

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda-
Volume 8- Epistles - Fourth Series

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Chapter 1

Note

NOTE

Before leaving for the USA, Swamiji used to change his name very often. In earlier years he signed as Narendra or Naren; then for some time as Vividishananda or Sachchidananda. But for the convenience of the readers, these volumes use the more familiar name Vivekananda.

Chapter 2

I Sir

I

(Translated from [6]Bengali)

BAGHBAZAR,

CALCUTTA,

28th November, 1888.

DEAR SIR, (Shri Pramadadas Mitra)

I have received the book of Pânini which you so kindly sent me. Please accept my gratitude for the same.

I had an attack of fever again — hence I could not reply to you immediately. Please excuse. I am ailing much. I am praying to the Divine Mother to keep you happy physically and mentally.

Your servant,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 3

II Sir

II

(Translated from Bengali)

BARANAGORE,

22nd February, 1889.

DEAR SIR, (Shri Pramadas Mitra)

I had intended to go to Varanasi, and I planned to reach there after visiting the birthplace of my Master. But unluckily on the way to that village I had an attack of high fever followed by vomiting and purging as in cholera. There was again fever after three or four days — and as the body is now so weak that I can barely walk even two steps, I have been compelled now to give up my previous intention. I do not know what is God's will, but my body is quite unfit for treading on this path. Anyway, the body is not everything. Recovering my health after a few days here, I entertain the hope of visiting you there. The will of Vishweshwara, the Lord of the universe, will prevail — whatever that may be. You also kindly bless me. My respects to you and brother Jnanananda.

Your servant,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 4

III Sir

III

(Translated from Bengali)

BAGHBAZAR,

CALCUTTA,

21st March, 1889.

RESPECTED SIR, (Shri Pramadadas Mitra)

It is several days since I received your last letter. Please excuse the delay in replying, which was due to some special reasons. I am very ill at present; there is fever now and then, but there is no disorder in the spleen or other organs. I am under homeopathic treatment. Now I have had to give up completely the intention of going to Varanasi. Whatever God dispenses will happen later on, according to the state of the body. If you meet brother Jnanananda, please tell him not to be held up there in expectation of my coming. My going there is very uncertain. My regards to you and Jnanananda.

Yours sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 5

IV Sir

IV

(Translated from Bengali)

SIMLA (CALCUTTA),

14th July, 1889.

RESPECTED SIR, (Shri Pramadas Mitra)

I was very glad to get your letter. In such circumstances many give the advice to incline towards the worldly life. But you are truthful and have an adamant heart. I have been highly comforted by your encouraging and cheering words. My difficulties here have almost come to a close — only I have engaged the services of a broker for the sale of a piece of land, and I hope the sale will be over soon. In that case, I shall be free from all worry and shall at once go straight off to you to Varanasi.

Your servant,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 6

V Sir

V

(Translated from Bengali)

BAGHBAZAR,

CALCUTTA,

4th June, 1890.

RESPECTED SIR, (Shri Pramadadas Mitra)

I got your letter. There is no doubt that your advice is very wise. It is quite true that the Lord's Will will prevail. We also are spreading out here and there in small groups of two or three. I also got two letters from brother Gangadhar. He is at present in the house of Gagan Babu suffering from an attack of influenza. Gagan Babu is taking special care of him. He will come here as soon as he recovers. Our respectful salutations to you.

Your servant,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Abhedananda and others are all doing well.

V.

Chapter 7

VI Diwanji Saheb

VI

BARODA,

26th April, 1892.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB, (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai)

Very happy to receive your kind letter even here. I had not the least difficulty in reaching your house from the station of Nadiad. And your brothers, they are what they should be, your brothers. May the Lord shower his choicest blessings on your family. I have never found such a glorious one in all my travels. Your friend Mr. Manibhai has provided every comfort for me; but, as to his company, I have only seen him twice; once for a minute, the other for ten minutes at the most when he talked about the system of education here. Of course, I have seen the Library and the pictures of Ravi Varma, and that is about all worth seeing here. So I am going off this evening to Bombay. My thanks to the Diwanji here (or to you) for his kind behaviour. More from Bombay.

