

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reviewing a recent publication of this twenty-five year old scholar, philosopher and poet, Swami Omkarananda, in which there was evidence of his specialisation in many branches of modern knowledge and ancient philosophic thought, the *Wednesday Review*, wrote, "he is a keen critic", "omniscient" by philosophic discernment", and that his is a "genuine contribution to world thought".

There is a consensus of competent opinion that the writings of this author "shine with the beams of native genius"; but, he reads books, too, and reads hundreds of them with great judgment; hence, is he a "keen critic". Three years ago, on the second of his six books, that was highly praised by *Hindustan Times* and wished a wide circulation by *Hindustan Standard*, the *Sunday Times* said that his "writings are characterised by his depth of learning and breadth of vision". Other papers had termed it, "an inspiring book", "a stirring book". In his Foreword to this work, the author of *Early History of South Indian Saivism*, a masterpiece in the field, has the pleasure to tell us, that Swami Omkarananda "has his own special and perhaps uncommon intellectual plane from which he views persons and events".

Added to his native genius of spiritual understanding and admirable faculty in the acquisition of knowledge, the author has an immeasurable receptivity of everything that concerns the enrichment of the inner divine life. That is the reason why, at eighteen he not only embraced the Holy Order of Sannyasa, probably the first to do so, after the great Indian mystic-philosopher Sankara, published his first book, received from foreign and inland periodicals comments couched in commendable terms, saw a Danish translation of his article in a leading Copenhagen journal but earned from his divine Master Sivananda such endearing titles as Bala-Jnani and Adhyatma Kavita Bhaskara. But, at 18 he was not new to Fame; for, at sixteen he found his way into a Local Newspaper as an excellent speaker on political philosophy and subjects of culture. To conduct conversations with this meditative monk of many rudimentary spiritual experiences, is to exclaim as Dr. Audry Kargere, the well-known American author of *Color and Personality* exclaimed, 'a brilliant genius'.



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ABOUT THE BOOK

In his Foreword to this book Swami Sadananda, formerly Professor of the Presidency College, Madras, writes: "The *value* of the work consists in the fairly complete portrayal of the character and greatness of Swami Sivananda. The *originality* of the work lies in the employment of Shakespeare's words for such a delineation."

"This book", says the author in his Dedicatory Preface, "is neither an exhibition of the feats of the possibilities of my creative powers nor an expression of my personal vision, but something that was created in youthful sportiveness..... If this book serves to effect in some small measure further enhancement of the excellence of the heart, and to inform the intelligence, of little folk like us, it would be for us, consolation enough.... That Shakespeare is an eye-witness to the life and character of Swami Sivananda, is no doubt sheer imagination, but what he witnesses and portrays is real biography."

SWAMI OMKARANANDA

This intuitive genius possesses the wisdom of a sage at a very young age. He has been literally burning with such a fire of thirst for knowledge that at an astoundingly early age of 25, he shines as a master of several fields of knowledge; and in his insatiable eagerness to expand the frontiers of his knowledge he often exalts himself to heights of wisdom, from where he is able to direct the gaze of the very authorities on a subject to the truth in it that they missed. This intuitive capacity has been made possible in him, not only by his penetrating insight into men and things, but by an inborn ability to realise within himself all that he perceives and desires to understand.

Endowed with supreme dispassion, Omkaranandaji shines today as a Jala-Jnani, a great lover of seclusion and solitude. Like Sri Sankara and Sri Jnaneswar, Swami Omkarananda has, even while he is so young, been guiding spiritual aspirants all over the world with sublime and deep wisdom born of his enlightened intellect. He hides himself and you can hardly meet him; but his fame and his life-transforming thoughts have girdled the earth today. Hard working and devoted to the Master, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Swami Omkarananda blends in himself the best among Karma Yogis, the devout Bhakta, the fiery Yogi and the resplendent Jnani.

Shakespeare on Sivananda

BY

Swami Omkarananda, M.Ph.
(*Master of Philosophy*)



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Renounce the world and realise the self.

—Swami Sivananda

Shikspur, Shikspur ! Who wrote it ?
No, I never read Shikspur.
Then you have an immense pleasure to come.

—From Act 2, Scene 1, of
High Life Below Stairs
by Rev. James Townley,
an eighteenth century
dramatist. (Edition 1759)

CONCERNING THE DISPENSER OF DIVINE TRUTH

Today Swami Sivananda Maharaj is a powerful force in India's religious awakening and revival of her ancient culture. He is dynamic in every respect; a treasure-trove of every aspiring Sadhak, a Great Acharya, a Sad-Guru, a perfect Yogi and dispenser of Divine Truth.

—Dr. Tan Yun Shan, Santiniketan.

I wish so much it had been feasible for me to come and visit Swami Sivananda and to make the acquaintance of one about whom I have heard so much, and who sets such a fine example by his spirit and way of life.

—Countess Edwina Mountbatten of Burma,
Valleta, Malta.

Swami Sivananda has been interpreting the teaching of the ancient Rishis of our land, reinforcing them by the example of his own life.

—Hon'ble C. Rajagopalachari,
Chief Minister of Madras.

I have a vivid recollection of my meeting with Sri Swami Sivananda. There was about him an air of great serenity which characterises persons devoted to the pursuit of spiritual well-being.

—H.E. Sri B. G. Kher,
High Commissioner for India in London.

It is but meet that periodical recognition should be given to the noteworthy spiritual enlightenment and humanitarian endeavour of which Sri Swami Sivananda is such an illustrious example and exponent.

—Sir Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer,
Vice-Chancellor, B.H.U., Banares.

CONCERNING "SWEET SWAN OF AVON"

There, Shakespeare, on whose forehead climb
The crowns o' the world. Oh, eyes sublime
With tears and laughter for all time.

—E.B. Browning: "A Vision of Poets".

He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!

—Ben Jonson: "Lines to the Memory of
Shakespeare".

Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,
Therefore on him no speech!

—Landon: "To Robert Browning".

So when Shakespeare sang or laughed
The world with long, sweet Alpine echoes thrilled
Voiceless to scholars' tongues no muse had filled
With melody divine.

—C.P. Cranch: "Shakespeare".

Shakespeare was the Homer, or Father of our
Dramatic Poets; Johnson was the Virgil, the pattern
of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love
Shakespeare.

—Dryden: "Essay on Dramatic Poesy".

The world of spirits and nature have laid all their
treasures at his feet. In strength a demi-god, in pro-
fundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a
protecting spirit of a higher order.

—Schlegel: "Lectures"

Here Reproduced from Hazlitt's Preface to
"Characters of Shakespeare's Plays".

Genius is master of man ;
Genius does what it must, and talent
does what it can.
Blot out my name, that the spirits of
Shakespeare and Milton and Burns
Look down on the praises of fools with
a pity my soul yet spurns.

--Owen Meredith, : *Last Words*,
published in *Cornhill Magazine*,
November, 1860, page 516.

AN EXPRESSION OF THANKS



While admiring the budding artistic genius of this fourteen year-old school-final boy, S. Rajagopal, we offer him our heartfelt thanks for the line-drawing that he has made to adorn the front cover-page of this book.

Magical gifts of evocative genius lie in the palm of Swami Sivananda, the Enlightened Teacher of universal compassion and the most enthusiastic Champion of Arts. To chance to come under his influence is synonymous with making patent our latent genius; to touch him is to add new dimensions to our stature. Tens of hundreds have received for varied form of excellence, awards and titles at his hands; hundreds more had, under his influence, released the best of their artistic energies into the regions of common human activity. Boundless love, most benevolent persuasion and a restless activity in breathless haste,—these are the weapons he employs not only in bringing into being your 'talent' and

your 'gēnius', but in creating fertile fields for their active operation.

Whereas the parents of the boy artist took no notice of his genius, Swami Sivananda, by the instrumentality of his characteristic love and encouragement brought it into dynamic activity and into lime-light. The earlier drawing, exceedingly well-done, was published on the cover of an important publication of the Society. We hope that the Divine Grace of the Master, would enable this young and bright lad to make, in the time to come, significant Indian contributions to world art. And this book is here dedicated to one of his two elder brothers—

S. RAMAKRISHNA



One of the Hundreds of College Student Disciples of Swami Sivananda.

AUTHOR'S DEDICATORY PREFACE

To S. Ramakrishna

(Second Year Student, Christian College, Madras)

Revered Brother-in-the-Lord,

Overwhelmed by a sentiment of spiritual affection commingled in a feeling of reverence, I grant myself the liberty of inscribing this little performance to your noble self: the affection is founded upon your great love of our divine Master, Sivananda, and on my feeble attempts at a perception of God-in-man that is so well suggested to us in that significant theistic Sanskrit term, *Narayana*; and, the basic excellences of your personal nature and your precocious wisdom of living, form the province of my reverence. Moreover, the inscription of this dedication to your goodself, would prove an enduring memorial not only of our spiritual friendship but of the many illuminating conversations we together conducted on the supernal character of our Master.

Remember that this book is neither an exhibition of the feats of the possibilities of my creative powers nor an expression of my personal vision, but something that was created in youthful sportiveness, when you, while you were here to spend your summer vacation, requested me to lend you my copy of Shakespeare; for, ere you finished pronouncing that dear name of delight, *Shakespeare*, it flashed across my mind that this 'supreme' genius in the literature of the world, dismissed as he was by Voltaire, as "a barbarian with occasional sparks of genius which shine in a horrible night", should as the Prophet of the description of Thomas Carlyle, portray to purvey

to our mutual pleasure and profit, certain aspects of the overtly manifest character of the inner divine life of our Master. What is more, this, I reasoned, in a strange or rather boyish manner would, *only for us*, defend Shakespeare against Ruskin's dictum, "Shakespeare has no heroes - he has only heroines." Therefore it was, that I countered your request by my promise to endeavour to accomplish the task set for Shakespeare, in nine articles in nine hours spread over nine consecutive days. Notwithstanding heavy limitations and many distractions, my determination triumphed and you had, as you told me, your full share of pleasure and derived added knowledge of the spiritual greatness of our Master. Much to our embarrassment, this book is leaving our hands for those of the public; but, if it serves to effect in some small measure further enhancement of the excellence of the heart, and to inform the intelligence, of little folk like us, it would be for us, consolation enough. Concerning the mode of expressing my thought presented in this book, I had explained to you, that I have purposely avoided high literary style and merely reproduced the rhythms of common speech. It is the compelling demand of the context and the "appropriateness" of the quoted passages, that occasioned the clothing of Shakespeare in flesh and blood. That Shakespeare is an eye-witness to the life and character of Swami Sivananda, is no doubt sheer imagination, but what he witnesses and portrays is real biography.

Yours in the Lord,
Ombarananda.

Post Script :

To answer the criticism of the great Voltaire on Shakespeare would be but to break a butterfly; but, any thought of presenting a reply to Ruskin must seem to you difficult and therefore take a different turn. Shakespeare has only heroines - there is a whole gallery of perfect women in radiant shapes; and, Ruskin is right. Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Desdemona in *Othello*, Cordelia in *King Lear*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Portia in the *Merchant of Venice*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, Miranda in *Tenpest*, and many more - all unparalleled creatures of uncommon excellences; they are beings "warmer, purer, and more tenderly human than the finest prototypes of classical antiquity. The Antigones, the Electras, the Iphigenias - beautiful impersonations though they be - are cold, and stately, and statuesque, beside the flesh and blood realities of Shakespeare." The female form that Shakespeare informed with his immortal life, is

"A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death,
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light."

"If there be one thing more wonderful than another in Shakespeare's genius, it is his delicate and pro-

found appreciation of female character through every variety of shade, every gradation of beauty."

If you delight in De Quincey, love literature, draw pure pleasure and enlightenment therefrom, drop this book here, pull out the seventh edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and peruse intelligently the concluding portions of the article on Shakespeare. That done, take up *His Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, read through the two and three and four pages of *Cymbeline*, and formulate for yourself with Hazlitt, this judgment: "No one ever hit the true perfection of the female character, so well as Shakespeare": then, back to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and speak with De Quincey, "Shakespeare, the absolute creator of female character."

Now, a digression into originality; give a free reign to the faculty of ingenuity; let that devise of mental consciousness, memory operate; there you see a subject for dissertation. Examine the following passages:

One woman is fair, yet I am well; another
is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet
I am well; but till all graces be in one woman,
one woman shall not come in my grace.

--*Much Ado About Nothing*, 2, 2.

Lines 61 to 65

--*Othello*, 2, 1.

Lines 13 to 16

--*Winter's Tale*, 5, 1.

and with the aid of the silken-thread of the meaning embodied in these passages proceed to the very

springs of the action of Shakespeare's genius that fashioned perfect forms of female character. It is clear that the light of the ideals hidden in the above three passages, must have governed the movements of the poetical dramatic art of Shakespeare whenever he breathed into being exquisite creatures, 'the reverse of tragedy-queens', his heroines.

Back to Ruskin's dictum! Shakespeare has no heroes -- and, there is no reasoning against the criticism of Ruskin. Coriolanus and Julius Caesar 'stand in flawed strength' and fall by their own deficiencies; psychological maladies eat into the vitals of Macbeth and Hamlet. Henry the Fifth, 'a favourite with Shakespeare,' is 'the king of good fellows'; but, he is fond of war and low company', has 'no idea of the common decencies of life', 'of any rule of right and wrong, but brute force, glossed over with a little religious hypocrisy and archiepiscopal advice'.

Othello is indeed a hero; he is, as Bradley lectured, 'more poetic than Hamlet', and one will not doubt 'the greatest poet' and 'the most romantic figure among Shakespeare's heroes'; Othello is so noble and has 'greater dignity than any other of Shakespeare's men'; but, Othello is weak, 'unusually open to deception'. In him the poison is 'at work', and 'burns like the mines of sulphur'; his 'mind is dazed', 'the hero who has seemed to us only second to Coriolanus in physical power, trembles all over', 'mutters disjointed words' and 'falls to the ground'. There is not a single truly heroic character in the great plays of Shakespeare.

