ 10.00.

A painstaking study of the philosophy of 'Objectivism' of Ayn Rand, this book makes interesting reading for the backswing it represents in the movement of contemporary philosophy. Miss Rand deprecates all talk of mysticism and sums up her philosophy as follows: *Metaphysics*: Objective reality; *Epistemology*: Reason; *Ethics*: Self-interest; *Politics*: Capitalism.

The writings of Rand, mostly fiction, have exercised a strong influence on the younger generation in America—largely in the universities—and the present book is a faithful presentation of her thought and an examination of its soundness or otherwise, its implication in the social and economic spheres.

M. P. PANDIT

A BIG CHANGE: BY K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR, Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 16, 1970, pp. 187, Rs. 8/-.

We have lived too long with the 'crisis' of the modern world. The crisis has now passed and things are disintegrating. Dr. Iyengar gives, in these *satsang* addresses, an admirably lucid and convincing analysis of the situation in the diverse fields of life and perceives everywhere an imminence of a significant change—the spiritual turn of humanity. Both individually and collectively the evolutionary developments point to a transmuting transition to the age of the spirit, a breakthrough into a vaster state of consciousness beyond the thinking mind. And this change is envisaged *within* man, 'for infinity and eternity and omnipotence are within, and the lever of change, the elixir of transmutation and the key to harmony are also within'.

The discourses cover a wide ground, e.g. Power and Grace, Work and Sadhana, Education and Yoga, the Call of the Earth, and propound in simple language many of the profound truths underlying the philosophy and yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

M. P. PANDIT

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE NEW HOUSE OF THE GENEVA VEDANTA CENTER

The opening of the newly constructed two-storied house of the Geneva Vedanta Center at Corsier on the 25th of November, 1972, marks an important stage in Vedanta work in central Europe. The large gathering that attended the function bore testimony to the precious contacts which the Swami has established during the last fifteen years with the National Church of Switzerland and the Vedanta study-groups in the neighbouring countries.

The chapel was consecrated on the 15th October, the *Mahashtami* day. The house is situated six miles to the north of Geneva town on the lake-side and commands a beautiful view of the lake in front and of the Alps behind.

Swami Nityabodhananda, who is the founder-head, formed the center in 1958 in a rented house. He conducted regular classes on the *Gita* and the Upanishads at his residence. In 1963 the center celebrated the centenary of Swami Vivekananda with the collaboration of the government of the Geneva canton and of the university. Since

then the Faculty of Arts of the university invites the Swami every year to deliver a series of lectures on Indian thought, comparative religion and philosophy. The Swami has to his credit half a dozen books in French.

In 1968 Dr. Henry Babel, an important church dignitary of Geneva, along with the Swami formed the committee for the unity of world religions. Speaking at the opening function Dr. Babel said that the birth of the Center is a vital landmark in the work of the committee which has been functioning on an oecumenical plane for the unity of religions. During the fifteen years the Geneva Center has formed study groups in Avignon and Nimes in the south of France, Bordeaux on the west coast. The Swami took a leading part in the inter-religious congresses organized annually by the Soufi order in Paris, Rome and Milano. With the facilities which the commodious house offers now, the Center has chalked out a programme of cultural and oecumenical activity in addition to the usual work of preaching, and organizing meditation groups and seasonal spiritual Retreats.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION: NEW DELHI

REPORT 1971-1972

During this its 45th year, the Centre conducted the following activities:

Religious: Regular Sunday evening discourses in English by the Secretary in the Auditorium; weekly Hindi discourses on Sri Ramacharitmanas, by scholar-devotees; Wednesday-evening classes on *Kathamrita*, by the Swamis; at the Vedanta Samiti, Delhi University: weekly *Gita* classes by the Secretary plus guest-Swamis. The Secretary had also to accept many invitations for discourses throughout the city. On February 6, 1972, in the Auditorium, a group of talented singers rendered 20 songs from the *Kathamrita*, with commentary from the same book, delighting the large audience. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swamiji, were celebrated with Puja, with public meetings the following Sunday, which included discourses in Hindi and English, and bhajan.

Further, large Recitation Competitions were held in connection with Swamiji's, and Narayana Seva with Sri Ramakrishna's celebrations. Birthdays of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Guru Nanak, Chaitanya, and Tulsidas were also observed with due solemnity.

