

SWAMI PARAMANANDA
AND HIS WORK

VOLUME II



SWAMI PARAMANANDA
Walking from the Temple to the Library after a
Sunday Service at Ananda Ashrama.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

Volume II

BY

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DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY
SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS DISCIPLES
HABIT OF HAPPINESS
BUILDING CHARACTER
SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISSI
ETC.



ANANDA ASHRAMA
LA CRESCENTA
CALIFORNIA, U. S. A.

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The greater part of these illustrations are made from kodak pictures which gives them a living quality.

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VOLUME II

INTRODUCTORY

When Swami Paramananda returned from India in June of 1926, after a sojourn of six months, he found on his desk two new volumes —“The Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers” and “Swami Paramananda and His Work.” The one had been compiled, the other written, during his absence. “Swami Paramananda and His Work” carried the Swami’s life to 1926. It could not extend beyond that year because it had not been lived. Now, however, the final chapter has come to a close, leaving fourteen years unrecorded, and I return to finish my task. I do not wish to infer that the Swami has gone from us. His presence and influence are felt vividly still—by those even who did not know him. He has merely passed into a larger area of activity, leaving behind him an open door through which he can move back and forth as the stricken world calls him.

The following pages do not represent a second volume so much as a supplement. In the first volume were described in detail the Swami’s personality, his habits and his method of work.

In this are recounted the multiple activities of the fourteen unwritten years.

At the close of the volume are given some of the countless tributes received by the Vedanta Centre of Boston and by Ananda Ashrama in California at the time of the Swami's passing.

My part in the following pages has been a small one. I have striven rather, so far as possible, to tell the story of the Swami's later years in his own words through his letters, that these letters might be preserved and also that the world might share in them. They reveal the beauty of his nature, the loftiness of his ideals and the tenderness of his heart.

I

SECOND VISIT TO INDIA

The year 1926 began for Swami Paramananda with a far journey. The Swami had determined to return to India for a visit of some length and had engaged passage on the "Berengaria" leaving the ninth of January. Two days before his sailing the Vedanta Centre of Boston held a reception in his honor. Many came and all expressed deep feeling for the Swami. In response, at the end of the evening, the Swami spoke these words:

"I have only one desire; that is to unify, to bring nearer that which is true and human in all hearts, joining them with a bond of love. Whether I am here or not, keep your hearts open and move on with the current of things, that you may play your part in the upbuilding of humanity, in the great brotherhood of mankind. Be charged with the ideas that are vibrant with love and nobility, so that people may be inspired by looking at you. When you are so imbued with the spirit of love, fellowship and service that you are not conscious of doing anything, you are truly blessed. When your ears

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are not spoiled by listening to the praise of men, then you leave them open for the voice of God to fill them. That is the acme of spiritual work. That is my dream. That is the message I have given one way or another through philosophy, religion, prayer and poetry, spoken or written. When we allow our hearts to pulsate in rhythm, we have the gift of outpouring. Let us all work toward that end. We have moments of doubt, self-pity, depression and total darkness. Do not let these overwhelm you; the light will come; the clouds will disperse." Then as a parting benediction the Swami read his poem "Thee I Love in All," in the hope it might give something that everyone present might carry "as a great thread of love, a thread that nothing can untie, the tie of spirit unbroken and unbreakable."

The Swami was setting out for India with mingled feelings of joy and sadness. Fifteen years had elapsed since his previous visit and he knew that he would not find the same India. Many of the great souls who had cherished and watched over him as a youthful monk were gone. Swami Ramakrishnananda would not be there, nor Swami Brahmananda. A few remained still,—Swami Shivananda, Swami Akhandananda and two or three others; but there would be wide gaps in the ranks of the great ones whom he had known, with only sacred memories to fill them. His thoughts, too, lin-

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gered with the Centre in Boston and the Ashrama in California. We can sense his mood in this brief message from the steamer just before sailing:

“God bless you all. My love abides with you always. There is no time for anything else. Every one has given me a wonderful send-off. Love binds us all together and forever.”

And later, this card, bearing the picture of the steamer:

“The receptions given in Boston and New York were most touching. You will hear about it later more fully. Love to everyone.

His mood was still more apparent in this longer letter to both Centres. It read:

I place my hand of love on each one of you and I pray that God may make your hearts glad. I am always full of gratitude that He has given me so many true hearts to love and serve and to be loved and protected through their pure consecration. May you all live each day to glorify Him. Through your selfless devotion I am so very bound to you that distance cannot diminish it, nor can separation prevail against it. I am bound to you through love, a gentle word but strongest of all fetters. This moment my heart is overflowing with such tenderness that there are really no words—no words but that which needs no words at all.

The letter to the Ashrama that followed contained a full account of his experiences in Boston

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and New York and tells of his sailing. It gives many personal details, because he was writing to members of his household and he knew that the smallest fact would be of interest to them. It was written on the way to Bombay from Aden:

Dear Ones:

The last days in Boston, as you know, were naturally crowded with varied activities. People showed very warm and genuine feeling at all the Services and especially at the farewell reception given me the last night I was in Boston. It was a memorable occasion; the people rose to a very high pitch of wholesome enthusiasm. I hope that someone has written to you fully about it.

Next morning at ten o'clock I left for New York and several came to the station to see me off. In New York I was met by several friends. The Cartozians arranged a dinner for me and invited a number of guests to meet me. After that they drove us all to Miss Faulkner Page's studio at Carnegie Hall. Here there was an informal reception. I spoke at intervals; Swami Raghavananda also spoke. Mr. Das Gupta paid a very glowing tribute and Miss Page also spoke in very genuine appreciation of my work. Dr. Eliot White's tribute was profound and heartfelt; at the end of it I could not resist reading my poem, "Tender Jesus." It will interest you that in course of his remarks, specially speaking of my poems, Dr. White pointed out the two lines from "Let Him Speak," "The tongue that speaketh soulless words but scat-

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tereth pebbles before hungry mouths," as a very great contribution to literature. He reminded the audience that "Swami will bring perhaps greater gifts from India, but we must be ready to receive—we must prepare our hearts." (It is hard to repeat such things, but I am giving you just a little with the thought of sharing with you.)

The next morning was so tremendously crowded that we had to hurry to catch the boat. Dr. Grier showed very deep feeling and begged me to attend the next New Thought International Alliance Conference to be held in New York the last week of June at Hotel Commodore. I have given him my word that if it is a physical possibility I will accept. It will enable me to reach a vast body of people from all countries. It will necessitate an early return, of course, which I am contemplating anyway.

When we reached the "Berengaria" we found several friends; also a pile of letters and telegrams and a basket of fruit and flowers. My body was probably more depleted and exhausted than I had realized for some time, because I felt completely let down—so much so that I excused myself from dinner and tried to get my bearings; but very soon decided in favor of retiring. Before I was wholly undressed I threw myself on the bed, hoping to get up again in a few minutes, but I did not know anything until six-thirty in the morning. At first I doubted my watch, but it was right . . .

We left London on January twenty-sixth and arrived the same evening at Paris. Left Paris on the twenty-eighth and arrived in Marseilles the same evening about eleven o'clock. Sailed

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on "Rajputana" on the twenty-ninth. This trip has been a great experience and it will be hard for me to define it in few words. It has tried to give hard blows to those ideas and ideals that I carry of larger humanity and of conquering all things with love.

The journey is nearly over and this has been a time of quiet—possibly unproductive, but such times have to be experienced. Soon after boarding the steamer I was invited by some of the fellow passengers travelling by second cabin to come and meet them, which I did. And the same evening I also gave a talk to a select group. I find in every turn people who have known me through some published work. There was a lady from Chicago, who was one of the organizers of the Bookfellows Association. She already knew me through my connection with the Seymours of Chicago. Also some of my Hindu friends knew me through the books, especially through "Path of Devotion."

I have been going to second cabin regularly every evening and sometimes in the afternoon, talking to a group of nine or ten. They are very full of appreciation and I have met quite a number of people, and several have ordered my books. I hope that you are all doing well and the workers are holding their own. My health seems a little more established now and I hope through His Grace it may carry me through. When my energy returns I shall try to write more fully and perhaps a little more interestingly—in the meantime you know that I am still in evidence. My heart's love and prayers for every one of you, always, always, always.

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A cable from India on February sixteenth brought the welcome news that the Swami had arrived safely in Bombay where he was accorded a hearty reception. He remained there only two days as he was hurrying on to Calcutta for the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on the nineteenth. What took place during those two full days at Bombay is told in the following letter from the Swami. It was written from the head monastery on the Ganges near Calcutta.

Since mailing my last letter to you a great deal has taken place, and I shall give you as much as I can before another siege of activity begins.

The steamer docked at six-thirty. First, I went on deck and found immigration officers stamping the passports and I attended to that before the crowd was up. Then as I was entering the other side of the deck towards the landing, two bright-faced young Swamis captured me with their enquiry: "Is this Swami Paramananda?" With them also was a prominent Parsee gentleman and a few others. I did not let them garland me, asking them to wait until I was quite ready to land. I was so glad to get away from the crowd and went with them to the Ashrama as soon as possible. I decided not to have breakfast; but there was unavoidable delay due to customs, although the customs officers could not have been nicer.

There were three automobiles at our disposal, one of them sent by our friend Dr. Nair. I went with them directly to the Ashrama, which is

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thirteen miles out of Bombay. They were very nervous lest I be uncomfortable, but in a short while they were completely disabused of that idea. I fell in line with everything so absolutely that I had to remind myself once in a while, "Monsieur Paramananda, not so fast." At first Bengali did not come easily; then the following day they had to remind me that I was speaking to people who did not understand Bengali.

Things happen strangely: first day I was mostly at the Ashrama and the devotees and friends came to see me there. The following day they gave me a reception and public address of welcome. Reports of such things you will undoubtedly get from others. I think I gave them a great many surprises; no one thought I could be more than twenty-five, and they were in a great dilemma how it could be when I had spent nearly twenty years in America. Then, my way of speaking before the public, so wholly different from the usual public men and orators.

This was on Saturday, and after coming back from the lecture and finishing our dinner I spent quite a long time talking with the boys. I found them very receptive and as I started to speak on any subject I drew from an unending storehouse of experience of the last nineteen years of such varied activities. Naturally I retired very late and woke up about four-thirty. I sang many of the favorite songs, specially that morning hymn that Swami Ramakrishnananda called for at his deathbed. When he called for it, unfortunately nobody knew it; then he himself gave the words and G. C. Ghose, after a

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meditation, composed the music for it. The next day Swami Ramakrishnananda passed away. They were so eager for me to teach them this song, also my "Song of Dawn." Every one was taken with it.

Sunday morning (Feb. 14th) there was a gathering before which I spoke, and the activity kept up all day long. In the evening there were musical parties composed of Bengalis, Madrasees, and Hindustanis. Before the evening was concluded it suddenly flashed through my mind to give them something to sing, in which they could all take part; because I observed there were various factions among these parties; they did not understand each other's language and naturally certain partiality was shown the Bengali singers, since they were familiar with Sri Ramakrishna's favorite songs. I sang the "Song of Dawn" and all of them took part, joining in the refrain. It was very interesting how eager they all were to learn it. Every one was taken with the melody. Well! It is great fun to see the working out of my simple way of ever blending in harmony.

It was a great day. A very full one! My voice went on steadily until the hour of midnight and after. Next day Dr. Nair sent his car to have us visit his hospital and take dinner at his house. But before I got away at eleven A. M., a neighbor was persistent that I should visit his house at ten o'clock. He sent a carriage, offered his hospitality, and before we were through several gathered there.

We returned to the Ashrama and had immediately to get ready for Dr. Nair. We visited his hospital first and also the factory where they

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manufacture all the hospital instruments—surgical instruments, artificial limbs for deformed people, a department for violet-ray and X-ray. I will not dwell upon it now in detail; some day I may talk to you more elaborately on the subject, as his work made a great impression on me.

Then was the dinner—a very elaborate affair. I returned from Dr. Nair's place very late in the afternoon. Evening was again as full as usual. Going to bed late hours, getting up early, talking constantly, change of climate—everything combined, made me feel very depleted physically, not at all equal to giving a public lecture.

It was arranged for me to give a public address Tuesday evening. Then I was taken from there to the Bengali Club and the agreement was for me to be there only for ten minutes. But it resulted in my spending an hour and a half with them; and it was the most successful of all my doings at Bombay. There was a little strangeness for the first few minutes, also they felt a little shy; but as I spoke of my experiences in America and especially of their wonderful club houses, where I had often occasion to remain, they were all drawn together. Then I asked them to sing. After the first song, they sang a most beautiful and heart-felt song, composed for the occasion to welcome me. It is truly very beautiful and touching; I shall translate it and send it to you as soon as I get an opportunity.

There must have been at least one hundred or more *babus* (gentlemen) sitting close together, with rapt attention. Afterwards they offered me some sweetmeat and tangerine, but I excused

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myself—only tasting a bit of tangerine. Then they gave me a great send-off.

After we got back it was already very late. We had our supper. Through the urgent request of the inmates of the Ashrama I started to tell them the story of my war experiences of 1914. When I got as far as Paris my eyes began to close automatically, and after making two or three efforts I told them if I did not have any other occasion to finish the story I would have to reincarnate to finish it.

The following morning (Feb. 17th) being the last one, I gave as much time as possible to the young Swamis; also the business affairs had to be attended to in regard to tickets, luggage, money and so forth. Finally we arrived in Dr. Nair's car at the Victoria station and found a crowd awaiting me there with garlands, roses, bouquets and fruits. To make a long story short, before the train pulled out at two P. M. I tried to distribute all the flowers to those who came, but it was not an easy task as there were many and time was short. I naturally felt deeply impressed with their spirit; and if it is at all possible, I promised them that I shall revisit Bombay before leaving India.

That is the story of my stay in Bombay, but naturally I had to leave out some of the details. The first part of the journey to Calcutta was very hot and dusty, but it suddenly turned very cold at night and I found it rather difficult to keep warm.

(Friday, Feb. 18th) This morning as the train reached Nagpur there was a crowd, mostly of Bengali gentlemen. They brought garlands and cooked food: rice, curry, and so forth, for my

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breakfast. The train stopped there for about half an hour, but several times since I have been greeted at different stations—chiefly by Bengali *babus*. I have not the slightest idea how these people are finding out that I am in India.

The journey so far has proved all right, except very dusty. Heat I do not mind very much so far. Tomorrow morning the train is due at Howrah station at seven-ten, so I have dictated this short or long letter, or whatever it may be, that you may know that “Monsieur Paramananda” is still at large. I do not know how much time I shall have for correspondence after my arrival at Belur, so let this carry my heart’s love and prayer for every one of you. I have really no time for anything of this kind, so you must not mind if you find this letter full of mistakes.

Another letter written by a fellow traveller contains these passages: “Naturally the Swami was tired the next day; he had no respite all day long; yet his cheerful, kindly selflessness was ever the same—giving freely to all who came, including my humble self. He inquired so kindly for my welfare. It deepened my regard for him and his selfless qualities. I am seeing him at close range, under unusual circumstances—some of it enough to turn the head of any ordinary person, yet he remains just the same. Even at the train in Bombay, on the stops at Nagpur and along the way, garlands and offerings of fruit were given.”

An extract from a Bombay paper reads: “Swami Paramananda, Founder and Head of the

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Vedanta Centre of Boston arrived here last Friday after an absence from India of nearly twenty years. A public reception under the chairmanship of Mr. K. Natarajan was given to the Swami on Saturday. In the course of it, the Swami said that the message that he would give to India as a result of his experience in the West was that true joy lay not in external possessions but in inner vision and self-consecrated service to others."

Another extract reads: "Under the auspices of 'The Western India Vivekananda Society,' a public meeting was held this evening to welcome Srimat Swami Paramananda. The hall was tastefully decorated with flowers, and on the platform were seated members of the Ramakrishna Mission. A large number of citizens of Bombay attended the function." (Then followed a long account of Swami Paramananda's work in the West, after which the article continues:) "The President of the meeting in opening the proceedings said that the Swami had been away from India a very long period which he had devoted to the dissemination of the highest truths of universal religion. An address was then presented to the Swamiji which referred to the great part he had played in furthering the mission of Sri Ramakrishna."

The Swami in thanking the members of the Society said that the only message he had to give the people in India was the great truth which Sri

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Ramakrishna had given and demonstrated in his own life—the establishment of fellowship among all the followers of the different religions of the world, knowing them to be but so many forms of the one universal and eternal Religion.

The Swami arrived in Calcutta on the morning of February nineteenth, and plunged at once into the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. Crowds began to gather at the head monastery of the Mission on the Ganges and soon became so compact, it was almost impossible to pass through them. A vast number of poor people were fed and in the evening there was an elaborate display of fireworks. The Swami moved about in the gathering taking active part and receiving much attention.

From Calcutta the Swami travelled to Delhi and his visit there was one of the most gratifying experiences of his sojourn in India. Nowhere did he meet with more enthusiasm and devotion. A member of the Ramakrishna Mission, who was in Delhi at the same time as the Swami, gives us this graphic description of the outstanding events of the Swami's visit:

“A special invitation was sent to Swami Paramananda by the citizens of the imperial city of Delhi to attend there the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami, accepting, left for Delhi on the evening of the twenty-fourth of February, accompanied by another Swami from

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the Math (monastery). Arriving the morning of the twenty-sixth, they were received at the station by a large crowd and taken to Raisina, a quarter in the new extension of Delhi, where accommodations had been arranged for them. In the evening the Swami was visited by a group of local gentlemen who gathered round him in conversation for over an hour. Some lines of his poems were read and were much appreciated.

“The next morning began the real celebration, which continued for two days. On the first day’s programme the Swami spoke in the morning. At noon there were functions in connection with the celebration of the birthday. At four o’clock a public meeting was held with a gathering of about two thousand people, under a durbar tent set up specially for the occasion. For over an hour the Swami addressed the audience on ‘The Universal Aspect of Religion and its Relation to Practical Life.’

“The next day held a very full schedule. The morning began with *kirtanam* (holy singing) and reading of Sanskrit verses. The Swami held an informal meeting, inviting questions from the audience. At noon about seven hundred *daridra Narayanas* (God in the form of the poor) were sumptuously fed.

“In the afternoon was the main event of the day—a meeting which drew a concourse of about

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four thousand ladies and gentlemen, among them many prominent leaders of India who were in Delhi attending the Council sittings. The proceedings began with the election of the Swami Paramananda to the presidential chair. Mr. S. M. Bannerji, who holds a very high position in the government of India Service, introduced the Swami. He said: "The Swami's personality appeared so attractive to me that I urged him to be my guest at Delhi.' After briefly describing the Swami's career in the West he paid a very high tribute to him for his simplicity, sincerity and love, saying: 'I do not know whether the Swami is a saint; but his childlike simplicity has so much appealed to me that if simplicity is a qualification of saintliness, I boldly declare that he is, in my opinion, one of the greatest saints I have ever met.'

"The next speaker was Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, one of the best Indian poets writing in English. Then Swami Paramananda spoke. Rising from the presidential chair, he declared that he was no orator and that if the audience had come expecting high-flown speech from him, they would be utterly disappointed. 'Dealing with the life of Sri Ramakrishna,' said the Swami, 'we find simplicity and sincerity as the most fundamental and essential factors of religion.' This was the main purport of the Swami's speech. Thus the program very happily closed. The lectures given by the Swami on these two days have created

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a deep interest in the minds of those who heard them.

“On Tuesday, March second, the students and members of the teaching class of the Ramjas College invited the Swami to speak for them. The lecture made a great impression on the students, and at their request the Swami presented the College Library with a complete set of his published works. Later he went to the Bengali Club of Delhi where the members had arranged a reception for him. They also presented him with an Address of Welcome. The Swami spoke there for about two hours on his experiences in America and the West.

“Sunday afternoon the Swami lectured on the ‘Significance of Sri Ramakrishna’s Life,’ Mr. B. C. Pal, a very famous leader presiding. In the evening an open-air meeting was arranged in one of the public parks, where an Address of Welcome, written in very appreciative and devotional language by the residents of the imperial city of Delhi and printed on a beautiful piece of silk cloth, was presented to the Swami. The Swami, replying to the address, spoke of *Sevadharmā*, (Religion of Service.) He spoke in English, his lecture being immediately translated by another gentleman into the local language. About two thousand people attended this meeting, among them being many prominent leaders of the dif-

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ferent provinces of India. The Swami left for Calcutta that same night."

The Swami himself writes of his experiences in Delhi:

Beloved Ones:

It hardly seems possible that nearly two months have gone by since I left the American shores. In some ways a great deal has happened and in other ways I feel that I have accomplished very little—practically nothing. Of course such things are always relative. Through strange turn of circumstances I was brought here to this new capitol of India a little over a week ago. I have been kept constantly busy ever since my arrival and now the invitations are pouring in from different parts. But I realize that it would be very imprudent to accept every invitation that is extended to me. I confess that some of them are very tempting, yet I must refrain from going about too much on account of my present physical condition. I hesitate very much to say anything about it as I am afraid you will grow anxious. There is really nothing radically wrong with me except a very over-tired body and it is impossible to get any rest here in India. They have overwhelmed me with kindness. It is very touching the way I have been received everywhere. I feel that there was a definite purpose in coming here. I met Mrs. Sarojini Naidu last Sunday. She spoke and poor me had to preside. When I return, do not fail to ask me about it. I have met many interesting people and have made some friends—friends that will continue to be friends.

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Tomorrow night I expect to start for Calcutta and am due there on March tenth. They have arranged a public reception there and after that I may go to Dacca for a week for a complete rest. But getting rest here in India is a very doubtful venture. You realize that some people I am seeing after an absence of some twenty-five years and more.

March eighth: It rained here very hard yesterday and the day before. Saturday night my party and myself were all soaked while we were having the meeting and also in the motor on our way home. The gentleman with whom I am stopping here is most kind and thoughtful. You know I am not much on giving news but I shall try to give you some after I return to the Math. You are in my thoughts constantly; you must feel it.

On leaving Delhi the Swami went to Calcutta, thence to Dacca, the home of his childhood, where he received a hearty welcome. A large reception was tendered him and he was presented with an Address of Welcome expressing admiration for his work in the West. One of the greatest events, however, of the Swami's sojourn in his Motherland was the convention held at the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur, near Calcutta, when several hundred Swamis from all over India assembled. It was Swami Paramananda's privilege to read before the convention the address of Swami Shivananda, venerable President of the Mission.

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There were other receptions, other addresses of welcome, other occasions of interest—it is not possible to tell of them all. The time was near for the journey westward. The Swami returned by the Pacific, completing his circling of the earth and bringing with him two younger Swamis for work in America. Also, a niece, Gayatri Devi, who for many years has been one of his ablest assistants. He came as he went—smiling, gentle, loving, untouched by the high honors he had received; and as he stood on the station platform surrounded by the many friends who were there to greet him, the separation of six long months melted away as a dream melts on waking.

II

LIFE AT ANANDA ASHRAMA

When the present record opens in 1926, the Vedanta Centre of Boston had been established seventeen years, Ananda Ashrama only three. These were still the chief Centres of the Swami's effort. The parent Centre in Boston was fully grown; the Ashrama was in the process of growth. What he felt for the younger Centre was expressed in these letters written subsequently—one written to the Ashrama community from St. Louis, where he had stopped on an eastward journey to deliver a lecture; the other to the Centre in Boston:

Loved Ones of the Ashrama:

What a contrast between these cities and that beautiful heavenly spot where you are all privileged to live. I think people who come to live there, they must have this sense of privilege, else they will miss its import. Do not ever think for a moment that I have lost my love for the Ashrama in any way or that my interest has grown any less. I think my love for it is deeper and purer born of detachment.

It is a mighty work! This consciousness is filling my whole being. Those who are blessed to help it have my eternal love and gratitude. I have very little to say that is new. I have already

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poured out my heart to you all. If you succeed in keeping the self out and stand united in love, then you cannot fail. Let this thought burn in your souls till all your small desires and selfish instincts are burnt to ashes. Make a bonfire of them and let your hearts glow with happiness as you watch them burn. Do not be afraid that I speak like this, but have faith and courage. Truth is never attained by weaklings or cowards. Be true and fear nothing.

I feel such love for you, for every one of you. I have such faith in you and your ability to do everything. You are all noble souls, unselfish and true. Let me be instrumental in reminding you of your true heritage. We must keep up our spirit of happiness. It is most essential for both physical and spiritual healthfulness. Good night and remember my love for you and faith in you always and always.

My heart's best love always goes out to you, freely do I give my love to you all. Move on, brave hearts. Divine protection is ever with you. Never forget this truth and move on. Your steps will be guided and shielded—never doubt and never fear.

Dear Ones of the Centre:

This is to tell you that I arrived here safely, as you know from my wire, and also that the Ashrama is very beautiful. I hope I did not say too much when I said it is almost breath-taking. It is more than physical beauty, and yet it is not without many responsibilities and a sense of burden.

Both the Sunday Services were well attended. The Temple was nearly full morning and after-

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noon. I have been active, giving supervision and planning for the immediate improvement and tidying up generally of the Ashrama for our anniversary celebration next Sunday. You know how much time everything requires here because this place is on such an extensive scale. The new arch leading to the Temple is a thing of great beauty. Mr. Kopp has given a wonderful token of his devotion by doing this. Phillip also has added quite a good deal by getting the lights and fixtures, wiring and doing the work himself.

The entrance gate to the Ashrama is being finished now, and Amala has done remarkable work in the way of lettering. Also her design and lettering on the arch itself is a very vital contribution towards the general appearance. She is still working there, hoping to finish it before Sunday. I have to keep watch on the situation as it is a very strenuous work and also not without risk—she has to stand all day on a high scaffolding.

With my love for every one of you and prayers for your safety and security.

Life at the Ashrama was never solemn, especially when the Swami was there. His nature was habitually joyous and he possessed a keen sense of humor. He was seldom without a smile on his lips and laughter lingered near the surface of his thought, ready to break through at a happy jest. He enjoyed humorous stories heartily and related them himself with telling effect. Like his humor, his laughter was never boisterous. It was a low chuckling laugh like that of a child. The Swami was always the child, both in his joy

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and in his graver moments. The following brief message to the Ashrama written on his way to Boston, reveals the delicate character of his humor:

All is well! Are you listening? You better listen—all is going to be well. The first item of news is that it is warm like spring. But I know that the spring can snap off at any moment without further notice. It is no wonder that my mind can no longer keep tab on either time or season. My thoughts are with you continuously. Remember all is well. All is going to be well. 1932 is coming. You would better tune in. Are you listening? Are you? You better tune in early.

Your announcer is Vasantaraj.

Whatever the Swami did, he did with rare lightness of touch. He transfused his work with the spirit of play. On Saturday he prepared the evening meal for the Community and sometimes for many guests. Four or five of the household gathered round him in the kitchen; and as they pared vegetables or ground spices, song and laughter would be heard through the open door. The Swami stirred the great kettles in rhythm with the song or beat time with dancing feet. Sometimes he cooked for thirty; sometimes for three hundred, if the Sunday following happened to be a feast day. With all his playfulness, however, he took his cooking very seriously, inventing new dishes and varying the old ones.

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Idleness was foreign to his habit. Every day he walked several times over the property from hill-top to entrance gate and from entrance gate to hilltop, supervising and encouraging the workers; stopping at the Guest House to speak a word of cheer to Sister Seva, who cares for the guests; walking through Miss Sherwood's lovely garden with a song on his lips, past the Buddha Shrine she had made for him in the pine grove below the Cloister terrace; then on up the steep zig-zag path to the Cloister to dictate a letter to Sister Achala, secretary of the Ashrama and one of the most efficient members of the Community. Sometimes he extended his round to the Temple terrace to have a word with Sister Vimala who has charge of the Library and receives visitors.

The fullness of his days is told in these letters to the Centre in Boston:

Dear Ones:

Since my last letter I have kept on moving with the regular round of activities here. The first was the Class in Altadena, about which I should have written immediately. It is a very beautiful place with a charming garden, and the room where we hold the Class is beautifully arranged with candle lights and has a remarkable atmosphere for a private home. We cannot hold the meeting out of doors because of the frogs of every dimension which reside there and seem to delight in offering their song.

The next public activity was the moonlight Service in the Temple patio at the Ashrama. It

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was a gorgeous night, although slightly cool, but it brought forth a large crowd. You know without my having to describe what an enchantment the Ashrama holds for people on such a night. I spoke on the "Hidden Powers of the Soul." Following the Thursday Class was the one at Mrs. Haggarty's in Hollywood and this also proved to be a very beautiful night, and we had the Service out of doors in the garden which was lighted and decorated. The Sunday morning attendance was quite good, but in the afternoon there was a slight drop. It was a very, very warm day.

Since last Monday, we have at the Guest House a distinguished gentleman, Dr. Cowling, President of Carleton College of Minneapolis, a very charming gentleman, very appreciative of the place and especially of last Tuesday's Class. He accompanied us to Altadena. He was most enthusiastic over it. Last Tuesday night at the Altadena Class we had again a very lovely group. It is drawing a very choice group of people, and the setting is certainly inspiring. Tonight we have our regular Thursday evening Class, at Mrs. Haggarty's. Saturday night I am inviting quite a number of people for dinner. There will probably be about sixty.

Yesterday morning I had a spontaneous feeling for silence which I carried on until after the noon Service. The result was my finding a very secluded spot near the Temple and everybody is enthusiastic over having this place to be used for our spiritual practices. It is so close to the Temple and so secluded that nothing is visible from there. I have just merely touched upon the high lights. The real Ashrama keeps on moving and the events are never alike when I am here.

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. . . Naturally I had to go without meals—practically nothing between breakfast and dinner at night: and that is what gave me all the strength that I needed. I find that if everything can be harmoniously operated, the work, especially creative work such as cooking or something which bears fruition, instead of exhausting one, really restores a certain amount of energy. However this theory may not always work out in every individual. Next Sunday we are going to observe the Anniversary of the Ashrama. It should have been celebrated last April but Swami Paramananda was away in India at that time.

Dear Ones of the Centre:

I was under the impression that I wrote you about the Labor Day activities, but evidently it was written only in my mind. We did not have a very large crowd this year, but the unanimous feeling was that it was one of the nicest Silence days we have ever had.

It has been rather difficult to carry on the public work during this extremely hot weather, but yesterday it changed and at once we had quite a response. Nearly forty people remained for the luncheon. So it was quite an active day, and everyone expressed great feeling of appreciation and enthusiasm.

I am expecting Mr. Leopold Stokowski to come tonight for Service and dinner, but it is not certain until we have a telephone call from him. As I am coming so soon, I shall not try to give you any more details.

With my loving prayers for each one of you.

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P. S.: We had a lovely visit from Mr. Stokowski this afternoon, and the friend he brought with him was none other than Greta Garbo! They stayed here about two hours and enjoyed everything. We had tea on the front terrace and Ranu danced for them. I have asked them to come again to the Ashrama even in my absence. I think Miss Garbo means to come and spend some time at the Guest House. Ashrama is full of surprises.

And this letter to Boston reads:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

I should have written to you sooner, but I think you can easily imagine how greatly absorbed my mind and thought became by the immediate surroundings and things to be done.

We arrived at the Ashrama safely Friday morning; it is not quite a week yet, still many things have taken place. Friday evening I spoke in town; Saturday the Guest House was quite full and we prepared a bounteous offering for the Shrine. Sunday was a very gratifying day. At both Services the Temple was quite full, especially at the afternoon Service. There were altogether fifty-six for luncheon at the Guest House, which included some of the members of the Community who served. Both Monday and Tuesday also I was occupied with various duties and visitors, and now I am taking this moment to send you these few lines.

We need never fear, if we just let go and be used by the Higher Power. That is my experience through life, and you will find it works in your case also. With my loving thoughts and prayers especially for your blessing.

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We are observing a day of Silence on Monday from three to six in the afternoon, followed by Service in the Temple and banquet in the Cloister patio.

The following letters to Boston give a further picture of life at the Ashrama:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

Monday was a regular rainy day. Now, I want to write to you about yesterday. As you know, I was booked to speak before the Manhattan Beach Women's Club. It was really a worth while occasion. It was their International Day and everything was done to create an atmosphere of India. There must have been close to one hundred and fifty people there for luncheon, and after the usual routine of the Club, Ranu and Chokanu gave two songs, and Ranu, one dance. Then I spoke to a very responsive gathering and it was regarded as a very brilliant occasion. Others perhaps will be able to write you a little more of the details and colorfulness of the event. There was a singer also who had auditioned for the Metropolitan Opera, who sang the "Song of India," "Pale Hands," and "Slumber Song of India."

At the conclusion of my lecture there was so much applause that I had to make a bow and a second speech and answer a question. Then the people crowded around me and many asked if I would speak before their various clubs, schools and gatherings. I realize how essential it is for me to have some sort of central office of information to fulfill this line of activity. I think a great many of these people will come to the Ash-

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rama, although it is a distance of forty to forty-five miles.

Today the sun is shining and I am going out for a walk as soon as I finish dictating this. One more thing I must tell you, as a result of the Santa Monica lecture, I have another engagement on Friday to speak before the Rotary Club for men at twelve o'clock noon.

With my abiding love for every one.

Then came Sunday. The Temple was full, and I think fifty to sixty stayed for luncheon. I went down to the Guest House to see that everything was going all right. After that I had my luncheon and got ready for the afternoon Service. In the afternoon there was a delegation of about twenty-five young people from the Presbyterian Church of Pasadena. I tried to take Monday more or less as a day of rest, at least from the public, but it was crowded with interviews. Tuesday we had a large Class. Perhaps we would have had still more, but unfortunately I forgot to announce it at the morning Service on Sunday.

With my love for each one of you and prayers for your safekeeping.

The last two Sundays I have spoken three times publicly, besides the three household Services; also last Tuesday we had a very satisfactory meeting, I think one of the largest attendances we have had in recent months. We are to have a full moon service this evening. The Santa Monica lectures went off very well, especially the one last Sunday.

Now for a few finishing remarks. This morning after the Service I spoke and as I did so, I felt

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so close to the Great Spirit and realized that nothing really happens without His Will. If we can always keep ourselves fastened to this consciousness, then nothing can really go wrong either with ourselves or with the world.

My prayers are always with you for your safe-keeping and your well-being; your happy, and peaceful hearts are my real aspirations.

Lovingly yours.

This brief message went to Boston from Kansas City on the way to California:

Keep close steadfastly to the Highest. It is the only practical remedy for all our ills.

My prayers are always for you.

From the Ashrama again:

After the Service I roamed around the Ashrama as usual. In the evening we had our fireside talk, attended by about twenty-five intimate friends besides the Ashrama household. It was held by the living-room fireside. Wednesday I did some strenuous walking over the Ashrama grounds, planning. The weather is heavenly. I roam over the Ashrama and conceive in my mind more and more beautifying.

When the Swami was absent, letters like these that follow inspired the Ashrama community and led them to work with ever greater and greater consecration and zeal. The Swami's words glowed with such divine fervor that they

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set every heart on fire with renewed ardour of service. The letters read :

Brave hearts :

My thoughts are so constantly with you that I must write a line and tell you so. You have all shown such splendid spirit of selfless devotion, profound understanding and courage that I have not been able to think of anything else but the picture you have given me. How can a work fail when such a spirit prevails. I pray I may not fail towards any of you.

My thoughts are with you most constantly. No great work is ever accomplished without supreme sacrifice and my mind invariably turns to you, one and all. Your noble and selfless spirit enables me to do my part. If I am ever successful, it is because of your love and devotion. I can never forget this great fact and I beg you, every one of you, to try and remember this. It will give you cheer in moments of sadness and darkness. We must hold fast now and always.

My heart's love and prayers are ever yours.

My beloved household :

I trust this will find you all well and happy. The secret of well-being and happiness you always carry in your heart, and I have faith in every one of you. Selfless love and service, let these radiate from every object of the Ashrama. Even the trees and shrubs may catch the spirit and bear witness to our consecration to the Supreme One. O! be of good cheer; One who has led us thus far will lead us farther, for

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we are ever in His hands. The dark clouds will come and go, but never forget the sun with its radiant glow. All is well and all must be well, for we are His. Never forget this great fact. Those who may come under the shadow, try to remind them of this great Truth. Fear not but look forward, ever forward. My spirit is there with you always. You have bound it with unbreakable fetters of love and selfless devotion. Try to keep the rhythm for yourself and for others; then all must go well.

Always with prayers and loving blessings.

I feel that I must share with you this most glowing thought in my mind and heart—that whatever comes through Him is full of sweetness, and whatever causes us sorrow or suffering is because we have broken contact and do not feel that it comes from Him. Perhaps this may provoke some thought in your own minds and inspire reflection and inward gazing. I realize more and more that without inner life there can be nothing but chaos, unhappiness and lack of peace. May the One who has always led us so far, awaken in our thoughts and prayers faith and unshaken consciousness of His Presence.

With these thoughts, I commend my love to each and every one of you. That you may be preserved for His glory is my heart's prayer.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

My thoughts are often with you and my prayers are always there for your happiness, your unfoldment and for a strong, united spiritual household. I know that every one of you

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feels this more and more, and your desire will be greater every day to help and serve more worthily. Our chief concern should be to remember this as often as possible and remind others of the same fact, that a single fabric of our mind need not be sidetracked from its purpose. There is no need for strain and struggle if we keep ourselves rhythmic with holy remembrance. There is no need for scorn or scowling face when we can so easily bear a countenance which reflects the Divine Light. Be always the thing you started out to be and help others to make themselves true to their purpose. Steadfastness is the greatest thing in life and it always pays in the end.

With my deepest love for every one of you.

I feel so keenly for every one of you and my prayer is constantly to be led in such wise that I may not want anything for myself but everything for the good of many and for the happiness of many. Wherever He keeps me, in whatever circumstance, may I only sing to the glory of the Highest without looking to the right or to the left.

Give my love to every one and ask every one to be contained and not to "touch the ceiling." Moderation is a good policy and makes our joy more enduring and our life more sane.

As I have kept pretty active and occupied here I have not had much time to write each one of you individually, but know that I am thinking of you always and of the Ashrama, which is indeed a blessed spot. Whether I am there or not, my love for it ever remains the same.



(Above) Temple at Ananda Ashrama.
(Below) Guest House at Ananda Ashrama.

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Sister writes me in her letter, "Ashrama never ran more smoothly than it does now," It certainly has made me very happy and I feel that one of my dreams has come true. Also I feel that every one of you is doing her share by cooperating with Sister and following her leadership. Nothing is ever accomplished without much perseverance and self-denial, and I know that you are all stout souls capable of doing great good. Please keep well and happy and make the Ashrama what it stands for.

My heart's prayers are for every one of you. There is nothing greater than soul-kinship, and that is what I feel with each one of you, blessed children of the Deity. My heart is full of love for you and if God ever grants one grace, it will be first yours—and all yours. I feel both dumb and eloquent at the same time. Let my unspoken words carry my real message to you.

There is one activity at the Ashrama which moves on quietly, unorganised and unannounced; that is healing. By telegraph, by telephone and by letter, requests for help for the sick come, and came even more to the Swami. He possessed remarkable healing power; but he never claimed it, nor did he ever speak of healing anyone. He believed that healing should be done spontaneously, silently, devoutly, without recognition or thought of return. No one ever knew when he healed or how, but healing took place.

A member of the community was grievously

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hurt in an automobile accident. Besides several other fractures, her neck was broken and her head and jaw pushed out of place. The doctors were so convinced she could not live, they made little effort to save her. The Swami was on his way to California when the accident occurred. As soon as he arrived, he turned the whole current of thought from death to life. He went to the hospital three times every day and stood at the bedside of the injured one for long intervals, in silence calling her back to life and by uplifted words giving her courage to live. The physician watched her slow and steady recovery with amazement and frankly declared it was a miracle. They attributed it to the Swami's superior power—the Swami said it was the power of God. He believed that that alone was the source of all healing.

On another occasion when one of the household was injured by a fall and he was detained in Boston, he wrote this letter:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I want you all unitedly, prayerfully and with all the exalted feeling you possess to do everything you can that will bring relief to S—. Nothing happens accidentally and nothing is without a definite reason. Ours is always to accept with bowed head and absolute humility, not as we may, but as He may help us to do. You can easily imagine how full my heart is when major difficulties strike you and I am

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away from the Ashrama. But my faith is constant in the power of prayer and in the power of holiness. You are my best assets, and I call you all to rise to your highest stature of selflessness and spiritual power. I know then that all must be well. Remember that your being at the Ashrama is not an accident. Your place in this holy community is not a chance but every one of you is destined to play a vital part in the good of many and the happiness of many.

With my undying love and a heart full of prayers.

The Swami felt that the spiritual life should not be wholly meditative—it should also be active and creative. It should call into play all faculties and gifts. He sought therefore to provide opportunities and facilities for the development of the talents of each member of the community. The result is, today the productivity of the Ashrama has grown so extended that it reaches from the dairy to the library shelf, and includes butter and eggs, honey and incense, weaving, metal work, wicker-work, illuminating and art-lettering. All decorations, the extensive lettering at the gate, in the Temple and in the entrance arcade; much of the rock work and the paving of walks with flagstones, quite a little of the building, all this was done by the workers. Even some of the furniture was made by them. Most important of all the products of the Ashrama are its philosophic and re-

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ligious publications. Among other writings, the Ashrama brought out the Swami's "Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers" which has had a number of reprintings and a wide circulation.

The activities of the Ashrama have never been wholly outward, least of all when the Swami was present. The two daily Services in the Temple; the holy words spoken by the Swami to the community, as the household sat together in the evening; the bedtime meditation, the public Services and Classes, all drew the thought inward. It was also in the Swami's mind to establish a summer school and the idea was realized intermittently, but for a few seasons only. One summer a Class was held for the study of the Bhagavad-Gita. The Swami with the members of the Class sat on the grass in the shade of a mulberry tree in the Cloister patio. The text was first chanted in the original Sanskrit, then the Swami translated and expounded it. Questions were freely asked.

Another year a more developed summer school was organized. The day began with a meditation in the open under the trees, with the birds singing their matins in the branches overhead and the breeze-blown leaves telling their beads. The teaching given was both practical and spiritual. At noon tasks were laid aside and again the workers gathered to hear the Swami interpret the teaching of Lord Buddha

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as contained in the Dhammapada. At four in the afternoon he expounded the Upanishads. This was the routine of the day. Some one who was present writes: "What cannot be recorded is the living atmosphere of beauty, simplicity, holiness, and the exalted teaching given in the midst of nature with the birds singing a constant accompaniment. Those who had come to spend their vacation at the Ashrama were profoundly affected by the spirit and power of the Swami's words and went back to their work refreshed and restored."

These are some of the teachings given:

"We need joy for the expansion of our soul. Joy and cheerfulness are great safeguards against evil. They are like the sunlight. They keep everything purified and sanctified. As sun is a great purifier, we must keep our life deep-rooted in God. When it is thus rooted, we can walk through life with a smiling heart. . . .

"The whole world is full of the spirit of God. Sometimes we close our doors and nothing can penetrate. Our heart becomes barren and dry. Self-consciousness dries it up and attaches it to the finite. Only as we open the door to the Divine can we taste the sweetness of Divine joy. Happiness is born of spiritual aspiration. . . .

"The world may try to cheat you or deprive you of everything, but it cannot rob you of that

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one thing which floods your life with sunshine—the spirit of joy. . . .

“Who can taste the blessing of joy? Only he whose life is in tune. What we are going to receive and when we are going to receive should not be the question—leave that aside entirely. But to be able to receive the blessing, whenever it comes, and to retain it, that is the individual’s greatest task. Let us keep our heart and mind, our body and thought, our whole life in tune. If we can do that all else will come.

“... There should never be any emptiness in the heart. When our heart, mind and thought are filled with the grace of God, nothing harmful can fill them. When our whole being is flooded with the light of God there can never be any darkness.”

III

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

Ananda Ashrama has had many temples—not temples of stone or stucco, but temples roofed with green waving branches and carpeted with soft turf or fallen leaves. The Swami was reluctant to build enclosing walls around these temples of the out-of-doors. He wished to leave them open to the sky, to the song of birds and to gentle scent-laden winds. The whole Ashrama must become a temple and every shade tree a sanctuary. But the weather was not always clement and the living rooms of Cloister or Guest House, which sheltered the congregation on cold or stormy days, did not always suffice; so it became urgent to erect a temple that would shield from rain and wind and chill of winter.