Consider these words of a recent authority, Charlton: "Shakespeare's menfolk, a Hamlet, or a Macbeth or an Othello, may have a subtler intellect, a more penetrating imagination, or a more irresistible passion. But what they have more largely in one kind of personal endowment, they own only at the expense of other properties no less essential to the encountering of such varied circumstances as are presented by the act of living. These heroes, in effect, are out of harmony with themselves, and so are fraught with the certainty of tragic doom. Their personality is a mass of mighty forces out of equipoise: they lack the balance of a durable spiritual organism. It was in women that Shakespeare found this equipoise, this balance which makes personality in action a sort of ordered interplay of the major components of human nature. In his women, hand and heart and 'head' are fused in a vital and practicable union, each contributing to the other, no one of them permanently pressing demands to the detriment of the other". These heroines of Shakespeare "have attributes of personality fitting them more certainly than men to shape the world towards happiness." Ruskin is right.

The science of higher mathematics militates against the very conception of two absolutes: "the absolute creator of female character", Shakespeare, we may hazard a conjecture, must have, of necessity or in accordance with the logic of mathematics, left the creation of the heroic male personality for another Shakespeare, "the absolute creator of male

character." But, Macaulay would aver and swear and swear and aver, "Shakespeare had neither equal nor second." If this be so, the next aspect of the alternative that is left us is, maybe, Shakespeare meant that we should pick and choose materials from the wilderness of his supreme genius and fashion a heroic figure of our own fancy. But, bear in mind, we are neither romantic story-tellers nor 'dreamy' novelists to wield the magic wand of 'fine frenzy' and formulate mythical Olympian figures to be fitted to the rhythms of the meaning laden in the 'mystical' passages of Shakespeare. We are, even while working with 'the poor crooked scythe and spade', matter-of-fact monks eagerly snatching every moment that could be ours as leisure, to study, to contemplate, to clutch at the higher values as exhibited in the life of the world's greatest luminaries; therefore it is, that instead of reconciling ourselves into reading a fictitious figure of heroic character into the 'Delphic lines' of Shakespeare, our inventing ingenuity, the noble daughter of the inexorable necessities of a higher life, reads into them the illustrious personality of the universally acknowledged Guide of Mankind, Swami Sivananda.

This is our living 'Hero': "Promethean in motive, intention, effort and endurance, Platonic in depth and horizonless ranges of thought, a Buddha in the most enlightened and compassionate nature, a Confucius in endeavouring to bring mankind to moral wisdom and happiness, a John the Baptist in initiating tens of hundreds of aspirants into the Holy Order of highest

spiritual experience, a Christ in the performance of 'miraculous' deeds, and in eloquence a Saint Paul, Swami Sivananda has been successfully engaging himself in an overpowering Cyclopean task concerning a diffusion of a divine illumination in all mankind, and making Herculean efforts to improve human nature around the world and enable individuals realise their own greatest inner possibilities." This passage from my latest publication gives you but the generalised notions of the many particular features uniquely united in the matchless personality of our Master, and here in this book, a Hero for Shakespeare. In our prefatory note to *Swami Sivananda and the Modern Man*, we have made it clear that Swami Sivananda's personality is so great that 'it has the Mystic, the Yogi, the saint, the philosopher, the prophet, for its aspects.'

Nothing more need be said of this Hero, as I presuppose on your part as much knowledge concerning him as may be claimed for me. But we would do well to wind it up with this: While sending greetings from Swami Sivananda's friends in England, of the Ecumenical Church Foundation and the Faculty Members of the St. Andrew's College, London, and also from the Swamiji's friend and follower, Charles Dennis Boltwood, Bishop of the Ecumenical Church Foundation and Rector of St. Andrew's College, Rt. Rev. Charles D. Boltwood, D.D., LL.D., London, pens his piece of enlightening appreciation of the Personality of Swami Sivananda thus: "Each year of Swami Sivananda's noble life has sent forth rays of divine

light, and each year these rays have extended their influence and brought inspiration and strength of will to all those who have come in contact with them. So Sivananda has become the Light of India and a manifestation of the Christ in His divine attributes."

This then is our Hero: the transfigured being of transcendental light, the liberated soul of spiritual enlightenment—a Hero who has made manifest and palpable to our natures the Perfection of the Father in Heaven, and is instinctively recognised by the heart of humanity as an incarnation of Godhead. A nourisher of the noblest parts of human nature, a caterer to the needs of the deepest longings of the soul of mankind, Swami Sivananda of restless Prophetic Force and dynamic divine Love, is not only pouring consolation, peace, happiness, into thousands of lives but bringing many more to service and sacrifice, wisdom and virtue, self-mastery and inner illumination. This tender and radiant Figure of mighty Yogic Power touching and transforming the susceptible persons of seeking intelligence from among the masses of mankind,—Swami Sivananda forms the subject for the delineation by some of the passages of Shakespeare.

And, "there is no name," writes the author of the biographical introduction to Odhams' Complete Works of Shakespeare, "in the world of literature like the name of *William Shakespeare*. Homer broke as a sudden dawn through the darkness of the earlier ages and sang the grandest of heroic songs. Dante, when

the gods of Homer were no more, towered up, proud and solitary, with his sad and solemn dreams, his fierce hate, and his majestic love. Milton opened the gates of death, of heaven, and of hell, and saw visions such as no man ever saw before or will see, again. But Homer, Dante, and Milton do not live in our heart of hearts, do not twine round our affections, do not satisfy our souls as *Shakespeare* does." "The greatest and best interpreter of human nature, the poet of the widest sympathies, of the most delicate perceptions, of the profoundest knowledge of mankind, a greater sculptor than Phidias, a truer painter than Raphael, came into the world at the pleasant town of Stratford-upon-Avon in April, 1564." Now, after the lapse of nearly four centuries, it flashed across the feeble but sensitive beam of our noetic power that a few notes from this supreme singer of the world, this sweet soul of the ages, may be drawn to give utterance to certain of the aspects of the life and character of the supreme Yogi, Saint and Prophet,—Swami Sivananda.

But, there may arise the question regarding the appropriateness of the passages quoted from the dramatic works of Shakespeare, for the purpose of presenting first to ourselves and now to the public the portrayal of a real biography of the Sage. The question would take its rise only in the minds of men like Dr. Moulton who treat the phenomenon of Shakespeare by principles of a purely scientific kind of literary criticism and have "nothing whatever

to do with the supposed or possible value of a piece of literary art, or with our personal feelings concerning it," "nothing to do with the question whether the criticism of life contained in the Shakesperean drama is sound or unsound." While asking us to guard ourselves against "the Fallacy of Quotations", Dr. Moulton gloriously slips into making such ridiculous statements as, "quotations from a play can never reveal either the mind of the author or the spirit of the drama", that "in dramatic literature no amount of quotations can give us the mind of the poet or the meaning of the poem." In answer to this exaggeration of Dr. Moulton, Hudson asks, "Can we doubt the dramatist does sometimes, wittingly or unwittingly drop the mask, and give utterance to sentiments for which he, and not his imaginary character and spokesman, is responsible?—that to take only one outstanding example, it is Shakespeare and not Hamlet who unpacks his heart in musings over 'the proud man's contumely, the pangs of despised love, the law's delay'... In all these passages, curiously inappropriate as they are to character and situation, we are listening, it is obvious, not to Hamlet but to Shakespeare: even so conservative a critic as Prof. Boas admits that they put "out of court all *a priori* theories of Shakespeare's pure objectivity." "We", writes Dr. Dowden "identify Prospero in some measure with Shakespeare himself. It is rather because the temper of Prospero, the grave harmony of his character, his self-mastery, his calm validity of will, his sensitiveness to wrong, his

unflinching justice, and with these, a certain abandonment, a remoteness from the common joys and sorrows of the world, are characteristic of Shakespeare as discovered to us in all his later plays." For more forceful accounts against the arguments of Dr. Moulton, read Campbell, Wilson, Furnivall and Laing; then your opinion of Mr. Moulton would be that he is a bumble-bee on a moving wheel, that we rather take sides with Coleridge who reads more into Shakespeare than reading out of him, than with Moulton.

The question whether or not the sentiments expressed through the passages of the characters, reveal to us the thought of Shakespeare need not demand our attention. Not that we have succeeded in solving it to some extent, but that it suffices us to know that the passages serve to inspire us to higher levels of thinking and suggest to our spiritual temper profoundest meanings. "Passages there are" lectured Carlyle "that come upon you like splendour out of Heaven; burst of radiance, illuminating the very heart of the thing." Not only isolated and out of the context passages, but the spirit of some of the dramatic works of Shakespeare as a whole, makes the same deep-moving and illuminating impression upon us. "When we read a great play like *Hamlet* or *King Lear*," Dr. Radhakrishnan speaks on our behalf, "we seem to be somewhere near a clue to the world's secret."

In *Tempest* the evocative stream of Shakespeare's poetic power commingles with profound philosophic perceptions. It is in this dramatic work more than in

others that Carlyle could call Shakespeare, "the greatest of all intellects", and Landor "not our poet, but the world's." It is in this play that the poet's mind grows to maturity, his reflective power deepens, his imagination becomes more fertile, and his humour less superficial. "Finally", says Dowden, "in moral reach, in true justice, in charity, in self-control, in all that indicates fortitude of will, the writings of the mature Shakespeare excel in an extraordinary degree those of his younger self." For us, Shakespeare stands "so manifestly in a class apart"; and for the reason of it, here is the judgment of Aldous Huxley, "Because he lets us up higher and far more frequently, down incomparably less often and less low, than any other poet." It is this understanding that emboldens Van Doren to assert that Shakespeare lives "in the great world of speculation where Plato and Aristotle and Dante live." "We are apt to consider Shakespeare" says Mrs. Montagu "only as a poet; but he was certainly one of the greatest moral philosophers that ever lived." Mathew Arnold sounds a warning: "A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards life." The great "poetry" of Shakespeare is striated with strong moral veins. When Coleridge said, "No man was ever yet a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher"—he perceived the philosophic profundity to be the very constituting essence of any enduring poetic greatness.

We need little reflection to know that profundity is the most fundamental characteristic of Shakespeare, as it is of every poetic genius of the first rank. According to Sri Aurobindo's classification of the world's greatest poets, Shakespeare stands in the first row, along with the two others—Homer and Valmiki. Edmund G. Gardener writes that when Dante "turns from Nature to the mind of man, 'his haunt, and the region of his song', no such revealer of the hidden things of the spirit, save Shakespeare has ever found utterance in poetry."

The passages of Shakespeare are so profound in conception and so grand in expression that they yield any meaning ingenuity insists upon. It must have been this understanding that made Keats declare, "Shakespeare led a life of allegory, his works are comments on it"; probably persuaded by the same knowledge, Madame Blavatsky made this pronouncement, "Shakespeare, like Aeschylus, was and will ever remain the intellectual 'Sphinx' of the ages." And, there are these lines of Milton:

each heart

Hath from the leaves of thy unvalu'd Book,
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took.

"The language of Shakespeare" B. Ifor Evans tells us, "is unequalled in its sources of suggestion." "Whatever can be known of the heart of man" says Goethe "may be found in Shakespeare's plays." "From his works alone" De Quincey assures us, "might be gathered a golden bead-roll of thoughts

the deepest, subtlest.....applicable to the circumstances of every human being." But, unless we take Shakespeare's Delphic lines with deep impression, "Shakespeare" would not be able to portray the life of Swami Sivananda, as Pope's "the divine! the matchless!" Shakespeare, as Dryden's "man who of all Modern, and perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul", as Richardson's "Proteus of the Drama", as Landor's poet whose one "rib would make a Milton", as Emerson's "sage who has outseen others", as Lamb's sweet bard who possessed "all divine features"; as Arthur Quiller-Couch's "fire of God", as Capel Lofft's Shakespeare who "deeply imbibed the Scriptures."

The chastened religious instincts of the soul of our spiritual nation hit upon Swami Sivananda as nothing short of an incarnation of Godhead; and in the estimation of Coleridge, Shakespeare is "an emanation of Godhead". To touch them with the sole intention of being ennobled in one's nature, and enlightened in one's intelligence, is to express oneself through the pages of a book of this kind.

Sivanandanagar P.O.
the 8th September, '54.

—Ombarananda.

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Ruskin: Sesame and Lilies

FOREWORD

In the ensuing pages the author has given us his view of what Shakespeare would feel and say if he were now alive and if he observed Swami Sivananda at close quarters. He has evidenced admirable skill in picking out such passages from the Plays of Shakespeare as exactly express what the author intends to say. Laborious indeed must have been the task but it has been very successfully accomplished; and, great credit is due to the author. The *value* of the work consists in the fairly complete portrayal of the character and greatness of Swami Sivananda. The *originality* of the work lies in the employment of Shakespeare's words for such a delineation.

"Thought is free" said Maria to Sir Andrew Ague-Cheek in *Twelfth Night*. The author indulged himself in a little bit of free thinking. It is a pleasure to note that the author has his own special and perhaps uncommon intellectual plane from which he views persons and events. He probed into the mind of Shakespeare from his own standpoint and felt that Shakespeare had met with a peculiar kind of disappointment during his life-time—namely, the disappointment of not finding a perfect person whom he could depict in one of his many plays. Shakespeare, according to our author, found marks of goodness in many people and he therefore made his different

characters good in different ways but he could not make any *one* character good in *every* way. So our author believes that if Shakespeare were alive today, he would not have such a disappointment for there is a Person—Swami Sivananda.

Because of its novelty the book will not fail to give satisfaction to the reader. It will also instruct and illuminate his mind and because each and every one of Shakespeare's passages has an independent value of its own apart from the context in which it is introduced. The book will also enrich the reader by making him know the many-faceted greatness of Swami Sivananda.