Medical: *Free Tuberculosis Clinic*, active since 1933, continued its 28-bed observation-ward, large X-ray and laboratory set-ups for diagnosis and for all forms of treatment feasible outside long-term hospitals. A Domiciliary Service Unit cares for many patients confined to homes. Milk and tiffin are supplied to indoor patients, and costly medicines to them and to the poorer out-patients. During the year, 225 Indoor cases were treated, and 2493 Outdoor cases, of which 1672 were new. It is still the only non-official institution of its kind in the Union Territory of Delhi. The *Charitable Homoeopathic Dispensary*, active since 1929, treated in this year 77,149 cases (6962 being new). It is on the Mission premises.

Library: The *Free Library & Reading Room* had an average of 310 visitors daily; during the year 1,793 new books were added, bringing total to 25,336; 17,954 books were loaned during the year. The University Students' Section, opened in 1962, maintained with assistance from the University of Delhi, had on average 120 visitors per day and a total of 500 students used it during the year.

Sarada Mandir: The Sunday-School, started in 1958 for imparting religious and moral education to children, met each Sunday morning, average of 40 being present. The hour was spent in prayer, meditation, music, story-telling; and the children prepared a play for each of the celebrations of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swamiji.

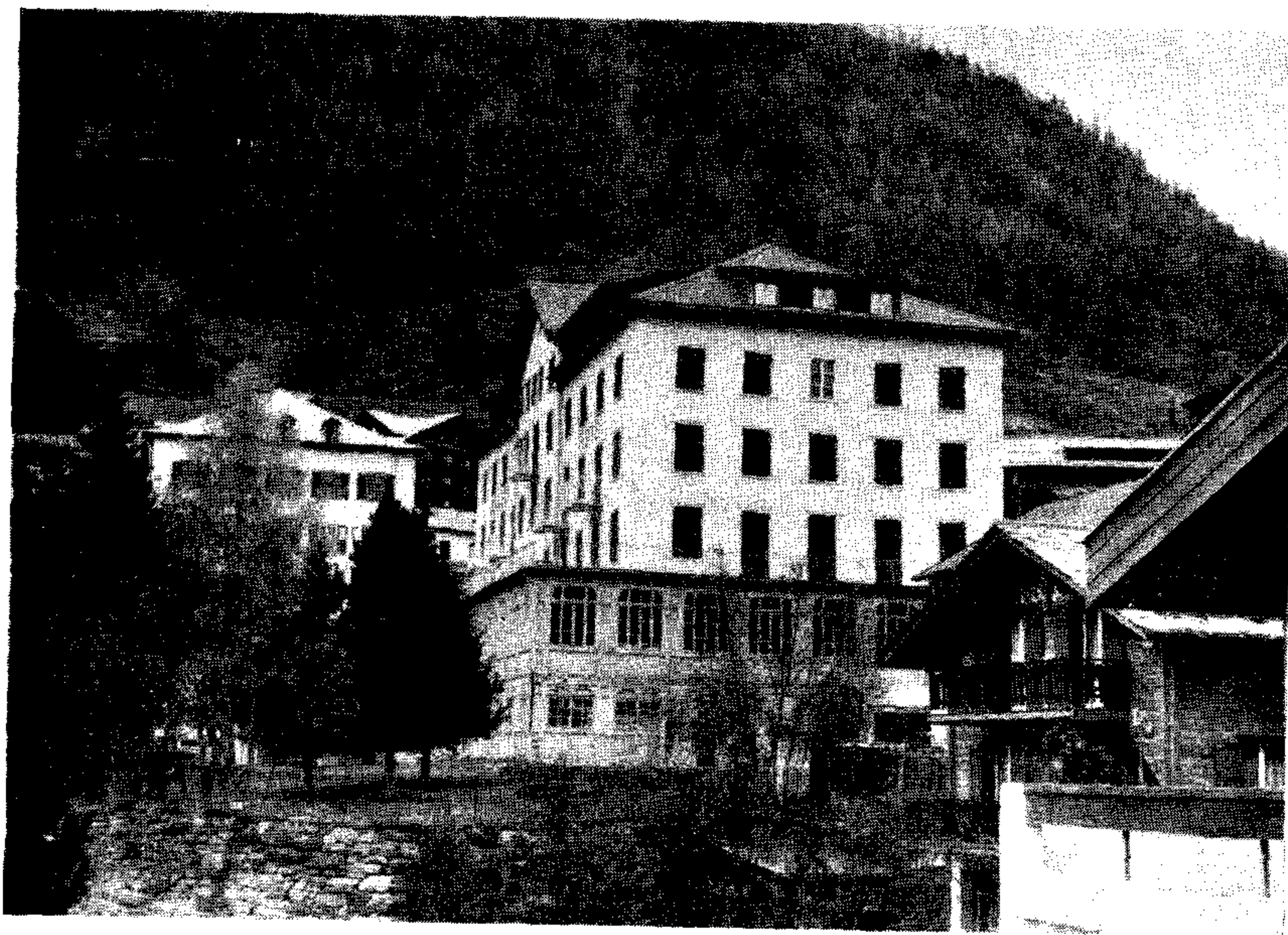
Sarada Mahila Samiti: Founded in 1952, to help serve the Ramakrishna-movement, and specially in the work of women's and children's health and education, this group held monthly meetings and bhajans, semi-monthly study circle, weekly *Gita*-class at the Mission (conducted by the Secretary). It largely directed the Sunday-School; and continued the programme of medico-social service at the Lady Hardinge Medical College Hospital for women.