A high terrace behind the Cloister was the site chosen and on Easter Sunday, 1927, it was consecrated. There was a simple Service and after it the Swami delivered an impressive address in which he said:

“As we consecrate this ground to the Supreme One, let us tune our hearts with this thought and prayer, that the Temple to be erected here

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may be instrumental in bringing happiness to many and blessings to many. In reality we cannot build a temple. The real temple, the real church, the real place of worship, is built not by man's hands. It is built by the souls of the consecrated, by those imbued with Divine inspiration; by those who give their lives for the service of God and humanity. Such souls may leave no trace behind them in the form of a church or a temple, but their lives radiate and continue to radiate unbounded light. That is the spirit we wish to invoke.

“We have no desire to establish here a cult or creed. We call this place ‘Ananda Ashrama’ or the place of peace and spiritual happiness; a place where we may live the life ourselves, and by living it in accordance with the highest principles, aid those who have need of aid; a place where we may serve with selfless devotion, drawing our inspiration from the Supreme One. For this reason we have chosen for this new Temple the name of ‘Temple of the Universal Spirit,’ which conveys the universal aspect, leaving no room for condemnation, sectarianism or anything that divides; but rather brings all men into blending harmony.

“I do not want you to think I am the first to conceive this idea of a Temple of the Universal Spirit. It has been dreamed by many souls. One temple or one church will not suffice for

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all humanity, but even a single temple that stands for the ideal of universality will help others to receive inspiration from the One Source. If we have need of anything in the world today, it is unity and universality.”

A long interval elapsed between the consecration of the ground and the dedication of the Temple and it was not until Sunday, October twenty-first, 1928, that the final dedication of the Temple of the Universal Spirit took place. The date chosen was that of the great Indian Feast of the Divine Mother, the salient feature of which is the reconciliation of all warring factions. At the close of this festival every one embraces, not only his friends, but also his enemies. No ill will must be left in the heart, otherwise the blessing of the festival is lost.

Six hundred people climbed the steep slopes of the Sierra Madre hills to take part in the two Services held during the day. The Temple was crowded to its doors, and late-comers stood outside in the patio. The Swami delivered addresses at both Services. In the morning he laid stress on the unbounded scope of the Temple, expressing the hope that followers of all faiths and all races might find a spiritual home within its walls. He told how the Ashrama workers had toiled, not only for long days, but for whole nights, to make the Temple ready; how the finishing touches had been given by

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the gifted members of the Ashrama community. One had decorated the walls, another the wood-work; still another had installed the electric fixtures, another had woven the curtains which were drawn across the sanctuary when no Service was in progress; and still another had composed the words and music of an anthem which was sung in the morning and in the afternoon.

The Swami said further in the course of his second address:

“The Temple of the Universal Spirit means unity of faiths, not a mixture of faiths. Each has its own place. You and I, Christian and Buddhist, Hindu and Mohammedan, East and West, are but different parts of the cosmic universe, of which not one part can be forgotten without lacking so much to make the universe complete. We want this sanctuary to be a spiritual centre, not essentially Hindu, nor marked by Christian dogma or Buddhistic creed, but significant of all the beautiful things born in the world of spirituality. May our hearts be so free from the blemish of petty feelings, hatred, anger, misunderstanding, that we may be secure in the spirit of God and help to extend that security to our fellowmen. We have pulled down a whole rock to raise this Temple and now as we consecrate it, let us pray that the light of the Supreme may shine upon us. May

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He direct our footsteps, bestow upon us inspiration, and cause our hearts to pulsate with His spirit.”

The new Temple was more than a Temple; it was a group of buildings in hollow tile and stucco with red tiled roofs. From the walls of the Temple proper on either side extend wide, curved and arched arcades. Facing the Temple the arcade to the left leads to the book-room where all publications are stored. The one to the right extends to the Swami's living quarters—a two story building with curving buttresses at the corners. From this a straight arched arcade terminates at the Library, a large high-ceiled room with open fireplace and a wide alcove. The enclosure within these arcades forms a large patio planted with orange and pepper trees. This is open on the canyon side, giving a vista into a grove of live oak trees. At the edge of the canyon bank, Swami had an outdoor fireplace constructed, in the upper portion of which a niche holds a burning vigil light. Adjacent to this fireplace is a stone platform for use in open-air Services.

A low stone wall connects this unit with a lotus pool, which is fed by water flowing down the bank over a flight of parti-colored stone steps. The slopes surrounding the waterway are planted with moss, fern, and flowering shrubs. This pool and waterway were built as

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an offering in memory of the Swami by the same devoted member who built the fireplace and the lovely stone arch through which one passes into the garden leading up to the Temple. The same member also built the imposing gate at the entrance to the Ashrama.

Over the high doors of the Temple is the inscription in illuminated letters, "Truth is One." The same note of universality is sounded in every detail of the interior. In each leaded window is a stained glass inset depicting an historical place of worship representative of some one of the great religions of the world—Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Shintoism; the Greek, Chinese and Egyptian faiths. This was conceived by the Swami as an expression of his fundamental conviction that as the same light passes through all these windows—symbolic of different creeds—so the one Truth shines in and through all religions.

Beneath the windows and alternating with them are arched niches further symbolizing the ideal of universality. Each niche contains passages from some one of the great Scriptures of the world, written in illuminated letters. Over each quotation is a symbol of the faith represented. At the east end of the Temple is the sanctuary where a beautiful altar stands with this inscription above its arch, "Where I Am

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There Is Peace." On either side of the steps leading to the sanctuary, against the wainscoted wall, are pictures or statues of great spiritual teachers. Thus the whole Temple proclaims the sole tenet of the Swami's creed, "Truth is One; men call it by various names." The same note sounds through all the teaching given within its walls.

The Swami never prepared his sermons or lectures. He preferred to trust to immediate higher inspiration, and his words were always convincing and charged with power. He spoke quietly, using few gestures and rarely raising his voice; yet his voice, even when low, carried always. He possessed an exceptional gift of language and a simple eloquence which was vibrant and impelling. A gentleman who once heard the Swami speak on "Cosmic Consciousness" declared, "If one is privileged to hear one such sermon once in a life-time, one is indeed blessed."

This familiar talk given at the close of a Divine Mother festival reveals in part the nature of the Swami's thought:

"All our mountain-like obstacles will vanish if we really know how to take shelter in that infinite tenderness. If we can only have faith and feel freed from all earthly fetters and believe more in that Power, in one moment all obstacles can be removed from our path. Let

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us believe, let us believe, let us believe! Let us have faith and perseverance and open our hearts. Having come into this world of unrealities, of passing phantoms, do thou worship the Lord, the Bhagavad-Gita declares. Be thou steadfast in worship of the Mother, the One Principle. Earthly things come and go. All earthly things are changeable. Let us be anchored in one thing above all others. Let all selfishness, all ambition, all desire for fame, let all these be turned to dust. Let the heart be like a cremation ground.

“This is the heroic type of worship. Let there be no blemish. As long as we have aught else in our heart, we can not make room for God. Christ said: ‘Those who would follow Me, let them forsake all else. Those who would follow Me, forsaking all things, they will find Eternity.’ The idea is, we cannot have God and Mammon. If you want to be part of that great Omnipotence, then do not cling to the little things of the world. May this Feast of Divine Mother be a great cleansing for our spirit. Material things do not matter—how in worship we offer a flower, whether with right hand or left hand, with closed eyes or open eyes. In these things the Lord does not take much interest. Let our heart, our feeling, our fervent spirit be offered.

“You ask, why then do we do this? These outer acts of worship are only symbolic. The

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heart's devotion is the main thing. Even an ignorant person, unlettered, uncultured, when he with whole-hearted devotion surrenders himself at the feet of the Deity, he is blessed and he can become a source of blessing to others. Calculating, weighing, measuring the Divine blessing, means we have not understanding. Ritual, office of priest, outer acts—all these things are of little importance. There are no doors between God and us. The barriers we ourselves create through selfishness, egotism and ambition. We cannot worship God as long as these things are within us. Those who cling to these, they feel the pang of separation from Deity.

“Let there be Divine power flowing through us, taking possession of us—of our hands, our feet, our mind and brain, then there will be no room for anything else. There will be no harshness, no discord, no disharmony, no sickness. We make the incarnate Spirit suffer when we inflict wounds. Some one said of Lord Buddha: ‘Why does the Compassionate One grieve? Why has He suffering and sickness?’ As long as there is selfishness, sickness, self-clinging, so long will the Lord suffer.

“Make your world a paradise, make your Ashrama a true abode of peace. Make it within your own heart. Outside polishing and decorating and building temples are nothing, nothing.

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The whole universe belongs to the Lord. There is no America, no India or England in the eyes of God. All is His and He is All. The whole universe belongs to the Mother of the Universe. We cannot find Her anywhere except through our love and devotion—through our helplessness. When we are like little children, guileless, free from all envy, jealousy, hatred, ambition, we strike the fundamental note.

“Make the heart clean. You know there are spiritual aspirants, who have a fragrance like sandal and flowers. Be clean of spirit! That is the way we worship truly. It is the spirit which worships spirit. Do not let us be earthbound, full of material thoughts. My spirit feels suffocated when these things predominate. Here we have come before the altar of the Divine Mother. Pray, wish for everything. There is no harm in wishing and desiring, if we do not remain earthbound. Wish for bigger things. Wish for others. Wish for others. Lose yourself in your prayer. Pray for the redemption of the world, for the happiness of the world; pray for your immediate surroundings, that every one may be happy.

“Let us forget self. We call the all-blissful Mother, *Anandamai*. When we come before Her altar there is nothing but bliss, expansion of the soul, nothing but desire to give—even the last thing we have; but there is no end, no last

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thing, when once we touch That. I am glad I have nothing. I never had anything. But when that bounty opens, we can never exhaust it. Do not make yourselves poor with selfishness and wanting for yourself. We cannot have God and self at the same time. They can not occupy the same throne.

“It does not require many to carry on a real spiritual work. But it does require a few stout hearts who are never daunted by anything. If He has chosen me to do this task of blessedness I cannot escape. If He has chosen you, you cannot fail.”

IV

RAVAGING FIRE AND FLOOD

Ananda Ashrama passed through the waters of a raging flood and was not swept away. It was encircled by a high wall of leaping flame; tall trees were kindled torches; shrubs and bushes were burning fire, yet it was not consumed.

On the night of November twenty-first, 1933, fire was discovered in a vacant lot beyond the property adjoining the Ashrama fully a mile away. We felt secure in the belief it would be extinguished before it reached us. The flames, however, came closer and closer. From midnight until five in the morning we watched them creep through the brush from hilltop to hilltop till it reached the peak just above the Ashrama; then as it burned its way down the mountain-side, it died.

We believed ourselves saved. Some of the fire fighters went away, but a few still remained on guard. Suddenly later in the day flames were seen in Oak Canyon, the canyon farthest from the Ashrama buildings. The alarm was given, but the fire warden refused to let his men go into the canyon because not long before

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a large number of fire fighters had been trapped and burned to death in a similar canyon.

At first the fire spread slowly; but at nightfall a fifty mile gale sprang up and swept the flames toward the heart of the Ashrama with relentless speed. One hundred and fifty fire fighters were thrown into the area and a mile of hose was stretched across the property in various directions, but nothing could check the advancing flame. It attacked the storehouse and reduced hundreds of books to ashes. It menaced the Guest House; it scorched the eaves of the Temple; it came within a few yards of the barns, and the cows, goats and chickens were turned loose. With dumb instinct for safety, they took refuge in the Temple patio.

On and on the flames came, passing directly over the Cloister while some of the workers sat within chanting and praying. Other workers were standing on the roofs of library, garage and barn, directing streams of water on the burning brush. The whole Ashrama was threatened with destruction, yet in every case except one the fire stopped short just before destroying any building. The bee hives were not touched; but a two years' supply of wood was consumed, the flames mounting fifty feet into the air.

The community refused to leave the Ashrama in spite of the menacing flames everywhere, be-

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lieving that the fire fighters would also abandon their task and the Ashrama would lie in ruins. The morning following the night of fire, the fire warden came to me and said: "Sister I know nothing of your religion, but it must be very fine to make it possible for all of you to meet the terrible test of last night with such calm and courage. Most women would have gone into hysterics under the strain."

No one was allowed to approach the property. Those who sought to share the danger with us were turned back and spent the night in their cars on the boulevard, watching the flames envelop the Ashrama and imagining the whole community was perishing in them. Happy were their faces when they came the next morning and found us still alive. All day cars climbed the steep driveway seeking to assure themselves of our safety. Even perfect strangers came. A gentleman, one of the warm friends of the work, stood the entire day in the parking-place receiving visitors and answering questions. A few cars came laden with food—an acceptable offering as our larder was empty. For thirty-six hours we had fed the fire fighters in relays of twenty, giving them hot coffee, eggs, milk, bread, potatoes, soup, whatever we had. Nothing was left.

The Chief of the fire fighters told us the men could not say enough of the graciousness and generosity of the Ashrama. Another fireman said to

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one of the members of the community: "We boys have been talking about you people, although we do not know anything about your religion, we said it must be pretty good to make people like you." And he bought a copy of the Vedanta Monthly in order to learn something of the teaching. All the men with one voice declared that it was the hand of God that saved us, that they had little hope of doing so. When the fire was approaching the Cloister where the community sat waiting for whatever might come, the fire warden had entered the living room and said: "The fire is coming. We shall do our best to save your lives." When the flames had passed over, he returned and exclaimed with quavering voice: "Thank God you are saved."

While the flames were sweeping over the Ashrama in California, the Swami was absent in Boston. On Tuesday night, the night when the fire first broke out, the Swami had retired early. He spoke of feeling strangely restless, even weary. By midnight everyone was asleep in the house save one resident member, who at one o'clock was startled to hear the telephone ring. She ran to stop the clamor, thinking it was a wrong number, but she found it was Western Union with a wire from California saying:

"Terrific fire on Bissell property, going up mountain; Northeast wind. Pray."

At eight o'clock in the morning the second Ashrama wire came:

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“Flames approaching but fire fighters here.”

The third wire came about eleven in the morning, bringing blessed relief. It said:

“Danger abating. Buildings family safe. Hearts courageous. Grateful wires. Love.”

The Swami telegraphed he would talk with the Ashrama at nine-thirty that evening, Boston time. He felt this would steady the morale of the household after what they had been through. He had wired them previously to take no chances. He feared that the workers might refuse to leave and be consumed in a fiery furnace.

“Never mind if the whole Ashrama is wiped out,” he said over the telephone. “Take no risk. Your safety is paramount.”

The fourth wire had been received by him just before he made his first long distance call. It sounded a fresh alarm:

“New outbreak, Oak, Quail Canyons gone—valley in flames—feel safe.”

The Swami smiled at the words “valley in flames—feel safe.” When later he tried to reach the Ashrama again by telephone, the poles were down and no message could come through.

At two o'clock that night the fifth and sixth wires came. The one from the Ashrama, sent through a friend, read:

“Fire passed over Cloister and Temple—so far all buildings intact. Everything in Temple safe. Full of courage.”

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The other wire was from the friend, head of an important insurance company in Los Angeles. It read:

“Just returned from visiting with Sisters and Fire-chief in charge at Ashrama. No further possible danger.”

These wires told what was happening in California. The following letter from the Swami gives the succeeding picture from Boston:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I could not rest without having absolute assurance that all was well. You see on Thursday, when for several hours I could not reach you and the Western Union informed me my last telegram could not be delivered because the inmates of the Ashrama had vacated and their address was unknown, perhaps no one can comprehend what feelings surged through me. Then a visitor came with the astounding news that the headlines in the Boston American were announcing that one hundred and seventy people were trapped in the mountains and could not be reached—so the combination of circumstances left me no alternative but to send a wire to Seymour Thomas; also I wanted you to know that about two hours after I telephoned you on Wednesday night, I tried to talk with you again, but was unable to do so. I heard the conversation between the Boston and the Los Angeles operators and it gave me a most harrowing picture of what was happening there. Thursday morning, when everything seemed black and no news came from you after the telegrams which you and Mr. Russell sent (which arrived

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here about two A.M.), I went into the Shrine and offered my prayer that I was willing to be stripped of everything if only these lives would be spared. Although in my heart of hearts I did not believe the reports of the Western Union, the radio announcements or the newspaper headlines, still I could not help but be torn by anguish. Then relief came first through the telegram of Mr. Seymour Thomas, and then your long wire. And think, I was cooking for one hundred people when all this was taking place.

It is strange that soon after I was talking with you over the telephone the first time, a strange feeling came over me that I did not urge sufficiently for your safety; that I had not impressed upon you strongly enough not to take any chances; and the picture began to come to my mind that the wind might change, which I believe did actually happen, and you were completely surrounded by flames. However, I think the Divine Power moved in spite of all human limitations. Mrs. Bowers had also talked with me on Thursday afternoon, I think at about five o'clock, our time. During her conversation with me, she completely assured me of your safety.

Now about the Thursday evening dinner which we had previously announced and could not postpone—I think, all told, we had approximately ninety guests. I cooked five dishes for the dinner; this act of service was a great saving grace for me. I am giving you all these details because you will be interested to know what was going on here at the other end of the wire. On Wednesday night when I was preparing a little thank offering for the first news of your safety and also to entertain Swami Nikhilananda with some Hindu cooking,

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the telephone started to ring in rapid succession—every one asking for news of the Ashrama, because Lowell Thomas had spoken of the terrible fire and had announced that the Hindu community was wiped out, people having fled from the fire, and so on. So when I was in the midst of cooking, I had to be interrupted about a dozen or more times. There were reports also from the Western Union in regard to my messages which they were still trying to put through to you. The door bell kept ringing and dinner acceptances were pouring in.

The very first thing at the dinner table, I assured them of your safety (I am referring now to the public dinner on Thursday evening.) Later I slipped out of the room and went upstairs to my own quarters and talked with you over the phone for the second time. There was a great deal of difficulty in obtaining the connection, but I persisted and you know the rest. Immediately after I came down I gave them a graphic description and by using my own mental concept on the matter, I was able to present to them a fairly vivid picture of what was going on in California. Everyone was deeply moved and it created an atmosphere such as I have never experienced in all my dealings with the public. You will be interested to know that last Tuesday evening, almost at the close of the class, a Congregational minister came with forty men.

What this whole episode has done to me—and my feeling for you and your unearthly devotion, must remain unsaid. My only prayer is that throughout the remaining years of my earthly existence, it may be justified through my whole-souled dedication to the cause of Truth and my nobility of purpose. Even these words sound so

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inadequate and vacant that I am almost reluctant to speak them. That is what it has done for me. Everyone here is talking of this remarkable miracle and of other things which might make us feel exalted, but my feeling goes even deeper than that. These episodes release in our soul a greater humility and other feelings which are much better expressed when we remain silent. This letter is rather mixed but I hope you will gather enough by reading between the lines to justify my writing it.

With my heart's deepest love and prayers.

Sunday P. M.

The morning Service is over. There was a good congregation and every one seemed intensely appreciative. Mai says she had never heard me speak this way before. I think it is because I spoke on the "Miracle of Faith" and it came differently. You are having your Service now and my inmost feelings are with you. My prayers are that everything that you have gone through during this ordeal and all the selfless acts that you have performed may be so blessed and justified that others will feel the glory of spiritual life, as they come in contact with you and look upon the Ashrama.

The long telegram to which the Swami refers in his letter was this:

"Ashrama grounds devastated except Temple, Cloister, Community House, garden, trees, parking space. All buildings intact except storehouse. Solarium, woodpile, roof of reservoir gone. Sheet flames passed over Temple, Cloister. No one left Ashrama. All sat in Cloister repeating His Name.

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No one flinched. Fire fighters admit nothing but Divine Hand saved. Do not feel necessary you change plans."

As this wire was read aloud the Swami's face was lighted with a great exaltation and he exclaimed: "I always told you they were golden souls and now the fire has proved it."

In response, he sent this message to the Ashrama:

"Your unearthly devotion has proved your golden spirit, tested by fire only to bring forth more shining qualities. My heart is dumb with feelings that cannot be expressed in words. This your selfless victory is my crowning blessing. If nothing further I am able to achieve in life, this will remain indelible."

A second letter from the Swami gives us an after-picture of his feelings about the fire:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I shall not try to make any comments about your letters except to say that each and every one brought a different vision of your great experience. I tried to give a graphic picture of the fire at the Class last night, by using several of the letters from different ones. I used practically all of Sister's letter. You can imagine the tense emotion it created. I felt choked many times when I first read Sister's letter yesterday morning.

With my heart full of thanksgiving and tenderest love for every one of you.

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Still another letter from the Swami to the Ashrama Community:

I hope all of you are keeping well and that you are full of good cheer and courage. You must all keep well both in body and mind so you can do your share in the great work. After the marvelous spiritual protection which you have witnessed with your own eyes, I am sure you all feel more than ever inspired to go on and do your part with deepest devotion. There is nothing that sweetens our life more than acts of service. Let that be always the first and last thought of the Ashrama brothers and sisters.

With my deepest love and tender prayers for each and every one of you.

The Swami returned to the Ashrama at the earliest possible moment and in the letters which follow he tells of the desolation he found. The buildings were there, but the grounds were terribly charred. He writes:

Dear Ones of the Boston Centre:

What I found at the Ashrama, I have no words to describe. At first it did not seem so terrible; but later on as I walked, I could not help but marvel how the buildings were saved, especially the Guest House, when fire practically ran to it and all about it. It was heart-rending to see the beautiful hills, stripped beyond recognition. I could not have imagined such a transformation. However, time will heal it, as it always heals all our wounds; and in spite of all the devastation,

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last night as I stood in the Temple patio after the Service, the Ashrama with its star-strewn canopy overhead was a picture of great beauty and sanctity.

I smell now the smoke as I walk over the grounds. How it pains me to see some of our beautiful trees scorched and charred. Flames must have leaped from fifty to one hundred feet, as it was variously reported, because some of our eucalytus trees, the tall ones, would easily measure sixty to seventy feet, maybe more, and the tops of some of those trees were terribly scorched. It is painful to look at them, but I believe with care they will all be saved, although I think they will have to be pruned.

I do not like to dwell on it, as something inside hurts; but I must take all these things philosophically, with understanding and spirit of resignation. I feel that if the Ashrama had escaped from this devastation completely, it would have brought upon it the envy of the people; and no one can see it without being awestruck. How close the flames came and how ravaging they were and yet the Ashrama stands as a monument. It is quite inexplicable how it all happened. Let our lives be ever more dedicated to live, love and serve.

I have written, without meaning to, a very long letter, but I know you will enjoy all the details I have set forth here.

I am so glad that the meetings are keeping up so well. Go forward with cheerful and courageous hearts. Nothing shall be lacking.

With my deepest love for every one of you.

P. S. A very strange thing happened this morning. Two members of the community discovered a blazing flame which sprang from the fire of over

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two weeks ago. It was the timber of the bridge in Nature's Sanctuary, which was still smoldering and today it actually flamed up. We have taken care of it. The fire waited for me to come home and put it out. It is a very interesting story to say the least.

Still later:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

Today I went with George and some of the others to Oak Canyon for the first time. We could not drive to it, as there has been a terrific wash-out and slide, making driving to the mouth of the Canyon impossible. What we found there was really harrowing. Oak Canyon, in spite of its burned area, still holds certain beauty for me. There must be at least a hundred trees still standing, badly charred and burned, but I believe some of them will come out with new green. What a sight! These great big green trees, split like small twigs through heat. They say the roar of the fire from the various canyons was something terrifying and could be heard from long distance. Mr. Kissam said he could not come out of the kitchen door at the Guest House on account of the heat. More and more one feels amazed how some of the non fire-proof buildings, such as our cabins, stood. I believe from George's description, that when the first fire tried to burn our place, although no fire fighters were fighting, the fire was put out by some other agency. If only one could have had the power to see, what a picture it would have created of Unseen Protection.

Uday Shan Kar and his party had lunch with us on Sunday, and he exclaimed many times, "My

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good God!" as he saw the burned area, and he said that it was nothing but a miracle. In spite of all this marred area, Ashrama stands in its own beauty. As we sit on the terrace, or as I am sitting now in the Temple patio, it is hard to believe that anything has happened. The little canyon where we held the Labor Day Silence, how that escaped devastation is one of the mysteries. Everything burned all around, and yet that place where we held the silence and prayer remains almost intact, and now it is covered with fresh fallen oak leaves, giving the appearance that nothing had happened there. Did I tell you that after my arrival the fire was discovered still burning there after a fortnight, and yet it remains almost unspoiled.

Another thing, some of our newly-planted trees along the road, especially the pepper trees, which were badly burned—today George and I examined them and found new shoots coming out! These things cannot but give one a sense of awe. Also I feel wherever love is poured forth, that is the only thing truly consecrated; it alone falls under the protection of the Divine Shadow.

P. S. You can read the following at the Christmas Eve Service:

My heart is full of tender feelings and prayers, love and deep appreciation for every one who has given me inspiration and impetus to carry on this work. I feel you are all a part of the great Plan and have a definite place in the pattern which is being woven by the Higher Power. Let me extend my heartiest greetings to every one of you, my friends, my inspirers, and my faithful, loyal and staunch supporters. May this season bring you all renewed faith, hope, courage and impetus for

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continued spiritual existence. May His love and peace ever and ever abide with you.

No more now. I am with you always—in sadness and joy, in pleasure and pain; in moments of exuberance and my moments of dullness, I stand with you and my prayers are always for you.

Another letter follows :

Dear Ones of the Centre :

It is hard to know where to begin, things have moved on so swiftly. The weather here has been very unChristmaslike, according to certain concepts. It has been warm like summer. I took a long walk on Christmas day, going over various plans, and I was dressed in my white linens; that gives you an idea of the weather. However, since yesterday we have been literally in the clouds. Today it is a little bit better, but still it is trying to rain. Although the Ashrama buildings have been saved from the devastating fire, nevertheless the devastation has been terrible. The last rain literally filled the upper dam, the lower dam, and the one above the upper dam, with mud. We have not been able to get any water, practically, from the upper dam, and it will require a great deal of digging and clearing, but this does not seem to be the opportune moment, because another rain is bound to fill them up again. Also this task will have to be engineered very carefully. In the first place, we must build a new trail to get the tractor up there, because it will be impossible to do the work just by man power. Then we must find some way to prevent further washouts into the dams.

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So I am holding up this work until we have some more rain and also until the Forest Reservation Department has finished the check dams they are building in Ward Canyon. This is the second week they have been working there. From twenty to twenty-five men appear every morning and leave about two-thirty.

I must send you my heart's prayer for the New Year's Eve Service. We do our part only as we unite ourselves through our thoughts, through our inmost prayers, through our consciousness that we are individually and collectively parts of the great omnipotent and all-loving Spirit. At this hour, as we are taking a step from the old year into the new, let us with all the fervor of our soul make it a consecrated one. Let us make our thoughts so completely dedicated, so completely free from unworthy and ordinary feelings, that we may become true channels for the working out of His beneficent Will.

Our greatest blessing is when we unite ourselves unflinchingly with the Source of our being. We are strong as we learn to be conscious of His infinite strength. We are safe as we learn to place ourselves in His safekeeping. Not one of us is self-sufficing. It is the greatest of our misfortunes when we, through material distractions and self-pity and other disappointments, let our mind become shadowed and clouded with thoughts of doubt and despondency.

Let us make our spirit rise up with all that is best in us, that we may not fail to do our part through prayer, through service, through the practice of humility. Let us strive to keep the spiritual light burning in our soul steadily

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throughout this new year and all the years to come. Let us remember that our joy adds joyousness to the world of life, that our courage brings hope into the greater world, and our peacefulness is the only way that we can establish peace upon this earth. May He who is All-tender, All-loving and All-seeing, see our helplessness and bestow upon us His abiding blessing. I am always united with you in such moments of prayer. Amen.

The flood which occurred on the last night of 1933 was the direct outcome of the fire. The fire had destroyed the watershed; this allowed the water to pour down the mountain sides and turn the canyon streams into devastating torrents. What happened on that destructive night is told in fullest detail in a description and a letter by the Swami. The description reads:

You are asking us and urging us to give you a graphic account of the devastating flood which passed over the beautiful valley of La Crescenta and its immediate environment. This task is not so simple as one may imagine. It is easy for one to visualize flood caused by a rising river or excessive rainfall, but this incident, which played havoc with the peaceful communities of La Crescenta, Montrose, Verdugo City and parts of Glendale, is entirely a different story. A flood was anticipated because of the recent terrible fire, which burned to the ground all the growth over six thousand acres of mountain land. The destruction of the natural watershed was regarded as a great menace to the safety of the people of

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the valley in case of heavy rainfall; but no one could, even with the most far-reaching eye, foresee what actually took place on the New Year's Eve of 1933-34. A rain had started two days prior to this, gently, and by Sunday great streams of water were rushing down from the mountain canyons. Not until the bells announced the New Year, however, on Sunday night, did the great crisis come.

Can you picture in your mind great rocks and boulders weighing five hundred pounds, nay, one thousand pounds, two thousand, five thousand, ten thousand, rolling down with unimagined speed, carrying with them on a high tide of water, giant oak trees, brush and debris? How could houses built by man's frail hands, automobiles speeding on the boulevard, human beings unaware of danger and reveling in New Year festivities, stand such a grim bombardment? This gives a sum-total of the picture. The details are too numerous, too harrowing, too heartrending, to be put into words. Yet, standing on the watch-tower of Ananda Ashrama, surrounded by the raging flood waters and looking down upon the stricken valley, our hearts ached and our throats choked with unspeakable feelings as we sent up a prayer for the safety and solace of the helpless and suffering. Roads once smooth, paved highways, no longer existed; traffic was completely blocked; even walking was impossible as the first few days one could not walk even a few steps without sinking deep down in mud. Yet the heroic men and women of Red Cross and Welfare Societies labored constantly to alleviate the suffering. It was indeed a most primitive and even picturesque sight to see mules carrying water buckets from house to house

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for those who had no other means of obtaining water.

And in the midst of all this chaos and fear-stricken atmosphere, a great lesson did we learn anew: that He, the All-beneficent, was present with us and that without His Will nothing happens. One of the most graphic reminders of this was in the Temple patio of Ananda Ashrama—covered as it was under as much as five feet of dirt in some places: the tablet on the out-of-door altar, with its inscription, “Thee I Love In All” was the only visible thing, shining like a jewel in the midst of wreckage. Those who witnessed this in the ominous lull after the great flood on that never-to-be-forgotten night, could not help but feel an unspeakable awe and divine wonder.

The next letter reads:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

In His name I greet you this New Year. It is not for us ever to judge or try to judge His way or His Will. We want always to remember and remind ourselves that He is All-beneficent, and ours is to learn this lesson, that whatever comes has a deep meaning and a Divine purpose.

So much has happened and with such speed that no words can possibly give you any adequate picture of the recent happenings. The rain began Friday night. There was nothing to indicate a storm. It was a gentle, steady fall, which somewhat increased on Saturday. We were full of plans for the New Year's Service as the Guest House was practically booked, but cancellations started over the telephone Saturday as people were

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afraid to venture up the hill on account of the weather. However, they hoped to be here Sunday if the weather permitted.

Sunday morning the weather looked so very ominous that we did not think it would be possible for anyone to climb the Ashrama hill, so much so that I thought of giving a simple talk by the fire-side in the Cloister living-room if anyone came. However, we decided to hold the Service in the Temple, as it was the most logical place. To our great amazement, a good number came, although some of them got up here rather late on account of the road conditions. All through the Service our faithful George, with shovel in hand, was digging ditches behind the Temple to make way for the water. There were at least twenty-five or more outside of the community present. It was a beautiful Service, as you know such earnest people inspire me and every one was full of feeling. Afterwards, as I greeted them and said that I would have to wish them Happy New Year then instead of at midnight, several of them said with emphasis that nothing could keep them away from the Service unless it was a flood. And the flood came!

We anticipated that by the time of the afternoon Service there would be a let-up in the weather, but it was quite the contrary. The steady down-pour increased and the roads became impassable. Our friend, Mrs. Anderson from Santa Monica, explored every possible access to the Ashrama and finally was obliged to give up. Other friends called up and wanted to know if there were any possible way to get to the Ashrama. We discouraged every one from even attempting to come.

When I was contemplating putting on my robe

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to go up for the afternoon Service, various reports came of the flood-water coming into the Temple patio arcade; the book-room also was threatened. So, instead, I put on my hiking boots, and when I arrived there I found the situation perilous. George was out trying to meet someone at La Canada, and the road conditions naturally delayed him. I started to make outlets for the water, but the effort was almost an impossible one, as the stream was so very strong. Also I realized that the water should be diverted at an upper source, so I began to battle with it in the canyon above the book-room. The book-room was then really threatened, as this great volume of water was beating against the wall, and rocks and debris of every description were piled up against it. It did not take long before every one came to my aid. Sister Seva was one of the first ones; then practically the whole Ashrama force was there. It was a very strenuous work, and George soon realized that nothing could stop it except sandbags. So a great number of sandbags were piled up and thus made a solid wall. When everything looked reasonably safe, I came in to change my soaked garments and wet shoes.

Things happened so rapidly that it is almost impossible to relate the succession of events as they occurred. We had our evening household Service in the Temple. Only a few could get up there because the stream of water was then flowing steadily. After dinner I made another inspection and sent George to rest in the cottage until time for midnight Service. Those who did not want to rest remained in the living-room and around nine o'clock I started to read some of the poems to them. While reading "My Creed" the

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telephone rang, and from that time on it was perpetual.

Amala on her own initiative went out and came back and informed me that the Temple patio was a lake, and the Library was threatened. I lost no time. I put on my heavy boots and asked someone to telephone George at the cottage to come and join me at once. It was impossible then to pass from the Temple arcade across to the Library, because the patio was literally filled with water and water was flowing over the Library arcade. I went through my quarters, out the front door, waded through water and found it was forcing itself into the Library. We closed the doors and put against them a very heavy rug, thus diverting the water course. The door of my study was the next danger point, and we had to block that with another rug, thus changing the course of the water through the Temple arcade.

There must have been a moment of lull after this, so I went to inspect the lower dam with several. We found the lower dam a regular roaring river and we had to be very careful because there was danger at any moment that the wall might give way. I asked them not to go near it. A tremendous volume of water was running through the canyon.

When we returned, I felt inclined again to look over the Temple patio situation. When I reached the Temple steps there was a stream of water coming down like a water-fall. I ran through the water and went first to my study door where I thought it might force itself into my study. Then there came such a tremendous roar that it was almost deafening and the flood-water began to flow through the Temple arcade. It was just like

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a raging river. I had no tools, not even a shovel in my hand at that moment, so I had no alternative but to use my two legs to prevent the accumulation of debris, sand, rocks, stones, and all manner of things from piling up. It is difficult to describe it because it all happened in a flash. Then I took one of the chimes, the longest one, and began to use that to disperse all the debris to make a water-way. If I had realized the danger of such an act, I do not think it would have been possible for me to do such a thing, or to have allowed anyone to be with me at that moment. We afterwards learned that something like a cloudburst had taken place. There is very little hope of escape when one is caught in that. . . .

George took me around towards the bee-house, the upper cabins and towards Dunsmore Canyon. There indeed was a real sight! That wide gap between the Ashrama and the Le Mesnager property—possibly a hundred feet wide, was a roaring, raging river, and through it came down upon New York Avenue boulders and giant trees. Unless one saw this with one's own eyes it must seem like some extraordinary fairy-tale. George and I walked carefully over the demolished electric poles and electric wires, possibly still alive, and what we saw made our hearts sink. The little brown house that stood at the head of New York Avenue was gone. All that was left was a portion of the chimney. Of course we could not see very much at night, and as it was very dangerous, I felt the responsibility for the safety of everyone, so I rushed to the Cloister.

The New Year had already started. At least an hour had passed. I was told there was not a drop of water running through the pipes in the

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house. It did not surprise me because I already had seen the great waterpipes coming from Dunsmore Canyon twisted and broken like small pieces of wire.

I suggested having our New Year's Eve Service without changing my soaking clothes, as I wanted to conduct our five guests to the Guest House safely. Nothing seemed safe. Perhaps this was the most unique and memorable Service we have ever had. Others may be able to give you a more graphic picture of this than I myself can possibly hope to do.

Here I must give you a little description of what that flood-water had done to our road. In the place where the automobiles turn to come to the parking-place (just below the bridge) there was a hole approximately ten to twelve feet deep and an equal number of feet wide, stretching down into the orchard. Each time I look at it, I cannot help but shudder and also feel grateful that none of our members were swept into it, because it would have been so easy for anyone to have fallen into it and everybody was going around working and battling with the flood. However, one can only be silent and thankful. There are no words which can ever express, nor logic that can ever fathom, why and wherefore certain things are.

We conducted the guests to the Guest House, and started to catch all the rainwater possible, because that was all there was for our domestic use. We realized how completely the Ashrama was cut off from the rest of the world. At the time of the fire there was nothing like this, because the roads were open after the fire and the outside world could have communication with the

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Ashrama; but this time there was no possible approach.

I think it was about two-thirty or three o'clock when we retired, and I cannot tell you how many hours I slept, because the rain was still continuing. At about six o'clock (Monday morning) I had a peculiar feeling that all was not well at the Temple. I visualized the picture of how the out-door altar was buried under dirt, and suddenly I realized that if the same thing continued to happen throughout the Temple patio and arcade, there would be no way of recovering anything from the Temple. When I got up there, it was indeed a strange sight. Everything seemed altered. The contour of the hills, the levels of the Temple grounds, were unbelievably changed. However, everything stood safe and serene. We realized that really nothing could be done until the rain and storm abated, and throughout Monday it kept up at intervals.

I want to tell you something here. Immediately after the New Year's Eve Service, I said to those who were with me that I had a peculiar feeling of depression about the valley. Many of the household had the same experience—as if they heard the cry of distress. During the night we tried to telephone various friends, but could not get any response. Most telephones were out of order. Strange, however, when so many of the telephones were out of commission, we were not entirely out of touch, as we had telephone connection with Pasadena. I also want to tell you that during the crisis, as we were battling to save the Temple, the electricity went out, making our work harder. All we had to go by was flashlight.

The relief in the weather came, I think, in the

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early afternoon. It was utterly impossible for us to get down to the valley. Walking was impossible, and there was no remote possibility of driving down. Early in the morning, when I walked to the end of our property, I found boulders and river beds where had existed paved highways; and I realized the immensity of the situation, especially for the valley. We got little snatches of news of the terrible condition that existed there, but could not grasp it until we actually saw it with our own eyes.

We telephoned to see if we could possibly get some help from the Red Cross because all our men had nothing to wear that was dry. I gave what was possible, but I myself had to change so many times that I literally had nothing dry left. Coming up to our place was utterly impossible, but one good friend did not give up. He surprised us by walking up the hill. He brought with him a bundle of clothes which he had gathered up for the men. I was deeply touched by his act of devotion, surmounting all obstacles, and I was determined to take him down as near as possible to where he had left his car.

I want to tell you some of the sights we saw—buried automobiles, some of them showing only the hood, and some of them only a little sign of the top of the car. We could not help but shudder to think how many lives might be locked up in automobiles and also under debris. There were uprooted trees, big boulders standing in the middle of the highway. This part of the story will certainly be beyond your strongest imagination. When I talked with Mr. Chapman, our neighbor, yesterday afternoon, when he walked over to call on us, he told me there were two big boulders

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over on New York Avenue which must weigh ten or twenty tons. He also had calculated other boulders on New York Avenue to be approximately about thirty tons. These boulders literally danced on the paved highway along with the flood waters, uprooting trees, levelling houses, electric and telephone poles, and all manner of things. Is not that a picture of destruction? What a strange drama! Every one tells me that the fire was nothing compared to this—at least this was a hundred times worse, according to their estimation. However, how can one compare such things?

Coming back home Monday evening was the most hazardous of all experiences. It was night-fall and the band of relief workers, who were conducting the traffic and pulling out cars stuck in the mud, had gone to their supper; without having any electric lights, they could not very well aid the situation. When we asked one of the men which would be the best way for us to get to the Ashrama, he politely said for us to leave our car and walk. We could not do that. However, we prayed and we held fast with faith, and finally we went over the dangerous places and reached the Ashrama safely. You can imagine the anxiety of those who were left at the Ashrama, because the storm was not over; it was still raining and every moment we expected a repetition of the previous night.

The moon shone once or twice during the night, but the storm was not over. Tuesday morning the sun came out and the weather changed so much that one could hardly believe all the horrible things that had taken place the previous days and night. As I looked upon the Ashrama from the ridge towards New York Avenue, I could not help

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but notice with what marvellous serenity and calm the Ashrama stood, as if nothing had touched it.

The Fire chief came to see if he could do anything for us and offered to bring up a tank of water for our use; but I told him that he would better give that to the people in the valley who were in worse need, as we could get along with what we had. It is touching how very concerned everybody is for our welfare.

I discovered that on the site of our own grounds, there must have been some places where the flood swept over something like forty to fifty feet deep. It was only through Divine grace that this flood water did not sweep over the whole Ashrama. That is all one can say, with deep humility. The tide did not turn towards us, but went in the opposite direction, even over a much higher bank than ours. The reconstruction work is going on.

Now I must conclude my story by saying that everything has a purpose, and perhaps this will teach us greater simplicity of purpose, and a more profound faith in unfailing Divine protection. When I saw them washing their clothes in the running stream, it could not help but awaken in me the picture of simplicity which exists in the lives of the people who live in the Orient.

Friends have called up from all quarters, but the Los Angeles and Glendale telephone lines and various other lines were out of commission for a long time. In fact all the New Year's messages sent to me were at least twenty-four hours late and they had to be relayed to the Pacific Telegraph Company. What havoc this episode has played upon the lives of people here! What a strange beginning of a New Year! And yet who knows how

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much blessing it may have for us, if we know how to take it with bowed head!

This whole episode has brought before me the beautiful Sanskrit verse composed by my Master, Swami Vivekananda: "Who art Thou, Beneficent Spirit, Doer of good? Thou dost bestow with one hand happiness; and with the other, misery." When we learn to take the allness of Divinity, we find beneficence even in the face of danger and difficulty. May we never forget even for a single instant the purpose of our existence, and how constantly we need to cling to that One who alone can save us from fear, doubt and all manner of entanglements.

My prayer is that all of you who have been nurtured in the spirit of Truth may rise up to great strength, that under all circumstances you will prove your faith and your devotion to the Ideal. There is nothing more worth while in life than this. We cannot judge. We cannot question the Divine Will, but may we all learn to abide by It, not only now, but at all times. This is my prayer. Nearly a week has gone and I have not been able to find time enough to send you the first letter. I can assure you that these days I have not found long enough and I am always reluctant to give up at nightfall, because there is so much to be done. However, the Ashrama goes on with its usual rhythm and the strength that lies behind it. We are repairing the road, especially the dangerous part, and it must be swallowing up at least one hundred tons of earth—maybe twice that much. One can only guess.

We hear now, coming to La Crescenta is prohibited, and anyone who attempts to come will be arrested. This will give you a little idea of what

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is taking place. They are afraid of looting, impairing the relief work; afraid of epidemic; and, I imagine, afraid of having the true story go out. Heaven only knows the truth, but I can only go by my own feelings. I cannot tell you how choked at times I feel, from the depression that comes up from the valley. What a calamity! What a tragedy! What a heart-rending experience for the people!

With undying love for every one of you.

These were the messages sent to Boston by the Swami while the Ashrama was battling with the surging waters:

Pasadena, California 12 midnight, Dec. 31, 1933

Terrible flood; unimaginable devastation everywhere. Buildings safe; details later. Blessed New Year.

The next message reached Boston twelve hours later:

January 1, 1934

Traffic, telephone, completely paralyzed. Have received no word from you. Harrowing sights, terrible devastation La Crescenta, Montrose; heavy losses. Death toll great. Ashrama water system wiped out. No one hurt here through Divine grace. Weather tranquil tonight.

Following this wire were two days of silence—then this message:

Do not be anxious about us. Ashrama is running rhythmically, although practically no outside

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connections at present. No one allowed in this territory without police permit. Long descriptive letter mailed tonight. Reconstruction work progressing under difficult conditions. Am obliged to delay my coming.

The three letters which follow show with what lofty stoicism the Swami had met the disaster which had overtaken the Ashrama :

Dear Ones of the Centre:

One whole week has gone by since the great disaster fell upon this valley of La Crescenta, once regarded as one of the most beautiful spots in Southern California. Not that the sun and the moon and the stars do not shine with selfsame beauty, but the people who have gone through this experience are dazed by what has fallen upon them.