Let us wish that the author continues to exercise his literary talents for the production of similar original works.

—Sri Swami Sadananda

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master-piece in the field by
critics of note.

SHAKESPEARE'S INTRODUCTORY NOTE

*His heart's his mouth :
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent.
Here's a goodly work !
Let his lack of years be no impediment
to let him lack a reverend estimation, for I never
knew so young a body with so old a head.*

--Coriolanus, 3, 1.
Merchant of Venice, 4, 1.

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A PARAGON OF ALL EXCELLENCE

Shakespeare's wide vision of incomparable intellectual imagination that fashioned the figure of Hamlet and created matchless characters from Coriolanus to Caliban, grows, here in the Presence of Swami Sivananda, operative for a yet finer function of peering into the sacred subtleties of a heart enlightened, a consciousness transformed, a life divinised, and, for portraying for public 'assimilation' the practical value of the Swamiji's Presence that pours 'the divine consciousness and its constituting light, power, purity and bliss into all who are receptive around him.'

That there is something in the very Presence of the Swami is a constant empirical experience of Shakespeare's sensitive soul. The problem for Shakespeare's solution is, Why this experience of a Divine Presence breathing through a Self-realised Sage, is not shared by every man? Master of wisdom and words that Shakespeare is, nothing can escape his myriad-minded grasp; and there is no knowledge on which he does not hold the last word. He lays his hand right on the heart of the malady of mankind, when he says

'there is no darkness but ignorance'

--Twelfth Night 3. 3.

A certain blindness is the common lot of mankind; and Shakespeare knows that there is no worse misfortune to be mourned than Ignorance. It is

the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to
heaven.
--Henry VI Second Part, 4, 7.

Be it any form or face of ignorance, wherever found, it provokes in Shakespeare a condemning exclamatory expression,

O! thou monster Ignorance how deform'd
doest thou look.
--Love's Labour Lost, 4, 7

Dealing with physical things, depending on the results of rational action, possessing no knowledge of the Soul that survives the body, of the Power that is the Light of the Soul, men of the world come to Swami Sivananda not to recognise in him the Presence of the Divine Being that functions through him as Its vehicle, Its instrument, but for the breath he gives, the medicine he ministers to their bodily bruises and mental sicknesses, for the shelter and comfort he provides. Few come for spiritual blessings, for service, sacrifice and Self-knowledge, for the Presence that the Swami is. Shakespeare consoles himself with the knowledge that men are 'sensible only in duller parts.'

The world knows nothing of the phenomenon, the greatness, the concreteness of an Enlightened Life as is lived by the Swamiji. Shakespeare has sought

to gain a first-hand knowledge of the fact that years of sustained and strengthened spiritual character, of thoughts divine, intense meditation and Self-experience have purified and perfected the vehicle of the Swamiji's being for the dynamic action in him of the Divine Power, for the flow through him of Divine Grace unto humanity. The elevation we feel in his Presence, the calmness that characterises the atmosphere around him, the delight he distributes, the enlightenment he spreads, the peace he sheds, the beauty of his ways, the sweetness of his speech, have all been reckoned by Shakespeare; in the saint he seizes a sight of a piece of humanity consummated by the perpetual touches of high spirituality.

What a piece of work
is the Swamiji,

How noble

in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and
moving how express and admirable! in action
how like an angel! in apprehension how like a
god! the beauty of the world! the paragon

--Hamlet, 2. 2.

of all excellences.

Shakespeare is ladden with an overwhelming feeling of being in the immediate presence of a beautiful Spiritual Person. The energies, the qualities, the powers of Sivananda's spiritual personality are so divinely dynamic, so elevating, so irresistible that Shakespeare clothes his overflowing emotion in the raiment of an ever-enduring poetical piece,

You, O You,
So perfect, and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best !

--Tempest, 3, 1

Here Shakespeare means by the phrase 'of every creature's best', not only that the Swamiji's physical form is a perfect modern prototype of an ancient Spartan, but also that he is a Spiritual Person in whom the first and fundamental metaphysical Principle coursing through the constitutions of all breathing beings, is luminously and fully manifest.

Observing Swamiji's loving services and feats of ungrudging sacrifices made for the welfare of the world, Shakespeare says,

Upon such sacrifices
The gods themselves throw incense.

--King Lear, 5, 3.

Without a knowledge by identity with the Divine in humanity, Lord *Narayana*, no love is selfless, true, wide and enriching. No form of love shown by the enlightened men is devoid of grains of selfishness ; all altruistic activities cease to be so in the absence of a modicum of egoism as their basis.

But the love of the Sage is a spontaneous flow of the law of the Spirit ; it is neither discriminating in action nor selective in distribution ; it is, as we understand from the nature of the Love of Sivananda, a mute tool, a dumb instrument for the flow and spread of Divine Beneficence to all. It is not something that streams forth now and then from an orifice of a human heart, but that which per-

petually pours itself out on all humanity, and is palpably felt and enjoyed by those who are susceptible to its force. The subtle mind of Shakespeare grasped the magnitude of the flow of Swamiji's love, when he posed a rhetorical question,

Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea ?

--As You Like It, 2, 7.

Selflessness is the constituting character of all the works of Swamiji ; day and night, and night and day, he is absorbed in actions of universal compassion. Shakespeare's trained eye, his Goddess-gifted sight dives into the merciful self of the Swami and finds it to be of such proportions as could measure the seas. His mercy is

as boundless as the sea.

--Romeo and Juliet, 1, 4.

There is nothing that we would fail to get from Swami Sivananda. He is

as bountiful as mines of India.

--Henry IV First Part, 3, 1.

Shakespeare has, by now, had a taste of the proverbial hospitality of Swamiji. For his stay, he has been given a beautiful cottage on the hill with the limpid waters of the Ganges flowing at its foot. The Ashram is set in such scenes that are comparable to any either in Scotland or in Switzerland. Swami Sivananda has been rendering personal services to Shakespeare ; he has enjoyed many a favour at the hands of the Sage. The noble heart of Shakespeare is replete with gratitude ; unable to contain himself he tells Swamiji,

Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me.

--Much Ado About Nothing, 5, 1.

Swamiji's overwhelming kindness occasions in Shakespeare a prayer,

O Lord ! that lends me life,

Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness.

--Henry VI, Second Part, 1, 2.

A Spirit that is liberated from every limitation of conditioned existence as the Swami's is, is a spiritual Splendour hidden from the sensuous sight ; it is a life-giving sun of many coloured light ; subtly Shakespeare sees the whole being of the Sage aureate with the beauty of truth and divinity ; but, he has no colour to compose the picture of beauty he perceives ; his technique is confounded and finds an immediate acknowledgement,

Ay ; beauty's princely majesty is such,

Confounds the tongue and makes the senses rough.

--Henry VI, (1st Part) Act 5, Sec 3.

The liberated Consciousness bears in its bosom the Stamp of the Light of the supreme Being, which is expressed in the 'grand, sonorous, long-linked lines' of the Upanishads as the 'Light that lighteth everywhere', as 'the Sun after which all things shine'. Shakespeare's powers of speech would in no way be inferior to the expression of the ancient Indian Seers. Shakespeare would accept no defeat ; so, we find him pour out his soul of subtle aesthetic experience in the glorious line,

O, It's a sun that maketh all things shine !

Love's Labour Lost, 4, 3.

Shakespeare hints to the Swamiji the spiritual Beauty that is his ; the Sage administers to him a mild reproach, for his chronic poetic exaggerations and ecstatic modes of expression. This disappoints Shakespeare, and he muses to himself,

The beauty that is borne here in the face

The bearer knows not, but commends itself

To other eyes.

--Troilus and Cressida, 3, 3.

Having come to possess an intimate experience of the occult Divine Consciousness throbbing in all things, Swami Sivananda has grown so full of spiritual light and gentle that he would not move his hand violently, lest he hurt the very air. What a strange piece of Nature's final work is the Swami :

His life

is

gentle, and the elements

So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up

And say to all the world, 'This was a man !'

--Julius Caesar, 5, 5

Shakespeare is persuaded into feeling,

Nothing natural I ever saw so noble.

Rare are such gentle, noble, perfect and peerless men cast in the mould and spirit of prophets like Jesus and Buddha ; only Shakespeare could assess the supreme value of their presence,

Beyond all limit of what else i' the world,

Do love, prize, honour you.

--The Tempest, 3, 1.

Admired Sivananda,

Indeed the top of admiration, worth
What's dearest to the world !

--The Tempest, 3I.

Shakespeare knows for certain that to see another like him, the finest bodily, moral and spiritual prototype of classical Vedic antiquity, is not possible on account of the rarity of the phenomenon :

I shall not look upon his like again.

--Hamlet, I, 2

Whilst we live, we must profit by the Sage's Presence. Before dust covers our eyes we must gather and garner as many spiritual blessings as we can from the spiritual Genius of the Sage. This is the ringing message, that Shakespeare would have us take from him.

He sings,

Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

--Cymbeline.

Lest cheated by the pageantry of earthly existence, we may miss the Presence of the Sage that must be ours before it leaves the stage of the world, Shakespeare presents us with a criticism of life, and brings out in these immortal lines the changing, insubstantial, perishing character of all conditioned existence :

And, like the baseless fabric of the vision.
The cloud-capp'd Towers, the gorgeous Palaces,

The solemn Temples, the great Globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.

--The Tempest, IV, 1.

Shakespeare, having spoken to us in the First Person Singular, of the value of Swamiji's Spiritual Presence, asks us to

take him for all in all.

--Hamlet, I, 2.

EXCELS HUGO'S EXCELLENCE

A critical study by a conscious exercise of that typical Shakespearean acumen, of Sivananda's nature and 'character' under varying conditions and trying situations, has more than convinced Shakespeare that the Swamiji is

Every inch a

--King Lear, 4, 6.

Sage, and has been indisputably counted among those few lights of the world like Buddha and Christ, earth's gods.

--Pericles, 1, 1.

There is no counting the many breathings being that wear on their visage the stamp of succour and solace received at the hands of the Sage. Every breathe that millions of Swamiji's devotees and disciples draw in a new-born poise, peace and joy, is a public advertisement of the supreme blessing that the Presence of a loving, serving, dynamic Sage, is. That he is a Power labouring for a universal spread of Light, Knowledge and Happiness among strife - and sorrow-ridden men in this vale of tears, in this world of woes, is an intimate knowledge of every sensitive spiritual soul here.

A nurture there is in the very gestures of the Swamiji; his looks seem to transmit a light, a light that warms our souls into growth. In a mildly child-

EXCELS HUGO'S EXCELLENCE

ing and quite a persuasive manner Shakespeare gives vent to these words,

O! know'st thou not his looks are my soul's food?

--The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 2, 7.

Moral excellences and spiritual graces coalesce in Sivananda. The Swamiji's spontaneous disposition to pour out equally his love on all, good and bad, is animate with the vibrant lines of the logic and laws of a divine nature. The laws of his love obey a Will that belongs to the Divine Being. The moral excellence in the Sage is so powerful that in its presence the meaner nature constituting the instinct of revenge, has died a natural death, thus providing a great source of enlightenment to the leading authorities in the field of Psycho-analysis. Having made a special observation of one silent charm of Sivananda's character that lay in the natural death of the instinct of revenge, in his boundless mercy, forgiveness and positive love, Shakespeare records this rare phenomenon of complete human mercy, in a moralising manner,

The rarer action is

In virtue than in vengeance.

--Tempest, 5, 1.

But this is a "weak" expression of the observation made of the extra-moral morality of the Sage's deeds, and betrays the fact that Shakespeare shares the constitutional difficulty of the European and American scholars and thinkers, who fail to understand a realm of action that lies beyond ethical regions. Moral principles govern our lives as long as the

lower nature expressing "self in such instinctive activities as revenge, is existing in us; but once the whole of our lower nature dies a natural death by protracted spiritual discipline, the Laws of the Divine rule us. Such moral teachings of Shakespeare as,

Kindness, nobler than revenge!

--As You Like It, 3, 4.

and

To revenge is no valour, but to bear.

--Timon of Athens, 3, 5.

should govern and guide human conduct. 'To bear' would be a poor virtue in a 'priest'; Sivananda has shown by example that to pour out our positive love even on our enemies must be something that must come automatically with us. But Shakespeare is a non-periel poet; his genius is supreme; and it is this that enables him to establish a mastery over the comprehension of every order of experience. Shakespeare has more than grasped the phenomena of an extra-moral activity that issues from Swamiji, when he said,

Priests pray for enemies, but princes kill.

--Henry VI. (2nd Part) 2, 2.

This statement brings out the striking difference between the reactions of a Swami Sivananda and of a prince, to the self-same object,—enemy. The Sage is moved by a divine Law to pray for the welfare, health, happiness, longlife, and spiritual enlightenment of an enemy as much as he would do to a friend, while a prince is goaded and encouraged by a moral law to kill his enemy, either in his own personal interest or in the interest of the state. The prince full as he is of human qualities and moral notions,

kills the enemy; but the saint full of the elements of a higher order, breathes a new life and richness into the villain who 'dies' by his own crime. This consideration makes it clear for us that the Sage acts from the Law of the Spirit, and that his morality is shot through and through by spirituality.

Shakespeare has been an eye-witness to the fantastic, highly offensive tricks played on the Swamiji, by some small natures, blonde beasts as the German philosopher Nietzsche, and after him Sri Aurobindo, would term them, and, one of them, as Shakespeare tells us,

a very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness

--Measure for Measure

the motions of whose spirit

were dull as night,

And his affections dark as Erebus,

Merchant of Venice, 5, 1.

assaulted Swamiji with an axe; but, Swami Sivananda, though having at his beck and call, spiritual and material powers, to crush him, had made those very foul tricks and that beastly assault, occasions for pouring out his overwhelming love and service on him. Such actions go beyond moral virtues. Stirring were the sights brought to being by the strokes of the Swamiji's strange spiritual nobility.