Yours in affection,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. At Nadiad I met Mr. Manilal Nabhubhai. He is a very learned and pious gentleman, and I enjoyed his company much.

Chapter 8

VII Diwanji Saheb

VII

ELLAPA BALARAM'S HOUSE,

C/O. THAKORE OF LIMDI,

NEUTRAL LINE, POONA,

15th June, 1892.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB, (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai)

It is a long time since I heard from you. I hope I have not offended you anyway. I came down with the Thakore Saheb of Mahabaleshwar, and I am living here with him. I would remain here a week or more and then proceed to Rameshwaram via Hyderabad.

Perhaps by this time every hitch has been removed from your way in Junagad; at least I hope so. I am very anxious to learn about your health, especially that sprain, you know.

I saw your friend the Surti tutor to the Prince of Bhavnagar. He is a perfect gentleman. It was quite a privilege to make his acquaintance; he is so good and noble-natured a man.

My sincerest greetings to your noble-minded brothers and to our friends there. Kindly send to Mr. Nabhubhai my earnest good wishes in your letter home. I hope you would gratify me by a speedy reply.

With my sincerest respects and gratitude and prayers for you and yours, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 9

VIII Diwanji Saheb

VIII

BOMBAY,

1892

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB, (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai)

The bearer of this letter, Babu Akshaya Kumar Ghose, is a particular friend of mine. He comes of a respectable family of Calcutta. I found him at Khandwa where I made his acquaintance, although I knew his family long before in Calcutta.

He is a very honest and intelligent boy and is an undergraduate of the Calcutta University. You know how hard the struggle is in Bengal nowadays, and the poor boy has been out in search of some job. Knowing your native kindness of heart, I think I am not disturbing you by asking and entreating you to do something for this young man. I need not write more. You will find him an honest and hard-working lad. If a single act of kindness done to a fellow creature renders his whole life happy, I need not remind you that this boy is a Pâtra (a person quite deserving of help), noble and kind as you are.

I hope you are not disturbed and troubled by this request of mine. This is the first and the last of its kind and made only under very peculiar circumstances. Hoping and relying on your kind nature, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 10

IX Diwanji Saheb

IX

BOMBAY,

22nd August, 1892.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB, (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai)

I am very much gratified on receiving your letter, especially as that is the proof that you have the same kindness towards me.

About the kindness and gentlemanliness of your friend Mr. Bederkar of Indore and of the Dakshinis in general, the less said the better; but of course there are Dakshinis and Dakshinis, and I would only quote to you what Shankar Pandurang wrote me at Mahabaleshwar on my informing him that I had found shelter with the Limdi Thakore:

“I am so glad to learn that you have found Limdi Thakore there, else you would have been in serious troubles, our Maratha people not being so kind as the Gujaratis.” So kind? heaven and hell!

I am very glad that your joint has now been nearly perfectly cured. Kindly tell your noble brother to excuse my promise-breaking as I have got here some Sanskrit books and help, too, to read, which I do not hope to get elsewhere, and am anxious to finish them. Yesterday I saw your friend Mr. Manahsukharam who has lodged a Sannyâsin friend with him. He is very kind to me and so is his son.

After remaining here for 15 to 20 days I would proceed toward Rameshwaram, and on my return would surely come to you.

The world really is enriched by men, high-souled, noble-minded, and kind, like you; the rest are “only as axes which cut at the tree of youth of their mothers’, as the Sanskrit poet puts it.

It is impossible that I should ever forget your fatherly

kindness and care of me, and what else can a poor fakir like me do in return to a mighty minister but pray that the Giver of all gifts may give you all that is desirable on earth and in the end — which may He postpone to a day long, long ahead — may take you in His shelter of bliss and happiness and purity infinite.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. One thing that I am very sorry to notice in these parts is the thorough want of Sanskrit and other learning. The people of this part of the country have for their religion a certain bundle of local superstitions about eating, drinking, and bathing, and that is about the whole of their religion.

Poor fellows! Whatever the rascally and wily priests teach them — all sorts of mummery and tomfoolery as the very gist of the Vedas and Hinduism (mind you, neither these rascals of priests nor their forefathers have so much as seen a volume of the Vedas for the last 400 generations) — they follow and degrade themselves. Lord help them from the Râkshasas in the shape of the Brahmins of the Kaliyuga.