I cannot tell you what weight has been thrown upon my heart each time I have gone down to the stricken area. Yesterday morning I was so overcome by something, which I cannot describe in words, that I had to ask George to turn back quickly. My breathing was almost stopping. It was not any ordinary psychic experience, but I felt as if many, many drowning souls were reaching out to something which might steady them. However, I am not going to dwell on this aspect. I am not going to speak of miracles and the supernatural, because there are certain things which are, and no man can alter them, whether they try to ignore them or throw their doubt upon them. Many people have expressed: "You certainly were very lucky,—you were saved from the

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fire and now from the flood. It was a marvellous escape." My answer is—it was through Divine Grace. But you see, some people at the very utterance of miracle recoil and become almost cynical. How strange that humanity has drifted so far from its Source that even the very Name of God, or giving Him credit for their safekeeping, seems to stir them the wrong way. It is all the more reason for those who have faith and feeling and true power of devotion to hold fast, even with greater strength.

The whole episode is of such gigantic proportions that one only feels dazed by it. I think the tendency is to keep the reports down. The outside world realized a little yesterday when every one was kept out of this area by law. Only three cars of our friends were able to pass through the police barriers, and they came through because they were bringing to us food supplies and necessities. A whole week has passed, and yet La Crescenta, Montrose, Verdugo City, and parts of Glendale are not open. We had our Sunday Services just the same. I feel it did us a great deal of good, and also possibly it helped to lift the terrible depressing condition that exists down in the valley. Today we are observing Swami Vivekananda's birthday with worship, prayer and hours of silence. These things certainly help. I know that there is something more than man's endeavor that safeguards our destiny. Ashrama stands and shines in the beautiful sunshine during the day, and like a lovely maiden in the moonlight, as if nothing has happened. How strange all this seems. Who knows what part it may play yet! I hope that you have received my first letter. You

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can well imagine the interruptions and the obstacles I had in the face of problems, which are so numerous, and every one comes to me for guidance.

One who has led me thus far will lead me further! How is that for a slogan always to carry in our hearts? I smile, as I always have; yet deep down in my heart there is a weight for the people who have suffered through it, and my prayers are constant and full of appeal for the solace and safe-keeping of every one who may be related to us and yet who may not be in any way connected with us. May Divine Mother ever keep you and watch over you is my constant prayer.

Dear Ones:

Let me give you a little glimpse of the survey I have made since last Sunday. Yesterday, George and I started to examine the Ward Canyon tunnel pipe line. It was a very hazardous trip, to say the least. We saw terrible devastation—trees uprooted, slides and waterfalls which have left great gaps, making certain places almost impassable. I think nearly three hundred feet of pipe line are completely gone from the big tunnel line, and at least an equal number of feet from the spring line. To give you a picture of the enormity of the task, George says that each length of pipe—that is, twenty feet each—weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds. How can all this material be carried to those heights, especially when there are no trails left?

Today several of our friends came. Of course, when anyone comes, it is like conducting a party and showing the effects of flood. Those two boulders on New York Avenue are certainly like monuments comparable only to the pyramids. You know

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I cannot help but have a little streak of humor. If I did not, it would be more difficult to bear.

We are having intensive prayers in the Temple and the atmosphere seems to have lifted a little.

Dear Ones of the Centre :

Sunday night I felt peculiarly indrawn, not merely weighted down, but greatly puzzled by the whole condition. I think I naturally spent a great deal of time in prayer and indrawnness even all through the night. One thing I remember distinctly—sending forth pleadings, that if this work was in any way involved through my misguided zeal or personal ambition, to have everything completely taken away; but if it was to serve any Divine purpose, then I must have assurance of how to carry it on.

When we were making a tractor trail up to the reservoir house (which was burned in the fire) to carry lumber and other materials to reconstruct it, Mr. Keck appeared on the scene, desirous of seeing me. Later I learned he lay awake Sunday night, thinking how he might help me and the Ashrama. He was full of earnest desire to take some action, and after talking with me, he started out to see the proper authorities about getting some help for the Ashrama; also to see the Red Cross and try to get some new lead pipes to mend our water line, one of the most urgent requirements of the Ashrama.

Next morning, while we were again on the trail, the Fire-chief and his assistant came. I showed him some of the work to be done. He at once offered us twenty men—Mr. Keck had only asked for a dozen. Then, later, I showed him the Temple grounds and explained what had happened there.

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He said: "Well, I think you need fifty men here and a truck." You can imagine what a surprise it was to every one when I related this story to them. Then the greatest surprise was yet to come. The Fire-chief told me he was going to send a foreman and a crew next morning. Within an hour or so Mr. Chapman, our neighbor and an engineer, appeared with another man to see me and go over the grounds, as he was in charge of the work. He said: "Swami, we are coming here not merely to clean up but to render service, and you are to tell us what is to be done and the way it is to be done." Well if this were not heaven-sent, what may we call it? One thing most gratifying—not a single person comes up here who does not express with real exaltation their admiration for the beauty of the place and its wonderful atmosphere.

I do not want you to think that I am the only one who is working. Our men are wonderful. George is invaluable, and others also are doing their share remarkably. Time is such a precious thing and according to my estimation, we lose time in foolish discussion and aimless wandering; yet, in another breath, I can say there is no such thing as time and causation. Instead of being incongruous, I find that the real principle of Vedanta is blended here, because in the realm of relativity, one is just as intensely true, as the other is out of the realm of relativity. Unity and universality are only realized in the concept of immensity.

If I am not mistaken, this letter will have two extreme points—the simple material details of the microcosm and the subtle outlook of the macrocosm. If you have any difficulty in understanding this, study profoundly, think deeply, and reflect continuously. When mind gets puzzled, the only

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cure is to keep quiet, think and work, and speak not at all.

With my deepest love and unceasing prayer for the safety and security of those who are away from me. These days when the world seems so out of joint, we must hold fast with even greater ferventness to that One who is our abiding shelter.

The closing words of this letter find an echo in an answer which the Swami gave to some one who, on seeing the ravages caused by the fire and the floods, asked him why such calamities should come to a holy place like the Ashrama where prayer is constant. The Swami's reply was :

“We must share in the troubles of the world, if we would show men how to meet them with courage and wisdom. We must teach by example, not by mere words.”

V

THE PARENT CENTRE

The Vedanta Centre of Boston was the parent Centre of Swami Paramananda's work. Whatever he established later was the outgrowth of this and drew its first inspiration from it. For eleven years it occupied a spacious house on Queensberry Street overlooking Fenway Park. With the removal, however, of a large portion of the Community to the newly-acquired Ashrama in California, the house on Queensberry Street with its wide spaces and twenty-seven rooms was no longer necessary and it was decided to dispose of it and seek less extensive quarters.

After two unsatisfactory changes a beautiful Georgian residence on the other side of Fenway Park was procured. It possessed great dignity and commanded a wonderful view of the Park, with its flowing stream, many trees and public buildings. After some alterations, which were personally supervised by the Swami, the Centre was moved to the new quarters on Saturday, February twenty-third, 1929; but no pause came in the activities. On the same afternoon, despite the confusion of moving, the Swami received over one hundred members of the Friendly Tours As-

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sociation, an organization formed for the purpose of breaking down the mental barriers which shut people away from varying phases of human thought and endeavor. As the Chapel was not available, they gathered in the large Italian room on the second floor. The Swami stood by the open fire and in vivid words outlined for them the spirit of the work and gave answer to questions asked. These visits were repeated at frequent intervals.

The next morning, Sunday, day of the dedication, there was universal amazement on the part of the public to see the Chapel in perfect order, the great symbol "Om" hanging over the familiar altar brought from the former home of the Centre and covered with flowers. It was as if the Centre had lived there for many days. The dedication consisted of three Services. There was special music—voice, cello, flute and organ, and Negro spirituals sung by a professional colored quartet. This last was a striking feature of the programme. Also Mr. Einar Hansen, one of the first violinists of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, played several numbers. In the morning the Swami gave to an overflowing congregation a glowing message of "Universal Tolerance and Love." In the afternoon with a few words he introduced the guest speaker, Dhan Gopal Mukerji, who pled for a greater unity between East and West. In the evening the Swami spoke again; also his assistant, Charushila Devi.

Prior to moving to the new Centre the Swami

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had received an auspicious visit from Mr. C. F. Andrews, close and dear associate of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. He was in Boston for three days only and out of those gave the Swami several hours of his time. Nearly two years later he paid another visit to the Centre and delivered an address. There were likewise many other eminent visitors. Edwin Markham, the American poet, came; Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poet; Dr. and Mrs. Cousins, prominent in the intellectual, philanthropic, and artistic life of India, and others. Dr. Cousins arranged an art exhibit of modern Indian paintings at the new Centre and also gave an address on art. Mrs. Cousins spoke on "Indian Womanhood;" and Dr. Kalidas Nag, distinguished author and lecturer, was entertained by the Swami and gave a talk about India after the Tuesday Class. Annie Payson Call was likewise a close friend of the Swami and came on several occasions to see him.

In the new home the life of the Centre quickened. The weekly routine, however, remained the same—the usual two Services on Sunday with a large attendance; a Class on Tuesday, likewise very largely attended, and another Class on Thursday. Later the second Class was transformed into a weekly dinner, at which often a hundred or more guests were present. After the dinner the Swami sat by the fireside and gave an informal talk, or there was an entertainment with a musical

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programme. It was not always the same. More formal banquets gradually grew out of these dinners and were given usually at the close of anniversaries and celebrations.

The following letters written from the Centre in Boston give a picture of the activities of the work there as it went forward from day to day.

Dear Ashrama Household:

Spirit always conquers. Never be frightened over anything but hold fast in faith. Nothing can harm us when Divine Mother is watching.

Now for Sunday, which was very interesting and inspiring. The weather was anything but pleasant. We had a snow storm and high, piercing wind. In spite of this, the Chapel was well filled and the people were most appreciative.

Remember we are nothing but stewards and servants and we must keep right on doing our part. There is One who watches over us and we want to make ourselves plastic to that One, first, last and always. When our mind is full of this understanding, there cannot be any loss. Know that my heart is full of tender love for each and every one of you. May you have nothing but the joy of God in your souls, is my tender prayer.

Dear Ashrama Household:

I am taking this opportunity to send you a few lines to tell you some of the news. The work here has really made quite a stride; attendance at Sunday Services and Tuesday evening Classes is steadily increasing. Last Thursday, I gave an impromptu dinner. I decided it at the last moment

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and announced it Sunday from the platform; and although such short notice was given, there were at least eighty-five present and we had a very pleasant evening.

Yesterday, at the morning Service, the Chapel was really crowded and extra seats had to be brought in. It is not only the large attendance but the warmth of response, which means so much. I feel very happy that the work has received this impetus.

With my loving prayers for each and every one of you.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I have neglected you terribly, but the time does fly; and although I have not done anything very notable during these days, yet I have not been altogether idle. Last Saturday I prepared a special offering for the evening Service, and without any definite plan our table was full. There was a warm spirit pervading the whole atmosphere.

Tonight after supper I was handed "Soul's Secret Door" and I read and read, poem after poem. All the association of early days dawned upon me, especially various little intimate pictures of the Queensberry Street house. How sweet are the remembrances of holy living, simplicity, devotion and selflessness. May we never be weary of living in this wise. The acts of devotion seem to me more and more significant in the spiritual life. Only this evening, I was saying to those who understand my spirit that although some may think acts of devotion are mere superstition, my soul craves for these more and more. My soul sees the great uplift that only devotion can give to those aspiring for Truth and the spiritual life.

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May the Mother make me more simple and take away from me all thoughts that are of the world, and even desire and ambition for spiritual propaganda. If we live close to the Divine Heart, there is nothing else that matters. There is nothing else that seems greater or more worth while, for it brings a sense of complete joy, security and safety. Let the outer world wrangle and have its vehemence, but let us not go out from this shelter where there is perfect peace and perpetual safety.

The hour is very late tonight but I wanted to open my heart to you with understanding spirit, that you may drink deeply of that which is worth while. May you more and more feel the worthlessness of all that the material, noisy world has to offer and be full of peace, Divine peace, a peace that nothing can unsettle and a joy that is never mingled with boisterousness. I want you to feel a great calm, a Divine serenity. May all these things enfold every one of you. Drink in the peace that comes from the great Shrine that stands there in the bosom of the Ashrama. Remember this always and may His peace and joy abide with you now and always.

With my heart's deepest love and prayers.

P. S.—Sunday morning Service was well attended but in the evening the Chapel was full. There was a group of thirty-five young people under the leadership of a Congregational minister. They were so delighted, that the minister said they would never forget this experience. Tuesday evening Class was quite full.

Dear Ones:

You are in my thoughts very much tonight; it is after the Tuesday night Class and nearly eleven

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o'clock. It was a very sultry evening and we really did not expect many people, so were surprised to find the Chapel nearly full at Service time. These Tuesday evening classes have been very gratifying because so many have come regularly to follow the practical lessons.

My heart is full of prayers that every one may be happy, every one may be peaceful, and that my life every day may bring peace and joy to all whom I contact. I can find nothing greater than to bring happiness to others through service.

The Swami continues to write of the life at the Centre in Boston and he calls this first letter "Scenes from my most recent Moving Picture:"

Dear Ones of the Ashrama Household:

I am going to begin from the beginning. After the "Chief" left the Pasadena Station, I retired almost immediately and it seemed really quite cool and comfortable during the night; but the morning began with real heat. The dining-car steward was most attentive to me, and let me tell you that the "Chief" is really chief in every way. My accommodations were excellent; being in the lounge car, it was like having a private sitting-room. The dining-car is air-conditioned and is therefore several degrees cooler than the outside temperature. When I presented to the chief steward a letter from Mr. Flynn, he said: "You do not need any letter here, as everybody knows you." He prepared for me a special vegetable plate. This was Friday. Saturday morning on my arrival in Chicago, I found three Swamis awaiting me there. I

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had about a half hour visit with them before the train left Chicago.

I have only touched upon the high lights, giving you a cursory and speedy glimpse of the whole trip. I presented the dining-car steward with a copy of my volume of poems, "My Creed." He was delighted with it; he used to be one of the Pullman inspectors of the Santa Fe. He is now a dining-car steward and I have seldom met a man more attentive than he. I noticed that the last morning when I went to take a bite of breakfast that the book was being exhibited to some fashionable ladies, probably of the Movie world. They were talking about me and looking at me as hard as they could. There is an innate shyness in me that comes to the surface when I am travelling and I can be as deaf and dumb as anyone, mostly dumb; so I appeared to take no notice and got out of the car as soon as I could.

It is not the bulk of the work, it is not the number of people, it is not the material prosperity, it is not the strength of mechanical organization, none of these things can make our Ideal shine forth, but life and life alone. To me in my present form of expression, the Light to which we are dedicated must shine through strength, first and last, and with living radiance of beauty. I feel these two should dominate all our thoughts and actions and should become our creed.

My heart's love and prayers are yours for all time.

P. S.—The evening service is just over. There was a larger attendance than there was this morning and they were even more appreciative. I spoke on "Keeping Out Doubt and Fear."

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

Dear Ones :

We had a very nice Tuesday evening Class with good attendance, and there was also warm response.

Last Thursday, at one-thirty o'clock, Mr. Edwin Markham, the venerable American poet, called to see me, and it was indeed a lovely visit. He showed such deep appreciation and I gave him an armful of my books to take away with him, which pleased him greatly.

My mind has been occupied with one thing and another and I am sorry that I have neglected to write to you for several days.

The first thing I want to share with you is Divine Mother's Feast Day which we celebrated simply. In the evening, however, we had the Tuesday Class as usual and afterwards served some refreshments to those who came. It turned out to be a large affair, I think the largest since my return. The Chapel was overflowing. After the Service, Mr. Hansen gave a beautiful musical programme, also Harold contributed his part. Every one felt very happy over the occasion. Last Tuesday again we had a large Class. Mr. Edwin Markham appeared one morning at the Centre.

I have just finished the Tuesday evening Class. I talked on "Inferiority Complex" and I think my treatment of it was a surprise to every one. It was a very nice, enthusiastic Class. Every Tuesday evening it has been so. We had our first snow-storm yesterday and the weather has turned quite cold suddenly. I shall stay with Swami Nikhilananda while I am in New York as he has sent me a wire urging me to do so. I shall try to see Dr. Guthrie and other friends there.

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I am sorry to cause disappointment to any of you by not being with you for Thanksgiving, but it seems wise to remain here just a little while longer and spend the Thanksgiving in Boston.

With my heart's best love and deepest prayers for your constant safeguard.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

I arrived here safely, Saturday noon. The trip on the California Limited and the Wolverine was very satisfactory. Everywhere I received loving attention. Eight people met me and we drove through the snow to the Centre. You will find it just as difficult to imagine the cold in Boston as the Boston people have difficulty imagining the flood and the fire. Life is strange in that respect. We live in our immediate surroundings and the immediate surroundings are always relative.

I am sure you would like to know something about today, Sunday. Early in the morning, the sun came out for a while but very soon a snow-storm started. In spite of everything we had a very good attendance. There was real warmth and enthusiasm. I went out in the snowstorm soon after the Service. As I was leaving the house, two Hindu students arrived, one fresh from Madras, also a gentleman came and greeted me. I do not remember his name, but he came faithfully some time ago. He was delighted to see me and I think he will turn up again. Immediately after lunch I saw a lady from New York belonging to a newspaper syndicate. I gave her an interview lasting over an hour and a quarter. As I was ready to take a little rest, a visitor from India arrived, This will give you a little idea of the life and

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

activity here. The evening Service was well attended and the theme was "Inner Vision."

But now as a closing remark, I feel that I must share with you the most glowing thought in my mind and heart—that whatever comes through Him is full of sweetness; and whatever causes us sorrow or suffering comes because we have broken contact and do not feel that it comes from Him. Perhaps this may provoke some thought in your minds and inspire reflection and inward gazing. I realize more and more that without inner life there can be nothing but chaos, unhappiness and lack of peace. May the One who has led us so far, awaken in us faith and unshaken consciousness of His Presence. With these thoughts I commend my love to each and every one of you. May you be preserved for His glory is my heart's prayer.

Dear Ones:

Last Tuesday the weather was so bitterly cold that we really did not expect anyone to venture out for the Class, so I was quite surprised when I went downstairs to find the chapel very well filled. Next Thursday we are going to celebrate Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. We shall have our celebration in the forenoon and in the evening I am invited to dine at the Providence Centre and speak there. We shall observe His birthday publicly on the following Sunday afternoon, the eighteenth. On the twenty-fifth, I am invited to go to New York and conduct the morning Service at Swami Nikhilananda's Centre, as well as to attend the banquet in the evening to be given in honor of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. I shall try to look up some of my old friends, not only the



(Above) Chapel of the Vedanta Centre of Boston.
(Below) Under the dome at the Vedanta Centre of Boston.

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Guthries but Dr. Eliot White and his wife. I have received a lovely letter from Dr. White full of appreciation and understanding. He wrote this spontaneously after reading of the fire in the "Message." I hope you have received the January "Message." February issue is now getting ready I shall try to see that it gets along speedily now.

I hope that the planting of the trees at the Ashrama will progress steadily. If a little is done each day along with other important work, I think it will prove advantageous. I hope all of you are full of good cheer and courage. You must all keep well both in body and mind so you can do your share in the great work. After the marvellous spiritual protection during the fire and the flood which you have witnessed with your own eyes, I am sure you all feel more than ever inspired to go on and do your part with your deepest devotion. There is nothing that sweetens our life more than acts of service. Let that be always the first and last thought of the Ashrama brothers and sisters. With my deepest love and tender prayers for each and every one of you.

Dear Ashrama Brothers :

I hope that you are all keeping well and that the work is progressing steadily, so that this Easter the Ashrama will shine with even greater radiance.

You have all been brave, true and loyal and these qualities have their rewards much more than the material. I pray the Divine Providence to bestow upon you greatness of understanding and lovingness of heart, and a peace that abides at all times.

I am glad that you are all away from the ice

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

and cold and the unimaginable, piercing winds. The Ashrama certainly bestows upon all who stay there its warmth and beautiful sunshine. Soon I shall be able to write definitely the date of my return. In the meantime, I want you all to do your best to make the place shining.

With my heart's love and prayers.

In all his crowded days the Swami still found time to write a jesting letter as we see from the one that follows:

I am so glad you are all safely away from these terrible weather conditions. In spite of the devastating happenings in California, you have the sunshine and roses and a few oranges, though they may not be altogether sweet; but the honey will counterbalance whatever sourness there is in the lemon and therefore I hope you will feel thoroughly contented and full of peace.

The ground-hog over here got scared and forgot to chase his shadow. He hid himself again in his hole and all the people here are clamoring that there will be a prolonged winter of another six weeks duration; but I see the sign of Spring. Already the temperature has risen a few degrees above zero and if it keeps on rising every day, it is quite natural to conclude that Spring will be with us in no time. I am telling you that the Spring is here and will stay with us until the summer crowds it out. There is nothing stationary in life, not even rocks and boulders, so with these brief comments I will close.

I pray now as I have never prayed before for your safety and security—those of you who are

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close to me, whether far or near. We must never forget even for a single moment that our safety is in His Hands. With my loving thoughts and prayers.

In the following letters from the Centre in Boston to the Ashrama in California the Swami returns to his more serious mood. Uplifted spiritual thought was always lingering in his mind, whatever might be its outer trend:

Dear and Devoted Ones:

As I said before, I am going to repeat again how consecratedly we must live and how prayerfully. Nothing happens without having a great purpose behind it. I realize more and more how constantly His beneficent protection surrounds us. In order that we may never become unconscious of this fact, we must keep our mind steadily at His Divine Feet with humility and surrender. With my deep love and prayers for your safekeeping.

Dear Ones:

I send my heart full of love and prayers for your safekeeping. Try and keep your minds in rhythm and your thoughts directed in the right channel.

This is just a line to tell you that all is moving along well in the Centre here. We had a record attendance last night for Tuesday Class, and the people were most appreciative. One wonders what it would grow to be if it could be carried on without a break. There has been a steady increase in attendance right along.

With my deep love for every one of you.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

Dear Ones :

I arrived in Boston Monday night and had the first Class Tuesday night. It was an amazing occasion—not only was there full attendance, but the whole atmosphere was charged with freshness and new strength. It only goes to show what steady, devoted service creates for the Centre.

Do not ever feel discouraged when the public attendance drops. It does not really make a great deal of difference in a spiritual work, because nothing can undermine innate spiritual strength. More we become conscious of this, less we shall worry about the fluctuating aspect of the public work. My one feeling is to be led, guided, used completely without stint. It takes time; it takes many experiences before this great height is reached. So do not be discouraged, but go on and on and on! The goal is there; it is ours by inherent birthright.

I hope you are all well and full of joy and peace. The manifestation of these qualities must be kept up in our thought, in our consciousness and in our daily living; all then will be well. With my undying love and devoted affection for every one of you, I am ever and ever yours.

Frequent letters continued to travel from Boston to California, carrying news of the eastern work.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

I want to send you a few lines by air mail so that you will get the immediate news. Both the Services today went off beautifully. In the morning, the Chapel was well filled and this evening

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we had an overflow attendance. Such a lovely class of people came with real warmth of spirit. Every one was most jubilant.

This evening after the Service several came to the Italian room including a new young couple, both musical and both keenly appreciative of the teaching. Mr. Shastry played two numbers on the flute and it was a happy little group. It seemed more like old times such as we used to have on Queensberry Street. The wind is raging and it is very sharp and cold, we were really surprised so many people came.

Good-night to every one of you and may the Divine Mother protect and shield you and keep you in absolute safety is my heart's prayer. This carries everything that I have not been able to express in words. Keep well and keep happy. Those who love God should have no anxious thoughts.

Just a line to tell you that we have inaugurated a new Class tonight, a private Class of instruction and meditation.

This carries a heart full of love and all the blessing Divine Mother can give you.

Dear Ones:

Two Services on Sunday, Tuesday evening Class, Thursday evening Class, and now Saturday afternoon—this is the regular week's routine. With other engagements my days are full, leaving very little margin for letters. However, I am not telling you this to offer excuses, but more to give you the picture of the activities here.

This afternoon was very auspicious; it was a lovely warm day and a great many people came to the Centre.

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With my heart's deepest love for every one of you.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

We are expecting to hold a reception and anniversary here the fifth of June. The sixth will be our regular meditation Class and the next day I expect to leave Boston and be in Cincinnati June eighth, and Louisville on the ninth and tenth, leaving Louisville on the afternoon of the tenth and arriving in Pasadena on the thirteenth. A party of five are coming to Boston from Cincinnati, driving over the road, for the Fourth of July celebration. All is well here and I am most anxious to be with you. With my deep, deep love.

The Swami found no rest. The demands upon him were incessant; and in his eager desire to serve he yielded to them with willing spirit, as we see from these letters to the Ashrama:

Ever since my arrival, the Centre has been packed with ceaseless activities. The train arrived twenty minutes late, but I was able to hold the Service on time and there was a lovely response and good attendance both morning and evening. New Year's Eve was the most outstanding one of our experience here. The Chapel was full and most of the people remained afterwards for light refreshments. It was a very lovely experience and we had absolutely no sense of time. We retired about two A. M. I hope you received my telegrams. One was sent on Monday evening, the thirtieth, and the other the next day.

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I must send you a few words expressing my feeling for the New Year. I have prayed heartily for every one of you that you may have new joy and new peace and live full of unbroken harmony. Do not lose heart, no matter what obstacles may rise before you. I know the Lord will shield you and give you all strength needed. With my tender love for every one of you.

I should have written to you sooner than this, but life has been very full. Thursday night, in spite of a heavy rainstorm, the Chapel was crowded, way over one hundred people. It amazed every one. Sunday we had two big Services. Yesterday afternoon at three o'clock I spoke at the Public Library under the auspices of the Ruskin Club. And at the present moment I have just come from the Tuesday night Class. From all this you can judge how little time I have left for correspondence. With my deep and tender love.

In 1936 the Ramakrishna Mission celebrated the Centenary of its founder Sri Ramakrishna. The celebration continued throughout an entire year and was observed by His followers all over the world—in India, in Europe, in the Malay States, in South America, in Africa, in the United States, and in still other countries. All the Centres of the Mission in America took part in it. The Swamis visited from Centre to Centre and celebrated it in groups. The Swami writes of this here:

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I am deeply engrossed in writing for the "Message" a comprehensive outline of Sri Ramakrishna's life and influence under the title, "Sri Ramakrishna and the Modern World." Such work, you can understand, cannot be well and properly done if I am constantly on the jump every few days. It requires a great deal of research and concentrated endeavor to be able to do it at all successfully.

I must be in New York by February twenty-second for my part in Swami Nikhilananda's Centenary dinner; in Boston on the twenty-third; Providence the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth; our own Centenary dinner in Boston on the twenty-seventh; Providence again on the twenty-eighth; our public celebration in Boston on the first of March, and another important meeting on March fifth; then later on, Washington and Chicago, plus Cincinnati and Louisville. It did seem like too much of an undertaking to try, in addition to all this, to travel all the way to California, only to be able to spend a very short time with you at the Ashrama.

The real strength of the work, we must realize, will come through quiet meditation and wholehearted spiritual dedication; and this aspect we must try to develop more and more. Such practice will insure the future growth and stability of the work. There is not a single spiritual organization which has benefitted mankind that has not had to go through tests and ordeals, and we are no exception. Sometime in the future we shall be able to look back upon these experiences and count them great blessings.

I want you all to realize that the same Power works whether I am at the Ashrama or elsewhere,

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and you must all try to realize from within that nothing can touch the Ashrama. Yesterday again and again I almost heard a voice blending with mine, saying: "I draw a protecting circle around the Ashrama." Thus I have felt the power of spiritual fortification all about you; and your part is to live within that circle, filled with the spirit of harmony, sanctity and faith. I feel that I have expressed my thoughts rather poorly, but you will understand that I have been praying constantly for you all. With my abiding love for each and every one of you and my prayers for your safe-keeping. . . .

Last Sunday morning was not only well attended, but there was genuine response from the congregation. The evening was also well attended, although out of doors one was almost blown to pieces. We do not know what to expect for the Class tonight. After the first thaw the walking is even more difficult, as the ice is uncovered and the pavements are even more slippery. Last Saturday afternoon we had a tea party. About thirty people came. Mr. Hansen played on his violin beautifully.

You have all been in my thoughts most constantly. I pray always for your safekeeping and your welfare, and your peace of mind and relief from all material worries. I am confident that Divine Mother who has always answered my prayers will not fail us now. We must all practice our great Master's slogan, "Endure, endure, endure." There is no other way we can have true spiritual unfoldment in our lives. If we can remain strong spiritually, other things will matter less and less and thereby we shall be able to help those who are near us. I hope this will find every one of you well and contented and full of spiritual

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fervor. When there is nothing outward which we can do, we can always release the inner power through our thoughts and prayers. This, no one can deprive us of. . . .

I expect to leave Chicago on Sunday, March twenty-second, and arrive at the Ashrama the morning of the twenty-fifth. I shall have to leave Boston on the fifteenth and spend sixteenth and seventeenth in Cincinnati and the eighteenth and nineteenth in Louisville. I am leaving tomorrow morning for New York for Swami Nikhilananda's Centenary banquet. I will, however, have to come back by the midnight train in order to be here for the Sunday Services. Monday I go to Providence for their private celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary Birthday. Tuesday is their banquet and on Friday they have their public meeting. Thursday night is our banquet, Sunday the public celebration and on Thursday, March fifth, we are having a big reception for different organizations and religious leaders. I hope this covers the ground.

Please do not feel discouraged about anything. Know there is a Power which is guiding you every moment and It will never fail. We must look specially to that Source with whole-hearted devotion and never cease to do so. Harmonious living, absolute faith and surrender to His will, combined together, will bring the solution of all of our problems.

With my deepest love for every one of you.

The observance of Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary caused engagements to multiply and in writing of them from Boston, the letters were inevitably

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full of reiterated detail, as the Swami wished to give a full picture of events to the Ashrama Community.

If you were here with me, you would all fully realize why there has been no time for correspondence. I will now give you a brief account of this week. I left Boston last Saturday morning, February twenty-second, at ten o'clock for New York, arriving at Swami Nikhilananda's at three. After having a little visit with him and a cup of tea, I called on Swami Bodhananda. When I returned to Swami Nikhilananda's there was a regular congregation of Swamis. We all gathered at Schrafft's restaurant, just one block from Swami Nikhilananda's Centre, and there was a very distinguished gathering for the dinner. Swami Nikhilananda said he had one hundred and ninety-one, but we will call it two hundred.

It was a very wonderful occasion and I met many friends. At twelve o'clock, when I took the train, the whole regiment of Swamis and Kanai came to see me off. I did not go to sleep until three A. M. and then had to get up and get off quickly at the Back Bay Station at six A. M., so you can imagine the little sleep I had that night. The next day was Sunday with two Services. After the Sunday evening Service, when the public had gone, we inaugurated a meditation in the Shrine. The next morning we had a special Service lasting an hour. We finished at nine-thirty and after a light breakfast, I left on the twelve-thirty train for Providence. I left Providence at ten P. M. and we again held a special meditation soon after eleven P. M. at the Boston Centre, which lasted

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until after midnight. The next day three accompanied me to the Centenary dinner in Providence.

It was a very lovely dinner with about eighty guests present. Quite a group of ministers came and the speeches were excellent. We did not get home until about three, Wednesday morning. On Wednesday morning we had our household Service and after a light breakfast, I went with several to the Harrison Avenue market and then to Faneuil market. We got quantities of things at both places for our Centenary banquet. Wednesday night you should have seen the picture in the Italian room. Everybody was gathered there shelling peas and preparing beans for the next day, and several in another part of the room were filling Message envelopes. Two were downstairs arranging Sri Ramakrishna's picture on a stand with all the publications laid at His feet. The activities kept up until a late hour. The next morning after Service and light breakfast, the cooking started. I cooked enough to serve about two hundred people. Everything was very sumptuous. We had a gallon of cream and two gallons of milk. Everything appeared very much like an Indian festival day.

Everything looked very festive. We placed one hundred candles on the platform beneath Sri Ramakrishna's picture. There was a profusion of flowers and a friend brought a whole forest of pine branches from our beloved Cohasset Ashrama. People began to come before six-thirty and by seven o'clock there was hardly any place for moving around. Fortunately my cooking was done, but the first distinguished guests belonging to that Brahminical class saw me in my smock, without collar or chuddar, and I noticed how large

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their eyes grew; but in a flash I changed my attire and assumed the dignified role of officiating priest. We had quite a time seating the people; then there was an art studio which wanted to take a picture of the banquet. That naturally took a little time. The picture is quite good and I shall send you a copy of it very soon.

I think we were able to seat approximately one hundred and twenty-five people at the tables. Our estimate is that the total number of guests was one hundred and fifty. The people who assisted in serving the dinner were twelve. After the invocation was chanted by the Swamis and the household in unison, I thought I would sit down; but I found things were moving too slowly to serve so many, so I helped by serving the rice and soon the whole thing was in full swing. Every one enjoyed the dinner and a little after nine o'clock we started the speeches. We took away a few tables in front of the stairs but the long tables remained. All the Swamis spoke. Every one enjoyed the evening immensely. I have received numerous messages by the phone as well as by letters, expressing the appreciation of those who were present. It was a rainy evening, otherwise I do not know what we could have done about seating the guests.

Yesterday was a perfect day, the first of its kind for about six weeks. Three of the household, with me, left the Centre about four-thirty for Providence. We had dinner at the Centre in Providence and then to Plantation Club where my lecture took place. It was a beautiful occasion. We got home at one-thirty and today I am taking this time, after finishing the Saturday morning Service and breakfast, that you may have a glimpse

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of what has been taking place here. Tomorrow is our big day. There will be several guests. Dr. Coomaraswami, Curator of the Indian Section of the Boston Art Museum, is going to read a paper in the afternoon on "Sri Ramakrishna's Tolerance." He is also coming here for dinner tomorrow. I am going to prepare a simple offering tonight. It will be served to the guests tomorrow.

I hope this will give you a fair understanding of what has taken place. Next Tuesday I speak on "Sri Ramakrishna and His Gifts to the World," especially America. Thursday evening we will have a reception and Mr. Hansen is going to offer a composition especially written for the occasion. The enclosed Centenary announcement will give you the details. A week from today I leave for Washington. The next day I shall return to Boston and remain here until March fifteenth. In the afternoon of that day I shall leave for Cincinnati, remaining there the sixteenth and seventeenth; Louisville the eighteenth and nineteenth; Chicago the twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-second; leaving Chicago the night of the twenty-second and arriving in Pasadena the morning of the twenty-fifth. This is really a report and itinerary more than a letter, but my heart has been constantly united with you in thought and prayers, especially at this season when we are celebrating the great Master's one hundredth anniversary. I hope through His Grace I am able to do something vital for the Centenary when I get to the Ashrama. In the meantime, I am leaving everything in His Hands and praying to Him to guide every one of you for a fruitful celebration at the Ashrama.

With my deep love and constant prayers.

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Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

I hope my long letter giving you the details of the week's activities reached you today. We had a lovely day yesterday, although the Chapel was not crowded. The trouble was in the rush of activities we forgot to send out our usual cards. Every one was most happy over both Services. Dr. Coomaraswami's paper on "Sri Ramakrishna and Religious Tolerance" was extremely good, very scholarly and fine.

You will forgive me for not being able to write individual letters, but it has been almost impossible with the daily pressure. Please do not be anxious about me. I am keeping up through His Grace.

Always with my loving prayers for your safety.

I am going to take a few moments to write you a few lines this evening. As you know, my life has been moving so very swiftly these days, it is almost impossible to keep track of all the happenings.

I left for Washington last Saturday morning by the ten o'clock train, arriving there about seven in the evening. The train was a little late, so Swami Vivideshananda although he came to meet me, was not able to remain at the station but had to leave me in charge of someone else, who received me and took me to the Centre. Swami Vivideshananda was giving a talk over the radio in connection with the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary, and he did it well.

One of his friends took us for a long ride over the new riverway, which is one of the very finest drives anywhere. I also visited the Capitol build-

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ing and enjoyed those beautiful historical portraits.

The Centenary meeting in the evening was quite successful and there was a record attendance. The hall was more than full. Altogether it was a very pleasant visit and I met a great many people who knew me, especially through my books. I left next morning, arriving in Boston in the evening, about seven forty-five. Yesterday was Class night and so you see how my time has been taken up with manifold activities. I am glad I have been able to go through this chain of activities through His Divine Grace.

I am leaving here Monday noon for Cincinnati. They have engaged a good-sized hall in the Gibson Hotel and I hope they will be able to fill it. I will be in Louisville the eighteenth and nineteenth and in Chicago the twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-second.

With my tender love.

These letters that follow were written on a later visit to the Centre. They were all addressed to the Ashrama.

Dear Ones:

I have just come upstairs after the evening Service and I want to write you a few lines to tell you my thoughts are often with you and I often see with the eye of my imagination what goes on at the Ashrama at different hours. I hope you are all well and happy and full of cheer. I have been here just two weeks and have given altogether six Sunday Services, two Tuesdays, and two Saturday afternoons in Cohasset. All the meetings have



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In clerical dress which he wore usually when
lecturing outside his Centres.

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been well attended and people are showing vital interest. Tomorrow afternoon I speak at the Ruskin Club on "Poetry of the Upanishads." Next day is our regular Tuesday evening Class, and Thursday evening I am giving an impromptu dinner party, so you can see how the time goes. There are no dull moments when we are active and interested in doing something.

I send each and every one of you my love.

The work here is going on with great vitality. Yesterday the Chapel was entirely filled at both Services. The evening Service was crowded.

Mrs. Frink and her friend attended both Services. Mrs. Frink said, "I have come over three thousand miles to attend these Services;" and it was literally so, because she had no other reason for coming to Boston except to visit the Centre. There were quite a few from New York, including a young man who is appearing with the Leslie Howard company this week at the Opera House in "Hamlet." I am always offering my prayers that whatever usefulness I may have left will be for the good of many and the happiness of many, that this work to which I have dedicated my life for so many years may really be of some lasting service.

Tuesday evening Classes are most interesting. Many men are attending our Services regularly and quite a number of young people have become regular enthusiasts. This week we have a heavy programme. First, there is the Tuesday evening Class; then on Thursday, Divine Mother's festival begins. I shall have quite a number for evening Service and dinner and for a meditation Class at eight-thirty, to which a few outsiders will be invited. Friday is the night of our private celebra-

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tion and dinner; and on Sunday there will be the usual two Services. Yesterday I spoke on "Individual Will and Divine Purpose" and "Habit of Thought."

I think of you all individually and my heart's best feeling and prayers go out to you. I cannot expect every one to understand me, but my prayer is that I may not fail toward any one of you. With my deep love.

The house on the Fenway did not prove as suitable as the Swami had hoped. He was contemplating a change and was making some effort toward it, when he found a beautiful house on Beacon Street which was far more suitable. It had a frontage of forty feet and the rear windows looked across the Esplanade and Charles River to the imposing buildings of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The interior was equally impressive in its beauty. Entering by white marble steps, one came into a broad hallway roofed by a great glass dome. Under it were five arched pilared panels, which commanded the wide stairway leading to the arched balcony of the second floor. The panels of the stairway later were lettered with passages from the ten living Scriptures. A very large wainscoted drawing-room provided a perfect Chapel, and at the rear were a spacious living-room and an equally spacious library.

The Swami had a strong desire to mark the Centenary by an offering to Sri Ramakrishna and to install the Centre in so beautiful a home seemed

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an especially fitting one. It was a rare opportunity and he felt he should not let it pass. This letter shows how well the work was going forward and how justified he was in deciding on the change. He writes:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

Friday was another Feast of Divine Mother. We had a long Service in the morning and then went to see the 420 Beacon Street house. I wanted to get a fresh impression of the house and study critically all the practical problems. I was even more impressed and pleased with the advantages and the house seemed very full of light, even to the basement rooms. Another possible purchaser came to see it while we were there.

There were several present from outside for the household Service and the dinner. It was a lovely evening and a source of great inspiration. We concluded with a short meditation. Sunday, we really had a record day. The morning Service was very well attended and the Chapel looked full. I spoke on "Civilization and Spiritualization." In the evening we had a record attendance. The place was packed and we had to get extra chairs. It was a very vital evening. You will be glad to know the atmosphere was vibrant with interest and appreciation. Tuesday evening Class was also full. The entire time was taken up with questions and answers.

Miss Frances Grant, vice-president of the Roerich Museum, arrived here this morning as our guest. We have announced the Bazaar Tea for Saturday of this week, so you can easily imagine how busy this household is.

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With my deep and abiding love for each one of you.

The Saturday Tea proved a success. It was a bitterly cold day and there was snow on the ground, but in spite of all these things there was splendid response. Last Saturday our tea was again well attended in spite of a blizzard. Now about Thanksgiving. We had a very pleasant eleven o'clock Service—not a big crowd but the Chapel was well filled. Last Sunday we had two good meetings. There was good attendance at the morning Service. The Sunday evening Services and the Tuesday Class grow larger and larger. They did some carol singing after the Service and it sounded beautiful through the house, especially the voices of the men.

I am so glad my Thanksgiving telegram brought you cheer. I was very restless and kept thinking of you all most constantly. My mind has been so filled with the happenings of the day that I have not been able to rest for a moment, but this restlessness is out of exaltation and a deep sense of relief.

With my tender and abiding love for each one of you.

This letter tells briefly of the observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Swami's coming to America. He landed in this country on December twenty-third, 1906. The Swami's mind, however, was so full of the new house, that he could not write in detail of the anniversary, but reverted at once to the question of the new house:

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How much you are in my thoughts tonight and you have been throughout this entire day. Many surprises have come to me on the thirtieth anniversary of my coming to this land. I have felt very deeply touched and overwhelmed by some of the happenings, so much so that I wanted to share them with you quietly. I even thought of reaching you through the telephone. The strain of these days has been very great, but the Divine Mother has sustained me and I am keeping on.

The more we learn about the new house, more strange everything seems in connection with this episode. If I waited even one-half hour more to decide, perhaps it might not have been ours. An inner urge led me on and the last day's happenings have surprised every one. I feel that Divine Mother truly is working and She will make this thing possible.

We have found out that the house was built in 1898. Practically everything was imported from Italy, especially the marble mantles and fireplaces. There is a remarkable history to this house, which has come into our hands. It seems more like a fairy-tale than anything I have ever read in modern fiction. In this year of our Master's Centenary, I have had many heartaches and sad thoughts about how unworthy I was, not to be able to do my part in expressing my homage to Sri Ramakrishna. Divine Mother undoubtedly heard my inner yearnings and this has come out of a clear sky. It was indeed a significant thing that at the end of Her festival this house was shown to me and the key left here! In fact, it is still in my possession. Last Sunday quite a number of people saw the house and they were literally in ecstasy.

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Many could not believe such a place existed in Boston. Here I have tried to give in a nutshell some of the things that have come to our knowledge.

Dr. and Mrs. P— came this evening with the most beautiful poinsettia, very large and perfect. You will be surprised to know this was sent to Mrs. P— by the owner of the house, Mrs. W—, and she brought it here without even opening it. Certainly Destiny is strange in her dealings. Mrs. P— has in turn sent Mrs. W— a copy of "Daily Thoughts and Prayers."

The strain of these weeks has been very severe on me and today I felt almost prostrated, but I am keeping up and I hope a little regularity in eating and resting will give me needed strength. With my deep, deep love and all the feelings and prayers that I have for you. May you receive the atmosphere of it all.

P. S.—Is it not a strange destiny that my life should be connected with all this! Every one feels deeply impressed by it. Not the outer only, but there is a vital impressiveness which is difficult to describe.

The Swami's dream was fulfilled. He was able to secure the Beacon Street house and make his Centenary offering to Sri Ramakrishna, as we learn from this letter:

We have obtained 420 Beacon Street. Evidently a great many people became interested in it toward the end; we heard that the owner really preferred our having her beautiful house. The house is really magnificent in every way. This

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morning when I went there, it seemed even more beautiful than I had thought.

During the past few days my life has been so active physically and mentally, I sometimes thought I could not stand the strain any longer; but that One who always sustains me has done so again. The household here has shown remarkable endurance.

There has been a wonderful spirit of warmth here in the Boston Centre. This will give you a little picture of all we have been doing. I am thinking of you constantly and hope all is well. With my deep love and prayers for each one of you.

This is the first letter to come from the new home. It tells of the dedication exercises on Thursday evening and of a second dedication on Sunday:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

It is over a week ago that I arrived here in Boston, but I am sure you can readily understand that all that has taken place here during these few days cannot be described adequately. I shall begin from the beginning. The moving had started before my arrival and I kept on going back and forth between 32 Fenway and 420 Beacon Street. It was a gigantic piece of work and it kept up through the entire week. I think the last bit of our moving was done on Friday night. The books and Messages were endless. We are now gradually straightening out everything. The platform was not finished for the Thursday evening dedication, so we covered it with velvet hang-

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ings and evergreens. We had not had anything to eat at the time the people began to come; nevertheless, the candlelight celebration was a great success. Everything was very impressive and all were surprised beyond words. Sometimes I gave supervision without sitting down during the entire day. I cannot tell you how much dust I have inhaled during these days. We slept here for the first time on the night of Tuesday, the nineteenth. If it were not for Mrs. P—, who brought us a hot dinner around eight o'clock, I think we would all have gone to bed without having anything to eat.