Shakespeare finds it difficult to resist a recording of his reactions to the observation of the many feats of the Sage's mercy. On the character of this type of mercy, he has these two lines: this

quality of mercy is not strain'd

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.

--Merchant of Venice, 4, 1.

and^e concerning its power,

'T is mightiest in the mightiest

--Merchant of Venice, 4, 1.

Shakespeare here presents a brief comparative study of the temporal might of a throned monarch and the power of mercy as existing in the Swamiji. The King's

sceptre shows the force of temporal power,

The attribute to awe and majesty,

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings:

But mercy is above this sceptred sway,

.....

It is an attribute to God himself.

--Merchant of Venice, 4, 1.

Human experience finds it difficult to face foes as friends; but to a soul of the nature of Swami Sivananda, it comes all too easy. Living as he does in a perpetual state of spiritual condition, he meets his enemies as if they were the very angels, gods embodying all goodness. The secret of this quality in him, as our life with him has taught us, lies in the immediacy of the experience he has of the One Self in all beings, good and bad. Reflecting over the superhuman excellences in the Sage Sivananda, Shakespeare gave a grave and low-toned exclamation,

How far doest thou excel!

No thought can think nor tongue of mortal tell.

--Love's Labour's Lost, 4, 3.

Seeking Shakespeare's pardon for our impertinence, we may suggest that Sivananda *excels Hugo's Excellence*: in an admirable social romance, *Les Miserables*, 'the great poet, dramatist and novelist who headed the Romantic movement in France in the early part of the nineteenth century', Victor Hugo, by the stroke of his splendid genius creates a character to exhibit a noble example of superlative goodness. But that comes under the category of the excellence of a fictional person. We are the spectators of the everyday manifestations of impossible virtues in the life of the Swamiji. By superhuman feats of kindness, of mercy, of love, of the sacrifice and service he has endeared himself to millions and is today a sort of God with tens of thousands.

SIVANANDA'S PROMETHEAN FIRE

Knowing I lov'd

Swami Sivananda's books,

he furnish'd mewith
volumes that I prize above my
dukedom.

--Tempest, 3, 2

Great is the value of the Sage's works. The Swamiji's boundless spiritual energy, eagerness, earnestness and enthusiasm to illumine and enlighten, exalt and elevate us, compels his prophetic pen to impart to us love-and-light laden and life-saving lessons. His epistles printed in the form of books, inform, inspire and implant the Light of the Lord's Divine Presence in us. *The pages of his books percolate paregoric elixir; his aphorisms make our anodyne; his one-word sentences have acted as life-belts to sinking men.* Touched by their life-giving properties and enlightenment-inducting 'energies', Shakespeare burst forth into this poetic expression:

The books, the academes,
From whence doth spring the true

Promethean fire.

--'Love's Labour' Lost 4, 3.

Some souls who had resolved to seek voluntary death, were saved by a page or two of Swami Sivananda's works. Many among tens of thousands

SIVANANDA'S PROMETHEAN FIRE 17

of persons who had, each one of them, derived from Swamiji's books a particular benefit they individually needed, had sent in their gratitude-filled letters to the Secretary of the Divine Life Society founded by the Sage, which have now filled over twenty almarahs. Among these letters, Shakespeare discovers forty communications concerning cases of suicide, all of them saved from the monstrous dead by the magic words of the Prophet. That the Swamiji should have lent life to so many souls is for Shakespeare a thought of inexpressible joy. From this day onwards Shakespeare has, for every one who comes to the Ashram these words:

Remember

First to possess his books.

--Tempest, 3, 2.

Thus we may see, to enlighten and exhilarate the minds made morbidly melancholic by the enervating empirical experiences, has been the characteristic activity of Swami Sivananda. To repose agony, is his joy; to spread wisdom, is his life.

The pithy and aphoristic form of expression the Swamiji employs in order to describe the conditions, the phases and the problems of the Life Divine, the nature of man, world and God, never requires the reader to think coherently in scientific terms, but rather strikes the chords of his heart and mind into the regions of light and inspiration. To read him is to be thaumaturgically transported into the strange islands of a superman, where we walk in the treasure-troves of unthreaded diamonds of revelation and

insight. Shakespeare laying his hand on Swamiji's *Treasure of Teachings*, a book consisting of brief letters written in the 'original' hand of the Sage, to act as open epistles to the readers of his Journals, and to carry for their use, from his reservoirs, a wealth of solace, inspiration and light, says in these two- and three word sentences expressing exclamations:

A book? O rare one!

—*Cymbeline*, 5, 4.

Having read the story of Swamiji's life, *Siva Gita*, an epistolary autobiography, Shakespeare clothes his review in these two beautiful lines:

That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story.

—*Romeo and Juliet*, 1, 3.

Buffet by almost all the winds of misfortune, a visitor with a countenance expressive of excessive gloom and grief, has just arrived at the Ashram. Moved by pity, Shakespeare is reminded of his library consisting of two hundred and fifty works of Swami Sivananda. He tells the visitor:

Come, and take choice of all my library,
And so beguile thy sorrow.

—*Titus Andronicus*, 5, 1.

A perusal of Swami Sivananda's works makes it quite evident to the reader that his words are outward expressions of his interior experiences of all the States and Statuses of the Life Divine, of the Truth; the Swamiji does not reason about Truth, he lives into the Truth; he does not speak towards a

knowledge of the Truth; but speaks from a knowledge of the Truth.

Everything that the Sage writes carries with it a wealth of his *will*, the light of his knowledge, the stamp of his personality. There is no problem either relating to empirical or spiritual life, that does not find a solution in the pages of his books. He is a Power and a Presence; and his books are carriers of his healing Power. *Maybe, much of the knowledge that the Swamiji imparts to us is the dynamic self-expression of the Divine Wisdom he has contacted in his spiritual liberation and experience.*

Swami Sivananda's books wield an immense dynamic power on the minds and actions of men. These volumes are not, as no Bible of Mankind is, intellectual titillators but *persuasive life-transformers*; they give a knowledge that is not meant for the pride of possession but that becomes a powerful instrument in effecting a profound metamorphosis at every point and in every detail of everyone's every-day existence. His books have lent sight to many an eye that seeing did not see; they have implanted in the hearts of his partakers a light that guides, rules and governs their thoughts, their feelings and their deeds. To be brief, *Swami Sivananda's books have become the Conscience of Men* who had made a study of them. Of this light enkindled in one's heart by a study of the books of the Sage, an aspirant told us in the presence of Shakespeare and Sivananda, that it has

'made me once restore a purse of gold I found.'

..Richard III, I, 4.

But this was nothing surprising to Shakespeare, for, he was in possession of a knowledge of the varied function of the Light in the hearts of 'men', lit by the Promethean Fire of Sivananda's Looks :

'a man cannot steal,
but it accuseth him; a man cannot swear, but
it checks him; a man cannot lie with his
neighbour's wife, but it detects him; 't is
a blushing shame fast spirit, that mutinies in
a man's bosom.'

--Richard III, 1, 4.

LOVER OF ORPHEUS' LUTE

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain tops that freeze,
Bow themselves when he did sing:
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

--Henry VIII, 3 1.

Musing in this manner, Shakespeare sought to gain a first-hand knowledge of the natural sweetness of Swami Sivananda's voice that has been highly heightened by the dynamic divine transformation his entire being had had undergone over three decades ago. It is a common knowledge with everyone who comes in contact with the Sage that the harp of his life is fitted for the rhythms of the Divine Existence. In Northern more than Southern, India, Swami Sivananda is known as an ecstatic singer of celestial songs. The magic of his voice bears in its being a twofold melody: one of the song, the other of the Soul. The rhythm and harmony of his throbbing inner spiritual life find their way into his voice. With the Swamiji, music becomes a rhetoric of profound religious emotion and experience.

In Sivananda's variation* of Sadasiya Brahma adra's well-known immortal musical piece, *sarvam brahma-*

* His famous Tablawala Brahman

mayam re re, the great philosophical significance and sense drown the sound; the song slips into a system of signals; the voice is made a vehicle for the expression of sublime and soul-stirring ideas. Whereas, most of the western critics pride themselves in saying that music signifies nothing but itself, the Swamiji has been showing effective methods of 'exploiting' the phenomena of sound in the world of music, for exerting an extra-cultural influence on the whole being of man. The great value of the magic of Sivananda's music lies in the sweet effort made to elevate our minds from their natural sordidness and shortcomings, into the supernormal substantiality of several succeeding stages of divine emotional experience; his vocal music wields a profound purifying power on our unregenerate emotions. Having heard one of his songs, Shakespeare said,

An admirable musician! O!

Sivananda

Will sing the savageness out of a bear.

—Othello, 4 1.

Of the same song, Shakespeare narrates an experience that he had while he sat by the Ganges in floods:

This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my 'passion'
With its sweet air.

—Tempest, 1, 2.

During his student life, Swami Sivananda took an active interest in playing on some of the instruments of the occidental orchestral music, though he did not attempt to add any of his own musical composi-

tions to the concertos and symphonies of Western music. Born into the traditions and art of South Indian music, which have always relegated to the instrument a very subordinate rôle of being a handmaid to the voice, Swami Sivananda has turned an excellent vocal musician, notwithstanding that his knowledge of the vast range of Ragas and Ragins, is not too great. Perhaps, it is the fact of his Self-Experience that pours into his voice such sweetness and power. However having once heard him sing, there is no resisting our urge to make a second request for his song. Shakespeare extends a request to the Swamiji,

Give me some music.

—Antony and Cleopatra, 2, 3.

Swami Sivananda sings his Song of Eighteen 'Ties'; and, Shakespeare's reaction to it is embodied in this appreciatory expression:

A wonderful sweet air, with admirable

rich words to it.

—Cymbeline 2, 3.

But Shakespeare does not stop with this expression that brings out his understanding of the richness of the thought-content and import of such words in the Song, as 'sincerity, simplicity, magnanimity, purity, generosity', but asks for the more of the Swamiji's music.

If music be the food of
our souls

Give me excess of it.

—Twelfth Night, 1, 1.

By the expression 'give me excess of it', Shakespeare

seems rightly to suggest that we who have gathered round him and Swamiji, were, till recently, solely engaged in a feeding of our bodies and minds, with the result our famished souls need a food that contains excess of nourishing properties. The subtle mind of Shakespeare is difficult of comprehension. Swami Sivananda sings two songs: the song of 'Eat a Little' followed by 'I am Knowledge Absolute'. Before Shakespeare could voice his opinion of these songs, we were all distracted by the 'notes' of a brass-tongue struck in the next room housing the Sales Department of the Sivananda Publication League, by a censorious, cynical soul who would not fail to discover defects in God. This man has, in a highly snobbish manner, hurled these two questions at the face of an aspirant in-charge of the Sales Department: "Why music here?" and "Why has Swami Sivananda founded a College for music in a spiritual institution?" As is evident from the two lines that follow, Shakespeare was provoked by the foolish remarks of the man:

Preposterous ass, that never read so far
To know the cause why music was ordain'd!

—Taming of the Shrew, 3, 1.

Shakespeare turns to us only to sound an advice,
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.

—Merchant of Venice, 5, 1.

But the remarks of the man whose affections are 'dark as Erebus' enlightens Shakespeare to the existence of a College for Music in the premises of the Yoga Vedanta Forest University. Shakespeare asks the Sage to show him the College. But Swami Sivananda has instead sent a word to the Principal of the College, to hold this evening his today's class down here in the open air opposite to the Office.

By way of making provision for imparting musical education to the spiritual aspirants, Swami Sivananda has founded a College of Music. The College has created a very favourable field and atmosphere for the production and development of musical talent in its students. There has been a steady and graded increase in the fertility of the College's musical soil. Holding of Musical Festival, has been a common feature on the periodical programme of this College. Great musical Vidwans of North and South India, have been vying with each other in paying pilgrimages to this spot. They feel greatly blessed to sing and play on musical instruments, in the holy Presence of the Sage and Yogi of the Himalayas, Swami Sivananda. The Swamiji insists on an appropriation of musical scholarship for engendering in the heart of the audience, greater and finer forms of religious emotion. Swami Sivananda's Yoga Vedanta Forest University, to which the College of Music is affiliated, awards musical titles to those students who are declared to be deserving for the particular excellence. The Sage seems to find it ludicrous to test art-excellences

by academic regulation. Though there is provision for some kind of academic examination in the College, the final Judge is the Swamiji, who seems to adjudicate the musical excellence and merit in a student by more ways than are known to the musical Vidwans. The College of Music here at Sivanandashram, has no pretensions either to be or to grow into an exact Indian proto-type of the Royal Academy of Music, London, or of the College of Music at South Kensington, in the land of Shakespeare.

Florid melodies laden with high philosophic import and touching religious sentiment, could be enjoyed by any one at the Music College, during early morning, afternoon and evening hours. But with apologies to the Principal of this College, the much respected renunciate, Swami Nadabrahmananda, I must say that he is a little over-fond of his *nwarga* gymnastics which remind me of the shallow saying of Liebnitz, the German writer and philosopher that "music is an unconscious arithmetical exercise." I have come to regard the Principal's music as a 'pyrotechnic attack upon the ear-drum', a splendid firework of sound. Probably that is because my knowledge of the abstract mathematics of sound and of amazing vocal exercises, is not rich. The Principal has a persuasive theory of the physiological, psychological and metaphysical value of his 'gymnastics'.

As has been desired by Swami Sivananda, the Musical Class is being held in the open air, opposite to the Office. Rajmani Bhagawatar, another musical

Vidwan of the College, was given the first chance of a musical recital. In his over-enthusiasm in the proximity of Swami Sivananda and Shakespeare, he keeps no proportion. This breaking of time extorts a remark from Shakespeare,

How sour sweet music is

When time is broke and no proportion kept !