I have sent a Bengali boy to you. Hope he would be treated kindly.

Chapter 11

X Haripada

X

(Translated from Bengali)

To Shri Haripada Mitra

MARGAON,

1893.

DEAR HARIPADA,

I just now received a letter from you. I reached here safe. I went to visit Panjim and a few other villages and temples near by. I returned just today. I have not given up the intention of visiting Gokarna, Mahabaleshwar, and other places. I start for Dharwar by the morning train tomorrow. I have taken the walking-stick with me. Doctor Yagdekar's friend was very hospitable to me. Please give my compliments to Mr. Bhate and all others there. May the Lord shower His blessings on you and your wife. The town of Panjim is very neat and clean. Most of the Christians here are literate. The Hindus are mostly uneducated.

Yours affectionately,

SACHCHIDANANDA.

(Swamiji used to call himself such in those days.)

Chapter 12

XI Alasinga

XI

To Shri Alasinga Perumal

C/o Babu Madhusudan Chattopadhyaya Superintending
Engineer

KHARTABAD, HYDERABAD,

11th February, 1893.

DEAR ALASINGA,

Your friend, the young graduate, came to receive me at the station, so also a Bengali gentleman. At present I am living with the Bengali gentleman; tomorrow I go to live with your young friend for a few days, and then I see the different sights here, and in a few days you may expect me at Madras. For I am very sorry to tell you that I cannot go back at present to Rajputana. It is so very dreadfully hot here already. I do not know how hot it would be at Rajputana, and I cannot bear heat at all. So the next thing, I would do, would be to go back to Bangalore and then to Ootacamund to pass the summer there. My brain boils in heat.

So all my plans have been dashed to the ground. That is why I wanted to hurry off from Madras early. In that case I would have months left in my hands to seek out for somebody amongst our northern princes to send me over to America. But alas, it is now too late. First, I cannot wander about in this heat — I would die. Secondly, my fast friends in Rajputana would keep me bound down to their sides if they get hold of me and would not let me go over to Europe. So my plan was to get hold of some new person without my friends' knowledge. But this delay at Madras has dashed all my hopes to the ground, and with a deep sigh I give it up, and the Lord's will be done! However, you may be almost sure that I shall see you in a few days for a day or two in Madras and then go to Bangalore and thence to Ootacamund to see "if" the M— Maharaja sends me up. "If" — because you see I cannot be sure of any promise of a Dakshini (southern) Raja. They are not Rajputs. A Rajput would rather die than break his promise. However, man learns as he lives, and experience is the greatest teacher in the world.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, for Thine is the glory and the kingdom for ever and ever." My compliments to you all.

Yours etc.,

SACHCHIDANANDA.

(Swamiji used to call himself such in those days.)

Chapter 13

XII Diwanji Saheb

XII

To Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai

KHETRI

28th April, 1893.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB,

On my way here, I wanted to go to your place at Nadiad and redeem my pledge, but certain circumstances prevented me, and the greatest of them was that you were not there; and to play Hamlet leaving Hamlet's part out is a ridiculous affair; and as I know for certain that you are to return in a few days to Nadiad, and as I am shortly going back to Bombay, say in 20 days, I thought it better to postpone my visit for that time.

Here the Khetri Rajaji was very, very anxious to see me and had sent his Private Secretary to Madras; and so I was bound to leave for Khetri. But the heat is quite intolerable, and so I am flying off very soon.

By and by, I have made the acquaintances of nearly all the Dakshini Rajas and have seen most queer sights in many places of which I would tell you in extenso when we meet next. I know your love for me and am sure that you would excuse my not going down to your place. However, I am coming to you in a few days.

One thing more. Have you got lion's cubs now in Junagad? Can you lend me one for my Raja? He can give you some Rajputana animals in exchange, if you like.

I saw Ratilalbhai in the train. He is the same nice and kind gentleman; and what more shall I wish for you, my dear Diwanji Saheb, but that the Lord would be your all in all in your well-merited, well-applauded and universally respected latter end of a life which was ever holy, good, and devoted to the service of so many of the sons and daughters of the great Father of Mercies. Amen!