Above : The Matterhorn in summer, photographed from the Riffelberg, Monte Rosa glacier at left.

Bottom : Saas-Fee today, in summer.

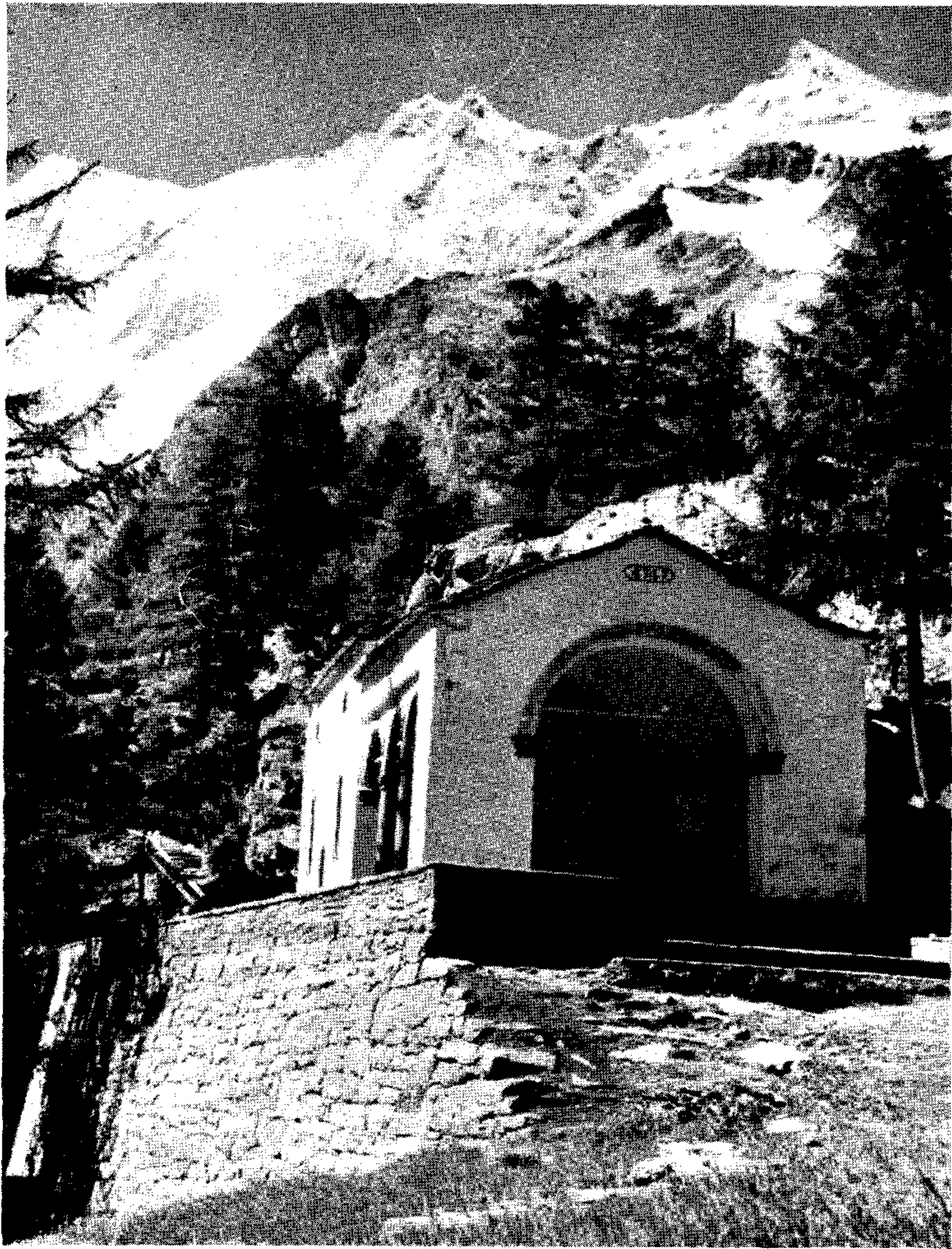




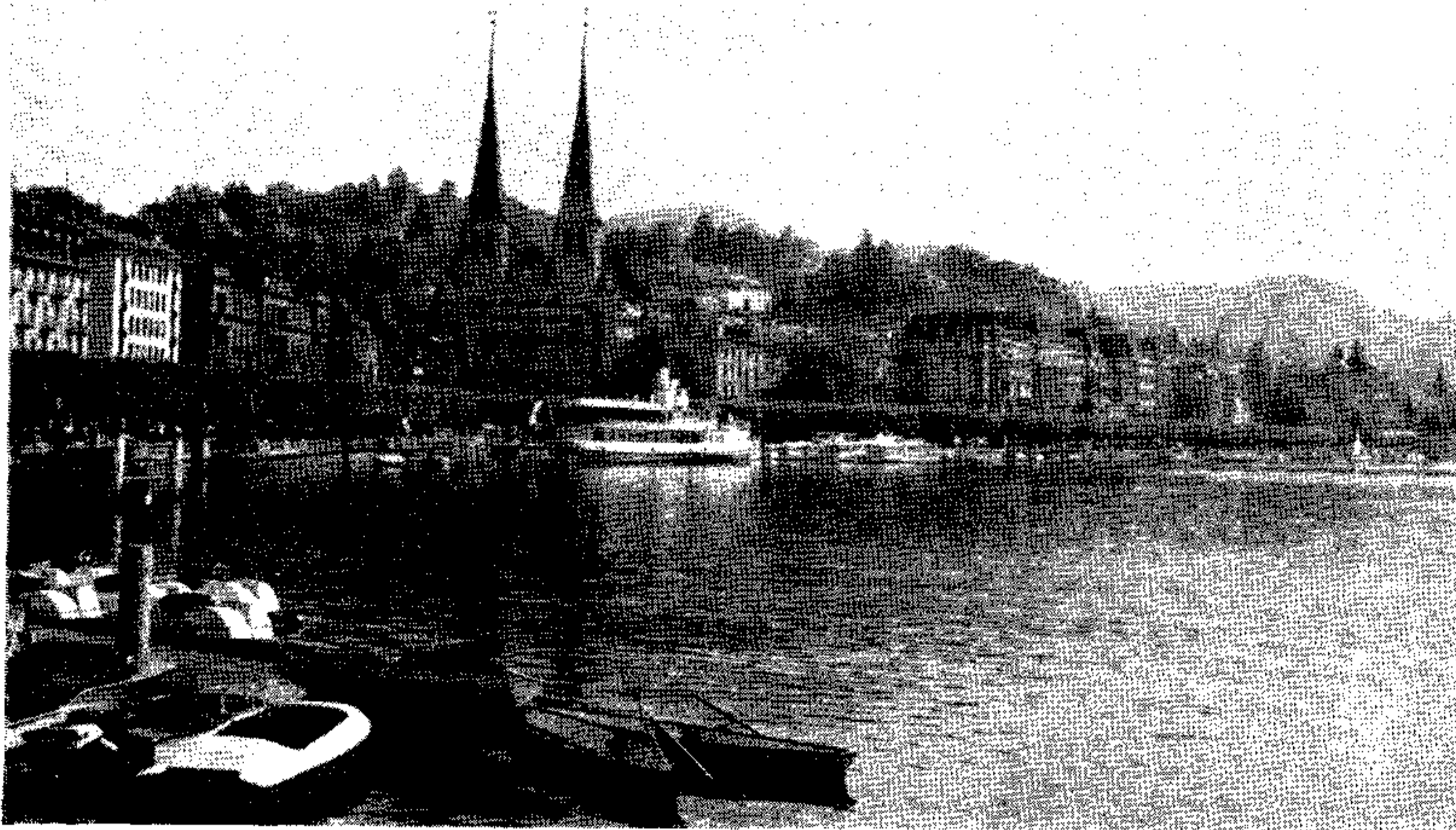
Above :
Grand Hotel,
Saas-Fee



Bottom :
Altar of chapel
Zur Hohen-Stiege



Chapel Zur Hohen-Stiege, near Saas-Fee



Above :
Lucerne. The church
with two spires is the
Hofkircke



Bottom :
Falls of the Rhine,
near schaff-hausen