—Richard II, Act 5, 2.

Not satisfied with the above expression, he adds :

That wild music burthens every bough,

And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.

—Sonnet, 102.

Turning to the Sage, Shakespeare says,

I love a ballad but even too well, if it be
doleful matter merrily set down, or a very
pleasant thing indeed and sung lamentably.

—Winter's Tale, 4, 3.

An ardent devotee of the Sage, Miss Sushila Kamboj, Professor of Music at the Mahadevi Kanya College, Dehra Dun, was asked by the Swamiji to sing a "ballad." She, a virgin who has consecrated her life for an experience of the Divine Presence everywhere, sings. That brings an exclamation from Shakespeare,

O !

the sweet power of Music.

—Merchant of Venice, 5, 1.

Feeling it necessary to explain himself, he adds two lines,

In sweet music is such art,

Killing care and grief of heart.

—Henry VIII, 3, 1.

Srimati Shushila Kamboj was next asked to play on the Indian lute. At the end of the play, Shakespeare has these two appreciatory lines for this noble lady:

As sweet and musical
As bright Appollo's lute.

--Love's Labour Lost, 4, 3,

Shakespeare tells Swamiji that

Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews,
Whose golden touch could soften steel and
stones,

Make tigers tame and huge leviathans
Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

--Two Gentlemen of Verona, 3, 2.

In reply to this, Swami Sivananda narrating the many miracles that were wrought by the Flute of Lord Krishna, said that Tan Sen could sing clouds into raining, that Baiju Bavara could melt by his song stones into water, that Mira Bai sang her way into the highest metaphysical experiences, that Purandardas and Thyagaraja have had not only experienced the Kingdom of Heaven within themselves, by the power of their music, but also left a taste of it in their musical compositions handed on to India as its rich heritage.

The Fathers of Indian Music, were great saints. Swami Sivananda teaches in song what he learns in spiritual experience. His songs transmit into the hearts of everyone of his hearers, a profound religious emotion that keeps them in a state of perpetual peace and inspiration. There is an element of inexplicable extra-spiritual quality in the sonorous, soft,

deep-moving, tones of Sivananda's song which, I am constrained to say, we miss in that blessed theme propounded by orchestra and that dies down after an exquisite solo by a single violin, the Benedictus of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis.

WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY PRECINCTS

Svetaketu, go forth to study the Brahman.

--Chhand. Up., 6, 1, 1.

A 'scientific' knowledge of the principles and processes that govern the attainment of the experience of the Self or the Brahman, has to be gained as a prerequisite to an obtaining of the highest Status of Spiritual Supermanhood as typified in the Divine Life of Swami Sivananda, by everyone who is 'painfully' conscious of the cramping and fettering limitations of a conditioned phenomenal existence. If the light of this Science of the Self, is not secured, Shakespeare asks,

What light is light?

--Two Gentlemen of Verona.

And if the limitless joy of the Realization of the Brahman, is not made our intimate personal experience,

What joy is joy?

--Two Gentlemen of Verona

But where are the modern aspiring 'Svetaketu's' to "go forth to study the Brahman.". Where but to Swami Sivananda's *Ashram Academe* set as it is in the most exquisite sylvan scenes of the spiritually vibrant Himalayan forests! Formally known as the Yoga Vedanta Forest University, this spiritual Academy is the only one of its kind in the contem-

WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY PRECINCTS 31

porary world of spiritual aspiration and struggle. Now endeavouring to emerge out of its embryonic state, this University is a unique institution that has been imparting practical lessons on living the Divine Life.

This Forest University, founded by the Sage, is, as Shakespeare tells us, away from the full stream of the world

--As You Like It, 3, 2.

and

in a nook nearly monastic,

--As You Like It, 3, 2.

in such environments as would set a Shelley sing,

The awful shadow of some unseen Power

Floats though unseen among us,—visiting

This various world with as inconstant wing

As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—

Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,

It visits with inconstant glance

Each human heart and countenance;

Like hues and harmonies of evening,—

Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—

Like memory of music fled,—

Like aught that for its grace may be

Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery

--Hymn To Intellectual Beauty

in surroundings that favour the birth of such ecstatic experience of the Spirit of Beauty, as

Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;

I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

—Hymn To Intellectual Beauty

Here Nature wears such garments and visage, that by itself it forms a vast Academy. The spiritually susceptible soul of Shakespeare feels by its tentacles the aetheric letters of the publications in the trees of the wood that overlap the Forest University precincts —if precincts they may be called where there is no fence. Shakespeare gives utterance to this determination:

These trees shall be my books.

—As You Like It, 3, 2.

And, having overheard one of the University students, seated underneath an enormous tree that casts its shadow on a perennially running brook, a brook that is termed as the Southern "fence" of the University, voice aloud in this manner,

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
so panteth my soul after thee, O God"

Shakespeare says that some of the student-monks of the University have been living such a blessed life of purest spiritual aspiratoin, that it has] been their normal experience to find,

tongues in trees, books in the running

brooks.

Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

—As You Like It, 2, 1.

There are Universities and Universities: to none of them could any Svetaketu go "to study the Brahman." Most of the modern Universities are

institutions that impart forms of specialized knowledge for professional purposes. In the Western world, some institutions denominated universities, are no more than small colleges. During the middle ages, when universities sprang in Europe, they were essentially ecclesiastic. But there is no comparing an ecclesiastic university with a unique spiritual Forest University. There exists between them worlds and worlds of difference. In the fourth century B.C., outside the walls of Athens, among the olive groves, Plato founded the first Athenian philosophical school, the *Academy*. It was, it is said, on the bank of river, with

A sound as of a hidden brook

In the leafy month of June,

Which to the sleeping woods all night

Singeth a quite tune.

The garden of this Academy possessed a shrine of Muses at which votive statues were dedicated. The legal status of the Academy, as was inferred by Wilamowitz-Moellendroff, was that of a religious association. Philosophy, during the functioning period of this Academy, was very much mixed up with studies of politics, mathematics and ethics. The Academy had neither produced Platos nor those who could, by their lives, comment upon the high idealism of Plato. The history of the Academy makes quite a flat and uninteresting reading. The Forest University of Swami Sivananda on the banks of the sacred river Ganges, is a University of Universities, not only in the sense that in it we "study" the Brahman, learn to

live the Life Divine, are trained to comment by living on the highest metaphysical knowledge, but also in so far as it draws for its students, men from among Professors and even Vice-chancellors of the Universities of the world. Retired and learned Professors of Colleges and Universities have been sending in their letters seeking admission into this "University". Many distinguished Professors of foreign Universities have had come for a temporary stay in this Forest University, and made successful attempts at effecting a higher change in their inner consciousness.

Many a College- and University- educated student has sought shelter under the aegis of Swami Sivananda, a figure of God's Nature, a Sage, the soul of the Forest University. Driven by the deepest urges of their inner Self, some of these young students have, under the illuminating influence of the Swamiji, metamorphosed themselves into meditative-cum-dynamic monks.

The Yoga Vedanta Forest University does not function solely as an organised body that offers oral lessons or printed lectures on, or digests or summaries of varied systems of, philosophical or metaphysical thought. Its primary and essential activity as an "informal" body has been to lay down for the students' living, the ways of Divine Life. The strength of the Forest University, is somewhat negligible. But almost all the Professors and students of this University are intellectually accomplished and talented. Whether it is Shaw's Prefaces or Elliot's poetry, or

Toynbee's *A Study of History*, or Einstein's Theory of Relativity, or American Pragmatism or Russian Dialectical Materialism, or Dr. Rhine's Parapsychological works, and so on and so forth—you could get an invaluable literary criticism or a remarkable exposition, as the case may be, from the students of the Forest University. A few of these bright-eyed Brahmacharis and silence-loving Sannyasis, yet in their twenties, have just assembled in the Office-annexe to give audience to Professor Burt of Cornell University, who would, in another five minutes' time, deliver a lecture on some of the important aspects of Western philosophy with occasional references to Indian philosophic thought. A look at these young "students" sets the fancy of Shakespeare travel, from this Forest University, back in time to the fourth century B.C., to the Lyceum, the Academy of Aristotle, opened in the grove dedicated to Apollo Lyceus, as a rival school to Plato's, only to hear Aristotle say orally in this Lyceum, that young men are unfit for moral philosophy.

Young men whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy.

—Troilus and Cressida, 2, 3.

The Greek philosopher little knew the many exceptions to his rules.

THE MILK OF DIVINE KINDNESS

Life with Swami Sivananda, has been for Shakespeare a great story of rare spiritual excitement, intellectual exhilaration and a complete emotional satisfaction. Shakespeare has been one of the most distinguished and happiest spectators of the susceptibilities-stirring scenes created, day in and day out, around the Power-filled Picture of Sivananda. What appealed most to Shakespeare was those sights of Sivananda in which high-ranking army Officers and Major-Generals, noted medical Surgeons and highly qualified Lady Doctors, elderly mothers and Lady Professors of Indian colleges, Police Inspectors and Government Ministers, play children and literally crawl all over the kindly Presence of the Sage, and call him 'Mother', Father, Friend, Philosopher, Guide, God. This is not all. A large portion of the human race is seen the world over rising in affection for the Sage.

Noble ladies from the land of Hitler, from the nation of Napoleon and Voltair, from the isle of Queen Victoria and Shakespeare, from the new world of Columbus, have been running races, first to arrive, and competing with one another to sit longer, at the "feet", and in the Presence, of Swami Sivananda. Shakespeare cannot but be moved by the touching sights these noble ladies, from distant lands, engender around the Sage. The inexpressible emotion with

which these noble ladies, elderly and young, touch the Swamiji's Presence, bathe in it, and sit on bended knees at his feet, from fifteen to fifty minutes, is something too moving, too sacred to be described. It is to be seen, felt and known. Being conscious of the poverty of my expression, I would humbly present Shakespeare's views on the kindness of Swami Sivananda, that has been divinely diffused around the globe. A million hearts every minute all over the world rise in acknowledgement of the healing and joy-infusing Power of the Saint's Presence, his Kindness, his Love, his Service.

Aspirants from Australia, seekers after Truth from Switzerland and Scotland, many God-lovers from every nook and corner of the world, are paying pilgrimages to the spot of Sivananda, in the India of the Himalayas. It has been spiritually exciting to Shakespeare to meet them, talk to them and cheer them forward on the path. Swami Sivananda has been, with a heart that is unvalled in its wideness, beckoning to every one who is weary of the load of a mishandled life, to those who would conquer their minds, establish sway over Death, become a Power and a Presence, to those who would want to say with Emerson,

I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Ceasar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's

strain,

—Essay on History.

to those who would share Wordsworth's experience :

A presence which disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfuse
Whose dwelling in the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things,

—The Prelude

and even to those who would want from him nothing more than food, comfort, pleasure and a little work to justify their receipt to the toiling and moiling men of the world. Each receives from Swami Sivananda what he most missed in his or her life. The Swamiji is a rare phenomenon in which have mingled Heaven and Earth, spiritual Perfection and material prosperity. Has any man no bread to eat, no shelter to rest his head, no place that could provide him a little noble pleasure, then he needs only to wend his way to the Sivanandashram, take his post of dedicated task either in the Press that pours into print the Sage's solacing and spiritually revolutionizing thought, or in the Post Office that links the hand of millions of men and women around the world with that of the Sage, or in the Hospital that heals the sick and nurses many a groaning body, or in the Pharmacy that gathers from the Himalayan ranges best herbs discovered by ancient Indian Rishis and manufactures medicines that are sovereign specifics for many diseases, and

stand univalled for their body-building, nerve-strengthening properties, or in any one of the innumerable Departments of Work. And if any worker's will is perpetually at war with work, if he be headstrong and feel disinclined to do any service, Shakespeare tells us that Sivananda employs unusual ways of extracting work from such a soul. A repeated observation of the Sage's ways of getting work done, makes Shakespeare conclude that the Swamiji's gentleness shall force

--As you Like It, 2. 7.

even wild youths into doing tasks that they would not willingly do, and that, be it a too difficult labour, Swamiji would on us

enforce it with (his) smile.

--Timon of Athens, 5, 4.

Swami Sivananda's Name must stand apart as unique among the world's great prophets, in so far as he has made provision and been catering to physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual needs, to every need of every type of mind, to the needs of any soul in any state of 'experience'. He builds our bodies, reconstitutes our moral nature in the light of spiritual understanding, improves and purifies our intellects, transforms our natures, and elevates us to the Status of the Divine Life. Kindness cannot go further : a spiritually perfect Being, a prince materially, has sacrificingly taken upon himself the dynamic and strenuous task of reposing agony here, catering spiritual pabulum there, comforting a soul in woe here, mailing intellectual enlightenment to a seeker

there, praying for an ailing person here, sending messages to men either in domestic, or official, or social, or political difficulties, there,—a thousand forms of service calculated to provide maximum happiness and enlightenment to the maximum number of men and women. Thanks to the Heart of the Sage, by which our bodies or our minds or our souls or all of them 'live'.

Shakespeare tells us that Sivananda's Heart

is too full o' the milk of (divine) kindness.

Yes, a phenomenally

kind heart he hath

—Merry Wives of Windsor. 3, 4

and it

's worth gold

—Henry IV (2nd Part) 2, 4.

True: it is worth gold because Shakespeare weighed the Sage's Heart, found it heavy with the load of unbounded love that expresses itself through a thousand forms of service for the material welfare and spiritual enlightenment of mankind, and assessed its value.

Shakespeare had made a character-study of the services of the Sage:

His bounty,

There was no winter in 't: an autumn 't was
That grew the more by reaping.

—Antony and Cleopatra, 5, 2.