And now we come to the Saturday afternoon tea. The house was made attractive and there must have been between seventy-five and one hundred or more who came throughout the afternoon. The occasion was a very bright and cheerful one. Miss Grant also arrived from New York; we were not able to accommodate her in the house but engaged a room elsewhere. Then came Sunday with beautiful sunshine and we started the day promptly in order to get everything in readiness for the morning Service at eleven o'clock. There was a very representative congregation. Miss Grant spoke beautifully and every one was thrilled with the whole Service. We had beautiful cello and organ music. Then came the big afternoon Service. I supervised the increased seating capacity and while I was so engaged, Professor and Mrs. Rankin arrived and also Madame Ratan Devi accompanied by Professor Bitter, her husband, who was carrying her tambura. We began promptly at three o'clock and the place was crowded even then. I did not wait for the arrival of Dr. Coomaraswami, but left instructions to

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bring him to the side of the platform where the speakers sat. Before the Service opened, I spent a few minutes arranging additional chairs and then started the Service. It was a very full programme. After the invocation and a few words by myself, I introduced Madame Ratan Devi who gave an Indian song, and then Dr. Coomaraswami read a paper on "Hindu Doctrine of Man's Last End." Then I called on Mrs. Hocking; next was Professor Rankin, who gave a beautiful speech in a true spirit of humility. After the offering, I again called upon Miss Grant who truly struck the keynote for the day. She gave a wonderful tribute to India and Sri Ramakrishna and summed it all up in a beautiful burst of appreciation for the new house. Everything she said was appropriate and was deeply appreciated by the congregation. There must have been between two hundred and twenty-five and two hundred and fifty present. A few left and a good many had to stand through the whole Service. Every one expressed enthusiastic appreciation. There remained only the evening Service at eight. Between the afternoon and evening Services a real blizzard started. I was entirely oblivious of the weather conditions. In spite of this drawback, we had a very beautiful evening Service. Thus an eventful day passed with rhythm, dignity and a manifestation of real harmony of spirit. Everybody showed a most wonderful spirit of cooperation.

The carpenters' work is not yet quite finished and there are still many things to claim my attention. My health has not been altogether perfect, but through Divine Grace I have been able to do my part and conduct the Services. Today

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I am taking things a little easy. With my heart's deep love for each and every one of you.

The letter that follows was written from Boston to the Ashrama four or five days later. It describes the celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday anniversary:

Dear Ones:

So much has happened since I came here that if I lay too much emphasis on time, it would be most confusing. I arrived here exactly on time Saturday morning and almost immediately plunged into relentless activity. Sunday morning, we had fairly early household Service and after breakfast every one had to work hard to prepare the Chapel, the house, and everything, for the public activities. We had three Services besides some guests for luncheon.

At the morning Service the Chapel was well filled. For the afternoon one, additional seats were necessary, as well as for the evening. The total attendance must have been somewhere in the neighborhood of two hundred and sixty or seventy.

Miss Grant of the Roerich Museum was unable to come. She sent a very charming message which was read at the afternoon Service. Swami Satprakashananda came for luncheon and for the afternoon Service, at which he spoke. There were no outside speakers for the morning and evening Services. The evening was especially appreciated by a large number. I related some intimate incidents from my memory of Swami Vivekanandaji. You will be glad to know that a group of twenty-five young people came from Malden for the even-

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ing Service. They are interested in comparative religions. Every one felt the evening Service was the cream of the whole day.

You can well imagine how tired every one was after such a day. Yesterday it rained, but we went out in the afternoon for a little rest and relaxation, but I do not think the damp weather was very agreeable to my health.

During the evening I interviewed the printer about the "Message," then I listened to a radio programme and retired early. Today my mind has been completely occupied with the next "Message." I have not been able to think of anything else. From this, you have the complete picture of my three days here in Boston. I hope you are all well and everything is moving smoothly at the Ashrama. With my abiding love and prayers for you all.

There was little place for leisure in the Swami's daily routine. Added to the intensive demands of his immediate work he received many invitations to lecture elsewhere. Educational Institutions and Clubs were recognizing more and more the value of what he was and what he had to give. Also, the ministers of Boston and surrounding cities were beginning to look upon him as one of them and were inviting him to speak in their churches. Some even came to speak at the Centre. One minister after hearing the Swami preach from his pulpit remarked to a fellow minister, "If I could speak like that, my church would be crowded every Sunday."

VI

THE COHASSET ASHRAMA

As the Swami wandered over the hills of the Ashrama in California and breathed its clear air, he realized more and more the beneficent influence of the open spaces of the country, with the companionship of trees and growing things; the wide sky overhead, beneath the feet the soft earth; and he determined that the Centre in Boston should have its Ashrama also.

Carrying out this resolution, in June of 1929 he purchased twenty acres of wooded land on the south shore at Cohasset, twenty-three miles from Boston. The charm of the property lay in its wealth of trees; they towered everywhere, save in one open space where there was a broad white field of daisies. Although adjoining developed estates, it was remarkably natural and unspoiled. A grassy driveway wound from the rustic gate to the foot of the rocks; thence half natural, half built steps led up to a house, small and inviting and commanding a wide vista on all sides. A surprising sense of peace and solitude pervaded the surroundings, for no house or road could be seen; only an expanse of tree tops with their contrasting greens.

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In this quiet woodland the Swami established a Peace Retreat as a part of the Vedanta Centre of Boston. For worship, an outdoor sanctuary was created in a fragrant shaded grove of pines. Here in this true Temple of God the Swami conducted a dedication Service on June fifteenth. A natural low rock covered with wild flowers, ferns and moss provided an altar, beside which the Swami stood and spoke of the beauty and holy charm of the new Ashrama. Ten days later a second dedication took place. After this dedication there appeared in the Boston Herald this description of the Ashrama:

“Deep in the heart of the ancient Cohasset woods Swami Paramananda has established his Ananda Ashrama, which in English means “Peace Retreat.” The name is well bestowed. Here peace is indeed to be found. The place is roofed with pine branches, through which the sunlight filters in soft shades of green. Columnar trunks of great trees support the vaulted ceiling, and, between them, vistas open ever farther into the forest. It is carpeted with brown pine needles into which the foot sinks noiselessly. The only sound is the whisper of the wind through the boughs overhead, with perhaps the occasional twitter of a bird in the thicket. Here, once a week (on Saturday), comes Swami Paramananda and holds a simple Service. It is a Service quite destitute of ritual or formality. The doctrine Swami preaches

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would not be inappropriate in any church or temple in the world. On a mossy boulder, deposited there by some glacier in the ice age millions of years ago, a coronal of pine branches is the sole decoration of this woodland sanctuary.

“On a recent evening a sunset Service was held. It was a deeply impressive affair. The sun was dipping slowly to the western rim of the horizon. Grouped on the rock, enveloped in a stillness so profound that the drone of an airplane miles distant came faintly to where the worshippers sat, two choristers sang hymns, their voices sounding sweetly in the stillness. Then Swami read and talked and concluded by chanting a sloka in melodious Sanskrit.”

For these Saturday Services the congregation gathered at the Centre in Boston, were driven in various cars to Cohasset; attended the Service; partook of a dinner cooked by the Swami himself and served more often in the open; then drove back to Boston in the coolness of the evening.

The Swami's feeling for the Cohasset Ashrama and all it stood for is expressed in these words taken from a short letter to the Ashrama in California :

“Every time we go to the Cohasset Ashrama, we enjoy more and more its peace and beauty. Last Saturday was a day of lovely feeling and quiet spiritual experience.”

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The rest of the letter reads :

The only cure for difficulties is whole-hearted prayer and faith in the Divine. Let every one of us remember this and practise it as frequently as possible. Only in this way can we minimize all troubled conditions and give birth to happiness and peace. Difficulties happen to cure us of self and of our attachment to outer vanities. After all, they bring us closer to God and there is no blessing higher than that.

Saturday we are going to celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the Ashrama at Cohasset. I know you will give me your united and loving prayers, and be assured mine are constantly flowing toward you. The light will come and we will hail it with gladness of spirit and renewed faith and surrender. My prayers are for your safe-keeping, peace and happiness. My love to every one of you, brave hearts.

The same thought continues in the following message to the western Ashrama :

As I sat on the rock in Cohasset Ashrama on Saturday wrapped in my shawl, from which I made quite an impromptu costume, I realized how much this little peace retreat has come to mean to every one. It was quite cold and every one was afraid to have me sit out of doors, but the beneficent sun poured down upon me its holy protection and all of us forgot the cares of the world and enjoyed the Service under the sky.

Those who stoop to evil cannot touch us, if we keep our hearts free from all malicious contact.

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With God in our hearts, we lack for nothing and nothing evil can ever touch us. Try to instill this thought in every heart with earnest pleading, then there will be no danger for any of you. He always guides our steps. Be strong in this thought and all will be well.

The Swami writes again in the same spirit:

Dear Ashrama Household:

We went to the Cohasset Ashrama yesterday and it was a heavenly experience as we sat on the rock in the beautiful sunlight. It was indeed difficult to tear ourselves away from that lovely spot, but we had to get back to Boston. Today is a typical New England downpour. After all, the Lord has given you the best that can be obtained on earth as far as I know. But what are places? There are lovely spots everywhere, but it is the spirit of man which makes a place holy or unholy.

Patience, forbearance, unalterable faith and dedication to Truth are the only safeguards in life's pilgrimage. Yes, at times untruth and evil seem to triumph, but only for a very momentary period. Therefore wise men, devotees and true seekers after Truth should never waver and should not give too much importance to such passing phantoms. There is only one remedy for all such matters and that is the awakening of spiritual force. We must keep the holy fires burning within us and that which is golden within will be made brighter and more shining.

I have no plans for the present except to live and do what is given me to do with wholeness of

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spiritual devotion. Everything else is superfluous. This principle, borne in mind, always bears abundant fruit. Ours is to do what is true, what is noble, what is loving, what is kind, and what is true to the spirit of God. All is part of His great design; only, woe to those who fall a prey to the negative aspect of life and make themselves a channel for evil. Bear this in mind and do not be faint-hearted and unhappy. Sometimes people like to impose on us their own doubts, their own ignoble ideas and cruel instincts; but God will always shield us from such imposition. We know our own hearts, we know the light burns there always. Nothing should be allowed to cloud our vision. Read this and also what is not written. What more can I say?

Be at peace! Let your hearts pulsate with the love of God! Let the Ashrama smile on all who come near it and who cross its threshold. Always with my love and my heart's tenderest prayers. *Pax Vobiscum.*

The Swami's experience in gardening is told in the letter which follows. The little house referred to in it was a garage converted into a dwelling-house for the Community:

Dear Ashrama Household:

Cohasset Ashrama is really assuming a very beautiful aspect. Many beautiful flowers have been planted around the new house—rose bushes, lilacs, honeysuckle and other shrubs. We have also two beds of tomatoes, thirty plants, which we hope will bear enough to supply all the needs of the Ashrama and the Boston Centre. We have

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also planted a number of fruit trees and some cucumber, bean and squash vines. All these are easily raised and could be raised with profit in California in the orchard below the front terrace.

I have rambled a great deal, but I have not told you yet how strongly I have felt the pull of the Ashrama there. You have all been brave and you must continue to be so. We must put our faith in the foreground and pray for supreme individual sacrifice and spiritual strength. No worth while spiritual work has ever been built up by any other means except dedication of self. Herein lies the strength of the individual and of the institution as well. My heart is constantly full of prayers that no matter whether we possess any earthly goods or not, we may never be devoid of our spiritual heritage. May it shine more and more and may we be inspired to go forward in His name and for His service.

The Swami's enthusiasm for the Cohasset Ashrama did not abate. He grew to love it more and more, as we see from the following letter telling of the celebration of the third anniversary of the younger Retreat:

Dear Ashrama Household:

I must give you the account of what you most want to know—the celebration of the anniversary of the Ashrama at Cohasset. For several days in succession, previous to Saturday, we had down-pour of rain; and on Saturday, although it did not rain, the grounds were soaking wet and that defeated our arrangement out of doors for dinner. In spite of the weather conditions a large number

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responded and you should have seen the way the traffic was handled. I had to manage the transportation of approximately seventy-six persons. The rest took care of their own transportation. Every five-passenger car was loaded with at least six and the last three cars, representing our seven-passenger Buick, Mr. B—'s Packard and a Pierce Arrow coach, carried twenty-five, including the children. All this had to be done rapidly and I got off from the Centre just a little before half-past three. I arrived at the Ashrama before quarter past four. Immediately we arranged the Service under the pine trees. They had to carry all the chairs and seats from both houses, as we had over a hundred people at the Service. There were three Swamis—Swami Akhilananda, Swami Nikhilananda and Swami Vivideshananda. There were twelve in their party.

Immediately after the Service the dinner was arranged and we had to calculate every inch of space to accommodate this large group indoors. We seated at tables over eighty, the rest had to take care of the serving, and a few had to stand or take their plates out of doors. Everything moved on smoothly and after the dinner Mr. Hansen, his son Harold, and a clarinetist, with Mr. Adams at the piano, contributed a delightful musical programme. Mr. Hansen had to leave immediately after seven o'clock in order to play at the Boston Symphony; but there was another group of distinguished musicians present with beautiful voices and they sang a delightful group of songs between the musical numbers. I introduced the Swamis, who spoke fittingly and feelingfully of the Ashrama; especially Swami Nik-

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hilananda expressed deep feeling of appreciation of the beauty and the atmosphere of the place. Mr. Bapat, who has been assisting at Harvard University on some Pali manuscript, spoke voluntarily and brought out certain high lights of Swami Paramananda's special contribution for the unity of West and East. On the whole the evening went off without a hitch.

With my heart's love and tender prayers for every one of you.

Sixteen months later the Swami writes:

October twelfth, 1933. Today a dozen of us spent from ten o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the afternoon at Cohasset. It was one of the most enjoyable outings we have ever had. We had our noon meal there and the rest of the time was devoted to work. It is surprising how little clearing it takes to really transform the place.

In the calendar of the Ashrama an especially important day always was July Fourth. It was not a day of clamor and noise, but a day of silence and prayer. One who was often present describes it thus:

"An outstanding experience was the Fourth of July celebration at the Cohasset Ashrama. Swami Paramananda himself arranged an altar under the pine trees and a portrait of Swami Vivekananda was tastefully placed thereon, as this was the day upon which that great Master-spirit left his body.

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The observance of complete silence began with a simple Service and continued for three hours. During this time many sat on the rocks or under the trees or walked gently through the woodland paths, praying, meditating, absorbed in inward thought. Those who are privileged to take part in these holy silences realize more and more the beauty, significance and practical benefit of these days so full of benign spiritual blessing."

Since the passing of Swami Paramananda the Ashrama at Cohasset has become a sacred place of pilgrimage for the many who loved and revered him. In the outdoor sanctuary a memorial altar has been constructed, made of rough stone with moss and ferns growing in the crevices. And on the spot of green turf where he lay as he went, a rockery has been created with ferns and moss—and in the centre a bird bath. The feeling for the rockery is as deep as for the altar in the sanctuary. A sense of the Swami's presence lingers around both and fills one with a great peace and prayerful silence.

VII

JOURNEYS EASTWARD AND WESTWARD

Transcontinental travels marked the time-beat of the Swami's activities. With a Centre on the Atlantic Coast in the east and another in sight of the Pacific Ocean in the west, it was inevitable that he should move back and forth from east to west and from west to east as a commuter moves from town to country and country to town. Yet these days of travel were not without their benefit. They gave the Swami opportunity to cease his tireless activity and do nothing. A humorous couplet written as part of a song by a member of the Community gives us a picture of these intervals of idleness. It runs:

"And the captain found his only play
Was riding along on the Santa Fe."

This desire, if not for play, at least for silence and idleness is voiced in more serious vein in this letter written to the Centre in Boston as he was speeding westward to California:

Dear and faithful Ones:

Time has gone speedily so far and I am really having a rest—the only rest I get these days. I never thought that a train journey would give

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me rest, but the hand of destiny must have her own way. The weather is bright, almost too warm. Last night a gentleman greeted me and asked me if I remembered him. He was one of my fellow passengers during the last voyage to India. Of course you know why I am not very enthusiastic over meeting friends on the train. I like to play both deaf and dumb.

There is a supreme Power which watches over us always, always; consciousness of this makes everything worth while, happy and peaceful. The lack of faith in It makes spiritual life most unhappy and restless. The touch of love will unfasten all barred doors. Try to remember this and be patient. Be patient always, first and last, with yourselves and with others.

My love I give unto you in His name.

Another brief message to Boston reads:

With love I commend this to you—there is no defeat for those who really love. Let your love shine like the gold disk, free from dross of selfish thoughts and fears. There is no lack of love. There is no sadness or fear in love.

Again this word to Boston:

Orange blossoms on both sides of the train under a veil of fog. It will not be long now before we see Pasadena. Yesterday it was dusty and hot, but this morning it feels lovely and refreshing.

I hope you are all well and full of clear vision. True spiritual life brings clearness of mind and a

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sense of perpetual enthusiasm and joy. Be your true self, undaunted and undepressed.

My heart's prayers for your welfare.

On later continental crossings he writes once more:

My most dearly loved ones:

This is to tell you that my thoughts are constantly with you. It is amazing to see rain water everywhere today. Prayers work miracles. Keep up your spirit of prayer, it will melt all obstacles. Writing is almost impossible on such a speedy train, but I must send at least this little token of unbounded love for each and every one of you.

Just resting, resting, so completely that even the mind is not acting. These days have been very uneventful and quiet. I am dreaming as usual, big dreams and you are always, all of you, in my dreams—for the good of many and for the happiness of many.

With love and prayers.

To all the dear ones of the Centre:

Here I am having a royal time doing nothing, but mind does the thinking all the more. The sun shone beautifully all day long and it was warm and lovely. I feel better for last night's rest. With so much love surrounding me I cannot help but be well and feel like a lion (not fierce).

Gallup, N. M.

Good morning to all the early and late risers:

It is cold here and snappy. This is the last lap of the journey. I am keeping fairly well. These

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trips should be taken only once in a great while. However, my destiny calls me forth to such ventures and I must follow my course, knowing that there is only one ultimate, abiding Good. Faith we must have, doing or suffering. The One who sees all and knows all never sleeps. Onward, ever forward, must we go—on and on and on.

With my deepest love for every one of you and hearty greetings to the congregation.

The trip so far has gone well. I have been resting and reading a little—a complete giving up after a period of relentless activity. There is no doubt I shall pick up a pound or two. My mind, however, has not been idle. My thoughts have been constantly at the Centre and at the Ashrama. How I like to see them grow into beautiful places of pure peace. This can only be accomplished when all hearts will unite in one holy resolve and banish all petty interests. I see a great power working towards this end. Those of you who are pure and selfless will be used as instruments. None can resist the power of the Spirit. There is no room there for what is false. Arm yourself with pure Truth, then you will be strong. Do not play a “Make believe game.” You may be able to fool me many times, but never that One who stands behind me. Be true above all else. There is no other way to find strength or peace.

Just a line to let you know that so far everything has gone well. I am resting and looking out into space as the train rolls along. Of course my mind is active, full of thoughts. Thinking of you most constantly and dreaming my dreams of perfection—perfection, beauty, peace and har-

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mony in everyone's personal life. Nothing is impossible for those who seek shelter in Him. Our surrender is our strength, our helplessness is our supreme safety. I pour out my soul to every one of you because my unalloyed love reaches out to you and my tender prayers are for you without limit. I pray not only for your safety, but for your understanding, understanding that will make you strong and unshakable.

This morning an old lady came and spoke to me and wanted to know all about my faith and philosophy. I gave her a copy of "My Creed" and "Message" to read. She was most appreciative. All things come in due course of time. With my heart's love.

As we read the letters to the Centre in Boston, just given, and those to the Ashrama in California, which follow, we see how impartial was the Swami's feeling for the two branches of his work. They were for him one community, with one ideal, one purpose, one task—to live a noble, selfless, consecrated life and help others to live their lives nobly and with consecration. The care he gave to one Centre he gave to the other. What he did for one, he did for the other. If he celebrated a feast day in Boston, he hurried to California to celebrate the same festival there, or he reversed the order and travelled from California to Boston to repeat the observance of some holy feast. This makes plain the cause of his constant journeying and his tireless activity.

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From Dodge City on his way to Chicago he writes to the Ashrama :

Dear and loved Ones of the Ashrama Household :

I trust that you are all well and radiating cheerful hearts. My thoughts and prayers are most constantly for your welfare, happiness and peace. In your joy I am joyous. In your peace I am peaceful. In your safety I feel secure. Ye are the concrete forms of your faith. Make your outer forms definite and forceful by your inner life. Nothing is impossible for brave hearts. True devotees' prayers are always answered.

I place my faith in you anew every day. Why do you doubt yourselves? Why do you make yourselves insignificant by small thoughts? Onward! In the march of life ever steady and onward! Look not back, all past will melt in the dark. His blessings are yours and mine alike at all times—do not make it otherwise through your thought of self. Ever yours in love and with love..

My thoughts are with you (every one of you). I had a fairly good night and am feeling well. My prayers are that you keep well and happy and that you maintain the spirit of harmony. I know you are all capable of this. Always with love.

Dear Ashrama Household :

The Chief is moving on over this dreary part of the journey. I had a fairly comfortable night. It is warm today and windy. I have been observing various Santa Fe Stations, specially the garden part. They have almost in every case mixed the cactus and other wild things with cultivated

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shrubs, so I feel that my suggestion was not altogether out of place. I picture that hill behind the Temple looking very beautiful and I think I shall find it so on my return. The dining-car steward gave me a warm welcome this morning. He said he was reading my book the other day.

My thoughts for every one of you are full of tranquil love and prayers.

All the employees of the Santa Fe Railroad were the Swami's warm friends. He made such frequent journeys that he was known to them all and received special attention from them. At the Pasadena Station one day a Pullman porter threw his arms about him in his joy on learning that the Swami was travelling in his car. A lounge car steward begged him to sit in the lounge car as often as possible; and when the Swami asked: "Why should you want me, I never order anything?", the lounge car steward replied: "It is just nice to have you." The dining-car stewards prepared special dishes for him; and once a steward on the Chief showed him a worn copy of his "Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers" saying that for ten years he had not failed to read the lesson each morning. We find numerous references to the friendliness of the Santa Fe personnel in these letters:

One day has already passed, but not half as speedily as when I am at the Ashrama. The weather so far has been very pleasant and the

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railroad people have showered upon me much attention.

At Barstow I got off the train for a walk and was warmly greeted by the dining-car steward. He said: "I was thinking of you today and was wondering how I could secure some of your books." Life is very uneventful on the train, but mind is even more active under such circumstances. When our thoughts are fundamental and deep-rooted, they will find their avenues for expression. We represent ourselves or misrepresent ourselves not through chance.

Greetings, love and blessings according to case.

Again to the Ashrama on his way to Boston:

Dear Ones:

I have just finished dinner and it was a regular Santa Fe *a-la-Supreme*. Light breakfast, no lunch and a real dinner—it makes you feel like a flying *fish*. If Mary Lacy only knew the joy of no lunch! Why, it is the only way to find peace or rest at noon. The Chief is all right, only a trifle extra fast and that is due to the extra fare which buys the extra fuel. It is all worked out scientifically. The Chief is an expert jumper; but as long as she stays on the track, we will surely stay with her.

This is really a very remarkable train, with an excellent working force. The dining-car head steward was most cordial, although I do not think that I had met him before. He even whispered to me if I wanted some more ice cream. I said "No, thank you." Mr. Kissam will surely weep when he hears this.

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Time goes quickly, specially with good and busy folks. So I shall not worry about any of you. Keep going, you will surely get there. May be sooner, may be later. Who cares when. Brave, unselfish hearts, know no fear. My loving prayers are ever with you for your safe-keeping.

The dining-car steward was extremely nice to me and when I thanked him for his courtesies he said: "I heard of you before." Last night he prepared an extra dish as a very special attention. I think even from Santa Fe System we can learn this great lesson "courtesy under all circumstances." How happy it will make me if every one of you will make it a point to be loving and kind towards all.

It is not easy to write on this extra fast train but I hope these few lines will convey to you my spirit. It is ever the same fundamentally, in spite of all my moods and flights. This is written for every one of you and all of you.

With my heart's love and prayers.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

The dining-car steward was an old friend of mine. I gave him some books last time. He was all excited and paid me lots of attention. This time I gave him a copy of "Right Resolutions." You will probably see him and his wife this summer at the Ashrama.

I hope that you are all feeling well, body and mind. May the glory of the Lord manifest through every one of you and may the Ashrama live long for the good of many and the happiness of many.

With my heart's deepest love.

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Dear Ones:

The dining-car steward is an old friend, so he is taking very good care of me. Special attention, I suppose. "With many hearts dost Thou love me. Proof of Thy unceasing care I find in every turn of life."

My heart's tenderest love for every one of you. Live happily and remember your Divine blessings. May Divine Mother bless you all.

Dear Ones:

Another night has gone by and the weather is getting much colder as we near Chicago. There is very little to write except that the Pullman conductor comes and sits with me and talks about world affairs, religion and politics. He is a very nice and intelligent man.

Everything is going smoothly except the train. It had terrible jitters last night and nearly succeeded in throwing us from our beds. The whole object of writing these lines is to tell you that all is well with me so far.

My thoughts and prayers are with you all always. With my abiding love.

Dear Ones:

The journey is nearly ended and everything has gone very smoothly so far. The steward has treated me regally and now a supervisor of the Santa Fe has come on the train from Kansas City and he is insisting on entertaining me, so I am having an orangeade with him.

With all my love.

This from the Ashrama:

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Dear ones all of the Centre :

The Chief was very comfortable, and the dining-car steward was exceptionally attentive to me. Of course all this added to the comfort and rest. I met a number of men on the train who were greatly interested ; and one of them, visiting California from New York, came to the eleven o'clock Service yesterday. He is connected with one of the big studios in Hollywood.

The Swami did little reading during his train journeys. He lost himself in thought rather than in the printed page. He was never a reader of many books nor was he a student. He seemed to gather his knowledge from life itself—from observation rather than from study. As a boy he took his schooling very casually and he never tried for a degree, but he was invariably looked upon as a university graduate and his culture was undeniable. On one of his eastward journeys he chanced to carry with him for the Centre in Boston some copies of the first volume of the present work. He went through it and a letter to me set the seal of his approval on it in these words :

I have been reading your book "Swami Paramananda and His Work" at intervals and it certainly reads very well. My mind has been greatly refreshed by these recollections of early days.

Out of the dreams and thoughts of a journey

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an occasional poem took form. The one which follows was written on an east bound train and sent back to the Ashrama in the postscript of a letter which reads:

P. s. Attention!

After reading the enclosed if you find it fit for publication, then send me a clear copy at once. I think it contains timely thoughts. And I have purposely made many short lines so that every idea may stand out separately.

BE THOU GRACIOUS STILL

My soul, be thou gracious still!
In distress and pain
In sorrow and in anguish,
Be thou gracious still.
If perchance thou art slandered
And insults hurled upon thee,
Thy heart torn and bleeding,
Yet be not ungracious
Nor think harsh thoughts.
If proud world hurts thee
And man shuns thee,
Still be thou gracious in thy thought.

Remember, my soul,
Remember life within!
None can trespass on that hidden place.
Bring no thought or feeling there
That is void of peace.
Only beauty and grace
Must we have there.
We must keep grace and beauty
Like two altar lights
Ever burning
In that sacred shrine,
Else there will be no light;
No light will shine
In our sacred sanctuary,

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And darkness will bring doubt, distress and fear.
I cannot live in doubt,
My soul, my friend!

Keep in light, then,
And be gracious still.
Nothing else matters.
Pain here is joy there;
Distress here is delight there;
Death here is Life there;
Insults endured here will be
Glory forever there.
Therefore be brave, be noble
In all thy thoughts, words and deeds
And be thou gracious still!

April ninth, 1932.

By a strange reflex of thought the Swami grew more silent and prayerful in a worldly atmosphere. He did not show disapproval or annoyance by a solemn irritated look; rather on his face was a smile, as if he were enjoying the levity around him; but it was the smile of inwardness rather than of outwardness. We catch glimpses of this inward mood in these letters written on the train as he moved rapidly toward Boston or California.

My Beloved Ashrama Household:

I trust this will find you all well and happy. The secret of well-being and happiness you always carry in your heart and I have such faith in every one of you. Selfless love and service, let these radiate from every object of the Ashrama that even the trees and shrubs may catch the spirit and bear witness to our consecration to the Supreme One. O! be of good cheer—One who has

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led us thus far will lead us farther, for we are ever in His hands. The dark clouds will come and go but never forget the sun with its radiant glow.

All is well and all must be well, for we are His. Never forget this great fact. Those who may come under the shadow, try to remind them of this great truth. Fear not, but look forward, ever forward. My spirit is there with you always. You have bound it with unbreakable fetters of love and selfless devotion. Try to keep the rhythm for yourselves and for others, then all must go well.

Always with prayers and loving blessing for your safe-keeping.

On the train to Boston the Swami writes again :

This is to tell you that so far everything has gone well. I read "Julius Caesar" all the way through today. It is a remarkable play for character study. I may read it to you some day without leaving out any part. These fast trains are for flying, not for letter writing.

Prayers, silence and self-control will pave our way through everything—through rocks, mire and mud. Peace be with you—one and all. Tune your heart with love.

My Beloved Ashrama :

What a beautiful send-off you all gave me last evening. I pray that same spirit may prevail and sustain each one of you. If you can only keep your hearts open, the great Spirit will not fail you. Too much mental cogitations and reasoning often deprive us of our purer reason and of our inspiration. I feel this very keenly. To make any

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productive spiritual effort we should never make our heart subordinate.

Dear Ashrama Household:

Let all peace be yours;

Let all joy be yours;

Let all strength be yours.

I am leaving you all in the land of sunshine.

Sun will burn up all the dross and fill you with new life.

My thoughts and prayers are with you and I know that you always sustain me.

With love.

Here I am in Chicago to start for Boston. It is gloomy here, but not too cold. In order to appreciate the Ashrama you must go away from it sometimes. I am studying the Air travel literature, it sounds well and promising. I have spent these days very quietly.

My thoughts are with you constantly and I pray that the light of love may shine through you and fill your hearts with gladness and spiritual sunshine. When we are not happy, it is our fault, our faulty thought. Never wear any grudge on your shoulders. Wear, rather, Divine Grace, it is more becoming to you and it is not heavy.

With all my love I always come to you; may you learn to receive with a loving heart is my prayer for you—every one of you.

P. S. Ever and ever and forevermore is our life in that great Spirit.

Dear Ones:

I hope you are all well and that every heart sings with happiness "The Joy of God."

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My dreams, my prayers and my constant thoughts are for your perfection, your happiness, your peace. Love one another and live for one another with joy in your soul.

God loves those who love each other.
Always with love and joy.

Brave Hearts :

I like to feel that all these efforts bring some good to people. Although these trips are somewhat strenuous, I am more than repaid when I find a man like Mr. N— and others who are revived and rekindled with new hope to go on. Keep on with your devotion and staunchness. Remember, we are nothing but stewards and servants and we must keep right on doing our part. There is One who watches over us and we want to make ourselves plastic to that One, first, last and always.

Those of you who stand high with your ideal must exhibit ideal faith, courage and endurance. They will win your battle for you always. When our mind is filled with this understanding, there cannot be any loss.

My heart is full of tender love for each and every one of you. May you have nothing but the joy of God in your souls, is my prayer.

To All the Scouts :

One night has passed with good rest and no dreams. I hope that you are all experiencing certain amount of tranquillity, about which I spoke so frequently during my last visit. There is very little to say except the inner things, which can never be said. How I pray that every one of you may have real spiritual quickening and that you may inspire each other by your life and actions.

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May Divine Mother keep you all well and safe.
My thoughts are with you tonight.

With my abiding love.

Dear Ones:

I hope the beautiful sunshine I left behind me continues. May it shine inwardly and outwardly, both. Where can you find such a collection of staunch hearts? That is the way I see you all. Am I blessed! Let me be so more and more. To see everything with eye of love is bliss. It is God's very own blessing. For He is love and nothing else. May you all grow into this consciousness is my heart's prayer for every one of you.

With my abiding love.

Dear Ones:

Everything is moving along smoothly, including the train. This morning the weather is cool and the outside is very wet. Such a variety of climates. It shows how vast this country is.

I hope you are all well. How I pray for every one of you that you may find contentment and true peace. I pray that every one of you may attain your ideal and that you may become instrumental in helping others who are struggling along the way.

With my tenderest love for each one.

You are in my thoughts most constantly and my prayers are likewise most frequent for your abiding happiness and peace. There is very little to tell you in the way of news. I am taking the same old trip. How much I miss the Ashrama! I do

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not mean this only in physical sense, but the great Presence that permeates the whole Ashrama. May you all realize this great and tangible blessing and be full of good cheer.

Always yours lovingly.

Dear Ones All:

It is cold outside and there is plenty of ice in evidence. I was up early enough to see the most beautiful sunrise. It was so very clear and my thoughts went up in prayers for every one of you that the sun of wisdom may shine upon your sky of destiny just as clearly.

I hope that you are all well and carrying on with noble spirit. I want to save every one of you from pain and suffering and I pray from my heart that you may all be blessed with patience, fortitude and all the other holy attributes which make our lives worth while.

Ever with love.

As the Swami's journeys multiplied, his mind turned more and more to air travel. He spent evening after evening studying the timetables, and finally on August second, 1939, he made his first flight. Others followed, but he did not lose his loyalty to the Santa Fe. On the train he could think and dream, rest and be silent; the hours passed quietly and seemed to lift his mood to higher regions of thought, as we have seen from his letters written as he journeyed eastward and westward.

VIII

CALENDAR OF THE WORK

The year began always for Swami Paramananda with prayer. A midnight Service was held at both the Centres of his work. He could not conduct the two; so, in order to divide his presence, usually he celebrated Christmas in Boston and New Year's Eve at the Ashrama in California—in the silence of the high hills away from the clamor of city streets.

In the early evening a dinner was served to a hundred or more guests; a musical programme with community singing followed, and at half past eleven all gathered in the Temple for the Service. The Swami delivered an address, there was music, and at the stroke of twelve the chimes sounded out into the night. As they died away, there was perfect silence in the Temple for five minutes. The New Year was welcomed in the stillness of unuttered prayer.

The most memorable New Year's Eve Service ever held at the Ashrama was at the close of 1933. A cloudburst had turned the canyon streams into ravaging torrents; houses were crumbling in the valley and those at the Ashrama were in danger. Already water had reached the thresholds and

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was flowing into the Temple, the Library and the bookroom. The Swami with the men-workers stood at the edge of the stream behind the Temple digging and shovelling, striving vainly to check the onrush and turn the current. As the clock struck midnight, the Swami came into the living-room of the Cloister, with water oozing from his boots and dripping from his clothes, his hair matted by the rain, but his face alight with dauntless courage and confidence in God. A fire was burning on the hearth, he sat down beside it, silence fell, and he uttered this prayer:

“O Great Mother Heart, may we learn to see Thy Divine Hand through the beautiful and through the terrible.

“In all circumstances may we never forget that Thou art behind all, that Thou art all; that Thou dost make us strong, as we require strength to meet every situation.

“Grant unto us, not our desires and wishes, but strength, staunchness of spirit, unshakable faith, in the face of all difficulties and dangers.

“Bestow upon us whatever Thou thinkest best, but grant us faith, gladness of spirit and surrender unto Thee.

“Glory to the Great God, the Transformer, the All-compassionate, the All-beneficent! We take shelter unto Him! The very Name of the Great Spirit destroys all evil, all danger.

“O Thou Great God, do Thou safeguard us.

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Help us to begin this year with the spirit of no evil, no doubt, no selfishness. Fill our hearts with absolute fearlessness, courage, and faith.

“Let us go onward and forward in the march of life and remember that we are all children of the Holy One. We do not know how to protect ourselves or others. May we learn to surrender unto Him. May we give ourselves completely to Him.”

There was no ritual, no music, no congregation, only the Community and three marooned guests, but the power that went forth from that little gathering and from the Swami as he prayed, must have reached countless hearts and given them courage to begin the New Year bravely.

Occasionally the Swami remained in Boston for the New Year. After the Service one year, he wrote from the Centre:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

New Year's Eve Service here at the Centre was really very lovely—quiet and impressive. The Chapel was quite full, and the atmosphere was uplifted. One cannot help feeling that as there are so many who are eager for higher things and reach out for the Truth, we need not feel despondent over the present state of humanity. If this spirit grows bigger and stronger, the world will naturally overcome the present tendency to unrest and unhappiness.

The last two Sunday Services were also very well attended and specially the Tuesday evening

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Class, when the Chapel was full. It was a surprise, as the weather was not good. I am happy because I like to see this work prosper in every sense of the word. There is a time of watching, there is a time of trial and test, but our vigilant spirit must always be kept up in order to maintain the high standard of our mission.

Always with my heart's best thoughts and prayers for your safe-keeping.

The next event in the work's calendar was Swami Vivekananda's birthday, which was celebrated equally in Boston and in California. The Swami conducted the celebrations in succession. Of the birthday in Boston he writes in 1932, before setting out for California:

Dear Ones:

We had a splendid celebration on Sunday and good attendance. People were appreciative of the occasion; also you will be glad to hear that the art exhibit met with real success.

Thursday evening, we are having a dinner and fireside talk. Friday, I must get everything in shape to leave Saturday noon for Cincinnati. I shall speak in Cincinnati twice on Sunday and in Louisville Monday afternoon, Monday evening and Tuesday morning. Tuesday evening I shall take the Grand Canyon Limited from Chicago.

With my heart's tender love for every one of you.

Soon after the Swami reached California he re-

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peated the observance of the birthday. This is a detailed description of it:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

Now, I must tell you about the most beautiful day that we ever had in the annals of Ashrama history. Although we have had many occasions with great multitudes gathered here, none has ever gone so smoothly and successfully as yesterday.

Sunday we observed the birthday of Swami Vivekananda. On Saturday we made an early start. I cooked an offering which was finished before two o'clock. Then I was invited to Hollywood by Swami Prabhavananda to take part in laying the corner stone for their Temple. I did not get home until nearly five-thirty, so you can imagine what a narrow margin I had for preparing the food for Sunday dinner. Also I had to give supervision for the improvement of the grounds.

Mr. and Mrs. White came with a friend from Santa Barbara for Saturday night; five other guests also came, so the Guest House was quite full. Besides we had two other guests for Saturday dinner. It was a very full day. Soon after dinner we all retired to get ready for Sunday. My wakeful hour began about two o'clock in the morning, and I had a strong feeling that Sunday would turn out to be a very significant day. Because of that impression we practically doubled the seating capacity of the Temple. Everything began to hum after the morning household Service and breakfast. We changed the banquet from the Guest House to the Cloister patio, and it was

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a very fortunate move. Cars began to climb the hill while I was still engaged in the kitchen, giving additional touches to my cooking.

At the morning Service the Temple was full. Mr. White played the violin charmingly, and Mr. Hamilton played on his trumpet with a silencer, which made it sound like beautiful flute music. Immediately after the Service we began to prepare for the banquet. People came and came and came. There were probably between one hundred and forty and one hundred and fifty people at the dinner.

The seating capacity of the Temple was enlarged still more. The programme began at three o'clock promptly, first with music, and by three-fifteen there was no space available in the Temple. We had way over two hundred. Two ministers from Pasadena were guest speakers—Reverend Dr. Miller of the Episcopal Church and our friend Reverend Dr. Nicholson, minister of the Neighborhood Church of Pasadena. Both paid such high tributes that it would have made you cry. Mrs. Shaw of the Rosicrucian Centre also spoke a few words. It was altogether a very beautiful occasion and all were full of glowing enthusiasm over it.

In the yearly routine of celebrations the observance of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday followed. The Swami gives this account of one celebration at the Centre in Boston. The portrait to which he refers in the letter was painted by an eminent artist and was exhibited at the Art Club of Boston.

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Dear Ashrama Loved Ones :

Here I have been already three days and have not written you a line. Yesterday, of course, was a very full day, being the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. We had three Services. At the morning Service there was a large attendance and it was a very appreciative congregation. The earlier spirit of the Centre seemed to manifest with great force. Then we had another Service at three o'clock.

At the evening Service there was again a full Chapel and I delivered another address on the "Life and Influence of Sri Ramakrishna." People really expressed genuine and hearty spirit of appreciation. Evidently the portrait has done more publicity work than we have had through any other avenue for our work here. Almost everyone is making some comment about it and speaks of having seen it at the Art Club.

I gave a little talk at the Home of Truth in Chicago on my arrival. I had rather a strenuous day there as some people seized upon me and entertained me. The weather here is unseasonably warm, but we are all keeping well. Always with deep love and prayers for each one of you.

Good Friday was always reverently observed at Ananda Ashrama in California and also at the parent Centre in Boston; but Easter with its three Services was specially stressed at the Ashrama. The Swami tried never to be absent at this season. For many years the Sunrise Service, conducted by him, was held on a wide terrace adjoining the Library. A congregation number-

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ing several hundred sat facing a stone altar; at its side, the Swami in white robe, with the first rays of the rising sun lighting his face and hair; beyond, a wide valley with a skyline of blue mountains; over all, the soft greyness of dawn; then a burst of sunshine, a glowing radiance everywhere, a chanted benediction, and the Service closed. In the following letters the Swami describes preparations and Services for two different Easter celebrations. In 1934 he writes from California:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

I want to write while it is fresh in mind, giving you a glimpse of our Good Friday Service and of Easter. Saturday the whole Ashrama buzzed with activities. George constructed a natural platform with a brick edge, which made a very lovely setting. He also built a good substantial background to protect against the wind. The Sunrise terrace had to be raked and leveled and benches had to be reinforced, as they were damaged by the flood. I was constantly back and forth, giving supervision to all the work that was going on in different sections. We made the offering in the Temple soon after three o'clock, and it was indeed a great relief to have it done ahead of time.

The outdoor altar was all in readiness before the evening Service. The Guest House was full, and after the household Service they all took their meal here in the Cloister dining-room. I excused myself and dismissed them after dinner, and as it was a beautiful moonlight evening, the guests wandered over the grounds and some were reluctant to go to bed.

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Every one turned in early, as the Ashrama had to rise at approximately four o'clock. I got up about a quarter to four, and to my greatest amazement found everything was enveloped in clouds. I could not see a single light in the valley; in fact, could not see a few feet away. It was indeed a sad disappointment. Then at four o'clock I went out on the front terrace to see if it were raining and found that although it was not, it was very wet and just a slight drizzle. However, we got ready and soon after half past four, the first two cars arrived. One was from Riverside. I got ready and went to the Shrine and had the morning household Service quietly, and then consecrated the outdoor altar. By that time quite a few had arrived and cars kept on coming in spite of the weather conditions and by quarter to six the place was well filled. One thing fortunate was, it was not at all cold.

We built an open fire a few feet in front of the altar. The benches and chairs were all soaking wet and they had to be dried; but nobody complained. There were over fifty automobiles, but if the weather had been favorable, we all feel there would have been twice that many. Also the road being torn up had a great deal to do in discouraging people from climbing the hill.

However, it was one of the most beautiful Easter Sunrise Services we have ever had in the annals of the Ashrama. A very nice class of people came, about two hundred, which is not an insignificant number for the Sunrise Service in unfavorable weather. I hope others will give you a more graphic account of the whole effect of the Service.

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After the Sunrise Service, breakfast had to be attended to; it was all arranged at the Guest House. I think there were about forty-five seated at the tables. The sun came out at intervals and it turned out to be a very lovely day. At the eleven o'clock Service the attendance was excellent. We had again an equal number for the luncheon, and then the afternoon Service was also well attended, but not quite as many as at eleven o'clock. It was altogether a very satisfactory day. Deep appreciation and feeling of exuberance pervaded the whole Ashrama. The sun is shining again today, but it is much cooler. With my loving prayers.

Much later, in 1939, this description of another Easter was sent by the Swami to Boston from California:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

I shall tell you a little bit of yesterday's activities, also those of Good Friday, while they are fresh in my mind.

We had a very nice Good Friday Service, with a good attendance.