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 14

XIII Diwanji Saheb

XIII

To Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai

KHETRI

May, 1893.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB,

Surely my letter had not reached you before you wrote to me. The perusal of your letter gave me both pleasure and pain simultaneously: pleasure, to see that I have the good fortune to be loved by a man of your heart, power, and position; and pain, to see that my motive has been misinterpreted throughout. Believe me, that I love you and respect you like a father and that my gratitude towards you and your family is surely unbounded. The fact is this. You may remember that I had from before a desire to go to Chicago. When at Madras, the people there, of their own accord, in conjunction with H.H. of Mysore and Ramnad made every arrangement to send me up. And you may also remember that between H.H. of Khetri and myself there are the closest ties of love. Well, I, as a matter of course, wrote to him that I was going to America. Now the Raja of Khetri thought in his love that I was bound to see him once before I departed, especially as the Lord has given him an heir to the throne and great rejoicings were going on here; and to make sure of my coming he sent his Private Secretary all the way to Madras to fetch me, and of course I was bound to come. In the meanwhile I telegraphed to your brother at Nadiad to know whether you were there, and, unfortunately, the answer I could not get; therefore, the Secretary who, poor fellow, had suffered terribly for his master in going to and from Madras and with his eye wholly on the fact that his master would be unhappy if we could not reach Khetri within the Jalsa (festival), bought tickets at once for Jaipur. On our way we met Mr. Ratilal who informed me that my wire was received and duly answered and that Mr. Viharidas was expecting me. Now it is for you to judge, whose duty it has been so long to deal even justice. What would or could I do in this connection? If I would have got down, I could not have reached in time for the Khetri rejoicings; on the other hand, my motives might be misinterpreted.

But I know you and your brother's love for me, and I knew also that I would have to go back to Bombay in a few days on my way to Chicago. I thought that the best solution was to postpone my visit till my return. As for my feeling affronted at not being attended by your brothers, it is a new discovery of yours which I never even dreamt of; or, God knows, perhaps, you have become a thought-reader. Jokes apart, my dear Diwanji Saheb, I am the same frolicsome, mischievous but, I assure you, innocent boy you found me at Junagad, and my love for your noble self is the same or increased a hundredfold, because I have had a mental comparison between yourself and the Diwans of nearly all the states in Dakshin, and the Lord be my witness how my tongue was fluent in your praise (although I know that my powers are quite inadequate to estimate your noble qualities) in every Southern court. If this be not a sufficient explanation, I implore you to pardon me as a father pardons a son, and let me not be haunted with the impression that I was ever ungrateful to one who was so good to me.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I depend on you to remove any misconception in the mind of your brother about my not getting down and that, even had I been the very devil, I could not forget their kindness and good offices for me.

As to the other two Swamis, they were my Gurubhais, who went to you last at Junagad; of them one is our leader. I met them after three years, and we came together as far as Abu and then I left them. If you wish, I can take them back to Nadiad on my way to Bombay. May the Lord shower His blessings on you and yours.

Yours,

V.

Chapter 15

XIV Diwanji Saheb

XIV

and Him alone. Amen!

To Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai

Yours affectionately,

BOMBAY,

VIVEKANANDA.

22nd May, 1893.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB,

Reached Bombay a few days ago and would start off in a few days. Your friend, the Banya gentleman to whom you wrote for the house accommodation, writes to say that his house is already full of guests and some of them are ill and that he is very sorry he cannot accommodate me. After all we have got a nice, airy place.

. . . The Private Secretary of H. H. of Khetri and I are now residing together. I cannot express my gratitude to him for his love and kindness to me. He is what they call a Tazimi Sardar in Rajputana, i.e. one of those whom the Rajas receive by rising from their seats. Still he is so simple, and sometimes his service for me makes me almost ashamed.

. . . Often and often, we see that the very best of men even are troubled and visited with tribulations in this world; it may be inexplicable; but it is also the experience of my life that the heart and core of everything here is good, that whatever may be the surface waves, deep down and underlying everything, there is an infinite basis of goodness and love; and so long as we do not reach that basis, we are troubled; but having once reached that zone of calmness, let winds howl and tempests rage. The house which is built on a rock of ages cannot shake. I thoroughly believe that a good, unselfish and holy man like you, whose whole life has been devoted to doing good to others, has already reached this basis of firmness which the Lord Himself has styled as "rest upon Brahman" in the Gita.