The ephemeral nature of all the good things that we prize and the enduring character of Sivananda's good heart is here portrayed:

A good leg will fall, a straight back will stoop, a black beard will turn white, a curled pate will grow a bald, a fair face will wither, a full eye will wax hollow; but a good heart is the sun and the moon: or, rather the sun and not the moon; for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly.

—Henry V, 5, 2

Well has been the observation of Shakespeare, Sivananda's heart that

Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair.

—Henry VI, 2nd part) 2, 1.

is not the moon,

the inconstant moon,

That monthly changes in her circled orb,

—Romeo and Juliet. 2, 2.

but the Sun.

Shakespeare, summing up his critical evaluation of the Work of the Sage, says,

immortality attends

on every deed of the Heart of the Sage, and that so wholesome and transforming has been the influence of the Swamiji's service to each individual, that it has been

Making a man a god.

—Pericles, 3, 2.

This grateful world has nothing to give to the Sage in return for the countless continual benefits his Presence has been raining on it, except a heart full of thanks, a great sentiment replete with affection; and, Shakespeare tells us, Swami Sivananda

lives in fame.

—Titus Andronicus, 1, 1.

CONCERNING MIRACULOUS OCCURRENCES

A most miraculous work....

I have seen him do.

—Macbeth, 4, 3.

The magical operations of the realised powers of the liberated Consciousness of Swami Sivananda have been creating miraculous phenomena in the everyday life of his psychically susceptible, or probably "believing", or "desiring", or "deserving" disciples in every town and city of the world. Whether it is a solitary building in a locality on fire that remained miraculously unburnt, in the land of Pakistan during the "division" holocaust, or a fast-running car on a hill-track that was, though two of its wheels going far over the precipice threw its centre of gravity right in the abyss, mysteriously pushed back on to the road by a powerful invisible hand, or a German or a Latvian devotee who escaped death during the air-raids of the Second World War, while everyone around him faced it—it is undeniably and unmistakeably as the written personal letters of the parties referred to testify, the work of "Swami Sivananda".

Who is this Sivananda, on the banks of the Ganges, in the heart of the foot-hills of the Himalayas, whose "voice" is heard by a few continental European ladies in Germany and Denmark, day after day?

CONCERNING MIRACULOUS OCCURRENCES 43

This Sage in whom the Divine Nature is so fully manifest and active, this Sivananda who has been granting sights of his physical Form, at the same time, to two persons,—one in the isle of Ceylone and the other in Santiago, South America,—who is he? Shakespeare asks us to

Consider him well:

—King Lear

Who is this Sivananda, who while not moving a furlong away from amidst us, is reported to have literally stood by the sick-patients in a Durban Hospital? This Sivananda whose packets of 'ashes' sent by Post all over the world, as Prasad of Lord Viswanath in the Temple of the Ashram, have not only been curing the head-ache of house-wives in the City of Bombay, acting as laxative to chronic constipation patients in Singapore, but proved to have breathed a new vigorous life into the dying bones of men in South India,—who is he? This God-head Redeemer, this Sivananda who makes his Presence palpably felt by a lady in Geneva, and chats with another in Kaula Lumpur,—who is he? Shakespeare answers,

The thing itself

—King Lear

and by this he means the higher liberated Consciousness in all its bareness. Yes: Sivananda has contacted the Godhead within us; he has experienced the inmost principle in us, the Thing-in-itself, and is in possession of Its Powers. The supreme poet, Shakespeare has caught in the magic web of

his aethereal thought, the very soul of the act: Sivananda is the *thing* itself. The Consciousness of this Sage does not function, as ours does in us, through the sensuous media of a physical body, through the limitations of a mental apparatus. His is a Consciousness that is unimpeded in its action, pervading everywhere, spreading its tentacles around the world into the hearts and minds of everyone who "looks" to him. Though present everywhere and by the side of everyman on earth, he is specially felt, or seen, or known by only those who have consciously or unconsciously tuned themselves with him. The most refined soul of an eminent American poet, tumbled upon this experience:

The tidal wave of deeper souls,
 Into our inmost being rolls,
 And lifts us unawares,
 Out of all meaner cares.

It has been an ecstatic experience with hundreds of Sivananda's devotees, though they have not come anywhere near the physical presence of the Sage, to "feel" and "know" him. As we learn from some of their epistles ladden with tear-filled admiration of the "invisible" and pervasive greatness of Swami Sivananda, that they have been, standing either by his picture or by his photograph or in "airy nothing", saying of him in the words of Tennyson,

Thou seemest human and divine,
 The highest, holiest manhood, Thou.

No universally acknowledged World-Teacher of a few centuries past, we have reasons to maintain, was

so powerful, so popular, so full of divine boldness and energy, so bubbling with joy, so triumphant in his ways, so infinitely confident, so spiritually magnetic, so "clever" in exploiting normal, super-normal, scientific means of communication to distribute physical well-being, mental peace and spiritual salvation to countless individuals inhabiting this globe of ours. There is something within and around the circuit of the self-luminous spiritual Form of Sivananda. Of the Sage, Shakespeare said,

Within whose circuit is Elysium,
 And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.

(--Henry VI 3rd Part), 1, 2.

Swami Sivananda's life amidst us has been giving us innumerable intimations of the Nature of the Eternal Being; a little "sympathetic" attunement with his Presence would engender in us a concrete sense of the Divine's Power; he has been delivering to us the messages of God, distributing a little of His Knowledge and Peace. Swami Sivananda is a standing proof of the many possibilities of the Powers of Consciousness.

Did the Post Man deliver you a registered-packet containing a book—yes, just the book that you desired to possess this morning? Then look up for the autograph in the book. It is from Swami Sivananda. A Spiritual Mind reads your thought for Swami Sivananda; and a Spiritual Force operating on mental thoughts and physical things materialises your thought. Did that barren woman in Madras conceive? She would tell you that it was a little magic wrought

by the repetition of a little sacred formula, Mantra, which she received from Swami Sivananda, and that the Sage himself had conducted prayers to the effect. A Persian devotee of Swami Sivananda, an in-patient for sometime in an Hospital in the Russian Zone of Germany, was declared by the Head-physicians of that Hospital, to be a hopeless and incurable case. However the doctors operated upon the patient, with a strong conviction that the patient would not survive. The patient who is now hale and hearty, discharged by the Hospital during this month, May 1954, writes that while he was being lead to the Operation-theatre and in the Operation-theatre itself, he did nothing but, with all the Faith his heart is capable of, thought of Swami Sivananda and repeated his name; and, lo, a miracle was performed. The patient began walking on the third day, while others who have been operated upon for the milder forms of the same disease, are lying in the Hospital for months and showing no signs of survival. The second para of the writer's letter speaks of the utter amazement of the Doctors. Reading this letter, Shakespeare says of Sivananda,

The mere despair of surgery, he cures.

--Macbeth, 4, 3.

But this is only one among the countless cases of miraculous healing that Swami Sivananda has worked. The Sage has been doing deeds that are

more divine

Than breath or pen can give expressure to.

--Troilus and Cressida, 3, 3.

He is

Of greatest works finisher.

--All's Well That Ends Well, 2, 1.

And the Story of the Life of this Light of the world, is spiritually exciting and enlightening. Conceiving a curiosity, cynics come to criticise him, but go converted. The miraculous power of the story of the Sage is known to Shakespeare. His tale, sir, would cure deafness.

--Tempest, I, 2.

Shakespeare has seen Sivananda minister
to a mind diseas'd;

pluck

from the memory a rooted sorrow;

raze

out the written troubles of the brain.

--Macbeth, 5, 3.

The concomitant powers of Swami Sivananda's God-Communion, have brought into existence innumerable instances of miraculous happenings. But, whether it is the Divine Powers of Providence, or the Forces of a liberated Consciousness, that are working through him, these many miracles, or that it is he that has been consciously exercising the highest spiritual Forces in bringing them into being, or whether he knows as to what is being done through him, must, for our uninitiated intellects, remain a riddle of the Spiritual Sphinx; for, the Sage has not so far given a public acknowledgment of his authorship of the many miracles that are being rationally referred to as being performed by him.

However, the Divine Life Society has been preserving the recorded oral narrations and the epistles embodying documentary evidences of the extraordinary happenings and supernormal 'occurrences' wrought by "Swami Sivananda". As we estimate, these records of the miracles that Swami Sivananda has worked in the lives of countless souls around the world, run into full five fat volumes. They are remaining unpublished for want of a competent editor who could yield this enormous material, give it a logical connectedness, and present them for the reading public. Or, would it not be better for us to cease to entertain the idea of pouring this 'wealth of evidence' into print, and sing with Longfellow :

His signal deeds and prowess high
Demand no pompous eulogy,
Ye saw his deeds !
Why should their praise in verse be sung ?
The name, that dwells on every tongue,
No minstrel needs ;

—Coplas De Manrique.

and again,

Upon the pages
Of the sealed volume that I bear
The deed divine
Is written in characters of gold,
That never shall grow old
But through all ages
Burn and shine
With soft effulgence !
O God ! it is thy indulgence
That fills the world with the bliss
Of a good deed like this !

—Epitaph to The Golden Legend

Or, shall we not, moved by an aspiration to provoke and enlighten the mind of the sceptical sections of contemporary humanity, shut as it is in the brilliant shell of limited experience, enquiry and enlightenment, proclaim the miraculous deeds of the modern messiah, the Swamiji, whose marvellous modes of transmitting messages to men in Malay States and to ladies in the Western hemisphere, have completely overshadowed the modern wonder of wireless that depends for sending its signals on the existence of electrical waves, and cannot afford to dispense with the transmitting and receiving points? Yes: Robert Browning's experience is shared by everyone of us :

do I not

Pant when I read of thy consummate deeds,
And burn to see thy calm pure truths out-

flash

The brightest egoism of earth's Philosophy?

—Pauline

We have our full share of Shakespeare's wonder at the divine deeds of Swami Sivananda; so, the resolve of the supreme poet rendered into the following two lines, would be ours individually :

I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again.

—Macbeth, 5, 3.

AT HIS ABODE

At the "Ashram" of Sri Swami Sivananda, Shakespeare experiences an enduring ethereal vibration, a subtle aesthetic-spiritual sensation that stimulates and empowers his finer faculties into rising and scaling higher and yet higher experiences that must belong only to profound spiritual geniuses. Such experiences as these are accompanied by a solid sense of the possession of the intensity of pleasure, of permanent peace, of a knowledge of the iron reality of the inner worlds. The Presence of the Swamiji has poured into the receptive soul of Shakespeare, a strange peace. It is the pressure of that peace that persuades Shakespeare, to speak out his experience at the Ashram to an unbelieving world, in terms that discount the highest prizes of the most successful and dignified empirical life.

I feel within me

A peace above all earthly dignities.

--Henry VIII, 3, 2.

And in this peace of Shakespeare is brought to birth a crowning note of Shakespearean spiritual aspiration :

God shall be my hope,

My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet.

--King Henry VI, (2nd Part) 2, 3.

AT HIS ABODE

This determination of the being, this faith of the soul, this integral self-offering to the Lord on the part of Shakespeare, is an unmistakable empirical evidence of the action on him, of the Swamiji's spiritual greatness, and of the divine intention of the evolutionary Nature, to implant in his consciousness purified and elevated by poetry, illumined and enlightened by divine inclinations and Yogic influences, the consummate perfection of Divine Experience.

Only a purified mind of spiritual sensitivity that has gained a profound insight into the life's many limitations and grasped its goal, could resolve to make God's Being its only Hope and Life, His Kingdom its domain, His Wisdom its guide, and His Light the governing principle of its movements and achievements. Here in the Presence of the Sage, Shakespeare's powers of perceiving life's shortcomings, have been gathering strength, but, Shakespeare clothes his noblest criticism of life in the "materials" he has brought from England :

Within the hollow crown

That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court, and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp ;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks ;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit --
As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable ; and humour'd thus,

Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle-wall, and—farewell king.
—Richard II, 3, 2.

This is the proper evaluation of life's little glory, that every Seeker makes under the aegis of Swamiji: the crown is hollow and hems in the being of Death; and we in our vain self-conceit, use the short span of life and the little scence lent us by Death 'to monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks', as if it were our all, a brass impregnable, as if there were no immortal Self that indwells, uses and survives it.

Shakespeare tells us that a life lived in the proximity of the Sage is the best. This life in the divine atmosphere created by the Presence of a Yogi, -
this life is best.

—Cymbeline, 3, 3.

This life that bears in its bosom a sense of the Divine Presence and works towards an active realisation of Its Power, is the thrice blessed life. In and through our daily round of life here, everyone of us must live and labour for an experience of the Divine Being, the Omnipresent Reality; otherwise,

What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
—Hamlet, 4, 4.

Purified souls, Swami Sivananda enlightens us, grow indifferent to every pleasure and prize of the world and get engrossed in a working for their hearts' expansion in divine nature, to infinite proportions; liberated from the yoke of lower nature, they take

conscious delight in the efforts that bring them a greater and yet greater knowledge and experience of the fundamental Reality lying beneath and over the pageantry of life. Aware of higher altitudes of existence, their enlightened intelligence questions every pull of the flesh, thus:

What win I if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy,
Who buys a minute's mirth to wait a week?
Or sell eternity to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the wine
destroy?
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,
Would with the sceptre straight be stricken
down?
—Rape of Lucrece, Line 211.

To such natures grown in the spiritual nursery of Sivananda, to such spirits that are susceptible to the Divine Grace, Its Powers and Forces, all the pleasures, uses of the world, for which the ignorant stake their all and their life, seem quite 'weary, stale, flat and unprofitable':

O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world,
Fie on't ah fie! 't is an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in
nature
Possess it merely.

—Hamlet, 1, 2.

Earthly greatness does not count in the "little kingdom" of Sivananda, in the realms of high religious

experience; the spiritually great bid adieu to their greatness and brief immortality on this mortal plane. Shakespeare makes it his will to live till the end of his "phenomenal existence", with the Sage; therefore, he bids adieu to all his greatness.

Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness!
—Henry VIII, 3, 2.

But Shakespeare does not stop with this ; he wants us to share his philosophic reflections and wisdom and draw consolation and enlightenment therefrom ; so, he adds these lines :

This is the state of man : to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes : to-morrow

blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick

upon him ;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost ;

And, when he thinks, good easy man,
full surely

His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls.

—Henry VIII, 3, 2.

Swami Sivananda has taught us that immortality is spoken of the Spirit and Soul: we are not immortal in our bodies, nor in our *brains*, nor in the pages of our Epics or our *undying* poetry, nor in the heart of the generations unborn, nor yet in any form on this speck of dust that our little globe is. True greatness and immortality belong to the Life Divine; and, to live that blessed life, should be the sole concern of every son of Adam. Evolutionary Nature that works

through the souls of our inmost beings, would lead us by the ear, through kicks and painful experiences, towards that life, if we do not willingly walk our way with the aid and help of a Divine Master like Swami Sivananda.

Shakespeare, having found, in the Presence of the Sage, a new peace, a new faith and a new criticism of life, expresses his gratitude for Swami Sivahanda, in this manner:

Thou sett'st me free,
And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee ;
He was the author, thou the instrument.

—Henry VI (3rd Part), 4, 6.

SUMMING UP SHAKESPEARE'S SIVANANDA

A luminous liberated being of consummate spiritual perfection and power, Swami Sivananda, has been delightfully engaging himself in a ceaseless performance of actions of universal love and redemption, and shaping a race of spiritual aspirants. While living on the highest heights of liberated spiritual existence and experience, he has been, through the instrumentalities of his etherealised and perfected body, mind, heart and the world-wide organisation he has founded, pouring enlightenment and peace into the ignorant and sorrowing heart of the masses of men all over our planet. Millions of people in every nook and corner of the world have been in holy reverence enjoying the life and light giving consequences of this Sage's Presence on earth. This divine dynamic spiritual Person has been the subject of personal study for our Shakespeare

As we have already learnt in the preceding pages, the Sivananda of Shakespeare is one who is 'so perfect and so peerless' (Tempest, 3, 1), 'Nature's final work' (Julius Caesar, 5, 5), 'the beauty of the world' (Hamlet, 2, 2), 'the top of admiration' (Tempest), 'the top of judgement' (Measure for Measure, 2, 2), the writer of rare books (Cymbeline, 4, 4), 'an admirable musician' (Othello, 4, 1), 'of

SUMMING UP SHAKESPEARE'S SIVANANDA 57

greatest works finisher' (All Is Well That Ends Well, 2, 1), sets us free (Henry VI, 3rd Part, 4, 6), whose love flows 'as hugely as the sea' (As you Like It, 2, 7), whose mercy 'is an attribute to God himself' (Merchant of Venice, 4, 1) who 'cures the mere despair of surgery' (Macbeth, 4, 3), is 'earth's god' (Pericles, 1, 1) 'the thing itself' (King Lear,) to be taken 'for all in all' Hamlet, 1, 2), upon whose sacrifices 'the gods themselves throw incense' (King Lear, 5, 3), and within whose Presence

is Elysium

And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.

—Henry VI (3rd Part) 1, 2.

It was of this Sivananda that Shakespeare gave an ecstatic utterance,

I would applaud thee to the very echo,

That should applaud again.

—Macbeth, 5, 3.

and prophesied of the little that he had said of the great Sage, thus :

the hand of time

Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.

—King John, 2,

What is more, Shakespeare is confident that this little portraiture of Swami Sivananda, put in the pieces of his powerful rhyme, shall live till the last syllable of recorded time :

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;

But you shall shine more bright in these

contents

Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish

time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And briols root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall
burn

The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still
find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.

—Sonnet, 55.

In this concluding chapter, it shall be our endeavour to seek to gain a fresh understanding of the leading points that Shakespeare has presented us, concerning the glorious spiritual phenomenon that Swami Sivananda is.

So perfect and so peerless.

—Tempest, 3, 1.

What should have Shakespeare meant by terming Swami Sivananda as one who is 'so perfect and so peerless'? There is no perfection higher and greater than the Perfection of the Father in Heaven. Any man, any son of God, who has effectively transcended every limitation of life on earth, and gained a perpetual possession of God's Grace, Power and Beauty—any person who consciously lives, moves and has his being in the Divine Lord, is entitled to Shakespeare's exclamatory epithet, "so perfect". Who else in the contemporary world would deserve this or lay claim to it by demonstrating more than Olympian perfection, but Swami Sivananda, the world's greatest living Sage and Prophet, a Self-luminous spiritual Person. Our

special study of his life, reveals to us that from him all the attributes of God, issue. The Mind of God thinks in him; the Will of God functions in everyone of his deeds; he embodies in himself the full Nature of God. We find the perfection of God personified in him. The life of the Sage here amid erring mortals, presents us for palpable experience the healing Light and saving Power of God. There is no Perfection greater than that of God; being secondless it is a peerless perfection. The Perfection of Swami Sivananda, is therefore, comparable to Itself and to no other.

The subtle mind of Shakespeare embodies yet another implication in the term "peerless". This second shade of meaning brings out the dual greatness of Swami Sivananda's Person and personality in our empirical plane. He is peerless not only because he is incomparable in his divine perfection to any known perfection on the terrestrial region, but he is greater than those Sages who have achieved divine Perfection, in so far as he did not rest satisfied with the highest he has scaled but took upon his shoulders the merciful labour of partaking his perfection with the people all over the world. Having felt and seen him, we are persuaded by the logic of this experience to express ourselves to the effect that we have seen all the Prophets, Sages and the Lord in the Heaven. We find manifest in him, what we would experience in God.

Philosophically considered, Swami Sivananda individualises the divine transcendental perfection.

Theologically speaking, he is a breathing, walking God. *Historically* treated, the consciousness that lies dormant in inanimate nature, that links in the beasts of the woods, and thinks in the mind of man, is in him made to rise to infinite measures and come to its own; moreover, his perfect divine consciousness, has been, within the boundaries of biological conditions, labouring to hasten the liberation of consciousness in creatures great and small. *Sociologically*, the action of the dynamic Presence of this spiritually perfected being, Swami Sivananda, on the associated life of humanity, on the collective body of persons composing the entire mankind, has proved to be chastening, purifying, elevating and enlightening. A new brotherhood of peoples of different nationalities has been, in the love of, and sacred relationship with, this World-Teacher, brought into existence. An Englishman finds his brother in a Mohammedan gentleman of the Middle-East, for the simple reason that their brotherhood is founded upon their reverence and love for the same Master, Swami Sivananda; and, on the same sacred grounds an American lady plays the fond sister of an Indian woman. The mighty Presence and Message of the Sage have been making men more and yet more refined, gentle, virtuous, cultured, noble and holy, and by this very act lifting society to higher levels. Evidently, the general standard of humanity's existence and evolution has been considerably elevated by the life and work of Swami Sivananda.

'Nature's final work.'

—Julius Caesar, *E. S.*

Not a moving matter-moulded form cast after the fashion of Michael-Angelo's painting, nor the speculative intelligence grappling with the subtle metaphysical problems in the mind of a Plato, nor yet a supreme aesthetic soul composing undying symphonies like the Benedictus in Missa Solemnis through the being of a Beethoven, but a breathing Spirit that wields Wisdom and Power, a Presence that pours into us consciousness and delight, as Swami Sivananda is, is the concluding couplet of the evolutionary Nature's Epic. This is the meaning that Shakespeare intended to bring home to our bosoms, by phrasing Swami Sivananda as 'Nature's final work'.

'The Beauty of the World'.

--Hamlet, 2, 2.

Shakespeare is incapable of entertaining any illusions concerning physical beauty; these few lines from his *Passionate Pilgrim*, amply evidence:

Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good,
A shining gloss, that vadeth suddenly;
A flower that dies, when first it 'gins to bud;
A brittle glass, that's broken presently:

A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, vaded, broken, dead within an hour.

It must be to the celestial beauty of the liberated Soul of Swami Sivananda that Shakespeare must have referred to. A critical consideration of the following sonnet would make the point too clear:

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Fool'd by these rebel powers that thee array,

Why dost thou pine within, and suffer death,
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
 Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
 Eat up thy change? Is this thy body's end?
 Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
 And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
 Within be fed, without be rich no more:

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on
 men,

And, Death once dead, there's no more
 dying then.
 ---Sonnet, 140.

John Keats sings of Beauty as a synonym of Truth: the Life of Swami Sivananda lived in the Divine Truth, is not only incomparably beautiful but immortal. The Sage's life is an extra-celestial existence expressing 'colours' more beautiful than the heavenly hues. The illumined Consciousness of Swami Sivananda's spiritual Soul is wrapped in an atmosphere of transcendental light: he is the Beauty of the world, the Light of humanity, the most lovable Person whose Self-realised Life is *beautecus* beyond all powers of delineation. Godly graces govern the movements of his bodily being; the message that his mouth breathes, is life-giving in its action. A spiritual touch of his would heal us of our phenomenal blindness and illumine the ignorance that envelops our beings:

Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand.

---Macbeth, 4, 3.

That Swami Sivananda's fully manifest dynamic spiritual Self is 'infinitely' beautiful, is our higher experiential knowledge; but his bodily being is not without its impressive and imposing beauty. Many of the philosophers and sages of the world had ugly and imperfect physical forms; but Swami Sivananda, the Sage-philosopher, has very attractive physical features. In his case, Fortune has come with both hands full.

Will fortune never come with both hands full,

But write her fair words still in foulest letters?

---Henry IV.

Shakespeare's phrase, 'the Beauty of the world' (*Hamlet*, 2, 2), said in relation to Swami Sivananda, has also a reference to his bodily form. Dante's person was not such as to inspire respect; but Swami Sivananda's physical being by its outward shape and size and by its inexplicable spiritual suggestiveness provokes in us an irresistible reverence and love. The well-built strong stature of the Swami is one of those ancient Spartan bodily forms brought to life. Not an irrational romantic sentiment but the logic of pragmatic experience persuades us into proclaiming the fact that the hued and honeyed person of the Swami nourishes our aesthetic elements and ministers to our spiritual sense. More than charming is the face of the Swami with its two sparkling eyes; and, most fascinating of all is his ever inviting, disarming and endearing smile. Contrast this countenance with the mauldin face of Heraclitus, the celebrated philosopher of Ephesus.

The flabby cheeks and the heavy lips of the poet-philosopher Coleridge, have happily melted into forming a fine face for the Swamiji. Sweet are the ways of the Swamiji and sweeter the graces that govern his bodily movements; sweetest of all are his words laden with wisdom. And the term 'wisdom' brings to our minds the figure of Socrates; his face was the very antithesis of the Swamiji's. A strange unconscious allitulative sense conjures before our eyes the picture of Schopenhauer, whenever we make any reference to Socrates. Now, if we are to believe the clerks in the counting-house of the father of the prince of pessimists, the philosopher Schopenhauer 'looked like a baboon'. 'The crippled little sage of Konigsberg', Immanuel Kant, one of the world's greatest philosopher, was, we learn, 'a quaint little elfin of a man—scarcely five feet tall, flat chest, protruding abdomen right shoulder twisted back, left shoulder depressed, head perched to one side...' Like an academic philosopher the Swamiji is not ungracious but like a mystic he is most lovable. Shakespeare gave a poetic expression to the psychological fact of a body that thought; but we have before us for a palpable experience the physical self of the Swamiji, a bodily being, that is spiritually conscious in every one of its limbs. A divine awareness animates the whole of his clay tenement.

The aethereal flame of multi-faceted genius burns in a radiant form: and this is the Swamiji. The beauty of the Swamiji's bodily being is doubled by the spiritual enlightenment that he had received and

lodged within himself, three decades ago. The compelling magic of his transfigured personality draws us to himself, holds us in his alchemising spiritual nursery, and brings to blossom and beauty the withering buds of our beings.

'The top of admiration' (Tempest, 3, 1):

The admiration of humanity for its leaders in the fields of *arts* and activity, is ephemeral. "Earthly" greatness is short-lived. To such greatness not only spiritual Souls but also poets of supreme genius bid adieu! Shakespeare embodies his noble farewell, in this piece:

This rough magic

I here abjure; and, when I have required
Some heavenly music,—which even now I do,—
To work mine end upon their senses, that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.

—Tempest 5, 1.

But the admiration of mankind for its spiritual Teachers like Buddha, Christ, and Swami Sivananda, is always undying. Of such admiration, we speak in superlatives. An admiration of Swami Sivananda implicates an assimilation to the measures individually vouchsafed unto us, a little of his dynamic divine character. Our admiration for him, is deep-rooted because we are admiring not any transcendent physical prowess or 'ephemeral' intellectual eminence, but a spiritual greatness that is not only undying but pouring into us a stream of

peace and joy, a greatness that comforts us in hours of gloom and despondency, enlightens us in moments of darkness, serves us with great strength and spiritual sustenance. The very thought of him puts us into elevated moods; even the intention to 'look up' and know him, engenders in us sublime sentiments. One cannot contemplate upon a saint of his spiritual excellence, without being possessed by a strong feeling that one's entire being is surrounded in a vibrant atmosphere of sacredness and inspiration. As Shakespeare tells us,

When to the seessions of sweet silent thought

—Sonnet, 30

we summon the memories of our felt and experienced Presence of Swami Sivananda, and its associated beauties and excellences, we would be enlightened to the truth of the Self of the Sage that is at one with the Divine Lord

that doeth the ravens feed,

Yea, providently caters for the sparrow.

—As You Like It, 2, 3.