For days the Ashrama has been buzzing with activity to make everything ready for the Easter celebration. On Saturday the Guest House was full, and Saturday evening was spent in preparation for the celebration. The day began early. It was not as beautiful a sunrise as we expected, but we had a very good gathering. They estimated between two hundred and seventy-five and three hundred people. Everything was orderly, including the parking of the cars. A strong wind

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came up, but nothing really spoils the beauty and dignity of the Sunrise Service.

Breakfast was served at the Guest House and was very largely attended. I think there were about sixty-five there, and including those who served there must have been altogether seventy-five. I went down to see that everything was in running order and afterwards had a few moment's rest as I had had very little sleep.

The eleven o'clock Service attendance rather surprised us. Cars began to climb the hill and crowd the parking place. The Temple was more than full. Lunch was also served to more than fifty at the Guest House. The afternoon Service was well attended. It seemed that this was the biggest Easter celebration we have ever had, especially to have such full attendance at all three Services. The people never showed more hearty appreciation of the Ashrama.

The entrance gate is gradually coming to completion. The arch is up, also the minarets; but it will be some time before the finishing coat of plaster can be put on. I have asked Mr. Gyger to add some little ornaments. It will probably be finished on my return.

It is needless to say that my heart has been very heavy over the world situation, especially during Good Friday. I am naturally very susceptible to any depressing condition anywhere, but through Divine Grace I stood all the strain remarkably well, except that my arm ached terribly yesterday. I think it was mostly due to having to shake hands with so many hundreds of people; I think there must have been at least five hundred or more hands that I shook.

With my deep, deep love for every one of you.

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P.S. My lecture at the Rotary Club in Santa Monica was very much appreciated and was attended by their full membership of between eighty-five and ninety.

The last Easter Sunrise Service conducted by the Swami was held in the Temple patio. At the Ashrama the weather was perfect, though the valley was wrapped in dense fog. A Cross stood on the outdoor altar and the rising bank behind it was covered with Easter lilies. The whole day was full of exalted inspiration. Five hundred people in all attended the Sunrise Service. At the other two Services of the day the Temple was overflowing and some were standing in the patio outside. At eleven o'clock the Swami spoke on "Triumphant Spirit," and in the afternoon "Resurrection and Reincarnation" was the subject. The Swami himself tells of his last Easter thus:

Dear Ones All of the Boston Centre:

Saturday evening we had with the house guests about thirty-five for dinner. Afterwards I dismissed everybody immediately, and then gave a final check-up to the preparations. The Cross stood on the altar, immediately in front of the niche which holds the light. The whole setting was beautiful. With the chairs and benches we prepared for approximately two hundred and fifty people. This did not even half fill the patio. This gives an idea of how many hundreds we can take care of on special occasions.

I awoke between half past two and a quarter

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of three and it was a very beautiful clear morning. You will be glad to know that we truly had a special dispensation as far as the sunrise was concerned, for nowhere else did they have any sunshine in connection with the different Sunrise Services, except Mt. Rubidoux in Riverside. We had everything perfectly clear and it was difficult to believe that people had absolutely no visibility. Even in Glendale people could not see the street lights or head lights. One person said they almost turned back twice; and one gentleman, who came from Glendale, said that he had lived there all his life, yet he could not distinguish the familiar streets. He said it was like driving through milk.

In spite of everything we had approximately fifty cars, every one well filled; so we had a goodly attendance. It was a perfect Sunrise Service. With fire in the fire-place and in a fire bowl placed immediately in front of the Temple steps; also in the Library with a fire, the people were very comfortable. Just as I concluded the Service, the sun came out and flooded the whole altar. About sixty remained for breakfast.

At the eleven o'clock Service, we had an overflow attendance in the Temple. The luncheon crowd was also unusually large, and I had to add three cups of rice to my dish of *pillou*. Many of our old friends came and we had visitors from New York, New Jersey, Grand Rapids, and other distant places. The afternoon Service was the greatest surprise. Cars came and came and came; even the Sunrise terrace was filled with cars.

It was one of the most wonderful Easter celebrations we have ever had. Everything went smoothly without a hitch. It is needless to say

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that every one was tired from the long day of activity, beginning so early in the morning. After the afternoon Service, I excused myself and retired before six o'clock, realizing for the first time how tired my body was. Today I feel much more rested, and of course am going on with plans for next Sunday. I am enclosing a leaflet which will give you an idea of next Sunday's programme. I think we are again going to have quite a number of week-end guests.

This Wednesday the Delphian Club is coming for luncheon at the Guest House, and I am to speak to them afterwards. We will have our regular Class tomorrow night, so this will give you an idea of what is taking place here.

Take care of yourselves, every one of you. Be strong, and be always open to the Divine Grace for your protection and safety. With abiding love.

The anniversary of the Ashrama was celebrated each year with deep feeling. The Swami gives a picture of two of these celebrations in the following letters :

Dear Ones of the Centre :

Saturday naturally was a very strenuously busy day getting ready for the celebration of the anniversary on Sunday. Sunday morning was beautiful and clear. Except for a little wind it was a perfect day.

It was the fifteenth anniversary of the Ashrama ; fifteen vigil lights burned on the altar and there were many flowers. Everything looked very beautiful.

There was a good attendance in the morning.

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In the afternoon there was a much better attendance. With Pennsylvania Avenue closed and the detour full of hazards, it is not possible to have a very large number. But everyone expressed great appreciation and enthusiasm over the day.

The men are working at the Oak Canyon tunnel. It is a pitiful sight. There are many, many oak trees, uprooted by the flood, lying on the ground. It is almost impossible to know what to do first, there is so much to be done. As soon as they have the water connected, they will finish cleaning up the Temple patio and make ready the Sunrise terrace.

I hope all is going well, and that you are all feeling in good spirits. With my love for everyone of you.

Dear Ones of the Centre :

It was altogether a successful day. People here are more enthusiastic than ever over the work, and judging from everything, it really seems a very promising outlook. . . . Of course I naturally had to go without meals, practically nothing between breakfast and dinner at night, and that is what gave me all the reserve strength I needed. I find that if everything can be harmoniously operated, the work, especially creative work, instead of exhausting one really replenishes a certain amount of expended energy. However, this theory may not always work out in every individual.

Tomorrow evening we are planning to give the play "Mira," but not much has been done yet except last night I taught them the celebrated song of Mira. I am supposed to sing this and they will join in the refrain. Ranu plays the accom-

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paniment on the Esraj and Sumita keeps the rhythm with the cymbals. Tonight we must rehearse and get our setting ready. Nothing is impossible, that is all I can say about it.

On top of all this, next Sunday we are going to observe the anniversary of the establishment of the Ashrama. It should have been celebrated last April, but Swami Paramananda was away in India during that period. So instead of altogether skipping it, we are going to mark next Sunday with a celebration.

I hope and pray that all of you are feeling well physically and mentally and full of vigor and spiritual cheer. With my tender love and prayers for your constant safe-keeping.

The Swami's correspondence shifts to the Centre in Boston and he described thus the twenty-fifth anniversary of the work there:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

Time has gone by and I am sorry I was not able to write to you a full account of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. We arranged the reception hall in such a way as to possibly take care of two hundred people, but the people came and came and came, and I think quite a few did not even gain access to the hall.

Besides the three Swamis, Mrs. Porter made a splendid effort to be with us, leaving her own important meeting to give a charming reading of three of my poems: "The Mystic Way," "Inspiration," "March of Life." Miss Mel gave a few words and Mr. Strang, a Christian Science Leader, spoke beautifully; Sister Daya gave a greeting

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and Sumita sang; Mai read some of the messages of congratulation—that of Kalidas Nag being especially outstanding. It was a very happy celebration and a great surprise to all that so many came. I think, on the whole, the occasion was a memorable one.

After a day of Silence at the Cohasset Ashrama the Swami writes:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

We had a most beautiful Fourth of July this year. It was in every way symbolic of the occasion. Of course, it meant a tremendous amount of work, not only for me, but for all the workers; however, everything went smoothly without a single ripple of discord. In the first place, there were more people than there were automobiles available to transport them to Cohasset. We set the hour between ten and ten-thirty for starting from 32 Fenway. I arranged the seating, packing six and eight in a car in order that all fifty might go. Coming back we had an extra car, as someone went directly without any passengers, and this lady brought four back with her.

Now for a little glimpse of the occasion. Although the day started with gloomy weather, it cleared partially and the sun came out at intervals. The altar arranged on the rock was full of simple beauty and everyone was impressed with the whole atmosphere. The Service was spontaneous, naturally, as I had no occasion to give a single thought to it. I cooked the dinner between the first part and the second part of the Service. Everything went beautifully and everyone en-

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joyed the dinner. It was hard work, but most gratifying. There were two Hindu gentlemen who had arrived the previous day and had called upon me, so I invited them to join us. They were tremendously impressed with the occasion.

Another day of Silence which made an especially profound impression on all present was that held on Memorial Day 1940 at Ananda Ashrama in California. It was the Swami's last day of Silence and there seemed to be an awed solemnity about it. Every one of the large gathering was deeply moved by his words and by the meditation which followed each instruction.

Among the celebrations marked on the calendar of the work none was more stressed than that of the Autumn Festival of the Divine Mother of the Universe. It is one of the great Feasts of India. It lasts for three days and on the third day there is universal reconciliation—one embraces even one's enemies. The Feast was always observed at the two Centres of the Swami's work with great rejoicing. There were frequent Services in the Temple or Chapel and after the closing one a reception was held. The letters which follow tell of these Festivals. The first letter describes a celebration in Boston; those that come after are from the Ashrama in California:

Dear Ones:

The Celebration of the Divine Mother's Feast started Monday evening, and yesterday we had

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the first Service about seven o'clock. I cooked many dishes for offering in the evening, with a Class following. Today also we had our morning Service at seven-thirty and I shall soon have to plan about the offering.

The weather here today is just like summer. I hope that all is going well with you and that you will have some real rain soon. How are the trees? My love to every one, including the goats and bees.

Dear Ones of the Centre:

This is just a line to tell you that all is well here at the Ashrama. It has been raining since last night and everything is fresh and fragrant. In course of my walks up and down to the Community House and Chapel Garden, I suddenly was overwhelmed with the fragrance of the eucalyptus grove. I stood there for quite a while to breathe it in and came back again to inhale the natural healing fragrance. Yes, Ashrama is beautiful and now after what it has gone through with the fire and flood, it seems to express greater significance.

The work here is going on steadily. The Thursday evenings are growing and also the Sunday Services, not so much in number, but there seems to be a genuine appreciation.

It is patience and patience alone which will clear our way and bring to us the fulfillment of our great dreams. This thought is taking hold of me more and more and seems to hold me back from quick action, although those who live with me think I am strenuously active; but still there is a definite change in my attitude towards life. I feel that with patience, perseverance and love that does not fluctuate, everything can be conquered. In spiritual life there is no other alternative.

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We are giving a special dinner in honor of the Feast of Divine Mother on next Sunday. I hope the weather will clear so that it can be held on the front terrace. On the following Thursday we are planning to give an entertainment, if the girls can organize something simple. Friday, the eleventh, is another Divine Mother's Feast.

I hope and pray that every one of you will be well and strong and become great assets for the Lord's work. With my deep love and tender prayers for each one of you.

Dear Ones of the Centre:

We had a very good attendance—and every one seemed so deeply impressed with the Service, especially when I read the "Litany to the Divine Mother." It seemed just the right way to bring the Service to a close. We did not have any entertainment. The refreshments were served in the Library arcade and both the Library and arcade were filled with people. They all enjoyed the refreshments. Ashrama is very quiet, but the Spirit is dominant. Every one expressed his appreciation after the Festival.

With my deep and abiding love for every one of you.

Dear Ones of the Centre:

Yesterday's special Service for the Art Club in the Temple was really a surprise to us. We were amazed when we saw so many automobiles in the parking place. After the luncheon all gathered in the Temple and I spoke to them. Being artistically inclined, they were deeply impressed and already they are planning for different groups to

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come here. This group that met here yesterday is called the Foothill Art Teachers Group.

I was about to send you a wire last night telling you about the special Service which I held this morning to consecrate the outdoor altar. I planned to have the Service at half past six; first, the usual household Service in the Temple and then the open air Service following. It was a beautiful occasion and a perfect morning. There is very little I can say about it, except it did so much good to us, to the Ashrama, and I think to all surrounding things.

I shall write to you soon again, but this is the first chapter of my visit and only the fourth day at the Ashrama. With my constant loving prayers for your safekeeping and this means every one of you.

Saturday: As you see, this letter did not go off yesterday, so I am adding a line to tell you about the beautiful evening we had. You know it was the Feast of the Lights. The Temple was illuminated a little differently, perhaps, from other years, and the outdoor altar was the most prominent thing of the whole evening. The weather was quite perfect. Mr. White of Santa Barbara played the violin; Mrs. Rowell sang, and the flutist, Mr. Beyne, played. I spoke and the people seemed very, very impressed with the whole occasion.

Thanksgiving was never forgotten in Boston or in California. At each Centre of the work there was a Service at eleven o'clock, for which the altars were decorated with flowers and fruits. One year when the Swami was at the Centre in

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Boston for observance of the day, he sent this greeting to the Ashrama:

A Thanksgiving Message to all my devoted
Friends:

Thanksgiving comes before me with new significance. It is not only that we offer thanks to the all-beneficent Spirit for His bounty and blessing, but most specially I feel thankfulness in my heart for the great blessing of having devoted and loyal hearts as my friends and as friends of the work. Of all blessings, I consider this the most precious.

My prayer goes forth from the depth of my being that every one of you who have crossed the threshold of the Ashrama, may be so blessed with understanding love and beauty of consciousness that your hearts will glow perpetually with thankfulness and joy of God; and in turn that you will carry the atmosphere of this rare spiritual quality wherever you go and to whomever you may contact.

Paramananda

The daily routine of the two Centres of Swami Paramananda's work did not give the full measure of his activities. He had ever increasing demands upon him to speak elsewhere, sometimes far afield. The various letters that follow give an account of his field work. From Boston, he writes:

My dear Ashrama Household:

It is difficult to know where to begin. Soon after I boarded the train, I realized how tired my body was. I hoped that a few days on the train would revive my vitality but it did not seem to.

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I arrived in St. Louis Saturday morning and had a visit with some old friends of the work. After my arrival in Cincinnati, there was very little time left except to reach the hotel and get refreshed for the evening lecture. This I did and I had practically finished my lecture when I realized that I would not be able to stay on my feet any longer. So I sat down, cutting short my speaking and hoping to finish with reading some poems; but through extreme will power, I managed to get across the hall and enter an anteroom and throw myself over a table near an open window. This revived me somewhat, as the lecture hall had hardly any air. This combined with fatigue probably caused this experience. They were all very kind and Dr. Stewart after the meeting came to the hotel and was full of concern for me. You can see how I felt—yet I was forced to keep on with the public work. The evening lecture, which was the best of my visit, was held at the Masonic Temple under the auspices of the Divine Science Church. This was very well attended and very warm appreciation was manifested.

The following day I left Cincinnati and arrived in Boston Tuesday at one o'clock. The same evening we had our first Class. I have felt very tired for the last several days, quite unequal to the various responsibilities which life seems to place upon me, but I think it will all clear, if I can hold fast.

Last Thursday noon I was invited to attend a Luncheon Conference at the Twentieth Century Club under the auspices of the League of Neighbors. Mr. Weller telephoned the invitation and I accepted it. They read some letters from Ma-

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hatma Gandhi, after which another person beside myself spoke and I was very happy that I had attended it.

The same evening we had our regular Class; also in the afternoon I had Dr. Allan as well as a gentleman from Bombay as visitors. So life goes on moving; and although I am not very energetic, I am trying to hold my own as well as I can. It has been pouring here since last night, so considering the weather our attendance this morning was very good, about one hundred present. Tomorrow I leave for New York by the ten o'clock train and on Tuesday morning I shall try to see Walter Hampden. Tuesday afternoon they have arranged a lunch at the Town Hall and I am to take part in it, so I shall not get back until Wednesday. I will try to finish this letter tonight and give you an account of this evening's attendance.

My love to all the Goblins (big and small).

My dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I know you are eagerly waiting to hear the report of my New York trip. I left here last Monday at ten o'clock and arrived in New York at four o'clock. I had just time enough to freshen up, have dinner, then go to Grace Church. I did not feel very well that day but in spite of that I had to meet the occasion.

When I entered the church the Reverend Eliot White, Assistant Rector of Grace Church, received me most cordially and conducted me through the church into the study where I put on my robe. There were a great many others who also greeted me with very warm feeling. Then we

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all walked up to the pulpit. The Grace Church boy choir arrived and marched up. The ceremonies began at eight-fifteen with singing and I was to have been the first on the programme, but through my request two others were put before me. After the hymn by the choir, Reverend Dr. Leavitt of the Union Presbyterian Church, which has one of the greatest followings today, spoke for ten minutes. I was given twenty minutes, being the principal speaker of the evening. I must confess that when I got up to speak, I felt very helpless as I faced this large representative New York audience of twelve to fifteen hundred; but after I had started, there was absolute stillness and it was as if I held the pulse of the audience in my hand.

The subject for the evening was "The Appreciation of Judaism," and the import of my address was that in order to show appreciation of Judaism or any ism we would have to look within our own house—within and ever within. Also I told them that I was grateful that I was born and brought up in a country where the tradition was that of reverence towards all peoples and all religions no matter how strange, peculiar or mysterious these religions may appear outwardly.

Then I told them I was not certain how soon the twenty minutes would be up so I wanted to read something which would give the sum total of my message to them, and I read my poem "My Creed." This held the audience and I heard afterwards their comments. Then the signal came and I very soon sat down. There was applause in spite of Reverend Dr. White's request that there should be no applause after any speaker. When Dr.

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White, who was the Chairman, got up, he said that he also felt like applauding and he did not blame the audience for doing so. Furthermore, he said that it was incredible that twenty minutes had gone by, for it seemed to be like twenty seconds. He said also, it was one of the greatest experiences of his life. I cannot adequately express to you the import of this occasion. I felt, as I expressed to the audience, that it was not a condescending spirit of tolerance that brought us together in spite of ourselves, but it was a symbolic expression of the spirit of the times. It was the call of the times which no one could resist.

Mr. Weller, one of the executives for the Fellowship of Faiths, made a great appeal for funds before the offering was taken up and he told them that that meeting cost them four hundred dollars for announcements, printing of cards and so forth. I was rather moved so I called someone aside and said to him that I would donate four sets of my complete works; I did not expect anyone to announce it, but Mr. Weller immediately got up on the platform and told the audience that Swami Paramananda not only came to them all the way from California, meeting all his own expenses, but was generously contributing four sets of his complete works, twenty-four dollars a set, a total of ninety-six dollars. After the meeting was over, round ten-thirty, ministers, Rabbi Grossman, New Thought Leaders and many others whom I did not know, but who knew me through my books, came and spoke to me. Some people could not wait for the end of the meeting at that late hour, and I was told that a number left the church soon after I finished my address.

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The following day they gave me a luncheon and reception at the New York Town Hall. Although it was called in short order it represented many of the leaders of different organizations. I read to them some of the poems, and three sets of my books were sold then and there. Altogether what I gave amounted to over one hundred dollars. I felt it was a worthy cause and this is going to do a great deal of good toward fostering the spirit of tolerance. I think that Dr. White is the one who ordered a set of my "Practical Series" nearly two years ago, and he and his wife and mother-in-law were most enthusiastic and cordial and they urged and urged me to come to their house for a simple meal and for a more intimate contact.

Now I must give you an account of the most chaotic day I had in New York. After the lecture Monday night I went to bed but I could not sleep, partly because I had eaten nothing and I did not remember it until I had retired and there was not even a bit of chocolate in my suitcase. Next morning the day began early. A number of people came to see me. Mr. Das Gupta came to have a visit as well as to take me to the luncheon conference. We hurried to the Town Hall. After luncheon, at quarter to three, Mr. Ghosal and I rushed to the Vedanta Society to pay my respects there. From there I rushed again to Mrs. Bliss's house to see Walter Hampden, and had tea with Mr. and Mrs. Bliss. Mrs. Hampden was also present.

Mr. Hampden had reserved three seats for me at the theatre, and we enjoyed the performance. I was very tired and many times felt I would have to leave before the performance was over, but I did not have the heart to go away without thank-

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ing Mr. Hampden. He was very lovely and cordial and I found my book of poems "Rhythm of Life" in his dressing room. His and my experience seem to coincide. He said to me he wished he could be only an artist and an actor and not have to take the leadership and management. How like an echo of my own feelings it was. How often I have told you all if I could only give up being a leader, what a relief it would be to me. When I told him that, he laughed and shook hands with great gusto. Then I said to him that perhaps people who did not want leadership are a little better fitted for it, because the others would certainly create a worse confusion with their own ambition. What do you think of such a record for forty-two hours' stay in New York? Life is a funny thing. Whenever I try to cut down all my activities and retire to the background, I am pushed more to the foreground than ever. So it seems.

If everything works out, my plan will be to take the Sunday morning Service in Boston and leave for New York at one-fifteen. That train is due in New York at six-forty-five. I will remain in New York Monday and Tuesday, giving three lectures, also classes and interviews, and leave New York Wednesday morning, remaining in Boston Wednesday to Sunday afternoon.

I am feeling somewhat better, but I need you all to sustain me with your united devotion and loving prayers. My heart is full of tender concern for every one of you and the report of the new house at the Ashrama has given me a great glow of satisfaction. Those who are working for it I want them to have the full measure of bless-

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ing and credit for their devotion. Always with love, prayers and tender blessings for every one of you.

Ever yours, bound for life, and maybe longer and forever.

Letters from the Swami came from various places as he moved about rapidly, lecturing and teaching. He writes :

Beloved Ashrama :

Here I am safely in Cincinnati. Last night there was a nice meeting and more of the old faithful spirit manifested. Mr. Johnson was talking about having a permanent Centre. People are asking everywhere for the translation of the Bhagavad-Gita. Please send six copies each of "Sri Ramakrishna and His Disciples" and "Swami Paramananda and His Work", and some Bhagavad-Gitas to Cincinnati. Louisville showed great enthusiasm. The weather was not good but the ballroom of the hotel was full. Yesterday morning again the Truth Centre was filled to capacity—about one hundred and seventy-five, I think—very good for a morning class. It is a bit strenuous but worth doing.

With love.

Dear Ones :

These days of my journey have passed very rapidly. Louisville gave me a very hearty reception. Every meeting was crowded. I gave in all three talks within twenty-four hours' stay there. Cincinnati is always my old faithful. I am so glad that I spent the day at Grand Rapids. Chi-

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cago friends were just as warmhearted as usual. Columbus will also bear fruit later. My body has kept up pretty well in spite of the strain. Please convey my loving greetings to all the faithful ones.

Always with my hearty prayers for your welfare and that of the Centre.

Lovingly.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I may go to New York next Monday or Tuesday. I shall be entertained at the Harvard Club.

There are two ways of approach to God: one with the intellectual faculty and with the measure of mind trying to discern the heights and depths of God; the other, to realize that all is His and to be able to say, "Place me where Thou wilt and do with me what Thou wilt. I lay myself completely in Thy hands." I have made my choice—the second path. I hope, no matter where I am, no matter what the turmoil, that this consciousness will remain always; and that by thought, word and action, I may give to those whom I contact the same consciousness of God, for this is Life, Truth and Joy. I love you always and I hope and pray that my love may grow in volume and in value as I pray to Him for your blessing. Loving blessing and prayers for all.

From the hotel in Louisville:

Good morning all the early risers of the Ashrama!

I have just finished my breakfast. Louisville surely gives me a grand reception. It began to rain Saturday evening and kept up all yesterday;

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but in spite of the weather the large auditorium was well filled for the morning Service, about five hundred. Three of the Cincinnati group drove me to Louisville, and I had my visit with them in the afternoon. The evening lecture was very crowded. About fifteen minutes before eight every available seat was filled and they had to bring chairs from the whole building. In spite of all this confusion the meeting was most harmonious. I spoke on "Meditation." The people were certainly most keenly enthusiastic. I must get ready now to go to the Truth Centre. This morning's subject is "Overcoming Fear".

Your night Message greeted me this morning and I hope you had a satisfactory Sunday. My thoughts are constantly with you.

Always with love.

P. S. Loving greetings to every one, including the goats, cats and chickens.

This on his journey eastward:

Morning greetings to all the early risers of the Ashrama:

How do you like this new way of greeting? You live in such a paradise, do not forget your responsibility of always keeping it so by your thoughts, words, and deeds. Well, I have been travelling through snow since leaving Cincinnati. Cincinnati visit was satisfactory in many ways. Mr. B— has offered me his motor boat which is now in Maine. I may have it sent to Cohasset Ashrama. It is open and carries eight people.

These trips are strenuous but more than worth while when I see how many people are helped

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through them. It is hard to write on this fast train, so will stop now with my love.

“Where I am there is no stagnation” is becoming more and more true every day. Well, I arrived in Dayton at seven-forty-three A. M. but there was no one at the station to meet me. A young lady representing the Traveller’s Aid Society became greatly interested in locating Mr. Hartzell and the others. We tried to get in touch with the Unity leader. While I was waiting I talked with the young lady and gave her the new booklet. It was interesting to see her appreciation and her understanding.

Very soon a lady came and brought me to the above hotel which is right across from the Unity Centre. They announced noon meeting and also big public lecture at two-thirty P. M. I telephoned Dr. B— and caught him as he was leaving for Dayton. He is driving with the books and will drive me back over the road after the noon meeting. Through some friends’ influence the radio is broadcasting that my lecture will be held at noon instead of two-thirty. People are also busy over the telephone, so we may have a good meeting. It is strenuous; but when I see how much people care for it, I have to forget myself.

This was written from the Ashrama in California to the Centre in Boston:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

I do not know just where to begin. I think the lecture in the Della Robia Room was a success, not merely from the point of view of numbers. I cannot tell you exactly what the number was, but

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a very good one for Saturday evening. The response was very much like the early days when I used to visit Cincinnati so frequently. People were really appreciative.

Early next morning we got into our motors and reached Louisville about half past ten. It gave me half an hour to freshen up and hurry to the Louisville Truth Centre. On my arrival there I found a tremendous crowd, not even standing room anywhere. The Truth Centre had been rearranged in order to accommodate the fullest capacity, but in spite of everything people were standing, sitting on the window sills and in the hallways.

After a luncheon it was time for the next lecture and we walked to the hall. Again to our amazement, we found the place crowded as in the morning. I spoke on "The Need of the Hour" and in the morning on "Creative Power of Thought." The lecture was really very much appreciated by the people, especially the men. Once or twice I paused and it was really amazing, the attention and silence in spite of the crowded hall.

The following morning there was another lecture. We again had a very lovely meeting. Of course, my choice is when there are not so many. I think at the Monday morning Service there were approximately one hundred and fifty people, and it was a lovely, intimate meeting, more like a class. I spoke on "Let us Give up Fear."

After the lecture we hurried to the hotel and did not try to have any lunch as it was time to go to the station. Several accompanied me to the train. I must tell you something very sweet. When I went to my hotel room, I found a beautiful

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tray of fruits, with a card from the management of the hotel with their compliments. This touched me very much. It touched others, also.

I do not think I ever had any more successful lecture tour. I arrived in Chicago in good season and there was a young man from the Chicago Centre who came with two of their Vivekananda Memorial books to be autographed by me.

Ever and ever with loving prayers and blessings.

Here the Swami reverses the direction and writes from the Centre in Boston to the Ashrama in California :

Dear and Devoted Ones :

I have just finished reading your account of the rain and the disturbance it created. It is strange how terribly restless I felt on Thursday and Friday without any apparent reason, but now after reading your letters I know exactly why it was I felt so heavy-hearted. As I said before, I am going to repeat again how consecratedly we must live and how prayerfully. Nothing happens without having a great purpose behind it. I realize more and more how constantly His beneficent protection surrounds us. In order that we may never become unconscious of this fact, we must keep our mind steadily at His Divine Feet with humility and surrender.

My visit to New York was indeed most warmly received. In the morning at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre there was a very large attendance. The dinner was not so greatly attended because of the severe snowstorm. Fortunately I

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did not stay in New York as long as I had at first planned. I had a premonition I should leave by day train, so I started at three o'clock in the afternoon and arrived in Boston at nine-ten, only one hour late. I think the later trains were held up for a longer time. One is absolutely helpless in such stormy weather. Even a great city like New York is not able to take care of its traffic. Our Class, last night, was a very good one. Tomorrow we are having a reception and I hope the weather will be favorable enough for many to attend.

With my deep love and prayers for your safe-keeping.

This again to the Ashrama from Louisville:

Dear Ones:

This is just a line to tell you that all is well so far. The snowstorm is certainly playing havoc here. Last night as we were driving we saw many terrible accidents. We could not make the hill, so it was suggested that we walk and leave the car behind. You can imagine us walking on the ice, and the road full of skidding cars. Well it was an adventure and finally we had to seek shelter at a stranger's house and telephone Mrs. Kelly to send for us. I could write a volume about what we saw last night. There were approximately one hundred who came in that terrible storm to hear me. I must stop now and go to the meeting. Yesterday morning's meeting was crowded, over three hundred.

With love.

The letters which follow deal with several of

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the Swami's transcontinental journeys during which he stopped and lectured at Cincinnati, Louisville and elsewhere:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

You have been in my mind so very constantly these days. I even thought of telephoning you from Louisville. I hoped to hear from you, but nothing came.

My time in Louisville was quite full as usual. We drove from Cincinnati on Sunday morning and arrived in Louisville just in time for the morning Service. With dinners, luncheons and five lectures in two days, I was kept busy every minute. Someone drove me back from Louisville to Cincinnati yesterday and we had a private Class at the Gibson Hotel last evening. I am realizing that I cannot lead any more this race-horse existence—the body has not the same resistance. Perhaps the Divine Mother has other plans for me.

With all my love.

Dear Ones of the Centre:

I am going to take a few moments at this early hour, six-forty-five A.M., to tell you that all is well with me through Divine Grace. The train arrived in Cincinnati on time and two or three of the group were there to greet me. After I had my private worship we took our breakfast and I had a visit with them in my room. Mr. N— took us for a drive through a new park. Then I got ready for the special dinner. Next was the meeting in my room—about thirty were present. It was a very nice visit.

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We left Cincinnati by motor at about eight-thirty. It was raining. The weather has been gloomy and rainy. We reached Louisville yesterday at about nine-forty-five A.M. It gave me an hour to get ready for the meeting. The first thing I found in my room was a tray of fruit again as a compliment from the hotel management. The meeting was an overflow one. It was really too crowded, but people were most appreciative. I came back to the hotel to rest for a while at three, but had to give an interview. The evening meeting had more people than usual. I spoke on "Power of Silence" and was greatly relieved that the crowd was not like the morning one. I autographed many books after the meeting and had a little visit with some friends. Louisville certainly gives me hearty welcome.

I am on the train now. Everything went beautifully this morning. Deep love for every one of you.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I am on my way to Boston after a very pleasant visit in Washington. The Swami looked after me constantly and yesterday morning we had a very beautiful long drive and also visited the Capitol. Last night's meeting was successful and there was a capacity audience for the little Chapel. Every one was most appreciative and I met many who knew me through my books.

Dear Ones of the Centre:

I will try to give a brief account of a long-short five days. After leaving you I reached New York on time, but the airport limousine had to push through a very congested traffic. Then I

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found Swami Nikhilananda. The meeting was well attended, considering it had no publicity, due to the eleventh hour arrangement. There were approximately one hundred and fifty, and they were most enthusiastic. The Monday noon meeting was also well attended considering the oddness of the hour. New York traffic is something too terrible at that hour.

We did not have nearly enough "Daily Thoughts and Prayers", and could have sold three or four times as many. I autographed a number of books, but you will get the account directly.

From the Centre in Boston :

Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

I feel, tonight, a strange apathy which I cannot account for in any way except perhaps that the public work no longer seems to appeal to me. It is not that I do not like my work; for instance, tonight's Class was a great inspiration to me as well as to all those who came. It was a very large Class and I felt grateful that so many received help and fresh inspiration through it. If it were not for the feeling that others derive benefit from it, I think I would drop the public work in a moment.

My home is the whole world, not in a figurative way, but in the most realistic way. You see, I am almost afraid to write these thoughts because some of you would feel deeply my mood and would grieve and that would only make my heart sadder. I want you to understand that my mind is greatly changed in regard to public activities. It does not mean that I want to be inactive or give up

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that which is best and highest. The whole world is going through change and readjustment and I cannot claim any exception.

I like to feel that my own mind is entirely detached from the work, and those of you who are actively engaged in its welfare may be inspired to carry on. The work here is going with remarkable steadfastness, but as I have said, my own mind is so far removed from all public activities that it is difficult for me to relish any of it. The only thing that holds me is the thought that my presence brings benefit and happiness to many.

With my abiding love and constant prayers.

IX

LATER VISITS TO INDIA

It was in December, 1906, that Swami Paramananda first landed in America. For five years he worked steadily in his new field, then returned to India in 1911 for a visit of several months. Fifteen years elapsed before he went again. In 1926 and 1927 he paid two successive visits; then another interval of six years, and in 1933, '35 and '37 he made three voyages. Whenever he went and wherever he passed he was received with great honor and entertained generously. On one journey the steamer missed connection and he was forced to spend nearly a week at Hongkong. When it was learned that he was there, a meeting of all the Hindu residents was called and he was invited to deliver a lecture. Many of those present knew him already through his books; they entertained him in their homes and placed their cars at his disposal. When he was leaving, he found that all obligations at the hotel had been met, not only his, but those of two members of the Ashrama Community who were travelling to India with him.

Of an earlier voyage these letters give a picture in full detail. The first one makes plain the cause

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of his going and was written from the Ashrama. Those that follow were written on board ship:

Dear Vedanta Centre Household:

I have received a letter from Swami Shivananda who is in failing health, and he is pleading with me to come now as he is not likely to live a very long time. Also as I gave him certain hope when I announced my coming with Mr. and Mrs. Stokowski, I feel that I must go, and go by the quickest way. All the detailed plans have not been worked out yet.

Too much human will leads to disaster, and I hope and pray every moment that at least I can abandon pursuance of human will. One of the strongest thoughts that come to my mind is that wherever I am, whatever may be my work, it should never become so small, narrow and exclusive that it should exclude any one. If it becomes that, it also excludes me. Whatever happens I want everything to be done with a deeper spiritual consecration and insight. Too much scheming and planning and discussing rob us of our clear vision, and we can never expect to be a right channel. Wherever I am, India, Europe, or in this country, whatever may be the situation, I am convinced that spiritual living, renewed consecration, is the only way to solve our perplexities. "Thee I love in all, and all I love for Thee." Beginning and end and all that is between, my spirit pulsates with this fundamental thought. Try to understand it and you will not misunderstand me. Love and more love and yet more love will overcome what is not loving and lovable.

Pax Vobiscum.

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Dear Ashrama Household :

We are just docking, but this afternoon it seemed more like ducking. It is still raining. The boat seems very steady now as it nears the dock and I am quite certain it will be steadier if it is taken out of water. Of course we get used to almost everything. The trouble with us is that we are so abundantly blessed in every way that it is difficult to remember the other side. All experiences are to give us greater balance. Without balance there is no steadiness and without steadiness how can there be any peace or happiness. Balance, balance, balance! Make that your mantram and let it manifest through your every thought, word and action. "Man of vision hold fast." Defeat can never be his who has gained the art of steadfastness.

More will come later if you do not hold the thought too strongly that I have forgotten how to write. My love, the only steady thing left in me, is ever yours.

Three days later the Swami writes :

There is very little I can say except that in a short while we will be sailing off. My love I send you always and my prayers are yours at all times. I feel so very tired that I shall not venture to say anything now, but I want every one of you to receive a personal message from me through this.

Again three days later :

My thoughts are constantly with you although the distance is growing greater all the time. The

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boat rocks continuously because I think it is built for rocking, but it does not bother me in the least. I am feeling rested. I have slept soundly for several nights, the salt air is relaxing.

On December twenty-first this greeting went to Boston:

To all the dear and faithful friends of the Vedanta Centre of Boston:

My thoughts are more constantly with you than you realize. My life and activities have been for past twenty years with you. Through these long years a deep and profound spiritual kinship has grown which distance cannot diminish. I feel your loving thoughts and prayers almost in every turn of the way. During my absence I hope and pray that the great ideals you have so long cherished in your hearts may grow more living and vibrant, that through your life and example others may learn the practical value of Vedanta.

May God bless you is my abiding prayer for every one of you.

With love and trust.

Ananda Ashrama Sisters and Brothers:

We have enjoyed so very much this truly beautiful place, Honolulu. Some day we must have a little cottage here and come for week ends. It will be worth the exertion. It has been raining here at intervals, but we had a beautiful ride and now are back on the President Monroe, ready for a long slow hike. We like her better, she grows on acquaintance.

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This on Christmas day to the Ashrama:

My thoughts are with you all naturally today. What a strange way to spend Christmas. The sea is very rough and most people are feeling somewhat down. I sent a great bunch of letters from Honolulu. I trust they will reach you safely. Also the first night after sailing from San Francisco I sent you a Radio message, transmit Boston and again, from Honolulu, sent you a Christmas greeting message. Please let me know if you have received them all. There is very little to say in the way of news. Honolulu fascinated me and some day it may be nice to have a little Ashrama as a link in the great chain of world unity I am dreaming of. Who knows what the future has in store for us. This is only a time for dreaming as far as I am concerned. But after dreaming we face the reality of life and action and it is there we have to prove our stamina.

Perhaps you can sense from the unsteadiness of these lines how the ship is rocking. It has been rough all day and now it is five o'clock and it seems to be growing rougher. This is one of the great and fundamental lessons of life we must all try to learn and that is to keep steady under all circumstances—rough and smooth. "Steadily sail along." Those who have learned to do this they are great winners. May you all, every one of you, become great winners is my constant prayer. Early in the morning, as I rise very early, my thoughts turn to you all and my prayers go up for every one of you, noble souls of holy consecration.

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To all the Sisters and Brothers of Ananda
Ashrama :

A happy New Year, a beautiful New Year and a peaceful New Year for every one of you. Such wishes and prayers have I sent out. This is not peculiar for me to do only on Christmas and New Year, but such wishes are current in my thoughts. When you are yourself happy and peaceful, you naturally share your peace and happiness with others. There is no limit to our capacity to do this. In fact our inner life unfolds rapidly as we begin to dwell on this aspect.

Difficulties are created for our good, is not merely a pleasant little sentiment, but great minds ever derive benefit through this measure. How we need to remember this and not lose faith and heart. Yesterday and the day before I wrote about sixteen poems. When they come, they come very much like a school of fish. You either catch them then and there or you lose them. There was enough noise last evening till midnight to drive away all inspiration for a time at least. No matter how long I may live in the occident, that is something I shall never learn to appreciate, finding pleasure in noise. Every man after his taste.

We are having rough weather all the time now. If we get out of it alive, we will be closer to immortality. That is a consummation devoutly to be wished. The New Year has not begun with you as yet. Well it is just as well, once you begin with it you will have to finish it.

May the all-beneficent Mother bless you all and increase your power to do good to many and gladden many hearts. Ever yours, bound by irresistible power of love and devotion.

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To the Vedanta Centre :

You have all been in my thoughts constantly, specially during this season. What is Christmas without Boston chill and snow. And as for New Year it should not be begun except at the great hub. There is plenty of wind and abundant chill here, but it lacks that cutting something which Boston wind alone has. Oh! how I miss it. This letter is meant for New Year's greetings, but so far I have overlooked all the solemn ceremonies. There is only one ceremony here logically possible for me to perform and that is baptism. As far as we can see at present there is nothing but water. Water before, water behind and on all sides there is only water. Below us there is nothing but water—too deep to think about. Even from above there are frequent showers bestowed upon us.

January 5th, 1928. We are very near Kobe now, only some hundred miles to go. Tomorrow morning at seven we are due there. If no one meets me, we will do some sightseeing. It is pretty cold in Japan now, but our staterooms are comfortable. On the whole the trip has proved very restful so far. We must try to revive our spiritual shiningness through constant mindfulness of our goal—our ideal. This is the kind of revival I believe in. My mind reaches out more and more for the larger interest of world unity, but I realize that we are nothing but puppets unless He chooses us and gives us the power to do.

I hope that my letters from Honolulu reached you and also the Christmas wire sent from Honolulu. I am in love with Honolulu, it is truly beautiful and deserves real poetry of praise. Give my loving greetings to all the faithful ones. I hope

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they will all help to hold the fort. My love and prayers go out to you all for your safe-keeping. May you all keep well in body and mind. May you become invulnerable through your devotion and prayers. Amen.

This letter was written off the coast of Japan where the accident occurred:

Strange turn of destiny! Yesterday morning at seven-twelve our ship suddenly stopped and from the sensation I realized it had struck something and stuck. It was stuck in mud for about fourteen hours and then only moved into the nearest harbor to wait. We have been waiting since last night for examination—a whole lot of red tape. It is very cold, bitter wind is blowing. I have all my warmest clothes on. We have to be grateful that it is not any worse. We have at least a nice, comfortable, warm ship for shelter. I hope that we will be able to move on very soon and not have to go to a dry dock, or need to change from this to another ship.

We had a very pleasant visit at Kobe with Mr. Utsuki, only he was misinformed about our arrival and did not come to meet us until eleven o'clock. In the meantime we had gone to Kyoto and only met him on our return at seven. We went out with him and his cousin.

We are of course a day late arriving at Manila. Mr. Utsuki's proposition for me to come back Japan-way and give some lectures at his university and at Tokyo interested me greatly. But I do not like to undertake this long journey again so soon. He also wishes to translate some of my books.

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Like the preceding ones the letter which follows was written during the voyage of 1927 and 1928. The Temple at the Ashrama in California was then under construction, hence the Swami's suggestions.

To All:

We are really approaching Singapore, just think of that. We have managed somehow to kill six weeks, but it was not an easy task. Around Christmas and New Year it seemed to me that all that existed was naught but water, and also I discovered the origin of the mountains, specially the higher ones. There were certain portions of earth which tried to escape from being swallowed up by the high waves. They rose higher and higher as the waves came after them. Finally the waves gave up the fray in sheer disgust and let those high peaks stick up at random. But remember the ocean has not given up her ancient grudge and I was inclined to think that on New Year's Eve she was starting another war. If you only had seen those waves, you would have been convinced. Now this is an authentic story, but do not make it too public until I copyright it. You can say there is no fish in this, only whales and sharks. Special edition for the exclusive use of Ananda Ashrama.

You would have been much amazed if you had heard me speak before the Indian Association at Manila. They were so full of regret that I could not stay there longer. It certainly was a surprise to me to find a community of Hindu merchants at far-away Manila. They entertained me lavishly

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and showed us about. In the evening several automobiles were placed at our disposal.

Now to speak of what is uppermost in my thought. The Temple work has begun, I cannot tell you how thrilled I was to get this news. I trust that all is going on well in connection with it through Divine Grace. My thoughts are often there you can easily understand. I wonder whether or not to make the Library a little wider and also to have an artistic fireplace. I picture a great deal of activity there—classes, social afternoons. Perhaps this part of construction may await my arrival, but still the architect, Mr. Hillman, may want to provide for it in his general plans. This may not seem vital enough but we must think of these little details. The entrances of Library and studio and weaving department must have clear glass like the display windows. This I think will add to the appearance as well as to all practical purposes.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

So much has happened since our arrival in Singapore that it would be impossible for me to give a detailed description of it. There was a very touching reception on the steamer and people kept on coming. Unfortunately the time for arrival was announced at eleven-thirty A.M. and it docked at seven. All day long people came and came in groups, although the distance is about seven miles from the heart of the city. The same silk merchant is still here and this time he is more determined than ever to follow me. We took our lunch with him at noon and at his store met four of our fellow passengers. After a fairly long drive we

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were brought here and I expected to take a rest before the evening, but several visitors came.

The reception was a real success. I have rarely known a public meeting of its size and mixture to go on as smoothly as it did. I was overwhelmed with sincere tributes. My reply came freely and smoothly. It was an unique occasion, to say the least. Today I speak at five o'clock and dine somewhere after it. Tomorrow and the day after, at eight-thirty in the evening. On Sunday I expect to leave for Kuala Lumpur and stay there till Wednesday; then we visit Ipoh, Taiping and Penang, before sailing for Rangoon. At Rangoon I expect to spend at least three days and from there sail for Calcutta.

This may not sound like a vacation, but it is impossible to refuse these enthusiastic people. My spirit cannot be bound. I feel a strange urge for the "World unity mission." You will some day know all about it, in the meantime you can draw your own conclusions. It means no more and no less than "world unity" on a practical basis. I am a dreamer and suddenly I cannot cease to be one on anybody's account. Many of my dreams have come true and why not this one?