May the blows you have received draw you closer to that Being who is the only one to be loved here and hereafter, so that you may realise Him in everything past, present, and future, and find everything present or lost in Him

Chapter 16

XV Diwanji Saheb

XV

To Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai

CHICAGO,

29th January, 1894.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB,

Your last letter reached me a few days ago. You had been to see my poor mother and brothers. I am glad you did. But you have touched the only soft place in my heart. You ought to know, Diwanji, that I am no hard-hearted brute. If there is any being I love in the whole world, it is my mother. Yet I believed and still believe that without my giving up the world, the great mission which Ramakrishna Paramahansa, my great Master came to preach would not see the light, and where would those young men be who have stood as bulwarks against the surging waves of materialism and luxury of the day? These have done a great amount of good to India, especially to Bengal, and this is only the beginning. With the Lord's help they will do things for which the whole world will bless them for ages. So on the one hand, my vision of the future of Indian religion and that of the whole world, my love for the millions of beings sinking down and down for ages with nobody to help them, nay, nobody with even a thought for them; on the other hand, making those who are nearest and dearest to me miserable; I choose the former. "Lord will do the rest." He is with me, I am sure of that if of anything. So long as I am sincere, nothing can resist me, because He will be my help. Many and many in India could not understand me; and how could they, poor men? Their thoughts never strayed beyond the everyday routine business of eating and drinking. I know only a few noble souls like yourself appreciate me. Lord bless your noble self. But appreciation or no appreciation, I am born to organise these young men; nay, hundreds more in every city are ready to join me; and I want to send them rolling like irresistible waves over India, bringing comfort, morality, religion, education to the doors of the meanest and the most downtrodden. And

this I will do or die.

Our people have no idea, no appreciation. On the other hand, that horrible jealousy and suspicious nature which is the natural outcome of a thousand years of slavery make them stand as enemies to every new idea. Still the Lord is great.

About the Ârati as well as other things you speak of, it is the form in every one of the monasteries in all parts of India, and the worshipping of Guru is the first duty inculcated in the Vedas. It has its bad and good sides. But you must remember we are a unique company, nobody amongst us has a right to force his faith upon the others. Many of us do not believe in any form of idolatry; but they have no right to object when others do it, because that would break the first principle of our religion. Again, God can only be known in and through man. Vibrations of light are everywhere, even in the darkest corners; but it is only in the lamp that it becomes visible to man. Similarly God, though everywhere, we can only conceive Him as a big man. All ideas of God such as merciful preserver, helper, protector — all these are human ideas, anthropomorphic; and again these must cling to a man, call him a Guru or a Prophet or an Incarnation. Man cannot go beyond his nature, no more than you can jump out of your body. What harm is there in some people worshipping their Guru when that Guru was a hundred times more holy than even your historical prophets all taken together? If there is no harm in worshipping Christ, Krishna, or Buddha, why should there be any in worshipping this man who never did or thought anything unholy, whose intellect only through intuition stands head and shoulders above all the other prophets, because they were all one-sided? It was he that brought first to the world this idea of truth, not in but of every religion, which is gaining ground all over the world, and that without the help of science or philosophy or any other acquirement.

But even this is not compulsory, none of the brethren has told you that all must worship his Guru. No, no, no. But again none of us has a right to object when another worships. Why? Because that would overthrow this most

unique society the world has ever seen, ten men of ten different notions and ideas living in perfect harmony. Wait, Diwanji, the Lord is great and merciful, you will see more.

We do not only tolerate but accept every religion, and with the Lord's help I am trying to preach it to the whole world.

Three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great: 1. Conviction of the powers of goodness. 2. Absence of jealousy and suspicion. 3. Helping all who are trying to be and do good.

Why should the Hindu nation with all its wonderful intelligence and other things have gone to pieces? I would answer you, jealousy. Never were there people more wretchedly jealous of one another, more envious of one another's fame and name than this wretched Hindu race. And if you ever come out in the West, the absence of this is the first feeling which you will see in the Western nations.