So, to admire Sivananda is to admire not a Nietzschean Superman, an embodiment of arrogant Power, but the Father in Heaven; for, the spiritual perfection of Swami Sivananda has enabled him to reveal to us in his personal visage the radiant countenance of the impersonal God. An admiration expressed for this Sage, a supreme living example of the liberated Godhead labouring for the salvation of mankind, is, in its quality, an excellent emotion. The most admired Sivananda is the 'top of admiration.'

EMINENT MEN ESTEEM SIVANANDA

EMINENT MEN ESTEEM SIVANANDA

I have been watching with great interest and sympathy the work which Swami Sivananda is doing at Rishikesh. Every attempt to make the world realise that there is something more in this life than what catches our eyes must be appreciated.

—Dr. S. Radhakrishnan,
Vice-President of India.

I wish so much it had been feasible for me to come and visit Swami Sivananda and to make the acquaintance of some one about whom I have heard so much, and who sets such a fine example by his spirit and way of life.

—Countess Edwina Mountbatten of Burma,
Valleta, Malta.

Swamiji is right in his assumption that the heart of America is sound and there are many here who are dismayed at the trend of events and those people will turn more and more to India for political and spiritual guidance. I do feel very strongly that we can help towards a solution of some of the world's difficulties.

—Vijaya Lakshmi Pundit,
Embassy of India, Washington.

Swami Sivananda has not only been guiding the disciples who are under his personal attention, but has endeared himself to a vast body of admirers all over the country to whom he has been interpreting the teachings of the ancient Rishis of our land, reinforcing them by the example of his own life.

—Hon'ble C. Rajagopalachari,
Chief Minister of Madras.

I wish the Divine Life Society all success.

—Dr. Rajendra Prasad,
President, Indian Republic.

Words are but poor vehicles of thought and, therefore, however much I may express my gratitude for Swamiji's books, I will not be able to convey what I feel. I thank him for his blessings and ask him to remember me in his prayers. I have my every good wish for him and his work.

—Hon'ble Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
Health Minister, India.

I have found the teachings of Swami Sivananda to be particularly adapted to the modern requirements of Indians. I hope the country will offer wider appreciation to his teachings, or rather to the method of his teachings, in which he presents them to us.

—Dr. Satchidananda Sinha,
President, Indian Constituent Assembly.

Swamiji's message is very much appreciated by us all and on behalf of myself, my commanders and my troops I wish to thank him.

—Maharaj Rajendra Singhji,
Commander-in-Chief, Indian Army.

I am delighted to see the glorious work that is being done by Swami Sivananda. Swamiji's teachings contain the best solution for all the problems that face humanity to-day. I am happy that I have been able to visit the Ashram to inhale the atmosphere of peace, calm and godliness that fills the entire place.

—Sri K.M. Cariappa,
High Commissioner for India in Australia.

Today Swami Sivananda Maharaj is a powerful force in India's religious awakening and revival of her ancient culture. He is dynamic in every respect; a treasure-trove of every aspiring Sadhak, a Great Acharya, a Sud Guru, a perfect Yogi and dispenser of Divine Truth.

—Dr. Tan Yun Shan,
Santiniketan.

It is but meet that periodical recognition should be given to the noteworthy spiritual enlightenment and humanitarian endeavour of which Sri Swami Sivananda is such an illustrious example and exponent.

—Sir Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer,
Vice-Chancellor, B.H.U., Banares.

The Divine Life Society aims at the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. We live to day in a materialistic world, in which there is not a true synthesis of the real values of life. This spreading of spiritual knowledge is one of the surest keys to a good life and real happiness. I send my felicitations to the Society, and my humble greetings to the Swamiji.

—H.E. Chano Lal H. Trivedi,
Governor of Andhra.

The Swamiji is known very widely in the world. He has done very useful service to humanity in more than one way. He has also served to create an atmosphere of good-will amongst the men of West and East. May God let him continue in this world for the longest period possible and may Swamiji continue to do the noble service he has been rendering to the motherland and the humanity at large for a long time.

—H.E. Sri C. P. N. Singh, Governor of Punjab.

Sri Swami Sivananda reminds us that there are people to-day in India who represent the great ideal of what may be called the truly spiritual yet practical life. He has inspired thousands by his practice more than by preaching, the true way of living sacrifice and service.

And that is the need of the hour, that is the demand of the times and if one may say so, the hinger of the human heart throughout the world.

—H. E. Sri R. R. Diwakar.
Governor of Bihar.

Like a true Rishi, Swamiji is devoting every second of his-life for the propagation of Vedanta, relief of suffering humanity and for the uplift of spiritual nature in man. His message has travelled beyond the seas and he can claim devotees nearly in every part of the world.

India has always produced noble and divine souls some of whom have been acclaimed as Rishis and Mahatmas, and the renunciation, Yogic achievements and the message of Vedanta which Swami Sivananda has been interpreting to the suffering humanity earn him the same venerable status.

—H.H. Yuvraj Karan Singh, Sadar-I-Riyasat,
Jammu and Kashmir.

The Divine Life Society wants to teach men and women on this earth how, by adhering to certain principles in their everyday life, they can turn the earthly life into divine life, the kingdom of men into the Kingdom of God, and the earth into a paradise for God to live and enjoy. In fact the Society

wants to show the way to all those who are anxious to establish Ramarajya. Man in this very life can attain Godhead, and the sordid environment surrounding him can be converted into spiritual influences for uplift of mankind.

The Divine Life Society is intended to concentrate the attention of man on those central fundamental principles the observance of which can transform as if by a Magic wand the human being into a divine being, and human life into divine life.

Swamiji has great drawing power. It is not possible for one to describe Sri Swamiji and his divine qualities. We must all carry Swamiji's message from door to door. Then only can there be peace in the world

—Sri S.L. Dhar, I.C.S.,
Commissioner for Lucknow and Fyzabad
Divisions.

We are living in an age dominated by science and economics, an age where quantitative values have eclipsed the qualitative values of life. To such a world Swamiji brings his message of the reality of the spirit and its transcendence over the material. Modern science has taught us that there are distant stars whose temperature are thousands of degrees centigrade. But religion tells you that there is temperature higher than any of these, the temperature of one's heart, one's capacity to love and to hate.

"He that ruleth the spirit is greater than he that taketh the city." Economics has taught us about man, the economic being, one guides purely by profit motives. But religion tells us that there are men and

women who will scorn delights and live laborious days, not for pity's pence, not for pursy affluence, not even for fame, that last infirmity of the noble soul, but to make their lives a sacrifice and an offering to the one whom they worship. Swami Sivananda Maharaja represents this attitude of service and sacrifice. Swamiji radiates cheerfulness, love and universal brotherhood. The beaming smile on his face is but the outward symbol of the inward peace which he has found because in a turbulent world Swamiji has been able to rule his spirit. I shall not attempt to pay any tribute to him. Instead, may I, by associating myself with this noble endeavour, draw inspiration from Swamiji.

—Dr. George Jacob, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D., I.A.S.,
Bhabua.

Swamiji is a very popular figure today. He is a great Mahatma. My son reads Swamiji's spiritual lessons regularly. Sri Swamiji is a God-realised saint of whom I have heard very much.

—Hon'ble Sri B. Dass, M.P.,
Ex-Premier of Orissa.

By his won Sadhana and through his numerous writings, Sri Swami Sivananda has done more than any single individual of our time for the resuscitation of the nation's faith in its ancient Dharma. We are indeed beholden unto him for teaching us the saving grace of religion that would help us to tide over crisis, unscathed. The Swamiji's voice is verily the true voice of a Yogi who thinks like the sage but yet feels with compassion for all mankind.

—H.E. Sri Kumaraswamy Raja,
Governor of Orissa.

So the Swamiji is also getting older. But he will not grow old. He has a spiritual force in him which enables him to compete with Father Time. The Swamiji's activities and those of his Sishyakotis are prodigious. I can understand how he has given up his profession in order to serve his country in its larger fields of mental and spiritual regeneration. May he be spared long to carry on his noble mission in life.

—H.E. Sri B. Pattabhi-Sitaramayya,
Governor of Madhaya Pradesh.

I have a vivid recollection of my meeting with Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in Poona a few years ago when he had come there in course of his tour in India and I was greatly struck by his personality which reminded me of the description given in some of our ancient books of the Rishis of old and of other men of realisation.

There was about him an air of great serenity which characterises persons devoted to the pursuit of spiritual well-being. It is my earnest prayer that he may be spared long to continue the noble work he is doing.

—H.E. Sri B. G. Kher,
High Commissioner for India in London.

I visited the great Ashram established by Swamiji on the banks of Ganges near Rishikesh some months ago. I was struck by his dynamic energy which he has been utilising for the spiritual uplift of mankind. He has taken great pains in spreading the Hindu philosophy of life far and wide. The number of the publications issued by the Divine Life Society is

itself glowing tributes to his great achievements in the field of spiritual renaissance which we are witnessing in India during the last 100 years. He has gathered a band of spiritual workers round him and the Society he has founded has been spreading out the message of the Divinity of life far and wide.

I wish Swamiji a long life of spiritual usefulness in the cause of the great Vedic religion to which it is our privilege to belong.

—Sri. B. N. Datar,

Deputy Minister, Home Affairs, New Delhi.

The Divine Life, through its every page, is a source of spiritual stimulation and inspiration. May it continue for many, many years to serve the cause of spiritual sadhana.

—H.E. Sri. Jairamdas Dowlatram,
Governor of Assam.

I have a very real appreciation of the work of the Society and of its Founder President, and I assure of my most cordial good wishes for the continuing success of the Society.

—Dr. Najib Ullah,

Afghan Ambassador, Royal Afghan Embassy,
London.

The mission to which Swami Sivananda has dedicated his life is a mission of universal love and in the present day world of turmoil we need spiritual leaders like Sri Swami Sivananda to carry the message of universal love to humanity. There is already a large volume of spiritual literature embracing the laudable doctrines and principles preached

by Swami Sivananda and the "Divine Life" is the society's valuable organ for the dissemination of knowledge in general and Swamiji's message in particular.

—Hon'bles Sri. G.B.Pant,

Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh.

Swamiji is very near to me in thought and love. I breathe out an aspiration that his life may pour out to many, the living waters of the ridden wisdom of Saints and Sages of India! This wisdom shines in simplicity and abides detached from external success and glory. Enshrined deep down in India's heart is that true Freedom,...the Freedom of the spirit, which is greater than there is among the enlightened peoples of the world. To that true Freedom which points to faith as lying at the foundation of true civilisation and every right path history, may his work bear ever-increasing witness in this period of complexity and chaos! I believe when India becomes again a truly spiritual Nation she will inaugurate a new Cycle of History.

—Sadhu Vasvani,

Panday Cottage, Poona 2.

FROM STANFORD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

(Of Comparative Religions)

Because of my religion I believe it is possible to live as full a life as the author, but I was still impressed that such a man could do so much so well and have such a good philosophy.

—A Student.

Swami Sivananda advocates a definite program of life-selfless service, and then, when the family is reared, going into seclusion and meditation. Today there are too many people who are living an aimless life, because of dissillusionments and pessimism. If they could fit out for themselves a progame of life, they would be happier. This would solve the problem of the person who says (quoting from the article) "Why am I miserable in spite of my possessions and riches?" Also, you see so many older people who seem to do nothing. Perhaps it would be a good thing for them to mediate. Although, in some older persons you see signs of wisdom, which indicate that although they aren't Vedantins, practising Yoga and meditating in seclusion, they have done thinking that has brought them a shade of enlightenment.

I found on the whole that the Swamiji's writings offered much truth and help, if one goes to them with an open mind.

—Millicent Edward.

In reading one of Sri Swami Sivananda's publications I feel that I got a much better understanding of his work. I was most impressed with his tolerance for other religions shown by reference, his obvious knowledge of the sciences and political situations, and his great encouraging drive that offers much food for thought.

—Georgia McCosh.

BOOKS BY SWAMI OMKARANANDA

1. *Sivananda and the Modern Man*†
2. *Dawn of Divine Life*
3. *Story of an Eminent Yogi*†
4. *Everyman's Philosophy of Swami Sivananda*†
5. *Daily Reading (Compiled)*

SIVANANDA : THE MODERN WORLD-PROPHET :

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

SIVANANDA AND THE MODERN MAN :

By Swami Omkarananda

These two bright enough appraisals of a world figure that Swami Sivananda is, are genuine contributions to world thought

Both are keen critics and zealous. If Sri Sastri is omnipresent by his facile pen, Swami Omkarananda is omniscient by his philosophic discernment and both again are omnivorous by their metaphysical perception. Scientists and philosophers have to appreciate the poses presented by both of them in rating the renowned Swami Sivananda.....

If a critique of the presentation of both these authors were made one might not even surprisingly find anything radically different between the elaborateness of detail of the one and the laconic terseness of the others in so far as the basic appreciation of the

† Books bearing astriak are now out of print.

present force immanent in the great Swamiji is concerned. The huge dynamism will be patent beyond any auto-suggestion and the lovers of Sivananda literature will be more than compensated by a perusal of these two assessments.

Sri Sastri is the product of a high tradition, happy environment, and a high level discipline..... Swami Omkarananda is quite young in his career, and quite reliable to steer the captain's wheel of divine life, sponsored by Swami Sivananda, across the boisterous seas... Highly enlightened by a stroke of divine Sankalpa the Swami is a pride for the knowing and the illiterate together and is therefore competent to present to the public the multi-phased facts of Sivananda's hallowed hues. The readers might have a lurking doubt whether the prophet and the messiah are one and the same and whether the world is to await a second Christ after the advent of Swami Sivanandaji and a careful reading of both these books will allay all fears in that direction. These two may therefore be placed on a par higher than many an existing exposition of Sivananda love and literature.

—*The Wednesday Review.*

THE DAWN OF DIVINE LIFE

By Swami Omkarananda

In a very lucid style the author synthetically analyses perfection of humanity and its attainment of Divinity by spiritual Yoga Sadhana and meditation... We wish the book a wide circulation.

—*Hindustan Standard.*