I must go in town now, the car has come. My heart is full, very full, and out of the fullness I send you my most tender love, affection and blessings. Each one of you grows dearer to me every day, and know that I place my hope and trust in you.

Travel seemed to stimulate the Swami's mood for writing. In his earlier years he was an active correspondent. As his work expanded, his letters

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grew fewer and fewer, but with the increase in his journeying's the earlier habit returned. He dictated when he could, but on an ocean steamer or in a train this was not possible and he wrote with his own hand such long letters as the one which follows. Evidently the enforced leisure of a long voyage gave him courage to undertake so exhaustive a description of his journey as this one, written on his way to Rangoon in February of 1928:

Dear Ones:

Where to begin and if I should begin how could I ever end. Twenty-third of January was certainly a memorable day when President Monroe docked at Singapore at about six o'clock in the morning. At first I did not see any one and afterwards we found that the arrival was announced for eleven. Soon people began to arrive and finally Swami Adyananda, (the one who accompanied me to Delhi) and the reception committee arrived with garlands and offerings. It was a very impressive ceremony. The secretary of the reception committee with a touching speech garlanded me, and some one sprinkled me with perfume. By this time a large number had gathered. Many of our fellow passengers were interested, surprised and some awestruck. Mr. Adams begged to take a picture, another lady took a moving picture. Then finally after handing over the luggage, we landed. There were two or three hundred people at the pier to greet us as we drove away in automobiles to Mr. Namatia's bungalow. This is where Dr. Tagore also stayed.

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People kept on coming all day long. The place was seven and one-half miles away from the city, otherwise you can imagine what would have happened. Our lunch was provided by the Tamil community—very hot. In the evening there was a regular stream of people. The musical entertainment lasted an hour. Dinner very late and sleep was almost nil.

January 24th: Tuesday morning after breakfast Mr. Tahatram (the merchant who wanted to follow me last time I was at Singapore, he is even more determined now) came with an automobile to take us to his store. We lunched there, then back to our bungalow to rest a little and then to get ready for the public reception.

The public reception was held at the Town Hall. It was full when we arrived there and more people came and stood outside. It was a very touching occasion. There were leading men from every community present—Hindus, Moslems, Chinese, Malayens, Christians, Americans and Europeans. The president after first garlanding me made a very sincere speech telling them of my work, then the address of welcome was read by the secretary of the reception committee, Dr. Pathay. My reply was "My Mission in America." One point I touched upon was universally appreciated and that was the "Commonwealth of Humanity." This first note rang through all my words in one way or another. There were about a dozen people who came from the "President Monroe."

January 25th: Wednesday morning after breakfast we tried to attend to our passage, then returned home at about ten o'clock. It was a very strenuous day. I spoke on "India's Contribution to the World Thought."

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January 26th: Thursday. I do not remember the details very well after twelve days of constant activities. In the afternoon there were quite a number of visitors. Also Mr. Pillai, who presided that evening, came for an interview. The evening lecture was at eight-thirty. I spoke on "The Pulse of Time." After the lecture, Mr. Pillai entertained us with ice cream at Raffen's Hotel. That was all the supper we had.

January 27th: Friday. Again we went to town and had many activities. In the evening there was one of the most important functions—reception at the "Mariamena Temple." They took us around in regular Temple procession after first garlanding me at the entrance. There were lights, waving of incense and music. They took this occasion to unveil a new Temple image, which was the greatest honor they could confer upon anyone. After my lecture, which lasted a long time, we were taken to a Bengali gentleman's house where they performed "Swaraswati Puja." Here we had a regular Bengali feast. Then at a very late hour we returned to the bungalow.

January 28th: People began to arrive even before our lunch. I saw them at intervals. Our first Saturday evening engagement was six P.M. at the Vivekananda Sangam where they presented me with an address of welcome; then my reply was translated into Tamil at intervals as I paused. Garlands, music and shouts were not absent. Saturday evening, our next engagement was at about seven-thirty P.M. at the Arya Sangam. Here also I spoke and Swami Adyananda translated into Hindustani. Then after eight P.M. we arrived at the Indian Association anniversary meeting which was practically the crowning of my visit at Sin-

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gapore. There were dozens of tables arranged for the guests somewhat in style of Harvard class day; orchestra was playing, also there were Hindu musicians on the platform. At first I thought it was going to be a formal occasion and I was to be just a guest. But after my opening speech everything centered around what I had said. There were many speakers. This gathering represented the picked men of Malaya. At the end the president requested me to distribute the athletic prizes, which were mostly beautiful silver cups. The whole occasion was so very impressive that I was impelled to give another speech at the close.

Sunday, January 29th, was also a very full day. I spoke at the Theosophical Society at nine A.M., visited some stores and then to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Mundall (who are very much interested.) He is an English lawyer, she is Polish. We arrived at the bungalow at about two-thirty P.M. and already there was a crowd awaiting us. From that time till we left at eight P.M. for Kuala Lumpur it was full to the utmost. They took group pictures and also mine separately. There were many at the station to see us off and some accompanied us to the next station. Our merchant came still farther. I have tried to give you a little picture of Singapore with my own pen, but I think it is a very poor one. I am doing it in a great hurry as I must finish before we reach Rangoon tomorrow. Let me tell you this, that the visit was most overwhelming and absolutely beyond all expectations.

January 30th: Monday morning at about seven we arrived at Kuala Lumpur, were met and garlanded. Quite a number were present, but the previous day over two hundred came to the sta-

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tion to receive us. They expected us on Sunday morning, but it was impossible for us to leave Singapore any sooner. We were driven to the monastery in an automobile decorated with flowers. Swami Videhananda of course met us and conducted us with the reception committee. After breakfast we went to the hotel where I stayed before. After lunch I was again brought to the Math (monastery) and then we were taken to the Town Hall in a procession. Town Hall was full (thousand or more) and after the president's speech the address of welcome was read and my reply given. Then a ride which was very beautiful. Dinner was about eight and then I had a long session and did not get to bed until very late hour.

January 31st: In the morning I had several visitors, among them was Mr. Mullick, a Bengali barrister-at-law, who spoke with great appreciation of my poems. He also presided at the afternoon lecture at five. I had to go to the Math and then had lunch at the hotel after two. Next I had to get ready for the lecture. I spoke on "Practical Spirituality." The audience was larger than the first evening and Mr. Mullick paid a glowing tribute. After that a large number of men gathered and I sat up with them. After late dinner again I had another group of visitors and retired late.

February 1st: We left for Ipoh at eight A.M. There were quite a number to see us off. Swami Adyananda also accompanied us. We had our breakfast in the dining-car, which seemed quite up to date. We enjoyed the country very much as we went along slowly. The trains do not run very fast in this part of the world and I wonder,

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at the rate they travel here, how long it would take for me to cross the continent. We reached Ipoh at about one o'clock and again we were received by a delegation of twenty-five or more with garlands. We drove to the Wassumul Store, where rooms were specially prepared for our reception. From sanitary point of view it was utterly impossible for us to spend the night, so after great difficulty they secured one room at the hotel. The reason was that next day there was a big horse race and the whole city was crowded with visitors. The Sultan came there with his household, otherwise we would have been entertained at his quarters.

I managed to get ready for the lecture at six-thirty. We had just a few minutes to drive as far as the Sultan's palace and then to the Town Hall. We were received and conducted to the stage. After president's speech I was presented with an address of welcome. My reply was on "India's Spiritual Heritage." After I had finished Swami Adyananda spoke. The hall was full—some seven hundred or more. This was arranged on twenty-four hours' notice. After the lecture they took me in procession with lights, music and shouts; it seemed that thousands took part in it and others watched from the balconies. It was an impressive sight. Then we had dinner and afterwards they took us for a drive, but I was so sleepy that I almost fell out of the car. Then when it all ended I had a hard time going to sleep. Sometime I will tell you how we spent the night. Swami Adyananda stayed with me. It was quite cool next morning and everything looked like a beautiful picture.

February 2nd: We left Ipoh after breakfast at

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eight-thirty A.M. in two automobiles. Two friends accompanied us. It was a delightful ride and we saved one hour and a half over the mail train. If again I tour through this country, I shall certainly do it by motor. After we passed Taiping and about seven miles away from Parit Bunter we were met by Dr. Josi, Mr. Sen Gupta and their children. We were garlanded, of course, and then we reached our destination. There is no hotel at Parit Bunter, as it is a very small place, so they arranged our stay at the rest house, which was very modest indeed. Then after a little pause we went to Dr. Josi's house and were received with real Hindu ceremonies of ardent devotion. Sen Gupta's family was also present with all their children. They had a special holiday in honor of my coming. We had a very sumptuous lunch and then we were taken back to our quarters and I tried to rest.

The evening lecture was arranged at Taiping, about thirty-two miles from Parit Bunter, so we had to get ready and leave at about five. We were late in starting so the driver went most of the time about fifty miles an hour over narrow and winding roads. It was a new Chevrolet of Mr. Sen Gupta's and rode extremely well. We had several showers along the way. It was a beautiful drive; such foliage I have seldom seen. We arrived a little before six and were received at the Temple with music, garlands, sandalwood paste and offerings. Refreshments were served to the entire party, which seemed like a regiment. Then several motor cars went along with us for a little ride around Taiping Lake; very charming.

We reached Town Hall exactly at six-thirty and were met at the entrance. Mr. MacLeod, the

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head master of the school, presided. His appreciation was most profound. He expressed great surprise at the simple way I handled my subject. He said that he came that evening under great misapprehension, expecting to hear some abstract philosophy. He again and again expressed his surprise. We left Taiping at about eight P.M. and arrived soon after nine and then to Mr. Sen Gupta's house for dinner. You can imagine what a full day it was.

February 3rd: Friday morning after breakfast we got our things packed in one car, with another one for our use. Some pictures were taken as we were leaving Parit Bunter. Another beautiful ride, then we reached the jetty (the other side of Penang). We were received here by a dozen or more people and garlanded, of course. We reached Penang by ferry and were taken to a merchant's store where refreshments were served. I gave several interviews. Then we were taken to the Indian Association, very much like a club house. We had our lunch there, then our friends Dr. Josi, Mr. Sen Gupta and their families arrived just before the lecture. My theme was "Commonwealth of Humanity." Mr. Abdul Khader, a Moslem barrister-at-law, presided and also Swami Adyananda told them something about my work in America. Afterwards the president took us for a ride through most beautiful country and then to his home, which impressed us greatly. It is a very up-to-date dwelling, furnished in good taste.

After dinner we went to the boat. Here I must tell you a surprising thing that happened. Mr. Abdul asked if I would have any objection if his wife drove me to the jetty. At first I thought she

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was merely coming with us, but she sat at the wheel and drove. This is probably the highest honor a Moslem lady can pay to a guest. Many were awaiting us at the jetty. We were garlanded and then to the ship. Quite a number accompanied us. Once more we were garlanded by another group and also I met some of the officers who were Bengalis. Finally the ship started at midnight and we stood on deck watching the beautiful hills of Penang and turning over in our minds what had passed since our arrival at Singapore.

I did not retire until one A.M. I am very grateful for these two days and a half on water. Yesterday I made up my mind that I must keep a record of all these happenings, so I am sending this document. You must not regard this as a letter but only as a very rough survey of the whole experience in Malaya. Please make a copy of it as soon as you receive this and send this on to the Ashrama. It was a pity that we did not have a supply of books; hundreds of these could have been disposed of.

I want to get back as soon as possible. I may reach New York May first. I shall send a cable as soon as it is decided. My heart is full of tender love and prayers for every one of you. And all this honor and glory which He has bestowed upon me I want to share with every one of you and may your hearts expand with gladness and deeper consecration. Ever yours, I am bound by unbreakable thread of love.

At the next halting place, Rangoon, there was no cessation of activities, rather there was reason for them to increase. An American friend who

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was married to a prominent Burmese gentleman, lived in Rangoon and was eager to entertain the Swami, also the Ramakrishna Mission had an important centre there. The honor shown him during his visit was overwhelming. He had no rest night or day. Only the habit of self-sacrifice made it possible for him to endure the strain. He tells of his experiences in this letter written on the steamer after leaving Rangoon for Calcutta. It must be remembered always in reading these letters that the Swami was writing to his community, to whom every detail was of interest, especially those of a personal nature.

Dear Ones :

Once more I have a little time to myself after a most strenuous five days' stay at Rangoon. The steamer arrived there Monday afternoon, February sixth, and a number of people came to the jetty to receive us. We were first taken to the Ramakrishna Seva Ashram (Hospital), then from there to our quarters, which they call the guest house. From that moment till we left Rangoon this morning we did not have any real privacy. People, people, people, a steady stream of them at all hours. Sometimes the Swamis arrived and came directly to my room at five o'clock in the morning. First evening a gentleman called Dr. Dey, took us for a lovely ride and then we had a number of visitors and I talked till a late hour.

February 7th: Tuesday morning after breakfast we were taken to the Buddhist Pagoda, the famous one, Shwe Dagon. We had to take off our

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shoes and stockings. We spent a long time there and it was a great thing to see. Someday I shall hope to tell you about it. It represents so much and such varied phases of life and religion that I shall not venture to write about it. We were very tired, naturally, because we had to climb many steps and cover much ground. No sooner we had finished our lunch, visitors arrived and through a Moslem lady we learned that Beth Jewett (Mrs. Paw Tun) was here. In the afternoon we were taken to the Ramakrishna free reading room and library. An informal reception was given me here. After the garlanding took place, I spoke for a while.

When we left this place, we were taken to the "Health Exhibition" and here we met Mrs. Paw Tun. As soon as she saw me, she ran towards us and seemed so happy. We had a very pleasant time here and met a number of people. When we returned to our quarters we found many people awaiting us. I sat with them and talked until very late hour.

February 8th: Wednesday morning we went out with Dr. Dey for a little ride after breakfast. Rangoon is very hot and dusty. After the beautiful green foliage of Malaya, the contrast seemed very great. The mornings are rather cool this time of the year, so we went out in the morning and evening usually. Afterwards I stayed at home to see Mrs. Paw Tun. The public reception took place at five-thirty and an English gentleman, who holds very high office, presided. After the usual ceremonies of garlanding and reading the address of welcome, I delivered my reply. What followed I shall try to tell you as briefly as possible. It would be impossible for me to write all

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the details of what took place on Thursday and Friday. Therefore I shall be brief, as brevity is the very soul of all true expression.

February 9th: Thursday morning Mrs. Paw Tun came to take us to her home for breakfast, but Swami Shyamananda, the one in charge of the Rangoon Ashrama, arrived. Also I met Mr. Paw Tun, he is a very nice man and is holding quite an important place in Rangoon. Mrs. Paw Tun secured some passes for the legislative counsel opening and we heard his excellency the Governor. I came back for my lunch. At lunch time usually lots of boys gathered during their recess. After a little rest, I had to get ready for the lecture. I spoke on "Commonwealth of Humanity" and there was a large crowd—one thousand or more. It stirred people very much and also it stirred the speaker. After the lecture we went down to Mrs. Paw Tun's house and several gathered there. They got a boy to show the California Ashrama pictures, then I talked to them and read from the poems. It was about ten when we went to the Seva Ashram, where quite a large group was awaiting us to see the pictures. After all this, when we reached our quarters I was physically so tired that I preferred not to eat anything but to go to bed.

February 10th: Friday morning I think Swami Shyamananda came to my room between four-thirty and five and told me of his work. Before I had had time to wash my face even, the carriage came for an engagement at seven. We drove to the Seva Ashram Hospital Wards and visited there; then to a devotee's house; and then to the lecture at the Bengal Academy, where a large number of boys and girls had gathered; the in-

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spector of schools presided. Mrs. Paw Tun again claimed me and drove us to her house and there I had to visit with some people; gave an interview to a Parsee gentleman who took a complete set of my books. Also I read some of the poems. After lunch I had some visitors and tried to rest a few minutes, but Rangoon is hopelessly hot. Then the hour for the lecture arrived. The subject was the "Pulse of Time." There was a very large gathering—between one thousand and fifteen hundred. A Burmese gentleman presided. After this there was a picture show—California Ashrama pictures. Then the ladies' meeting and another picture show. It lasted till nearly ten o'clock. I did not have my dinner until nearly midnight and only a little sleep. I woke up at about four-thirty and then the visitors began to arrive. We had to leave the house at about seven and the launch left the jetty at seven-thirty. Quite a number came to the ship and we sailed away at about ten o'clock. Yesterday I was called upon to conduct a Divine Service on the ship.

I was very tired on Friday. Three public lectures and so many social engagements left no time for normal rest. I have tried to rest up during these last two days. Before my arrival in Calcutta I am planning my leaving for America. It seems strange but I feel a pull and also I feel that what I was brought here for is already fulfilled. You must all try to understand. My heart is yearning without words.

Bless you. Know that all that is mine is yours at all times. About thirty-seven little Reflections I have written on this voyage. I shall be so happy when I can gather you all together and read them. Ever and ever yours in His name.

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The Swami remained but a short time in India. He had received an enthusiastic welcome on his arrival there, but he felt the urge to return to his work in the West. It was not until 1933 that he undertook another visit. He tells of his voyage in these letters which he called jestingly "Travel Classics."

TRAVEL CLASSIC VOLUME I.

To all the dear Ones of Ashrama and Centre:

This is the very first letter I am writing this year and by every right it should go to you. My heart's prayers and wishes have already gone out to you. Last night as you were having your Service I held a simple Service in my cabin with my travelling companions. None of us wanted to go up and join the midnight frolics, but quietly retired.

Now I must begin from the beginning and give you an account of all that has taken place since my departure from the beloved Ashrama. I felt quite a pang as I saw you all standing on the dock as the ship was pulling out. Then my heart went up in tender prayer for the safety of every one of you. May all loving Mother bless you and help you to reach your goal.

It is needless to say that my body was tired and so I did only the necessary things and retired early. We arrived in San Francisco at about two o'clock. As we did not see any familiar faces at the dock, I settled down to read my mail which numbered over a dozen letters.

The following day, December twenty-ninth, I rose early in order to be able to send a few im-

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portant letters of greeting before my guests arrived. Soon after breakfast the Swami arrived with two friends, and then Dr. and Mrs. True came. Dr. True sat at the piano and played the compositions he had written to my poems. Mrs. True recited "Thy Holy Lamp" and "Inspiration." Afterwards Dr. True sang eight of the songs. It was indeed a rare treat. We sat in the lounge room which is beautifully decorated.

January 2nd, nine-thirty A.M. A glorious day, full of sunshine and the air is balmy. We are, I think, about three hundred miles from Honolulu now and we are due there tomorrow morning early. Yesterday was full of interesting happenings. First we gathered on the boat deck at eight-thirty A.M. for Japanese New Year ceremony. The Captain made a speech in his own native tongue which I understood perfectly with a very slight exception and that was the language. The Captain is a very nice genial gentleman. I was presented to him by the purser and I found him very cordial. At about eleven there was a special dance in the lounge room in Japanese costumes. At twelve-twenty we passed "Tatsuta Maru", sister ship to this one. Of course there were many special dishes both for luncheon and dinner. At eight-thirty P.M. fireworks on the deck and at eight-forty-five moving pictures, all Japanese. It was interesting to see the contrast. There was absolutely no love-making on the screen.

I have written you a whole volume, but I have not said the things which are closest to my heart. I realize more and more the value and the influence of the Ashrama. I also realize your part in making it a perfect place, a thing of great beauty and potent spiritual shelter for the weary. You

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are all blessed with selfless devotion and power of consecration. Only I pray that you may unite your forces and guard the "Shrine of the Lord." My heart is full of tenderness for every one of you. There is no high or low among you, save when you lower yourself by forgetting your standard and your divinely ordained spiritual position. I love you all and I trust you all. I consider myself blessed that you are my friends and helpers. If my love for you and my faith in you and my prayers for you can work any miracle, then let me offer all these before the Divine altar for your health, happiness, understanding, unfoldment and abiding peace. May these lines convey to you a little of what I feel for you always.

Ever yours in eternal bond of love.

TRAVEL CLASSIC VOLUME II.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama and the Centre:

The first big surprise is the weather. It has been just like summer and the ocean like a big, calm lake. There is hardly a ripple and this morning I had to get out one of those summer suits, so securely put away for Singapore and India. I cannot get over the surprise, as I so vividly remember the storm and cold weather that we encountered almost immediately after we left Honolulu the last time. It is indeed a very pleasant surprise.

At this point I had to join the tea party. This afternoon at three-thirty a special tea was given. One side of the promenade deck was transformed into a veritable garden, a gate was erected on one end and, on the other end, the orchestra played the popular tunes. With flags on the sides and small

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tables, the whole effect was of great charm and artistic beauty. I am more and more impressed with the Japanese people; whatever they do, they seem to lend an artistic touch to it. Several times I have thought of stopping over in Japan and seeing something of the life there, but I do not think that this is the opportune moment for it.

January 6th, two-forty P.M. About two hours ago we passed the meridian and dropped Saturday, January seventh. When we get up tomorrow morning it will be Sunday. Of course I shall miss my Saturday but I think I shall treat it as Saturday spiritually. As far as I am concerned, several days can be dropped if that will get us to India any sooner. The weather is much cooler and it is rougher today.

We make our heaven and its opposite. I am beginning to realize what hold destiny has upon human life. We may blame others for our miseries, but we cannot alter anything by doing so. There was a time when I disregarded all personal fitness and karma and tried to force happiness upon others, but it did not work in most cases. People must earn their right by renunciation and selfless consecration. Nothing can be gained through chance or through cunning or cleverness. Living the life with noble purpose is the only way.

January 8th: Sunday, six-forty-five A.M. As you see I am up early and I must do something for the lost day. What can one really do for it. It will have its revenge or we may call it recompense. But you may be sure it will come back double. There is no real loss anywhere in this cosmic universe. In the meantime every brain is straining itself to the very limit to know whether at home they are having this day as "Saturday" or "Sun-

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day." Well, they are having a day and a day of opportunity, that is enough for anyone.

We are having sunshine again this morning and it seems to me a little less rough. Yesterday I slept and slept on the deck chair while they were having the dance. It was difficult to drag myself to bed. I suppose my whole system is beginning to relax completely. Now I must have my "Sald wader bad" and dress and have my Service and then go up on the deck. I am invited to speak this afternoon at two-thirty o'clock. You will get the report later.

A thought is coming to my mind most persistently and I want to pass it on to you while it is fresh. Try to live for a whole week without blaming anyone or anything. Not only refrain from blaming others, but do not blame yourself either for anything that has happened in the past. Help each other in observing this strictly. In order to do it perfectly, we must not only give up speaking the words of blame, but stop thinking them. It may seem a little difficult at first, but I know you will adapt it whole-heartedly when you see the enormous benefit it will bring you personally. Real spiritual life is very easy once we get a taste of it, we never want to live without its benign influence.

January 10th: For some reason or other I did not write to you at all yesterday and now it is a little difficult to pick up the thread again. That is why we should never make any break in our spiritual habits. Well, I can write a great deal about my lecture and its effect. The gracious Captain introduced me. I spoke for about forty minutes and then paused, in order to give them an opportunity to ask questions. They were all most

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attentive and unusually appreciative for a mixed audience. I closed the meeting by reading the poem "My Creed." A sculptor from Altadena and Carmel-by-the-Sea remarked, "You certainly did not step on anybody's toe," and his wife said to me, "Well, Walter Hampden had not anything over your voice." You know very well that I am not a good recorder of such details. However, the great transformation we observe is in the attitude of our English fellow passengers. One of them came to me yesterday and thanked me for what I had said and also wanted to know if the philosophy I expounded could be applied in the life of a business man. He surprised me by saying that he was born in India. He expressed appreciation of my talk. You never know where the seed may fall.

The other Englishman who is travelling with his two young sons approached me last night after dinner and thanked me with elegant manners and then asked me if my philosophy of right thinking was going to help the unemployment and the hungry. You know there is something very nice about these people. I have quite a weak spot for them. A couple from Colorado also are very much interested; the gentleman bought a copy of my "Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers." I think I have said enough about this episode.

I had a very nice talk with the Captain yesterday and one of his remarks has stayed with me. He said, "Every Japanese will welcome you." I hope it may prove true some day through Divine Grace, not only in Japan, but wheresoever my destiny may lead me, may I find my point of contact through love with every one. It is the only thing that makes our life worth living and blessed.

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January 12th: It is two-thirty in the afternoon now and we are expected to reach Yokohama this evening at eight. We have already been informed that Yasukuni Maru is delayed a day and we can board her at Kobe tomorrow evening. We shall have more details later. We had a violent sea last night and this morning, but things are a little better now. Well, the first lap of the journey is nearly done and I think it is the longest one, as we were out of touch with everything and everybody for so many days in one stretch. Now I must stop and attend to the immediate.

With my heart's love and prayers.

From Yokohama the Swami went by train to Kobe and took another steamer there. He continues his record:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama and the Centre:

A great deal has happened in rapid succession since our arrival at Yokohama. We arrived rather too late on Thursday evening to go ashore. We expected to reach quarantine at about eight, but it was much later. First the medical examination, then the passport examined by the police, and then the custom officers. Travelling these days does not represent pleasure but decided nightmares. Well people seem to like it and are getting used to these annoyances.

A cable from Boston greeted me. I may hear from you at Moji. The newspaper men were certainly after me. They even pursued me to my cabin and took a flashlight picture there. Finally they used the most ingenious method to get hold of me. While I was talking with the N.Y.K agent,

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one of the stewards announced "Reverend, the Chief of Police wishes to interview you." Of course I went at once and found the gentleman very gracious. He rose to receive me and began to ask about my religious views. All the newspapers were represented and I am sorry we never found out what appeared in the papers next morning. Our day started early on January thirteenth. I did most of my packing before breakfast and then at breakfast we discovered that our tickets were made out somewhat wrong. To make the long story short, we boarded the train at Yokohama at one-twenty-eight P.M. and arrived at Sannomya Station near Kobe at about eleven o'clock. The N. Y. K. agent received us and brought us to the ship. The luggage arrived at midnight. Such courtesy is very seldom seen anywhere. This is certainly a very colorful life, but the cold wind is bitter. Next day we got back to the ship at about lunch time. I wrote two letters, one to the Captain of the Chichibu Maru and the other to the purser and left them in care of N. Y. K. agent at Kobe.

January 15th. Moji. Well, we arrived here very early this morning and had breakfast at eight instead of the usual hour of eight-thirty. As the ship does not dock here, there was a notice of the launch service between shore and steamer at every hour from nine-thirty A.M. to two-thirty P.M. We went ashore and walked a little and visited some of the stores, the N. Y. K. Office and also the telegraph office. But I do not think that I am very much wiser about the telegraph rates here. The language difficulty is very great, but I think I shall find out before we leave Moji. We sail at three P.M. Your cable was handed to me

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at breakfast. I would like to know if my wire sent from Honolulu reached you or not. I addressed it "Anandashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles."

It was beautiful last night in the moonlight as we passed through the inland sea of Japan. Hills on both sides and water quite smooth. But the wind was fierce and cold. It is surely "an eager air" that blows over here. It finds its way close to your inner skin. In the train ride we passed through snowstorms and also green fields. Every inch of the ground is under cultivation. The whole outlook is different from any other part of the world. Well, this may not give you a graphic picture of the country, but it is a very different nation and a very positive type with all the gentle exterior. I am very much interested in Japan and all that the Japanese are evolving.

I hope everything is going well with every one of you. Please give my greetings to all the faithful friends of the work.

With my heart's love.

TRAVEL CLASSIC VOLUME IV.

My last letter to you was mailed yesterday at Moji although not marked as Volume Three. I did not think it was important enough to classify, but it was the third one I had sent. Well, we had a slight excitement. The launch we took ashore was rather late leaving the ship and did not reach the pier until nearly two o'clock. It gave us only a half hour's time to go to the telegraph office and walk back to the pier before the last launch left at two-thirty. We did it and got back safely. I sent you the cable via Boston, mailed all the let-

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ters and walked speedily in the cold wind. It was a good test of my endurance.

So far every night I have slept with my window tightly closed. It is bitterly cold and the sharp air comes through just the same. I have my electric heater turned down low all night and it does not seem to make much impression, except at about four o'clock in the morning when I have to turn it off. It seems to me that in this climate it turns warmer at about three A.M. It may be nothing but my own notion.

I have been pondering over the mystery of the Yellow Sea, why it is so called. But I think it is too deep to solve on this trip. Tomorrow morning we are expected to reach Shanghai very early and if the tide is favourable we shall leave again tomorrow. I am not certain whether we will venture ashore or not. The chief steward tells me that everybody is safe except the Japanese. Well I do not think we will risk it. Also it is apt to be very cold and usually very dirty. This section has been anything but safe for a long time. Five years ago when we passed through here it was very warlike and now it is decidedly worse.

January 17th, eleven-forty A.M. We arrived here before five this morning and had breakfast at eight. We ventured and walked all over Shanghai, pretty nearly. It looked just as colorful and was just as cold as before. Only safeguard is that I do not think any self-respecting germ wants to survive such bitter weather. You never saw such elegant beards as the Sikhs have, so neatly combed and tied. With their turbans and with their sticks they look most picturesque. Most of them were over six feet tall and one of them certainly looked over six feet six.

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The other day soon after we left Moji, as I was walking on the deck, I met a very interesting Japanese gentleman with a long military mustache. In course of our conversation he pointed out to me the place where the great imperial navy of Russia was sunk. It gave me a strange feeling as I listened to him. What a world, with all its fine exterior! Spirituality is its only solace and salvation. It may not enter into the life of the whole; but aspiring individuals must hold fast with faith and ferventness of spirit to the great ideal of life and truth. I think I have written enough for this time and now with all my heart's love and prayer I am, as ever yours, unshakable in the Lord.

TRAVEL CLASSIC NUMBER V.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama and the Centre:

We are expected to reach Hongkong very early tomorrow morning. There is very little to say this time, as I have not been around very much since our departure from Shanghai. There is a Hindu merchant on board the ship who is very familiar with our Mission and lives not very far from Singapore. We gave him some literature to read. The passengers on this ship are quite different from what we had on "Chichibu." Did I tell you that one of the Honolulu papers had quite a little article about my visit? It was good; I shall try to send you a copy. We have passed several islands today and also a number of ships. You can see from the tone of my letter that I have practically nothing to say but am merely making conversation. This should give us insight into what produces rattle brains and empty speeches.

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January 24th, ten A.M. We are nearing Singapore and it is a steady downpour. What a blessing it would be to the Ashrama to have such a rain once a month. I hope it will stop soon so that we can land and walk around in Singapore. I am not at all certain what is going to happen there. I called Swami Adyananda from Hongkong merely announcing our arrival. I also cabled Swami Shivanandaji. I enquired for cables from America at Hongkong but there were none. Since our departure from Hongkong everything has been very quiet and uneventful. We took a ride in Hongkong which was beautiful. I think they all enjoyed it immensely. I shall add something later before I mail this.

January 25th, eleven A.M. So much has happened that it will be impossible to give you any idea without writing pages. I will not be able to write again until we leave Penang next Saturday night, the twenty-eighth, for Rangoon. Every moment is taken up. Yesterday a reception and address of welcome at the Ramakrishna Mission at five-thirty P.M. and at eight-fifteen a big lecture at Victoria Hall. We are leaving this boat at once so no more now.

With all love.

This next letter tells of the Swami's experiences in the Malaya States, especially at Penang, during his voyage to India in 1933 :

Dear Ones of the Centre and the Ashrama :

I must put into words some of my thoughts that have gone out to you during the last few days of activity at Singapore. We went ashore soon after

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lunch and after a delightful ride we were taken to the Ramakrishna Mission and then things began to happen. First we had a little refreshment. Immediately following this was an address of welcome presented to me and then my reply. Also a few remarks from Swami Adyananda. After this a large group picture was taken in front of the Mission building. All this was done of course between showers. That is something which keeps Malaya in a state of beautiful green all the time. We came to Yasukuni Maru for dinner and I invited Swami Adyananda to be our guest. We had to move with real speed and even so we were a few minutes late at the hall. Mr. McLeod, the principal of the Raffle Institute, presided and spoke with warm spirit of appreciation and described his first meeting with me five years ago. It was a large gathering, probably a thousand people. It was remarkable to have so many as everything was arranged after they received my cable from Hongkong—only three days' notice. Although last time I spoke at the Victoria Theatre Hall, which has a seating capacity of over two thousand, it was crowded every time, this time the audience excelled in understanding and appreciation.

January 29th. Exactly a month ago we left the American shores, that is we sailed from San Francisco. Of course we dropped a whole day in the Pacific, but we have gained a great many hours, so I think it is balanced by this time.

Well, I do not know how to begin or where to begin about Penang. We reached there at about seven A.M. and immediately after the ceremony of garlanding we boarded a private Government launch which carried us ashore. Then things

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began to happen in rapid succession. First our motor stopped at a merchant's place, home and store combined, and they took me up two or three flights of stairs where they had a very well furnished bedroom, but at this early hour it was still filled with little sleepy heads. A tiny baby was brought before me to be blessed. This was very exclusive, as there was only Dr. Joshi who accompanied me. The others waited in the cars. Next we were taken to Dr. Joshi's house where we were given a formal reception and breakfast. There was a Bengali lady present, Mrs. Mitra, who prepared some special sweetmeats. It was a sumptuous feast.

Then something unusual took place. A gentleman came from a very long distance by train to see me on a special errand. He said, "Swamiji, I am about to marry a Christian lady, will you please spare us five minutes and give her a blessing that she may re-enter the Hindu faith?" I told them to come to Dr. Joshi's house at nine. So after breakfast I performed a simple consecration Service; then addressed the group who gathered there in the outer room, urging them to accept her with love and prove the real spirit of the *Sanatana Dharma* (the eternal religion.) I cannot give you the details, it will take too long. Swami Adyananda gave a summary of it in Hindi and our friend Dr. Joshi spoke with feeling. Dr. and Mrs. Joshi overwhelmed me with their devotion. They are remarkable people and I feel a special drawing toward them. I have a feeling that some of the children would like to come to the Ashrama.

Three twenty-five P.M. If I only had somebody with me to take down everything in shorthand,

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then I could really write a volume and also give an adequate picture of everything. So much happened at Penang in five hours that I am likely to forget the happenings at Singapore of nearly three whole days. But let me conclude Penang first. After we left Dr. Joshi's house we found several automobiles waiting for us outside. Our cars stopped at several places, six or seven. I truly cannot remember. Everywhere first the garlanding and then the offering laid at the feet and then the refreshments. Of course it was impossible to eat in every place, but we tried not to offend.

We had to move rapidly from one place to another as our time was getting short and the sailing was exactly at noon. These people were all merchants. Their devotion was touching. In one place in the midst of the ceremonies I wrote three cablegrams, one for Swami Shivanandaji, one for Charu and the other for "Vedanta Boston." (I hope you have received it safely. I also sent you another one from Moji, Japan.)

We were driven through the beautiful Botanical garden of Penang and then at last we reached the dock. There we found more people waiting for us. Mrs. Mitra stayed over with her little girl to see me off and let her husband go away alone to some other city. The Christian girl whom I christened into the new old Hindu faith not only came to the boat herself but brought with her a cousin. So with a large number of people we got into our private launch and I talked to them until we reached the ship. The library of the ship was pretty full of humanity and humidity. Some of the people even sat on the floor. I sat at the desk and autographed many, many copies of

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“Right Resolutions” and “Healing Meditations.” Then the hour came for them to leave the ship. I gave away all my garlands and bouquets to the different ones and to the children—there were a great many of them.

Five-fifteen P.M. Well, this is a colorful and many-sided life. I have been struggling to speak with a southern Indian Chetty (merchant) gentleman all day long, he does not understand a word of English or Hindustani. I have tried here and there a word of Tamil to communicate to him my thoughts. I despaired and began to feel that it was better for me to resign all things to the philosophy of the unmanifested. At last I told him my name and his face brightened up and he said there was an article about or by Swami Paramananda in a Tamil magazine published by the Ramakrishna Mission, Mylapore. Later on, I spoke with him and there was a man from Ceylon who interpreted to me in fair English. Now the orthodox friend wants one of my books that he may remember me.

The other incident was my meeting with two Buddhists monks this afternoon. I noticed two of these men among the deck passengers. I went down and spoke to them. They were from Ceylon. When I was leaving them I saluted them the usual way and I asked them what was their custom of greeting. The elderly one explained to me that they did the same way as we do, only they do not return the salute to the younger members. So I became rather curious and enquired how old they were. The venerable monk was forty or forty-one and the other only thirty-one or so. I asked them how old they thought I was. The older man said that if it were not for a little white on my

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head he would have guessed only thirty. It is amusing how easily they get elderly over here. If more things keep on happening I am sure I shall not be able to keep up with them and give you the details.

Three days later the Swami writes from the ship:

Dear Ones of the far-away land:

How I wish it were possible for some of you to have witnessed all that took place during the past week—you who have no thought of self and are happy when others show me understanding love and reverence. How all of it would have delighted your souls.

In some way I think I am changed this time. My heart is full of mellowness specially for those who think that they are in a lower rank. I used to be shy of people, retiring and sometimes aloof. All this made them feel that I was unapproachable. This time I go down anywhere and even make advances to those who are afraid to come near me. For instance there are two Bengali lads who work down below as clerks in the cargo department. They have been wanting to meet me, but did not dare. This morning I sought them out and had a long conversation. They are about twenty-four and I urged them not to get married yet, but to go ahead and learn some practical trade. They seemed most appreciative, but they are very timid. I am trying to give you a little side light of my thoughts and doings. Singapore newspapers published excellent articles telling of my visit, so that will give you some idea of my

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activities there. I think, all told, six or seven articles appeared in four different papers. I am not certain that we have them all, but will send what we have.

One-fifty P.M. I have written quite a lengthy letter but by no means is it an exhaustive one. A very charming couple of Philadelphia greeted me saying "Did we not travel with you on Taiyo Maru in 1925?" I told them it was on my return trip from India in 1926. They greeted me the very evening after we sailed from Singapore. The gentleman reminded me of the lecture I gave on Taiyo Maru and of his wife playing the piano before the lecture. I have enjoyed meeting them again very much. They are very fine people. Even the barber remembered cutting my hair on the S. S. Takoda, another ship of this line, some seven years ago. It is getting to be like Santa Fe on this route.

Now with all my love I commend you to shed your light of love on each other and share your spiritual joys with each other. Keep on and on and on with undepressed heart, that this sad world may be a little more glad and that it may find abiding peace.

Ever yours with tender affection and yearning prayers.

There is a certain repetition of events and ceremonies in these letters, but it must be remembered that they occurred at different intervals on different journeys. For three successive voyages the Swami went by the Pacific and necessarily touched at the same ports, met the same people

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and was received with the same honor and devotion. The letters continue:

Dear Ones of the far-away land:

I hope all is going well with you. Now I must share with you all the happenings at Rangoon while they are still fresh in my mind. We arrived there very early, soon after six, but it took a long time to go through customs, passport and other formalities. Finally I was taken to the Rama-krishna Mission sometime between nine-thirty and ten-thirty. The others went to a hotel. Then began a constant procession of visitors. I had my breakfast and lunch combined at about noon.

Let me at the outset lay before you the number of public engagements planned for me during the forty-eight hours stay at Rangoon. First day: (a) Four P.M. tea and meeting with special friends at Mrs. Paw Tun's house. (b) Six P.M. Public lecture at a large hall; Mr. Paw Tun chairman. (c) Seven-thirty P.M. Lecture at the anniversary of the Young Men's Hindu Association; chairman, Mr. Dougall, the present mayor of Rangoon. Returned to my quarters, tired and hungry, about ten P.M. It will be humanly impossible to give you all the details, the extra visitors between times and engagements.

Second day: (a) After a cup of coffee, went for a ride with Dr. Dey, a prominent devotee of our Mission here. But I must not forget to tell you that some devotees, ladies and men too, came very early with garlands and delicious Bengali sweetmeats. They tried to coax me to eat but it is impossible for me to indulge in such luxuries. They stayed a long time and I talked to them. One of

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them I think has lost about eight children and her only solace is in Sri Ramakrishna. (b) Gathering of devotees at eleven-fifteen A.M. On return found Mrs. Paw Tun waiting with her little girl. Well, to make a long story short, it was nearly noon when we got to her house. (c) Lunch at Mrs. Paw Tun's. We had a delicious lunch, then returned to the Mission and found a room full of ladies waiting to see me. They had waited nearly a half hour before I arrived. (d) Conversations between two-thirty to three-fifteen P.M. (e) Three-thirty P.M. Public lecture at the school for women and children. This was one of the high lights of my visit there. I enjoyed the atmosphere of this meeting best of all. When I saw those hundreds of tender faces before me I could not help but speak to them in Bengali. Soon, however, I changed to English through the request of the chairman but I spoke in sections and he translated into beautiful Bengali. (f) Returned to my room; another gathering, mostly of women. (g) Five-thirty P.M. Lecture at the opening of the Ramakrishna Mission Library—a large gathering. (h) Six-thirty. Public Lecture, subject "The Need of the Hour". A very large audience, presided over by the new Mayor. (i) Visit to Durga Temple, but we were obliged to cancel the lecture here, due to the crowdedness of my engagements.

The evening lecture I gave with full vim and vigour on "The Need of the Hour." The hall was crowded, at least fifteen hundred people. Large groups stood through the whole lecture, by the door. Enough of this. I am glad to do everything I can, but I told them plainly that I was not interested in lectures. I wanted them to wake up to the vital facts of life and the reality of

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living, to practise love and dedication to truth, because they are the basis of life. I think people were moved and stirred. The ship's doctor, whom I think I mentioned in my last letter, came to several of the meetings. The last evening he was with me I touched him on the shoulder and he burst out in tears and sobbed and sobbed. I think he is a real devotee and I am sure I shall see him in Calcutta and also, possibly, his wife and child. I feel deeply touched by all this. I seemed to make greater contact with every one this time. One man said to me: "Swamiji we are all happier since your coming in our midst."

February 4th, nine-forty-five A.M. Here I am again with you, writing, writing. Some of you more skeptical than others, I am sure, will rub your eyes and pinch your muscles to see whether it is true or you are merely dreaming about these long letters written by my own hand. This time I am exercising both my mind and hand. I think for a change I shall give my brain and heart a little rest, for methinks that neither has much share in writing these dry scribbles. However I know that you are easily pleased and are generous enough to overlook my short-comings. Pretty speech and very nicely expressed, *n'est-ce pas?*

We sailed yesterday on this boat called "Egra" at about eleven A.M. Up till the very minute of leaving, my room was filled with people. I had some breakfast before we came to the dock. There were a good many to see us off, although it was during the office hours. Mr. and Mrs. Paw Tun were both there and Dr. Dey was with me all the time. There were also about six Swamis and some Brahmacharins.

With love.

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At last the Swami reached Calcutta, but he found no respite from activity. His days were full of interviews, lectures, receptions and visitors. He remained for some time at the head monastery of the Order on the Ganges, then went to Dacca to visit the school established by Srimati Charushila Devi in his name. Charushila Devi had been with him in his American work for several years and, inspired by her experience there, she had organized this school, which she called Ananda Ashrama to relate it more closely to the American work. A visit to the school formed a part always of every journey to India.

On his return to Calcutta the Swami gave his first lecture to a crowded audience at Albert Hall. Dr. Kalidas Nag presided and paid a beautiful tribute to him, referring to his visit to the Ashrama at La Crescenta, California. On the following Sunday morning the Swami spoke over the radio. A little boy who heard his voice exclaimed: "Now that the Swami has got into the radio, how is he going to come out?"

The Swami's stay in India was a short one. He returned to Boston in May. He was happy to be again with his work, but the lure of India still drew him, as we see from the passage in a letter written to the Ashrama in California from the Centre in Boston. It reads:

India has gripped me this time. Never did I find such point of contact, and such openness of

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spirit as this time. Its genuineness is very living in my mind and heart.

It drew him back again in 1935. The letters which follow tell of his voyage. They read:

Loved Ones of the Ashrama:

It may have seemed like neglect that I was not able to send you a single line from San Francisco. The sea was very stormy between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and due to the tired condition of the body, there was nothing to do but let go completely. During our stay in San Francisco there was also very little time for letter writing. We did not take the time even to read the mail. There were about fifty letters and wires. It rained at intervals and we started with heavy sea.

Brave hearts of the Centre:

My mood is more for silence than anything else. I send you constantly my love and prayers for your safe-keeping. There is no time when my thoughts do not turn to you. Distance and physical separation cannot prevail against the spirit. Sometimes when I am still and far, far away I am very close to each one of you. May the Divine Mother keep you well and safe is my heart's prayer.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

There is very little to tell as far as news is concerned. We had a sample of a real storm yesterday. The sea is better today but it is cold and windy on the deck.

My mood is for silence these days. I talk very

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little even with my two companions. My love, my prayers and my thought of you remain constant, even without a single written word. Time, space and physical separation cannot prevail against the spirit. Be full of the spiritual. Let your body, mind and entire being vibrate with the rhythm of the great Spirit. With all my love and prayers for your safe-keeping.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

This is to send you my heart's love and greetings from far away Honolulu. You are in my thoughts most constantly day and night. I wake up usually around three every morning and dream of the Ashrama. May Divine Mother keep you well and safe is my heart's prayer.

Dear Ones:

Much has happened since our arrival in Hongkong last Saturday night, January nineteenth. Of course we missed our connection with Suwa Maru which left Hongkong the same morning. The delay was caused by stormy sea. We are leaving today on the La Plata Maru of the O.S.K. Line. We have made some real contacts here and I lectured last night to a genuinely cosmopolitan audience. You will hear the details later. Please send a copy of this to Boston. I hope you received my cables from Honolulu and Kobe.

With my deep, deep love and tender prayers for your safe-keeping.

The visit to Hongkong proved exceptionally interesting. The lecture of which the Swami speaks was a world gathering—China, England, Ger-

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many, Norway, Holland, Scotland, United States and different parts of India were represented. The address of welcome to the Swami was read by a Parsee gentleman. It said in part: "Time does not allow us to express fully our respectful regards towards you, yet with sincere joy and esteem we welcome you as one of the greatest sons of India, and one of the foremost spiritual teachers of Divine Truth, who is so whole-heartedly working for the benefit of the entire human race. Your untiring energy, zeal and devotion for the well-being of humanity has won our profound esteem and admiration. Your noble work, the Ananda Ashrama, that unique establishment, is universally known and will ever remain as an emblem of your noble and self-sacrificing work. We earnestly pray that the Almighty may bestow on you strength and health to continue your blessed work of peace, which the world so greatly needs."

Among those who were most deeply impressed by the meeting with the Swami was a Chinese graduate of the Hongkong University who rose and spoke these appreciative words: "I am deeply touched to meet personally the inspiring author, Swami Paramananda, whose literature I have known and drawn inspiration from for the past eight years."

In the letter which follows the Swami refers further to this visit to Hongkong:

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Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

You will hear all the details of our doings at Hongkong. First there was the disappointment in missing our connection with Suwa Maru, but all that was transformed into blessing through Divine Grace. We remained three days at Hongkong, and every moment of that was spent in breathless activity. Hospitality, generosity and genuine devotion were showered upon us continuously.

It was too bad that our supply of literature was so limited. Practically all the copies of the "Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers" were sold at Hongkong, but we have still a good supply of books left for Singapore.

As you see, we shall not reach India till tenth of February, and that is provided we make good connection at Singapore and Rangoon; so, my returning for Easter is becoming increasingly more difficult. However, I have not altogether abandoned the hope. If there is anything imperative, I shall change my plan and come, although it will give me only four weeks in India.

My thoughts and my tender prayers are constantly with you for your safe-keeping. My deep love for every one of you.

The Swami remained in India for two months only. During that interval the demands upon his strength and effort were unremitting. Lectures at Calcutta, Dacca, Delhi, Asansol, Narainjang, Madras and Colombo before thousands of people, unceasing visitors and many engagements of various kinds, filled his days. Two restful visits, how-

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ever, gave him a slight respite. One was to Charushila's school in Dacca. While there he came in contact with the Catholic Brothers of St. Gregory's School. They heard him speak and expressed warm friendliness and appreciation. This gladdened the Swami's heart, as it meant a step towards unity of thought and feeling, and world unity was his dream.

The other visit was to the Ramakrishna Orphanage at Murshidabad, founded by Swami Akhandananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Here the Swami found embodied many of his own ideas and he rejoiced to see them sanctioned by a great soul like Swami Akhandananda. It was always in his mind that one day he would return to India and establish an Ashrama after the pattern of his Ashrama in California, but the dream never attained fulfillment—his Western work held him too closely bound.

X

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In 1937 Swami Paramananda made his final journey to India. It was the occasion of the Parliament of Religions held to close the great Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, the celebration of which had continued from the previous year. The Swami had cabled to India that he could not be present owing to the dedication of the new home which the Vedanta Centre of Boston had recently acquired. An answer came from Swami Sambuddhananda, who was in charge of the Ramakrishna Centenary activities. He wrote:

“I am in receipt of your letter of the twenty-sixth October, and am extremely sorry to learn that it seems utterly impossible for you to leave for India. You must be aware that our Exhibition of Indian Arts, Industries and Culture will be held from the first of February for one month and the Parliament of Religions will sit from the first of March 1937. Invitations have been issued to the distinguished scholars, philosophers, Indologists and church dignitaries of the different countries of the world—about five hundred in number; and we have been receiving a good re-

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sponse from everywhere. China, Japan, Italy, France, Germany, Holland, as well as some of the universities of America, have sent word that they would send their representatives to the Parliament. A good number of papers are also expected from the most distinguished thinkers of the modern world. We hope we shall get even more responses very shortly.

“I have great pleasure in informing you that the Lloyd Triestino Company, a well-known shipping concern of Italy, has granted fifty percent reduction on the passage of all Asiatic, European and American delegates embarking from any Italian port to an Indian port.

“I do not find words adequate to convince you that your presence on this occasion, particularly to represent our North American Centres, is a necessity, nor do I find a man who can better represent our ideas and activities in the West on such an august occasion than you. Considering the great importance of the occasion, which is expected to be unique of its kind in India, I earnestly request you to make it convenient to attend the Parliament of Religions without fail.

“I, of course, shall be the last man to stand in the way of the progress of an important Centre like Boston. I am sure, by the grace of Sri Guru Maharaj you will be able to finish all your work relating to the Centenary there by the middle of January next and start for India thereafter, so

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that you may reach here by the twenty-fifth of February at the latest."

On receiving this letter, Swami Paramananda reversed his decision and sailed from New York for India on February sixth, 1937, making the journey to Bombay in seventeen days and a half. These letters tell of his voyage. They are carefully numbered and dated from day to day:

NUMBER I.

Dear Ones of Boston and California:

Here I am alone! alone! alone! and yet not alone. It is not difficult for you to imagine how tired I felt, in both body and mind. The reception at Swami Nikhilananda's was truly refreshing and I autographed many, many books. I had a very pleasant visit with the Swami and we retired soon after half past twelve. Saturday morning was already upon us and the sailing time came rapidly. A number came to see me off. I met a good many of the ship's officials, who remembered me from the last trip. Finally the Rex sailed exactly at noon. I was sorry that I could not send any messages. This ship operates on the same principle as the streamliners—very, very short stops.

Great many telegrams and special delivery letters came, but they did not reach me until after we sailed. I was about to unpack and settle a little when the chief steward sent for me which resulted in my having an outside room with private bath. The sea is rough. It was just as rough yesterday, if not rougher, but I was rested and did not feel

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anything. It was a sight to see how beautifully everything was roped off. It has not been easy to stay on the berth always. I am getting rest, my whole system needed it. One thing I have discovered, that I can live on celery and tangerines.

February 10th: There is very little hope for a calm sea on this trip. When this pond gets stirred up, it takes days to become normal again. In the meantime I am resting, musing and working a little. I have outlined my speech at the Parliament and also some notes on the closing speech. You see in this case inspirational words will not wholly suffice. At least the newspapers will expect something in writing at every session. Also I have written a number of cards and in order to remember all my special friends I must write at least another fifty or sixty more. Everything runs on a large scale.

February 11th, four P.M. It is a beautiful day and the sea is calm. People are playing on deck and even the swimming pool is full of blue water. We are just passing by the coast of Portugal. We touch Gibraltar this evening between eight and ten. Tonight also is Captain's gala dinner. During the storm, when this big ship was tossing like a cork or a plank, how ominous everything seemed. And yet people fight and quarrel! I think that tragic happenings have greater influence in quickening the minds of the people to Realities than anything else. Even the common man is forced to think in terms of philosophy after a rude shock, unless his reaction is bitterness and hate.

This is no time for preaching; this is vacation time. I have already written some twenty letters and cards and I must write many, many more to

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come out right. The purser informed me that he had received a radiogram that the steamer Conte Verdi will wait for us at Naples. I hope that the Rex will get there soon enough to avoid a mad rush.

February 12th: Gibraltar looked like a picture and several little boats came to sell their goods. Bargaining went on for quite a while and then the engines of the Rex began to vibrate and we left at eleven P.M. We are making very good time today and it is expected to reach Naples at noon. I have already secured my return ticket on the Rex, thereby saving something, and if I cannot use it and return by some other line the whole amount will be refunded.

I cannot say that I have gained any more strength so far, but I hope it will be different during the next few days. Please send a copy of this to California or keep the copy for the Centre and share with others. My thoughts are with you constantly. Through the grace of the Divine Mother may all go well with you.

With deep love.

NUMBER II.

Dear Ones everywhere:

This is February fourteenth, four-twenty-five P.M. We are having stormy, cold weather again and some water came into my room last night. I forgot to tell you that on the Rex I had a real baptism one morning. My whole bed had to be changed. Teaching of the Gita is the greatest thing in practical life. Luxury and want, praise and blame, gain and loss, all have their influence

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in moulding our lives. Blessed is the man who can take all experiences with calm dignity.

February 15th, nine-thirty A.M. Good morning to you all, but you are I hope having a good night's rest, so I must talk only in a whisper. Another night has passed and the sea is calmer and everything seems to be right. I do not want any of you to be anxious about me. I am really having an interesting time. All of you know that I like changes and this is one of the biggest I am having in many years. I noticed that my body was getting altogether too delicate. As the result of all this I lost weight. Of course you all know what responsibilities I had to carry during the last months and my peculiarity is that when my mind is full I am inclined to eat less and less. Well, that is enough of self. I am interested at the present time in the non-self behind the self—the Great One.

If all goes well we are due at Port Said tomorrow and I shall not only mail the letters but also will endeavour to send a cable. Heart's deepest thanks to the Ashrama for the cable night letter which reached me. It was delivered to my cabin at ten P.M., five hours after we left Naples. Now I must bring this to a close, as we must be up very early tomorrow. The ship is due at six A.M. and we leave again at ten A.M.

With my love and tender prayers.

NUMBER III.

Dear Ones everywhere:

It is difficult to realize that two-thirds of my journey is over. I sailed from New York exactly twelve days ago. I hope my cable from Port Said

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reached you duly. Now I must explain to you about the mailing of the letters and post cards. When I went to the Post Office at Port Said the postmaster told me that if I had a trusted friend in America I could mail them "the way I did" or it would cost about five dollars in stamps. Egyptian foreign stamps are very costly at the present time, due to exchange rate. Well to say the least the foreign travel is a bit of a nightmare. When I think what it was like before the war! Red Sea has not been at all red this time. Yesterday and the night before it was really cool, but today we had to get into our light clothes.

February 19th, eight-twenty A.M. We are at Massawa, the new Italian Port in Africa, the fruit of conquest I suppose. It is still somewhat barren looking, but they are building it up very fast. Most of the passengers are getting off here, some for official duties and others for the gold rush. The sun certainly is hot and I felt it in my head, but fortunately there was a cool breeze on the other side of the deck. Now we are headed for Aden and I shall try to mail this there. Last time when I touched Aden a merchant received us, took us ashore and gave us a wonderful ride. I have met a number of Indians who are travelling in different classes. I am feeling fine. "Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long." These are wonderful words of the great poet. "Say peace to all, from me no danger be."

It is hot, although on one side of the ship there is a good breeze. I happened to be on the warm side today. We may still have some cool weather after we leave Aden. I hope that everything is going well, both in Boston and in California. When

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I calculate the time, I am simply stunned by the difference. When I wake up you are just about ready to go to bed and I am sure you are strenuously active when I have my sleep. I hope that everything will be all right with the new issue of the Message, and also the books will come out right. I am naturally anxious about all the unfinished work.

Lovingly yours.

NUMBER IV.

Dear Ones everywhere:

I did not expect to begin another letter so soon again, after mailing one this morning at Aden. But I think you would like to know that this afternoon I met Sir Francis Younghusband and had a long talk with him. He is going to India just to attend the Parliament of Religions. He naturally wanted to know about the various plans. You will be interested to hear that Mr. and Mrs. Lindbergh are going to be there. They are coming specially through him. I shall see Sir Francis again tonight and give him some of the "Messages" to read.

February 21st. A Happy New Year to you all. Do not forget that we must have a party or two after I get back. The sea is just like a big lake, not a ripple even. A great contrast with the Atlantic crossing. I had a long and interesting talk with Sir Francis again this afternoon. He gave me one of his books to look through, "A Venture of Faith." I gave him six copies of the Message, a "Daily Thoughts" and "Rhythm of Life" to look through. Well, I shall be glad when this Parliament is over.

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February 22nd. Only two more days of this long journey. The sea continues smooth and the air is balmy, but inside the cabin is always hot in spite of the fans going night and day. I hope there will be some news from you at Bombay or at least at the Math.

The Swami reached Calcutta about three days before the Parliament began. It opened with impressive ceremonies. Delegates represented almost every country in the world. North America, South America, England, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Poland, China, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Japan and many provinces of India; the Straits Settlements, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Jugoslavia, Rumania, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Belgium, the Phillipines, France, Italy, Norway, South Africa, all sent delegates. Those delegates who were unable to be present sent messages, greetings and tributes to Sri Ramakrishna and his cause. These were shared by overflowing audiences that filled the historic Town Hall in Calcutta; one session was held in the Calcutta University Institute Hall. There were fifteen sessions in all and the Swami took an active part in each one. The following passage from a letter written by a pleader at the high courts of Bengal gives a picture of the Swami as he appeared at the Parliament:

“I went to Calcutta and attended regularly the Parliament of Religions in connection with the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami

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Paramananda took a very prominent part in the proceedings and had to speak at almost every sitting, morning and evening, and it is the opinion of many distinguished persons, that the Swami's speech was one of the best on each occasion. He presided one day and I think it was unusually fine. There was pin-drop silence in the august assembly whenever he spoke. Every time he rose to speak he was greeted with enthusiastic and long-continued cheers."

The Swami had a seat of honor on the platform at all sessions and throughout the Parliament he was in touch with many distinguished people—Sir Francis Younghusband, Dr. Rabin-dranath Tagore, Colonel and Mrs. Lindbergh, Sarojini Naidu and many others.

At the first session of the Parliament the Swami presented this greeting from America:

"My Spiritual Kinsmen:

"I bring you a message from the United States of America. As I was about to leave to take part in this great and august assembly, the American people begged me to convey their message in the same way that the great Swami Vivekananda carried India's message to America.

"I bring you a message of love and unity. I believe they will serve to build a bridge over the gulf that separates man from man. Sri Rama-krishna's life was a living parliament of religions. It was and is a symphony of all idealism and

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spirituality. Sri Ramakrishna through his life and example demonstrated that universal religion is not a dream or a possibility, but a practical reality. Today we must realize we are gathered here because of that great spirit standing behind us, because of his benediction and blessing upon us. May that Infinite One who resides in all hearts bring success to this great assembly."

The Swami's method of addressing the audience as "My Spiritual Kinsmen," aroused great enthusiasm and Sir Francis Younghusband declared from the platform that "Swami Paramananda had found the true way to reach the hearts of this great assembly." At a subsequent session the Swami spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna the Messiah of Spiritual Democracy" and at still another session he read a "Litany to Sri Ramakrishna" which he had written for the Centenary celebration in America. The final stanzas are given here:

"Thou dost stand before us as an unfailing lamp,
To guide our steps from the world of men to
the world of God—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times, now, and
forever and ever more!
"Gently, like a morning hymn sung by the
heavenly choir,
Thy face so full of tenderness,
Thy hand so full of saving Grace,
Thy heart so full of unearthly love,
Call us forth from our slumber—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times, now, and
forever and ever more!

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His address on "Sri Ramakrishna the Messiah of Spiritual Democracy" aroused special enthusiasm. In the course of it he declared:

"Sri Ramakrishna's greatest contribution to the modern world of religious thought was to bring into it a note of definiteness. Our present age of multiple theories and intellectual speculation had set the hearts of men adrift in regard to God and the ultimate realities. Here we find Sri Ramakrishna rising like a star of hope in the midst of chaos and confusion. His equipment and self-expression did not lie in erudition and intellectual cleverness, but in direct vision and perception. When we approach him, he does not try to confuse our mind with theological doctrines and metaphysical implications; instead, he gives us this unique and convincing statement, 'Yes, I have seen God and known Him, and furthermore, I can help you to see and know Him.'

"Sri Ramakrishna was an untiring explorer in the realm of spirit. His mind was intent on practical demonstration in regard to what is ordinarily termed the unseen. He never wanted to accept anything without definite proof. In this respect, his mind is comparable to the minds of the scientists, and his apparent lack of learning was an asset rather than a handicap, because it was entirely uncolored and unbiased. No hazard was too great, no self-sacrifice too difficult for him. He gave himself wholly and completely for

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the purpose of discovering the end of all religions, and by so doing made himself a channel through which infinite power flowed with unalloyed clarity. As a result of his exploration in spiritual realms, he brought back the definite revelation that each religion, sincerely lived and practised, leads to the same goal of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*—Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.

“How refreshing to find in this world of dissension and conflict one who is the living example of God-concentration, and one who makes his spiritual realization include the wholeness of Divinity and the allness of humanity. His silent life of dynamic force laid a firm foundation for ideal democracy, since it brought forth the truth that every man is fundamentally a part of the Divine Essence; and that, in spite of all differences, dogmatic variation and barriers of caste and nationality, man is a child of one Indivisible, Absolute Being. The realization of this fact provides a solution for the social, political, and religious evils that rend the skies of the world with the lightning of dissension and the thunder and havoc of war.”

Although active at all sessions Swami Paramananda was especially invited to preside at one sitting. He opened the proceedings with this address:

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“My Friends and Spiritual Kinsmen :

“I have listened with a great deal of interest to the illuminating papers offered by the distinguished delegates, not only of this country but of the world. Naturally they all provoke thought. I will touch on but one note, which may be of practical value and utility. In travelling and in sitting together, I have heard it said that the world is a very evil place. If it is an evil place, we also have our share in it. We live in it, we breathe in it, and if we find undesirable elements, we must have the desire to set it right. Sri Ramakrishna did this. He was modest and humble. He was not a scholar, but he was a practical idealist. He was himself a model of perfection. That is the reason why we are all here today. There is not a single soul who does not wish to reach perfection. Sri Ramakrishna, with his sincerity of purpose, with his purity of life, and his concentrated devotion to the Ideal, brought that perfection to practical realization. We should look at this model every morning, every noon, and every night—as frequently as possible, and see that our lives are moulded in accordance with it.

“I can say very frankly and honestly, I have found from my own experience that a life can be transformed by a mere touch. It was my good fortune to witness such a miracle. Instead of theorizing, let us do something constructive, as Sri Ramakrishna did. We are tired of theories.

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Who wishes to be reminded that the world is an evil place? If you are lovers of humanity, instead of repeating such words, come and give a helping hand.

“Let us hope that the fundamental principles discussed during these sittings shall be lived. Those of us who know something of the life of Sri Ramakrishna know that it is not through politics, not through science, not through any of these ingenious methods, that he attained spiritual vision; it was through love, the golden thread that ties humanity, that he realized Truth. So let us forget all evil conditions; the less we dwell upon them, the better for us. It will give us more strength. If we can do good to each other, we shall achieve that to which Sri Ramakrishna and his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, gave themselves without thought of self. Thereby we shall receive their blessings and benediction, and we shall find the joy and peace that we long for.”

Not only at the Parliament sessions but elsewhere also the Swami was called upon to take the chair. One of the most signal occasions was a meeting arranged at the Town Hall in Howrah, at which the Swami presided. When he arrived at the hall, thousands greeted him with cheers, music and the blowing of conch shells.

The Parliament closed on the eighth of March. Then many days were consumed by receptions, teas, dinners and meetings, in all of which the

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Swami took an active part. After visits to Dacca, Madras and Colombo, at each of which places he delivered lectures, he sailed for America from Colombo on May fifth.

XI

CLOSING YEARS

The radiance of the sunset is reminiscent of the radiance of the dawn. In both, the sky reddens and fades. Both lead to a noontide—the one, to a noontide here; the other to a noontide there. So was it with Swami Paramananda's closing years. The sun was setting—he was wearying but his face shone and his words glowed.

These years were full of teaching, travel and great fatigue. The horizon of his activity had broadened more and more. Wider and wider had grown his contacts. His fellowship now embraced the whole human family. The Swami could never be narrow or geographic. It was contrary to his entire nature. His vision was a world vision. His conceptions were all essentially universal. As all religions were gathered up into one eternal religion, so the world was for him a unit. His constant journeyings had erased all barriers. Again and again he had circled the earth. Distance was accounted by him as nothing. He crossed seas and continents to show men the way to God-knowledge and consecrated living. Neither was language an obstacle to universal kinship. The shining light in his eyes, the smile on his lips, the love in his heart, the atmosphere of holy peace which en-

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veloped him, spoke a tongue that all men could understand.

The Swami reached New York from India on June third, 1937. After a short stay in Boston he made a journey to the Ashrama, where he spent ten days only, then returned to Boston to conduct the Service of Silence at the Cohasset Ashrama on July Fourth. He writes from the Centre to the Ashrama in California:

Dear Ones:

You must think I have failed toward you terribly for not having written during all these days, but I think you can imagine the first four days of Boston activity. They were practically filled with perpetual functions and comings and goings. On Saturday we went to Cohasset with a goodly number. Gayatri was obliged to remain there to look after the guests who had signed up for the week-end. On Sunday we had two Services and it left time for very little else. Monday began very early. People who were going with us to Cohasset for the Silence began to arrive by nine-thirty. There were nearly forty-five people for whom to provide transportation. In addition, there were some who drove there directly in their own cars from other points than Boston, beside those who planned to remain in Cohasset for the week-end.

Immediately upon our arrival at the Ashrama, I arranged the usual altar with the assistance of others. It was a very beautiful and impressive occasion. I always enjoy the Fourth of July Silence under the pines. Everything went off beautifully and smoothly. Next day was Tuesday

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Class, so you can judge with what rapid speed we had to work. Friday and Saturday we went to Cohasset for sea bathing. We have been having very hot weather here for the past four days.

My thoughts have been constantly with you and I have prayed for the safety of the whole Ashrama. As you know, I am always anxious to hear about everything that takes place at the Ashrama or anything that concerns the Ashrama members. We have just announced the unveiling of the bas-relief of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji for this coming Thursday at eight o'clock. We are doing so on very short notice.

No more now. With my deep love and constant prayers.

The letter which follows was written two months later as the Swami was travelling to Boston. He used an envelope for his stationery, as he had nothing else:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

For lack of writing paper I am using what is available. My pocket knife helped the construction. I had a fairly good night. My location is changed to the car next to the lounge. The conductor, steward and several of the porters gave me their welcome and I am well looked after. The weather in these cars does not take account of the outside temperature as they are all air-conditioned. This is the best feature of modern travel. Even so it is strenuous for the nervous system.

My thoughts have been with you most con-

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stantly and I am hoping and praying that all may go well during my absence.

Seven-ten P.M. I have just finished my dinner and all is well so far.

With my deep love for each one of you.

Another letter on the same journey:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

There is very little to tell you, two nights are over and the third is drawing near. The Pullman conductor told me that this train will soon cover this distance in forty-eight hours and the super-chief in thirty-six hours. Now we are in Kansas City and it is very warm here. I shall stay in the lounge and write a few lines to you. My thoughts are specially with you this evening. "If Christ comes today"—I think I would like to write something on this subject for the next issue of the Message. Give me a reminder if you think of it.

My thoughts turn to each one of you. I realize more and more that you all together make a perfect unit. May the great Power preserve you as a perfect unit for the good of many and for the peace and happiness of many. One who has led us thus far will lead us farther. Hope, faith and courage, we need them all and need them always. With my deep love.

The following letters were written from the Centre in Boston and tell of its multifarious activities:

Dear Ones:

Soon after my arrival on Saturday, we had to

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get ready to go to Cohasset for the Service. It was very pleasant and every one enjoyed the outing. The following day, Sunday, there were the usual two Services, which left room for nothing else. Both Services were well attended. Monday morning I had several visitors, a gentleman from Philadelphia, who had attended both the Services on Sunday, and three other gentlemen. Tuesday we had a regular downpour all day long, so we did not expect many to come to the Class, but we had a very good number after all. This letter is only to give you a little glimpse of the activities here. I shall hope to write you more fully in the near future.

With my love for each and every one of you.

It has touched me deeply to hear such enthusiastic words of appreciation from every one of you in regard to my letters. Your expressions of joyousness on hearing from me have inspired me so much that I feel I must not fail in writing to you at once. Life is very full here, there is no doubt. There are so many unexpected things for me to attend to—problems and details fill my time completely, but as some one said the other day about my constant travel, "It must agree with you because you look so much better."

Last Saturday we had again a very beautiful day in Cohasset. Every one seemed very joyous. Swami Satprakashananda came there for the first time and expressed great appreciation for the Ashrama. He said he never expected to find a place like it outside of India.

With my deep love and prayers for each and every one of you.

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Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

The Thursday evening banquet here turned out to be a very great success. We drove to Providence on Friday to take dinner with Swami Satprakashananda. Sunday was a very good day and both Services were well attended. The Divine Mother's festival began early Monday morning. I cooked an offering and in the evening our guests were Swami Satprakashananda of Providence and several others from outside. Tuesday evening for dinner we had even a larger number. There were over fifteen from outside, making a party of twenty-five or six with the household. We made the Service rather early, as it was Class night. The attendance was quite large. Wednesday was another feast day and Thursday was the big concluding Service of the festival in the Chapel. We had an overflow attendance. Afterwards, there was an entertainment. I have already communicated its success to you by wire. A stage was set in front of the big reception hall fire-place; Sumita danced and Gayatri sang. It made a beautiful picture as people sat along the stairway, making a perfect balcony scene. Every one agreed it was a warm-hearted gathering. People are more and more showing their appreciation of this beautiful house. Every one was most enthusiastic in their praise of the new setting. From all this you can readily see how active life is here. Last Sunday again we had two lovely Services. This evening we are having Lakshmi Puja and so the work goes on. I cannot tell you all the details of the activities; what I have written, will give you some idea of how intensely active I have been.

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I am very grateful that you have all appreciated the letters I have written to you. It only shows your great power of appreciation and your ability to feel the depth of my thoughts. It is indeed a life of onward march. No faint-hearted attitude can be of any assistance to us in the march of spiritual progress. The Omniscient Being takes no account of age or physical limitation when the spirit surges within us. When it is dormant and lacking in response, we are not able to move a single straw, like the parable in the Upanishads. May you all be vibrant with faith and ferventness of spirit. We have only one life, and we must give it wholly. Give your all and nothing can be lacking. With my heart's full measure of love, I ask Divine Mother's blessing upon every one of you.

In January, 1938, the Swami received an invitation to speak before the International Peace Association of Los Angeles. A banquet preceded the meeting and there were many internationally prominent guests present. The Swami was guest of honor. He gave a stirring address on "Practical Basis for the Enhancement of Peace," which called forth such enthusiastic applause that he was obliged to rise again and read his poem "No East nor West." Soon after this engagement he returned once more to Boston.

It required great pliability of both body and mind to move back and forth from the sunshine and warmth of California to the chill winds of Boston; from the freedom of the wide-stretching

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property of the Ashrama with its hills and picturesque canyons, to the constriction of a city house. The Swami, however, took little account of these changes and gave to each of his Centres his whole-hearted service and care. He tried always to keep the Centre from which he was absent well informed by wire and by letter of all that took place at the Centre where he was. When he could not write, he called upon members of the Community to do so. His letters grew at times very infrequent and then at times they would come often. The following letters fill the year 1938.

The first letter was written after the second terrible flood in California. Bridges were out and rails washed away, so the Swami was forced to travel to Barstow in a bus and board his train there. The letters read:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

You must think me strange not to have written to you for all this time. I myself think it is most strange but that is the way things work out. When we save one day, we somehow lose several days.

After I left you on Tuesday, it was indeed a most extraordinary trip from Los Angeles to Barstow. We passed through several places which have become sights of harrowing devastation. It was not until we had passed San Bernardino mountain that we saw the most heart-rending and almost unbelievable evidence of what a flood can

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do. There are no words that can describe the horror of it all. It seemed the chasms made between canyons extended miles in some places and that they had become great river beds. We saw many, many houses almost completely buried, doubtless without the inhabitants having any warning or chance for escape.

We reached Barstow about six o'clock, where we were greeted by the courier nurses. I found my train, El Capitan, waiting there. It was not crowded and the passengers were on the whole of a very good type. Sunday was a good day here. The morning attendance was larger than the evening. Seven people drove all the way from Providence for the morning Service. The Tuesday Class was also well attended. Next Sunday we are celebrating Sri Ramakrishna's birthday with three Services.

Dear Ones:

As you know the first few days after my arrival in Boston are very full and it is difficult for me to write letters. It takes me a little time to get my bearings after so much change and activity. I had a very pleasant visit with the Chicago group and Swami Nikhilananda gave me a royal reception in New York. I arrived here Sunday evening rather tired, but I am already feeling much better. We had a good Sunday evening Service and the Tuesday evening Class was well attended and was greatly enjoyed as it was very vital and helpful. We are now busy preparing for a big dinner party tomorrow. The number attending will be unusually large, judging from the reservations that have already come in.

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You will be sorry to learn that a cable message has just informed me that Swami Vijnanandaji, the President of the Mission, passed away last Monday afternoon. It is indeed sad to see one of the last ones of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples gone. His will be done!

I have been to Cohasset once and have taken several short rides, but so far there have been no other distractions. I hope all is going well with you and the reconditioning of the Ashrama is progressing favorably. The weather here has been quite warm for the past two or three days.

With my deep love and prayers for every one of you.

From the Centre in Boston again the Swami writes:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I certainly have been busy here; so much so, it is difficult to keep any accurate idea of the time element. Since I wrote you last, several events have taken place. I do not know whether I gave you any account of the banquet which was well attended and a great success in every way. The following Sunday we had two full Services.

The opening of the Cohasset Ashrama, which took place on Saturday was very successful. As it is early in the season, we did not make any great preparations. Thursday is our May festival, and four Swamis will come to be with us. Swami Nikhilananda will be our house-guest. Then will come Saturday and Sunday, so you see what time I have for the Message work. I am still trying

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hard to have it all finished before I leave for California.

With my deep, deep love for every one of you.

From the Centre to the Ashrama in California two months later :

Dear Ones :

You must think me most strange not to have written you for so long a time, especially after I wired you I would write, but the events here have been so very fast moving that I have had really no legitimate pause in which to write and explain to you fully. Our Fourth of July Silence celebration was really beautiful and quite a number of people attended in spite of the fact that we had not good weather. Everything went off beautifully. Friends from Cincinnati, and Dr. and Mrs. Nag from India were here, and last Tuesday night after Class, we had a little reception for Dr. and Mrs. Nag.

I was very grateful that I did not have to leave on the evening of the Fourth. You can imagine how very tired my body was after two Sunday Services and then getting up on Monday around five o'clock and finishing all my cooking before eight for the Cohasset dinner, managing the entire transportation of the people who had not cars. The rest you can imagine. It was indeed a great blessing I did not have to rush to the train on the same evening.

With my heart's deepest love and abiding prayers.

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From California:

Dear Ones of the Centre:

It is indeed gratifying to know how well you have all carried on the work. May God bless you and give you greater inspiration and strength to do His work and serve truly; there is nothing so beneficial for individual unfoldment as selfless service. It has gladdened my heart so very much to see the way you have done everything.

With my loving wishes and prayer for each one of you.

Through a cordial invitation from Mr. John D. Overholt, the Swami consented to break his journey from California to Boston by stopping at Wooster, Ohio. On September eleventh, he spoke in Zion Lutheran Church. The Reverend Dr. Paul S. Kelly, pastor of the Church, graciously presented the Swami to the congregation. The Swami spoke on "Christ and Oriental Ideals."

The next day twenty ministers of various denominations from Wooster and outlying districts gathered to hear the Swami speak and answer practical questions. After the visit, Dr. Kelley wrote to the Swami:

"May I assure you that it was a very great privilege to have you with us on Sunday last. Various members of the congregation have spoken to me in high terms of your fine spiritual address at our morning worship.

"I, personally, was delighted with the lofty

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spiritual tone of your sermon. I consider it significant that you spoke so delightfully of Jesus the Christ. It always means much to Christians to hear a spiritual leader of another faith speak highly of their Lord and Master. Your address before the Cleric Club of Wooster was on the same high level. The fact that all acrimony was absent from the discussion which followed your address is a tribute to your own fine spirit."

Of this visit the Swami writes :

Dear Ones :

The experience in Wooster was an unique one. I addressed the congregation on Sunday morning at their regular eleven o'clock worship. I should have said, "I gave the sermon." In the afternoon I had tea with the rector of the Lutheran Church, Reverend Dr. Kelley, and his wife, at the house of Mrs. Overholt, the ninety year old mother.

Of course I answered questions unceasingly on each and every occasion. The next morning I met a gathering of exactly twenty ministers, representing the various denominations of the district. This was easily the outstanding event of my visit. Everything went off beautifully without a single note of antagonism. Reverend Dr. Kelley was a little apprehensive of this at first because of the narrow views of some of the ministers, and when nothing of the sort happened, he was quite jubilant over the entire visit.

Finally, Mr. Overholt invited three ministers to lunch with me as his guest—the Episcopal minister, the Presbyterian minister, Reverend Williams, and Reverend Dr. Kelley of the Lutheran

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Church. The Presbyterian minister was a very intellectual and worth while person. He asked me numerous questions and exclaimed, "I have been waiting for such an opportunity all my life."

Mr. Overholt put me on the train the same afternoon at Cleveland and I arrived in Boston Tuesday A.M.

I send every one of you my deep love and prayers for your safe-keeping.

These letters from Boston some days later :

Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

I hope you are all well and that everything is tranquil at the Ashrama. Here the weather has been unspeakably bad. You must have had news of the terrible hurricanes and storms that have swept New England and have caused great damage in all New England, specially Connecticut. This afternoon the report is that the wires are down between Boston and New York and some of the big business houses were not even able to keep their contact with one another.

The European situation has certainly been most grave. I heard a portion of Anthony Eden's speech this afternoon. I do not believe even though they may succeed in patching up a peace proposition at this present juncture, that it will be enduring. However, the world must move on.

Last night we had a very wonderful Class. Every one went away deeply moved and I felt a strong spiritual atmosphere and that is the real purpose of this work. I hear the wind howling. Possibly it will carry away some of the humidity and low pressure. On Tuesday evening we shall

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announce a special autumn festival of Divine Mother. We want to make this an important occasion with entertainment and refreshments, as it will correspond to Vijaya (last day of the feast).

It is needless to say that I shall have to return to Boston soon, as I am still keeping the date with Tuft's Divinity School on October seventeenth. I shall probably have to leave on the evening of the eleventh or twelfth; but as you know, much can be accomplished in a short time through individual endeavor and joint action. Do not let there be any minority problem at the Ashrama, but only one great majority, one individual and united front. With oceans of love and unceasing prayers for your safe-keeping.

Since I have spoken of oceans, we are experiencing it as we look from the window. The Charles River is worked up almost to a fury and is beating against the bridge and the wall on the opposite side of the river.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

It is difficult to write to you at this moment because, as you know, it was my plan to see you and tell you everything face to face. This time it is circumstances that have changed all my plans and I am not sorry I am here. The world situation today is surely most grave; yet in spite of all the black clouds, I feel that the calamity of war will be averted at the present moment.

The devastation of the hurricane here is really beyond description. Whatever you have heard and read you may consider not exaggerated. The death toll may amount to one thousand and property



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Taken in the Sanctuary of the Cohasset Ashrama.

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damage is almost beyond calculation. Some of the beach resorts have been completely wiped off the map.

We are going to observe Divine Mother's festival simply. If I can leave here conveniently, I shall have Divine Mother's festival with you on Sunday night, September ninth, also on the twenty-second. I am hoping to get in touch with Dr. Skinner in order to change my Tuft's Divinity College engagement to some later date.

Please be of good cheer and do everything you can to make the Divine Mother's feast full of spiritual inspiration. Here we are terribly short-handed, but I know the Divine Mother will send whatever and whomever we need as She has always done. With my loving and abiding prayers for every one of you.

Dear Ones:

Last night's celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday was an amazing demonstration. In spite of most severe weather and impassable streets, we had practically a record attendance. Of course none of our out-of-town friends were able to be present.

It is no use giving you a description of the weather because California did not escape wholly, for retribution falls close upon the heels of those who malign the weather of the sedate, puritanical Easterners, especially those who dwell in the hub of the universe. It is a fruitless competition and the sooner it is stopped, the better for all concerned; for in that case, the weather god might make some compromise which would equalize the weather conditions. No one wants your tropical

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sun all the time and thus the snow comes to temper the atmosphere. But enough about the weather.

Sunday we had two lovely Services. I spoke in the evening on "Clear Mirrors." It may be the current article for the next "Message." We are planning to have a big banquet in honor of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday on the twenty-fourth of February and a public celebration on the twenty-sixth.

I hope all is well with you and that the weather has moderated. I try to keep myself informed about the weather situation, but the newspapers seldom give these things accurately.

With love and prayers for the protection of each and every one of you.

The Swami writes again on his return to Boston after some weeks spent at the Ashrama in California. These letters all belong to the year 1939:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I am truly sorry I have not written to you before this; but when I finish one of these transcontinental trips, my body is exhausted, especially when I stop anywhere along the way. Tomorrow is our banquet. The notable thing I have done since my arrival here was to see Maurice Evans in "Hamlet." This was an uncut version and it was indeed a real treat and a very remarkable performance to say the least. Of all the great Shakespearean actors I have seen in this role, no one has come up to Maurice Evans' simple rendition of this character play.

This is just a brief letter to tell you my thoughts are constantly flowing toward you, although I

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have not said so in words. With my deep love for every one of you.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

We had a very lovely banquet last Friday night. Daylight saving went into effect yesterday morning and our Service was somewhat disturbed by those who did not remember. There was a better attendance in the evening.

My thoughts have been with you most constantly, though it has not been possible for me to write you as often as I should like to have done. With my deep and tender love for each and every one of you.

Dear Ones:

This is just a line to tell you that all is well here. We are plunged into strenuous "Message" activity, which will require vigorous and concentrated work for the next two weeks, but so far everything is promising well. We had a lovely Class last night with a large attendance. We are celebrating the thirtieth anniversary here on May twelfth, Friday, also we shall have two Services on the fourteenth.

This carries my love for every one of you.

Dear Ones:

We truly had a wonderful Silence Day at Co-hasset on the Fourth of July. Everything went very smoothly. The altar in the pine grove with Swami Vivekananda's picture almost made us feel a forest Deity was seated there blessing us. A Hindu doctor in army service was present. His name is Lieutenant Colonel Basu. He brought

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with him a Chinese doctor, a very distinguished gentleman of whom Lowell Thomas says, "He is one of the most brilliant speakers of our time." He is sometimes called the "Teddy Roosevelt of China." At the present time he is managing director at Boston of the Chinese Service Bureau for this entire country. He has written three books. Both of these gentlemen spoke and everything went most beautifully.

With deep love to each one.

The Swami gained such momentum in his activities that train travel no longer sufficed and he resorted to the air. Of his first journey in an airplane he tells in this letter dated August third, 1939:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

This is to tell you I arrived here safely on time, but actually it was about five minutes ahead of time. The last part of the journey was on one of the American Airline planes and it was very fine indeed. After I sent you my telegram from Albuquerque the passage proved pretty strenuous, as we had to keep up most of the time at an altitude of eleven thousand feet and air bumps were frequent. Also we encountered some rain and wind.

The view of Boulder Dam was a marvelous one, also that of Grand Canyon of Arizona; but a curious thing is that most of the time the whole earth looked absolutely flat, with here and there little bits of design. The houses did not count at all and the hills looked like little marks on the valley.

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When one takes a flight in an airplane, the earth seems very insignificant. A tall tree, a shrub and a field of lowly grass look like so much verdure. There is no towering oak, no great spreading bush in contrast with the soft carpet of grass, but there is merely a mat of green, all looking exactly the same—no smallness, no tallness; no superiority or inferiority. In the same way, we have only to rise in consciousness to see our great difficulties and our small difficulties melt into nothingness. I shall have a great deal to say on the subject when I see you. The first discomfort I felt was in my eardrums, which might have been from altitude, also from the noise.

I had to change planes at Kansas City but I did not take a sleeper because the first time, this dressing and undressing and getting up early in the morning did not appeal to me. But I had a very comfortable reclining chair, more like a steamer chair. However, I am here, safe and sound, and have had a nap and am now eating some salad. If it were really urgent and needed I am ready for another flight.

With deep love.

From Boston again:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

Divine Mother's festival began here on Thursday morning with a long Service. I prepared an offering and we had a beautiful celebration all day long. Then came yesterday's banquet, which turned out to be quite a large one. There were about ninety-five people present. Having the pri-

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vate celebration combined with such a big public one, made it very strenuous for everyone. People started to arrive for the banquet before we had finished the evening Service. Dinner was a huge success. People ate and ate and certainly enjoyed the food. I cannot yet make out how things turned out so well. Every one acclaimed the dessert was grand. Altogether, it was a real and very sumptuous feast.

Dr. Tehyi Hsieh, the Chinese gentleman who also spoke at the Fourth of July Service, was the chief speaker. He talked for one solid hour. There was a very lovely and joyous spirit manifested in every way. The house has been filled with the Divine Presence, every one has been very conscious of it. We did not eat until Saturday morning, (way past midnight). That was the reason I was not able to send you a wire last night. Today I am again cooking an offering and we are planning to have the Service around three-thirty, as I have to drive to Providence to keep an engagement. It is needless to say that I find all this a little strenuous, as we shall very likely not reach home before one o'clock.

We shall go Tuesday morning to help celebrate the first dedication Service of Swami Nikhilananda's Centre. We shall try to see the World's Fair on Monday night and shall no doubt reach Boston some time Saturday afternoon. I shall try to write you a description of my flight, especially when we were flying above the clouds, but just now I have not leisure to go into further details.

Be of good cheer. Cease thinking about trivial ups and downs of human affairs. With my loving prayers for each and every one of you.

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Dear Ones:

My time has been so very full that I could not even send you a tour telegram from New York. As you know, I went by motor and drove both ways and it was indeed a delightful trip in every respect. The state of Connecticut was a blazing glory of color. Massachusetts and New York lacked brilliancy this year.

We had a very nice Sunday here with very good attendance both morning and evening. I shall arrive in California on the morning of the sixteenth. My tentative plan is to speak in New York on the evening of November twelfth and also the following noon at Mrs. West's Centre; and in Cincinnati the same evening, Louisville Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning. Due Burbank airport Thursday A.M. Will write further details later.

With my love and abiding prayers for each one of you.

The Swami's last Christmas was spent at the Ashrama in California; he also welcomed the New Year there with the usual midnight Service—his last one. The Christmas celebration was a joyous one. There was an impressive Service in the Temple on Christmas Eve, to which a large number came. The Swami spoke with deep feeling and a choir sang Christmas carols. On Christmas evening the entire Community gathered round a glistening tree in the living-room of the Cloister and many gifts from friends of the work were distributed. The Swami's share was overwhelmingly large and he showed the delight of a child;

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yet there was in his pleasure, as always, an undercurrent of quiet detachment.

This visit to the Ashrama was a brief one. Early in January the Swami returned to Boston. This letter tells of his activity at the Centre there :

Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

It is difficult to realize that I have not written you at all since my arrival in Boston exactly ten days ago. Many times I have wanted to send you a long letter telling you all that has been going on here and also everything that I felt on the train. How I wanted you to know of my prayers for each and every one left behind me; and how I prayed to the Lord that He might make me a good shepherd that I may look after each one with all the selfless devotion I can command. You must have got my thoughts, even without a letter telling you of them, because I believe so much in the power of prayer.

I will give you a summary of the last ten days' activities. We have had eight public functions since my return, besides all the private activities. On the first evening after my arrival here, we held the Service and reception for Swami Vijayananda which went off very well. The next event was the visit of the "Friendship Tour" on Saturday afternoon. That was pronounced by many a truly brilliant success. One who was present said, "Swamiji, it was worth coming all the way from California for one such occasion." Several members of the Tour came to our banquet and to Services since. The tea and refreshments served were sumptuous. Most of it was furnished by

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Miss Murphy. The next day I had two public Services. On Monday we went down to do some necessary shopping. Tuesday we moved the Shrine from the chapel to the room that I had previously used as my study. This is making a very great difference in the house in every way.

The banquet on the anniversary of the Centre last Friday night, in spite of bad weather, proved very successful, although some did not receive their cards until after the banquet was over. There were eighty present and the whole affair moved along with warmth and enthusiasm. Today we have just concluded two very good Services. The morning Service was well attended but in the afternoon there was a large gathering. For the anniversary Services, the thirty-first, we arranged the chapel with a small separate platform facing the river. The afternoon began with Mr. Hansen's violin contribution. This was followed by invocation and prayer after which Gayatri played a number on the esraj, then Gayatri and Sumita chanted a Vedic Hymn. When they had finished, I introduced Professor Rankin of Simmons and Radcliffe Colleges, who spoke beautifully and impressed every one. His theme was, "What I Learned in India." It was really a very gratifying occasion.

With my love for each one.

This letter was written twenty-eight days later during the Swami's subsequent journey from California to Boston :

Dear Ones all :

This is just a line to let you know that all is going well with me. The train is not at all crowded.

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The steward is a special friend of mine. He greeted me last night with a large glass of orange juice. I had a fairly good night, in spite of being so very tired. I have to admit that this is a bit of rest, although this may not be the ideal way to get it. I want you all to have plenty of rest, but do not forget to do the vital things before my return. Ashrama is a lovely place in so many ways; may you be often reminded of this fact. Make it lovelier by your own individual share of loveliness.

I have been royally treated by the dining-car steward. He is the nicest one of them all. His name is Mr. Huston. The weather seems very pleasant so far; very little snow. I hope that you received my wire yesterday from Gallup. There is not very much I can say in the way of news, except my thoughts are constantly welling up and they are principally for your greater unfoldment and safe-keeping.

Always with my abiding love.

The Swami's constant effort was to unify, to make all humanity one. The dream was too large to realize in the few years of one lifetime; but he sought to contribute his part towards a ground work for its realization by turning antagonism into understanding, discord into harmony, prejudice into tolerance. He organized several religious conferences. The most important of these was held first at the Centre in Boston and later in California during March of 1940. These letters which follow tell of his preparation for the Con-

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ference in Boston and also of other strenuous activities there:

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

It does seem most strange that I have allowed so many days to go by without sending you any word; and now as I try to remember the many happenings since my arrival here, I cannot give you a detailed account, because everything has become submerged by the recent activities. We had a very lovely Sunday (yesterday) with good attendance. Friday evening banquet was outstanding in its quality and a certain joyousness manifested all the way through. It was attended by over eighty, which was extremely good considering the weather conditions. Here the snow is piled up everywhere and when I first arrived, it was just through sheer luck that there was a little break like a tunnel on our entire block.

This week is very full. We are bringing out a circular with the calendar of events for next Sunday's convention. It must be ready for distribution by Tuesday evening. So far we have for the Conference, Dr. Dieffenbach, Church Editor of the Transcript; Reverend Palfrey Perkins of Kings Chapel; Reverend Carl Heath Kopf of Mt. Vernon Church; Reverend Wm. H. Gysan, Unitarian Minister to College Students; Professor Robert Rankin, Head of the History Department of Simmons College; Dean Clarence Skinner of Tufts and Harvard Divinity College; Mrs. Georgina Tree West of New York Unity Centre; and Ruth Cranston, who will speak on the "World's Religion Conference at Geneva." The Chinese scholar, Dr. Teyhi Hsieh will also speak. It is

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quite a full programme even for three sessions. We are holding the Services at eleven A.M., four P.M., and eight P.M.

Then, incidentally, I am speaking at the Mt. Vernon Church on the evening of the sixth; the following day I am to address the Divinity students at Tuft's College; and on the afternoon of the twelfth, I speak at Simmons College; so there is no chance for me to leave earlier than the night of the twelfth or the thirteenth, coming directly by the Chief. Then, too, on top of all this, there is the "Message" to be completed. I am working hard with my editorial associates to finish this task. I am sure when you receive this, you will realize at what speed my mind and body are travelling.

I wish it were possible for me to write individually and thank each one of you for your beautiful and devoted nature, but that is entirely out of the question. With all my love for every one of you.

Dear Ones of the Ashrama:

I have just returned from Mt. Vernon church after the supper and my address there. It was indeed a significant occasion. I feel we have made an important contact with our immediate church neighbor; and I must say, the appreciation of the people was most genuine and touching. The minister is announcing our Religious Conference and other activities from his pulpit next Sunday. We distributed about one hundred circulars at the church.

I am enclosing a circular which we have brought out for the Congress of Religions, and in a few

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days I shall send a synopsis of the programme for California. The enclosed announcement with the picture of the Chapel was brought out in twenty-four hours, cut and all.

Tomorrow I speak at Tufts Divinity School at noon. You can imagine at what speed I have been going during the last few days. Next Tuesday, as I told you in my telegram, I am to speak at Simmons College. I had another invitation to address the "Union Church" next Wednesday, but do not see how I can do it.

I shall be with you for Good Friday and in ample time for the Easter preparations. After much deliberation, I feel sure our Congress of Religions will be more successful if we have it on the next Sunday after Easter.

With my deep love for each and every one of you.

The Conference took place in Boston March tenth, 1940. The Swami introduced all the speakers at the Conference and presided in his usual gracious manner. His words struck each time a glowing note of unity. At the close of the Conference one of the chief speakers said to the Swami, "It has been more than a privilege to take part in the exercises today, it has been an honor."

The Swami's description of the Conference follows:

Dear Ones:

I am enclosing a rough draft for the Ashrama announcement. One side will contain all the

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Easter activities and the other the programme for "Harmony of Religions" day.

Now I must give you a brief summary of last Sunday's activities. It was a beautiful day except for a high wind. The eleven A.M. Service was well attended and the Chapel was more than full. I had expected the afternoon session to be quite a full one, so through a very great good fortune I had an intuition that it would be best to place the platform near the dividing wall between the Chapel and the big hall. This enabled the speakers to command the entire lower floor. Before the clock struck four, the entire Chapel, the entire lower hall, the stairs, and one hundred additional chairs lent us by a good friend, were all full. I even made a concession and allowed people to sit on the platform steps. There were approximately three hundred present. It was a very brilliant occasion. Reverend Dr. Kopf spoke well. Miss Ruth Cranston gave a summary of her experience at the Conference of Religions at Geneva. She spoke at the morning session at which Reverend Dr. Gysan, Unitarian minister to College youth, also spoke. Reverend Palfrey Perkins of Kings Chapel sent a message that he could not be present because of urgent pastoral duties. Dr. Dieffenbach, religious editor of the Boston Transcript, spoke in his usual scholarly, cultured manner. At the conclusion of the afternoon Service he said, "Oh, my heart feels so warm," and this morning I had a letter from him in which he said, "It was truly an exalted occasion." Immediately following the afternoon session, we had to rush people to take their supper places. I forgot to tell you that forty stayed for luncheon and an

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equal number for supper. These were out-of-town friends. Mrs. West of New York Truth Centre, flew from New York and arrived at the Centre while we were having the afternoon session. She had difficulty getting up the stairs, due to the large number of people seated there.

At the evening session, Dr. Hsieh, Professor Rankin, Miss Mel and a doctor from South America spoke. The evening was also very crowded. There was a little difference of opinion regarding the total attendance for the day, but it was around seven hundred. Many people said nothing like this had ever happened in Boston before. Even the newspaper men commented upon it. I have given you in a nutshell the picture of what went on.

Now in regard to myself. I deeply appreciate your feeling of concern for my physical well-being. But my real attitude is that as long as I am sustained by One who has placed me in this role of service, nothing matters but His work. But if we are not sustained by His power, do not think that there is anything else that can save or protect us. I hope this consciousness will enter into every one of you, so that instead of worrying unnecessarily, we shall feel infinite strength and become more ready to do His service. March on! March on! With my tenderest love for each and every one of you.

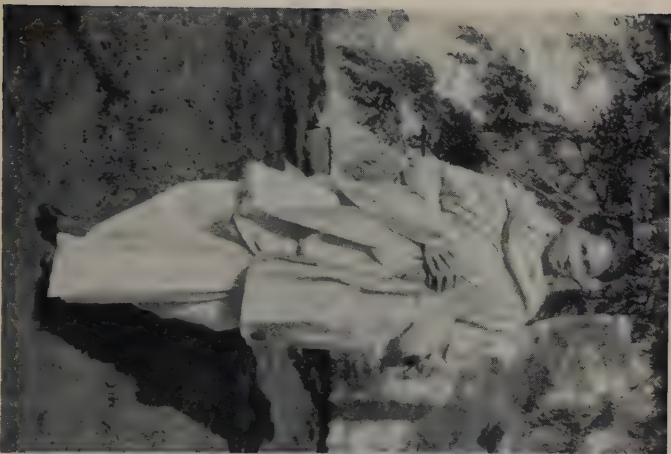
Three weeks later, on March thirty-first, 1940, a similar Conference took place at Ananda Ashrama in California. It was called the "Harmony of Religions." It proved a harmonizing of many different phases of thought. It was the birthday

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anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna and at the morning Service the Swami spoke on "Unity in Diversity." At the afternoon Service there were ten guest speakers representing various faiths and nationalities. The speakers were Dr. Gill of the University of Chicago; Bhikshu Goldwater of the Hongwanji Temple, Los Angeles; Father Paul Case of the Liberal Catholic Church; Reverend Dr. Folger, Minister of the Quaker Church of Whittier; Dr. H. Sjaardema of the University of Southern California; Reverend J. F. Halliday of the La Canada Community Church; Dr. Syud Hossain of the University of Southern California; Dr. Walter Raymond of the Unity Centre of Los Angeles; also Dr. Richard, a French philosopher, and Dr. Richardson.

In spite of unpropitious weather, with thunder storm and heavy rain, several hundred eager friends crowded into the Temple, filling every available space. The fellowship, tolerance and unity of thought which prevailed were most gratifying. Not a single discordant note was struck by the speakers. It was truly a "Harmony of Religions." This was due in greatest measure to Swami Paramananda's tactful and exalted manner of introducing the speakers. The spirit of tolerance and unity sounded through his every word.

At noon on April fifteenth, the Swami took the train for Boston where he remained for a month,



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(Left) Taken earlier in Indian dress. (Right) Last picture of the Swami.
Taken June 5, 1940.

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returning by air to the Ashrama. He left the Ashrama by air again on June fifth. This was his final eastward journey. The last letter the Swami wrote to the Ashrama from Boston is dated April twenty-third, 1940. It reads :

Dear Ones of the Ashrama :

This is just a line to tell you that we have been in the midst of one of the greatest storms in all New England history, but in spite of everything we had a very good Sunday. I feel it was a real demonstration to have as many as we did, especially at the evening Service, as there was a real gale and blizzard. We are in the midst of preparations for our coming banquet and the play which is to take place immediately following.

I have just received a charming letter from Mrs. Fisher, wife of Bishop Fisher, who asked for two reservations for our Hindu banquet on Friday. Naturally, I at once invited her to be present as my guest with Madame Kamala Devi, who is at present residing with her as her house guest.

This is all I can write now. I hope you are all well and that everything is going on satisfactorily. Tuesday evening Class is just finished. It was crowded.

Affectionately yours,

Paramananda

This closing letter, though an earlier one, sounds the note of the sunset hour, so it is given here :

Dear Ones :

My mind has been very close to Inner Things.

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The only consciousness worth having and conveying to others is God-consciousness. Know that my determination is going to be more and more for that. Physical exertion and effort are only a means to an end. I want to give all my energy to the fulfillment of the great Ideal to which I have dedicated my whole life. But know that unless our daily thoughts, words and consciousness can unite with the Great Spirit, we are not fulfilling our Ideal. I have thought of you all more than I can convey in words. One time I felt the whole family should be together and I thought that no matter how many Centres we have or how far apart they are, when the great moment comes, I hope and pray I may have all of you, who are part of my heart and life, together.

With all my love and blessings for your safe-keeping,

Paramananda

XII

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The closing years of the Swami's life, as we have seen, were lived at high pressure. He moved back and forth across the continent between Boston and California at intervals often of ten days and even less. He spoke at the Ashrama one day, in New York on the second, and in Boston on the third. His ardour of service burned like a flaming fire within him. It could not be cooled or quenched. The pain of the world was his pain and he longed to assuage it, if need be with his life. One day, suddenly all activity ceased and he was gone. He could not linger in his going—the momentum of his life had grown too strong. His spirit was tireless, but his body had tired. It could do no more. Did he know that the end was approaching? I believe that he did. It was that which drove him on to give himself more and more freely, more and more completely—nothing must be left.

It was on Friday the twenty-first of June, 1940, that he passed away. In the morning he had worked on the "Message of the East", preparing it for the printer. When noon came he complained of weariness; but there were workers to be

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brought from the Cohasset Ashrama and no one to bring them, so he drove the car himself. When he reached the Ashrama he moved about wearily, going to the upper house where he asked Sister Shanta if he could lie down on the verandah, but she said it was too cool, so he walked along the grass-grown path to the lower house. As he went, he saw a worker, said to her, "I have been in another world," and fell forward. The other world had claimed him.

He had told his workers he had received a warning, but still he did not abandon his relentless activity. When they remonstrated with him, he would reply: "So much to be done and so little time to do it in;" or he would reproach them gently saying: "Do you not know that Divine Mother is working through me?" A letter written by one who knelt beside him as he went, gives these details:

"We left Boston about a quarter to four. On the way we talked little—the Swami seemed in a quiet mood and remained almost continuously silent until we reached the Ashrama. As we left the car he said, 'Listen to the birds!' He walked about a few minutes, then said again, 'How the birds sing!' He left me to go to the upper house. In a very short time I saw him coming down the road and as he neared me he said, 'I have been in another world.' I had the feeling that he had been meditating in the woodland shrine he so

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loved. He spoke then to Brother Phillip about mowing the grass. Suddenly he reached down with his hand towards the ground and before I could move, he fell. I called to Phillip to come and very gently we turned the Swami over. His last words were, 'Do not move me yet!' He drew several deep breaths and his spirit fled from the body. Two doctors were called, they said that he was gone. Those who had gathered around him began to pray desperately. The sky was so very blue with fleecy white clouds moving across it; there were blooming flowers near by and the birds sang joyously. As he lay there, there rose in the mind that line from Swami Vivekananda's poem, '*Song of the Sannyasin (Monk)*': 'The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed.' "

They bore the Swami's body back to the Centre in Boston, where two Memorial Services were held—one on Saturday afternoon and one on Sunday morning. At both Services the Chapel of the Centre and the spacious adjoining hall were crowded; and offerings of flowers in lavish profusion filled the Chapel, the hall, the library, the stairway, the Swami's room and the household Chapel. Gayatri Devi, the Swami's gifted assistant, conducted both Services. Swami Yatiswarananda and Swami Nikhilananda, the Swami's spiritual brothers, flew from New York to be present; while Swami Akhilananda, another brother, hurried from Philadelphia, canceling all

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engagements. Others came from Washington, Cincinnati, and points as distant. Mr. Einar Hansen, Boston Symphony violinist, motored across the entire state of Massachusetts to play, as his farewell offering to the Swami. The three Swamis, Dr. Hsieh, Swami Paramananda's devoted friend, Miss Mell of the Home of Truth, Professor Rankin of Simmons College, all spoke words of loving appreciation.

At the Service on Saturday afternoon, Swami Yatiswarananda said in the course of his address:

"I know that I should not grieve for one who has passed to immortality, but still I find that the human element is now too strong in me. It is with a heavy heart that I rise to pay my last tribute to our reverend brother monk, Swami Paramananda. It was my good fortune to meet our respected brother when he went to visit my revered teacher, Swami Brahmananda, the then President of the Ramakrishna Order, soon after I had joined the Order in the year 1911.

"Towards the end of 1911 I was sent for my training to the monastery in Madras. Swami Ramakrishnananda was no more. But something of his wonderful spirit of devotion and service was still there, and we the inmates of the monastery could breathe something of the spiritual atmosphere in which the young Paramananda's

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character was moulded by the tender and yet strong hands of this great brother disciple of Swami Vivekananda, the illustrious master who initiated Swami Paramananda into the monastic life.

“We saw in the Madras Monastery an old ‘Harmonium.’ This was presented by a local friend of our movement to Swami Paramananda, who used to practise music also during the period of his training in Madras. The Madras Centre had many pleasant associations connected with him. It is a great pleasure for me to recall now in the midst of our sorrow how I referred to many of those old associations, when, in 1932, as head of the Ramakrishna Mission Branch in Madras, I had the privilege of arranging a reception in honor of our departed brother in the large hall of our present monastery there. The picture is still before me.

“The Swami has gone to another plane of existence. But he has left us his numerous works embodying the teachings that he learned and lived. I know from personal experience in India and Europe how these books are bringing light to many, both in the East and in the West. His books are admirable; but what we valued more than books was his loving personality, so full of creative devotion and service. Let us bear in mind that he has left us a great ideal of self-consecration, an ideal he lived, following in the footsteps

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of the great disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who came before him.

“These great disciples of the Master and after them the monks of the second generation, of whom Swami Paramananda was one of the foremost, have shown us not only how to live, but how to die. They have shown us how to lead a life of self-dedication, how to offer ourselves wholeheartedly to the service of God and man. They have shown us how to move from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality. Let us bear in mind that the greatest honor we may render to their memory is to follow in their footsteps, to live and die like them, and to move in our own humble way towards the Real, the Light, the Immortal.”

Swami Nikhilananda, following, paid another loving tribute, saying:

“I have come here on behalf of myself and the members of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York to pay tribute to the memory of our beloved Swami Paramananda. His passing away was so sudden and unexpected that we cannot estimate our loss. It is a tremendous loss not only to his numerous devotees, disciples, and friends all over the United States, but to the Vedanta movement in this country as well. Since the very foundation of my work in New York he has never failed to stand by my side and give me encouragement in my arduous task. Realizing

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from his own experience how very difficult it is to start a work of this kind in this country, he always stood by me and helped me with his understanding and encouragement. I shall always feel his absence keenly.

“Swami Paramananda was one of the pioneers of the Vedanta movement and one of the successful instruments for the spreading of the mission of his illustrious Guru, Swami Vivekananda, in this new continent. I can say without fear of exaggeration that among the teachers of the Ramakrishna Mission who came to this country after the passing away of Swami Vivekananda, he has been the most successful in disseminating the ideals of this ancient system of Hindu philosophy. His books, written in a simple and direct style and revealing the rare penetration of his mind, have been giving solace and peace to innumerable souls. I have seen his books even in the mountain fastnesses where the rays of civilization had scarcely penetrated. His cyclonic activity, his contact with men and women through lectures and interviews, have helped to unfold many aspiring souls. Above all, his sweet and gentle nature, his suave temperament, his dignified demeanor, and his unfailing courtesy, endeared him to all classes of people.

“True to the example of his own Guru and following the methods of the great Sri Ramakrishna, he imparted religious instruction in a unique way.

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He was full of fun, merriment and gaiety. Under his care spiritual discipline did not appear as a chore. All this is well known to his disciples. Even in the most casual remark or light-hearted action he kept intact the spiritual view of life. His companionship itself was a spiritual lesson. I believe he taught more by influence than by words or even by example. Words were superfluous.

“Like a noble warrior he has laid down his life on the battle-field. During the years of his fruitful life he never shrank from hard tasks. He always put his duties before personal considerations. When we warned him again and again about his strenuous labor and asked him to slow down his activities, he always smiled and said to us that the Lord would supply him with the necessary strength and energy. I do not intend to tell you of the great difficulties through which he passed at the beginning of his spiritual ministration in this country. There are others here who can give you a better account. But we all know that his path was not strewn with roses. If he attained a great measure of success, every bit of it had been fought for and won by his own will power and courage. His life will always be a model for us to copy. Even while walking through the *Via Dolorosa* he did not fail to be cheerful. Very few, I believe, could understand the anguish of his heart. He always kept a part of his soul

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unattached to the things happening around him, and with that he communed with his God.

“Swami Paramananda has left a great legacy to his followers and disciples. It is for them to see that the noble work, for which he shed his last drop of blood, may go from strength to strength. As I look at the sad faces around me, I am reminded of a couplet by the great Hindu mystic and poet, Tulsidas. He says, addressing himself:

‘O Tulsi, when you were born, you wept and the world laughed.
So live that, when you die, you will laugh and the world will weep.’ ”

At three in the afternoon of Sunday, June twenty-third, the Swami set out on his last journey from east to west and at the Ashrama in California the final Service took place. When he reached the station in Pasadena on Wednesday, a large number of people were there to meet him and the two Sisters who had travelled with him. He was motored to the Ashrama, many accompanying him, and was taken to his own room. There the members of the household watched beside him all that day and night. At five in the morning of Thursday, June twenty-seventh, the Brothers of the Ashrama carried him with loving hands to the Temple, the entire community following with lighted incense and flowers. No one wept; the hour was too sacred for tears. After

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the regular morning Service there was more chanting and singing of holy songs for two hours, then the Swami was borne to the Temple patio where the final Service was to be held. He was placed under a wide-spreading oak tree, with flowers all around him, a blanket of gardenias and orchids over him, and the early morning sun shining down upon him.

At eight o'clock Swami Ashokananda, head of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, who had made the journey especially to assist at the final Service, and Swami Prabhavananda, head of the Vedanta Society in Hollywood, performed a simple Indian rite which consisted of lighting a fire and laying upon it fruit and flowers symbolic of the closing life. At half past eight, the final Service began. Gayatri Devi conducted it, with the assistance of the two Swamis, who spoke with deep feeling of Swami Paramananda. The address of Swami Prabhavananda was, unfortunately, not recorded. Swami Ashokananda said in part:

“In the passing of Swami Paramananda the cause of Vedanta in America has sustained a great loss, and a career of valuable service to humanity has been prematurely ended. Swami Paramananda was probably the youngest disciple of Swami Vivekananda. At our monastery in Madras he was trained by Swami Ramakrishnananda; and it is still related there how affectionately and so-

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licitously the great Swami (one of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna) cared for him, and prepared him for the life of spiritual ministry. Now that Swami Paramananda has gone beyond our vision, his work is left with us, and it will continue to flourish. I have no doubt but that the immortal achievements of the Swami will bear, with the passing of years, a thousand times more fruit than they have yet done.”

Gayatri Devi then spoke with deep feeling of Swami Paramananda and his achievements, after which Sister Daya, one of the Swami's most able assistants, read this tribute, written by me in the name of the Sisters, Brothers and workers of the Ashrama :

“One of the great teachers of India, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, said to me when I was in India, ‘Paramananda lived with me for five years, in daily, hourly contact, and I was never able to find a single fault in him.’ I who worked with him in closest association for thirty-four years, can pay the same tribute, as also can another elder Sister who has known him as long—Sister Satya-Prana. All the other Sisters, Brothers and workers, whether with him for a long or a short time, bear witness to the inspiration and glowing example he held before them. His teaching was more than teaching; his life was more than living; both bore a fragrance, a beauty, a convincing

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power, that drew hundreds on hundreds to his feet to hear him and to love him.

“We, the Sisters, Brothers and workers of the Ashrama, stand anointed to carry forward the work in his spirit and in the spirit of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna. With courage and deepest consecration we pray that we may be clear channels through which he may still bless the world. We ask your cooperation and your love to uphold us along the way. May God bless you and may He bless us.”

One who was present describes the Service thus :

“The day, warm and fragrant, the flowers, the lovely music of voice and violin mingling with the chanting of the two Swamis—East blending with West—the enfolding mountains, the human faces, and the white-robed, slender figure who spoke so bravely, made a picture that will not be easily erased by either time or distance; while to the inner ear floated that age-old Vedic hymn—intoned so often at sacred occasions by the Hindu members of the Community—which carries in its stately rhythm its transcendent meaning :

‘Hear ye, ye children of the Immortal One,
I know that all-glorious Being, radiant as
the sun,
By knowing Him one escapes death!
There is no other way!
There is no other way!
There is no other way!’ ”

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More than five hundred gathered to pay homage to the Swami's memory and the floral offerings reached nearly one hundred. Letters and telegrams poured in from all parts of the United States and beyond, expressing sorrow and sympathy. It was said that the whole valley of La Crescenta, stretching beneath the Ashrama hills, was saddened by his going. Even those who were closest to him did not realize how widely known he was and how widely loved.

The Swami's voice is not silenced, it still sounds through the printed page. He has left us a rich legacy of published writings, books of great variety and profound thought,—four volumes of illumined poems, six volumes of practical teaching, three of comparative study, philosophic writings and books of devotion; many booklets and pamphlets; also translations from the Sanskrit of the Bhagavad-Gita and some of the Upanishads. These works will perpetuate his memory and his influence through the years.

He has left us more than his writings. He has left us himself—his lofty example and his living presence. He is as vividly living now as when he walked among us. His presence pervades and permeates all his past association and reaches beyond. Even people who did not know him feel it. Unseen he will live and work for the world as long as there is a heart to heal of sorrow, a life to lift from despair, a soul to wake to God.

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When Swami Paramananda's passing became known, telegrams and letters containing glowing tributes were received in uncounted numbers. Only the most salient are given here. Many more deserve to be recorded, but it is not possible to include all. Among the most valued was a letter from Swami Virajananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission in India. As the cable announcing the Swami Paramananda's passing went from the Centre in Boston, the letter is addressed there. It reads:

“What terrible news I received by wire yesterday evening from the Belur Math that our dearly beloved Swami Paramananda entered *Mahasamadhi* at Boston on Friday! I am simply shocked, it is too heart-rending. He was so full of youthful energy, I never dreamed I should survive him and suffer this sad bereavement in the closing years of my life. His loss is simply irreparable to our Math (monastery) and Mission, and especially to our American work. To me personally, who had an intimate, affectionate relationship with him for nearly forty years, his passing leaves a void in my heart which can never be filled—we were so deeply attached to each other! To you and all your Sisters and Brothers of the Ananda

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Ashrama and Boston Centre, it must be the same. There is no word to give you consolation. How can I give you consolation when I cannot find it myself?

“The Lord is taking away to Himself all His most beloved children, one after another, and we are left to mourn their loss. Inscrutable are His ways and we have to bow down to His will! I can only earnestly pray to Him to give you all, who belong to the Swami’s spiritual household, strength and courage to bear this heavy burden of sorrow and face life with a determined will to continue His work—the work of Sri Guru Maharaj (Sri Ramakrishna) and Swami Vivekananda for whom he lived and died. He is not dead—he lives in you all whom he loved so dearly, for whom he sacrificed his life from day to day, and into whom he infused his spirit of supreme love, service and self-sacrifice.

“Sweet and loving; beautiful in body and spirit, with untiring, youthful energy; with loving kindness to all beings; always ready to help them with no thought for himself; radiant with spiritual wisdom, he moved among men as a little child of the Divine Mother. May he rest now in Her lap in peace and blessedness!

“HARI OM TAT SAT!

“Please accept my heartfelt love and blessings and convey the same to all our Brothers and Sisters there. Also let me know all about yourself

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and how the work is going on there. Hoping you are doing well.”

Dr. William Norman Guthrie, Rector Emeritus of the Church of Saint Mark's in the Bouverie and for many years one of the most prominent clergymen of New York, writes thus to one of the Sisters at Ananda Ashrama:

“I write to you after the shock of the Swami's passing has left me competent to speak. How fine and pure and humble at heart, how gentle, how highbred and noble he was, you know. Never did he go back from his vision of one human religion—uttering itself diversely in different ages and races, but to the same effect; and he most winsomely communicated his conviction, his hope, his benediction to all alike with the blended wealth of inspiration and holy experience. My wife and I feel we have lost a beautiful friend. He had finished his work. He was entitled to go hence. True, I had in store to visit him once again in the Ashrama, always it remained a hope. But he has other work to do, or surely he in his perpetual youth would not have departed. I doubt there is anyone who can fill his place. May the tolerance, the sensitive, devout universalism or catholicity never desert the Ashrama above the Pacific.”

Another letter from Dr. Guthrie addressed to the members of the Centre in Boston and to the

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Ananda Ashrama Community expressing deepest feeling, reads:

“My dear Friends of the Vedanta Centre and the Ashramas, East and West:

“The news of our beautiful leader’s passing is, of course, a shock. He was so perennially young, so innocent in his detachment, so unspoiled for all the adulation of his following. To my wife and me, he was a cherished beacon as well as a friend. To those who are organized in his obedience, it is a trial of strength and a tremendous challenge. I never dreamed I should outlive him. I always looked to him as a comrade, a little benediction in reserve for an ill day of confusion or fatigue.

“But then he made the Bhagavad-Gita vocal, personally alive. In him lived and breathed the joy of the thousand hymns of the Rig-Veda—but those are on my shelf; he is in my heart. And so it is with you. He meditated, realized, impersonated with incredible sweetness and delicate, reserved authority. His like has not been among us in America—the fairest representative of all that India has to give. Thank you for apprising us of your bereavement and ours.”

A neighbor of the Swami, Reverend James F. Halliday, Minister of the Community Church of La Canada, adjoining La Crescenta where the Ashrama is located, writes thus with sincere feeling:

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“I want to express to you and to the other members of the Ananda Ashrama my profound sense of sorrow in the death of Swami Paramananda. I had known him but a comparatively short time, but in that brief three year period I had come to understand and appreciate some of his marked qualities of leadership; his generous, kindly spirit that drew so many hearts to him. I count it one of the privileges of my sojourn in California to have known Swami Paramananda and to have had some contact with a life that has ministered helpfully to so many other lives.

“A representative and advocate of the universal religion of spirit, he understood the common ground in religion and was far removed from all narrowness and intolerance. It was a joy to know him and to share in his friendship. We shall miss Swami Paramananda, but his life will continue to count increasingly in the lives of his fellow-men.”

Mr. R. B. Hutchinson, a resident of Pittsburgh, and active in the business world there, writes thus to a Sister at the Ashrama in California:

“There are times when we would say with words those feelings which mere sounds cannot carry; when thoughts alone, in their silent way, seem better to bear outward our sympathy for others, and also inwardly to enshrine in memory for ourselves that rare combination of beautiful qualities

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of another which made Swami Paramananda our friend.

“As we live our day-to-day lives, we meet many people, here a casual contact, there one of deeper impression; but, in that short dream journey, how kind is the Nature which causes our path to cross that of another whose illumination is so great that, although through our own beclouded window only stray beams may penetrate, yet those rays, like a lighted candle touched to a dark one, cause to spring up a small flickering flame. Even though the outward paths from such cross-roads never again be given to touch one another, that little inner light remains and we know within our own silence that he who fanned it to flame is with us always.

“So often, as I sat with you and Swami’s other dearest friends, listening quietly to his words, I seemed to cease to hear just words; more plainly what he was saying became strange inner pictures. So close was he to That of which he spoke that his very devotion made words almost unnecessary. How rare is such true devotion!

“Since I last saw the Swami, I have so many times thought of him as he would talk with me on the Ashrama lawn, one minute with almost child-like simplicity about some current occurrence of small moment to him, and the next, with a depth of understanding that gave the thought of ages

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of contact. When he spoke, as he so often did, from his inner self, he was no ordinary man.

“Finally, as I came to know him better, I valued in him as a friend one towering and outstanding characteristic which is the unquestioned credential of only the greatest—this man did not merely care to “know;” he had passed, without stopping, those deceptive and too generally self-satisfying stations of learning and knowledge—his goal was Being.”

IN MEMORIAM

To Swami Paramananda

By A. G. CHRISTIAN, M. D.

Back to the native soil that sent you forth
Where loving eyes may view the tranquil scene.
Home—from the fleeting glories of this earth
You rest in peace—unhurried, calm, serene.

No more responsive to the sordid cry
Of selfish hopes of nations torn with pain,
You kept your tragic tryst with destiny
And shall not carnate walk these troubled ways
again.

Humbly you lived—in death still play your part.
Alone—you closed your patient eyes in sleep;
Securely your fame enshrined within the heart
Of men, in words of simple faith, and deep.
Where once serene and confident you trod the sod,
Now roams your spirit in the sunlit hills with God.

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From G. Philadelphus, a close friend of the Swami's work:

"I cannot find words to express my thought of him, but I clearly see that to him, the experience we call death was not an actual experience, but only an outer incident. His Being was so established in the Eternal that he did not pass from one realm to another, he merely ceased to wear the garment which made him physically perceptible. Through love he entered this realm—not in order to abide here with us, but to woo our spirit into his native realm. The door by which such spirits enter this world is a swinging door, opening both ways. By selfless love they come to us in order that by the same means, we may find access into their world of pure Spirit. Here they share our limitations, gradually loosing our bonds so that in turn we too, with them, may partake of the Boundless.

"And it is invariably true that their mission is never consummated until after they have passed from the confining grasp of our physical and mental perceptions.

"Out of all the consecrated and holy persons I have known in the flesh, who have helped and inspired me, Swamiji has been the clear, transparent lens through which I received a direct focus of spiritual vision. He brought within the range of my perception, the world of which he is a native child and citizen. The full import of such

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blessing I cannot fathom. Anything I say seems both too wordy and at the same time inadequate."

A tribute written for "The Message of the East" by M. Hallett, a friend of the Swami from the earliest days of his work in Boston:

"Swami Paramananda, the leader of the Vedanta Centre in Boston for the last thirty-odd years, was both a doer and a dreamer. We in the West think of the people of the East only as the contemplatives of the world; but Swami Paramananda combined in his nature the deep, mystical strain of his own land with a dynamic energy, which we mistakenly think is found only in the Western hemisphere.

"He brought to this new world to which he was called by an inner spiritual urge, a passionate and intense one-pointedness in his service to his Ideal, the Ideal which was unity in the seemingly different religions of the world. His was a clarion call to all men and women of whatsoever creed and nationality to serve their own chosen belief with whole-hearted and sincere devotion; to live their religion by thought, by word, by deed.

"He did not come seeking converts to a strange religion, but rather to rebind men's hearts more strongly to their own. True tolerance, understanding, charity and love, were his watchwords, a golden chain to the Promised Land. He gave great truths simply and by that holy light within

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his own soul, they became living words of pure spiritual essence.

“Swami Paramananda’s great passion, like that of his Master, Swami Vivekananda, and before him, of the great illumined Sage of India, Sri Ramakrishna, was to lay stress upon the fundamental sameness of all religions and not upon the names they bore. To the Swami, God had spoken in every land and every age from time immemorial. His mind was fastened to this truth as to the lodestar: ‘Truth is One, God is One, Men call Him by various names.’

“In all faiths he found the same Truth leading always upward toward the True, the Beautiful, the Good; toward God, the One Creator, the Absolute, the All. To him Truth did not change, but only man’s portrayal gave it diverse forms and coloring at varied age and clime. Still Truth itself remained, intact, inviolate, immortal.”

A leading Indian Magazine, the “Prabuddha Bharata” contained these words in a notice of the Swami’s passing:

“We knew him well. His was a cherubic soul, full of tender feeling for all humanity. Gentle in spirit and ever depending upon the guidance of the Divine Mother, Swami Paramananda carried joy and sunshine wherever he went. The tragedy that is being enacted in the war theatres of the West, had brought a shock to the sensitive soul of

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the Swami, who made the world's woes his own. One of the Swami's assistants, sending us an account of the last days of the Swami, says: 'During the latter months all were conscious of the wounds the war with its attendant human misery was inflicting on his heart; he admitted lying awake hour after hour, night after night, weighted by the woe of the world and pleading with the Divine Mother for its lifting.' "

The tributes which follow are only passages from letters. From J. V. Bhambal comes this one:

"I read and reread the letter as I did not believe for a moment that our youthful Swamiji had really left us to join the great souls. My paying a tribute to the greatness of Swamiji would be like lighting a candle to show the sun. But not doing so, I would be depriving myself of the high honors and privilege of singing praises to him whose life and work had been a constant source of inspiration to me and to thousands who knew him.

"One could not fail to notice perfection in his Sunday Services. He even could do ordinary things with extra-ordinary touch. In his worship, prayer and sermon there was depth of human and spiritual insight. There was no bigotry or smallness in him. He was universalist in its highest sense—a true internationalist and citizen of the

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world. Those who knew him intimately found in him a real friend and a great teacher."

From Miss E. M. Post, a faithful friend of the Swami and a frequent visitor at the Centre in Boston and at the Ashrama in California:

"A picture remains in my mind of Swamiji speaking at twilight under the pines of Cohasset Ashrama. As daylight faded, a little owl appeared, and perching on a branch high over the Swami's head, seemed to be listening to his discourse. The bird of wisdom to the man of wisdom."

From Wm. E. Ennis, an active worker at the Vedanta Centre of Boston:

"Thinking of Swami the other day in terms of the meaning he has held for me for many years, I wrote down these brief sentences, but not for any definite purpose: Until I met Swami I had never met serenity so beautiful anywhere, poise so strong and still, and spiritual culture and discipline so deep and impressive. The silence and power of a great man were in him. Though sensitive and responsive to goodwill and kindness and loving appreciation as few great souls I have ever met were, he seemed not to know pride or vanity. He was too selfless, too much a child, too simple to be hurt by any words of gratitude or expressions of praise that anyone could give him."

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From Dr. N. Jaardema of Holland, professor of Psychology at the University of Southern California, also active in research work at the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles:

“My deepest regret with the passing away of your beloved Swami Paramananda. Although I met him only once, I was greatly impressed by his personality and convinced that I had the privilege of meeting a teacher who experienced and lived his contact with God.”

From Marion Craig Wentworth, the well known playwright, of Santa Barbara, California:

“Only yesterday did I learn of Swami Paramananda’s death! I was, of course, shocked and grieved. The news was so sudden. He has labored long and devotedly and his work has borne good fruit. No man could ask for more of life! I am grateful for all he did for me; grateful for the simplicity and wisdom of his teaching, for the privilege of having known him through the years—to have contacted his rare and exalted spirit in friendship. His work surely goes on. He seems just away to me! I shall always think of him with sincere affection.”

From Laurel K. Chivington of Denver, Colorado:

“My aunt sent a small clipping, undated, of Swami’s release from life. I was horribly shocked.

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It seemed so impossible. One could not but think of him living on and on. I cannot tell you just how much it has touched my life. It is as though some firmly imbedded root of my being were shaken. Although I seem to live separate from the Ashrama, it holds a place unlike any other in all the world; for anything to imperil or change its existence makes me want to rise up to protect it—as one rises to protect one's country in intense patriotism. Do reassure me that nothing will be changed—that it will go on just as it has for years, with its quiet charm and restfulness to the body as well as to the spirit. Of all homes upon this earth, I think of that as being my real home. I hold so many pictures of you living there, insignificant daily moments, just flashes, but printed indelibly upon my memory; they are my rosary of fragrant hours—to recount for beauty, for strength and for inspiration.”

From Mona Hille, of Chicago:

“Swami Paramananda was so young and so filled with quiet strength that it seemed he would surely be on earth for many years longer. We shall always be grateful to him for the joy and the beautiful serenity and wonderful spirituality that emanated from him to all who were privileged to come in contact with him. Surely he has had a happy home-coming with all the Great Ones who have gone before and who must have been waiting to welcome him on the other side.”

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From William H. Gysan, Minister to the Unitarian and Universalist Students in Greater Boston:

“Swami Paramananda was a choice spirit, a princely soul,—so kind, so serene, so thoughtful of others. I hope to know him better through the books which he has written and through which he will continue to bless the world, as well as through his disciples who have caught his spirit and learned his message. May the blessings of his life continue with us all through the years, and God bless you as you carry on his work.”

From George Palfrey (a boy of twelve years) to the Centre in Boston:

“I am distressed to hear that Swami passed away last night. I know that wherever he is, he shall still love us, and we shall love him. God has called on Swami to help this war-torn world, and to bring religion back to countries that have persecuted ministers who tried to teach the people to do right. May Swami’s work in heaven redouble his work in this world. My sympathies are with you. Much love.”

From Joan K. Caires, Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Swami Paramananda:

“You are to be found within the melody of all beautiful music; within the songs of your

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acolyte-birds of Cohasset; within the scent of the pine trees; the fragrance of the flowers. One will find you in every glorious sunrise and every softly-colored sunset. Wherever there is a radiance of God, there you are also. And, in the whispered words of 'Peace, Peace, Peace,' we shall forever hear your loving voice. Au revoir."

From Maude Williams, Edgewood School, Greenwich, Conn.:

"It does not seem true that anyone so vital, so alive, so much needed could possibly leave earth so suddenly. He still leads on and will to the end. He has left us such a wealth of treasures in his writings—pearls of wisdom and loving thoughts and with such explicit and practical directions for living. Surely we cannot fail him after all he has done for us. His writings will live forever as will his work and his memory. He was a grand and noble man, a very great character and the one and only holy man I ever knew. So kind, so gentle. If the *world* could only have heard and understood his great message there would be no war. I shall never forget the hushed silence and the sweetness of his voice as he invoked the peace blessing. Our loss is beyond words. We can only prove our love for him and our appreciation of all he did for hundreds and hundreds of us, by carrying on his message and trying to live as he taught us—cheerfully."

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From Ella S. Bush, an eminent miniature painter:

“I always think of Swami Paramananda as young and vigorous in body as in spirit. ‘He who in fewest hours finished Thy divinest work,’ was said of Jesus, so your leader filled his earthly hours to overflowing.”

TO SWAMIJI

By JENNIE I. RAYMOND

Oh, gentle one, a child art thou,
With laughter in thine eyes,
Our hearts grow light, our spirits soar
To fairer, brighter skies.

Oh, noble one, a man art thou,
Ardent, inspired and wise,
We listen to thy vibrant voice,
That calls, “Awake, Arise!”

Oh, knightly one, a warrior thou,
Courageous, true and bold,
Thine own pure heart the golden shield,
To turn the base to gold.

Oh, blessed one, a Mecca thou,
For tired souls care-worn,
We bring our homage to thy feet,
And earnestly do we repeat,
“Hallowed the day that thou wert born.”

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This volume had been completed when a letter came from the distinguished author and scholar, Dr. Kalidas Nag. It contains an important passage concerning Swami Paramananda which we add here:

“I am so thankful to you for your kind and sympathetic letter which reached me within a few days of my getting the Memorial number of ‘The Message of the East’ dedicated to our beloved Swamiji. He was and will continue to be the link between me and all of you in America. I tried to give a picture of the great work he did there, in my address before his Memorial Meeting held at the Albert Hall of Calcutta in which, the younger sister of Swami Paramananda (Mrs. Labanya Chakrabarti) also spoke feelingly of the childhood and youth of Swamiji. My father-in-law Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee presided and it was a most impressive meeting. But alas, we had no time to write out our addresses and so only brief reports were published in local papers! In case you arrange to publish a special volume in Swamiji’s memory, I may try to send you a few papers and messages. I hope and pray that the Ashramas founded by him will continue to thrive, forging ever new links of fellowship between America and India.

“May I request you to consult Sister Devamata and Sister Daya and other esteemed friends as to the possibility of founding a ‘Paramananda Fel-

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lowship Centre' at the Ramakrishna Institute of Culture of Calcutta. I am collaborating intimately with the Institute which is under the direct supervision of the Belur Math, and also is trying to develop a truly universal mind. Bengal, the cradle of Swami Paramananda, should have a permanent and functioning centre like that preferably in the cosmopolitan city of Calcutta with a University of over thirty-thousand students—a great potentiality.”

The following tribute from Rabindranath Tagore was received still later:

“While travelling in America, I received the hospitality of Swami Paramananda. There I witnessed the honor the people bestowed on him. His untimely death is indeed a serious loss. He glorified India's name in the Western hemisphere. It is an unforgettable fact that he has carried away with him the eternal gratitude of his fellowmen.”

CONCLUDING WORDS

Swami Paramananda's work will still go forward in his spirit and in the service of the exalted Ideal for which he gave his life. The slogan which he taught his workers jestingly shall be the rule of their daily effort. The slogan runs:

“Onward and forward! Steady!
Courage and cheer! Ready!
March! March! March!”

* * * *

I cannot turn the last page of this volume without expressing my warm gratitude to Sister Amala for her wholehearted cooperation. She made working copies of all the letters, copied the entire manuscript and took dictation. My previous books were all written with my own hand, but it was not possible to continue this habit in the present one. If, by reason of the change in method, it possesses less literary merit, I ask the leniency of my readers. The Swami's letters alone will suffice to carry into every heart this record of his God-given life.

DEVAMATA

Ananda Ashrama
June 1941

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