Three men cannot act in concert together in India for five minutes. Each one struggles for power, and in the long run the whole organisation comes to grief. Lord! Lord! When will we learn not to be jealous! In such a nation, and especially in Bengal, to create a band of men who are tied and bound together with a most undying love in spite of difference — is it not wonderful? This band will increase. This idea of wonderful liberality joined with eternal energy and progress must spread over India. It must electrify the whole nation and must enter the very pores of society in spite of the horrible ignorance, spite, caste-feeling, old boobyism, and jealousy which are the heritage of this nation of slaves.

You are one of the few noble natures who stand as rocks out of water in this sea of universal stagnation. Lord bless you for ever and ever!

Yours ever faithfully,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 17

XVI Sisters

XVI

To the Hale Sisters

DETROIT,

12th March, 1894.

DEAR SISTERS,

I am now living with Mr. Palmer. He is a very nice gentleman. He gave a dinner the night before last to a group of his old friends, each more than 60 years of age, which he calls his "old boys' club". I spoke at an opera house for two hours and a half. People were very much pleased. I am going to Boston and New York. I will get here sufficient to cover my expenses there. I have forgotten the addresses of both Flagg and Prof. Wright. I am not going to lecture in Michigan, Mr. Holden tried to persuade me this morning to lecture in Michigan but I am quite bent upon seeing a little of Boston and New York. To tell you the truth, the more I am getting popularity and facility in speaking, the more I am getting fed up. My last address was the best I ever delivered. Mr. Palmer was in ecstasies and the audience remained almost spellbound, so much so that it was after the lecture that I found I had spoken so long. A speaker always feels the uneasiness or inattention of the audience. Lord save me from such nonsense, I am fed up. I would take rest in Boston or New York if the Lord permits. My love to you all. May you ever be happy!

Your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 18

XVII Babies

XVII

To the Hale Sisters

DETROIT,

15th March, 1894.

DEAR BABIES,

I am pulling on well with old Palmer. He is a very jolly, good old man. I got only 127 dollars by my last lecture. I am going to speak again in Detroit on Monday. Your mother asked me to write to a lady in Lynn. I have never seen her. Is it etiquette to write without any introduction? Please post me a little letter about this lady. Where is Lynn? The funniest thing said about me here was in one of the papers which said, "The cyclonic Hindu has come and is a guest with Mr. Palmer. Mr. Palmer has become a Hindu and is going to India; only he insists that two reforms should be carried out: firstly that the Car of Jagannath should be drawn by Percherons raised in Mr. Palmer's Loghouse Farm, and secondly that the Jersey cow be admitted into the pantheon of Hindu sacred cows." Mr. Palmer is passionately fond of both Percheron horse and Jersey cow and has a great stock of both in his Loghouse Farm.

The first lecture was not properly managed, the cost of the hall being 150 dollars. I have given up Holden. Here is another fellow cropped up; let me see if he does better. Mr. Palmer makes me laugh the whole day. Tomorrow there is going to be another dinner party. So far all is well; but I do not know — I have become very sad in my heart since I am here — do not know why.

I am wearied of lecturing and all that nonsense. This mixing with hundreds of varieties of the human animal has disturbed me. I will tell you what is to my taste; I cannot write, and I cannot speak, but I can think deeply, and when I am heated, can speak fire. It should be, however, to a select, a very select — few. Let them, if they will, carry and scatter my ideas broadcast — not I. This is only a just division of labour. The same

man never succeeded both in thinking and in scattering his thoughts. A man should be free to think, especially spiritual thoughts.

Just because this assertion of independence, this proving that man is not a machine, is the essence of all religious thought, it is impossible to think it in the routine mechanical way. It is this tendency to bring everything down to the level of a machine that has given the West its wonderful prosperity. And it is this which has driven away all religion from its doors. Even the little that is left, the West has reduced to a systematic drill.

I am really not "cyclonic" at all. Far from it. What I want is not here, nor can I longer bear this "cyclonic" atmosphere. This is the way to perfection, to strive to be perfect, and to strive to make perfect a few men and women. My idea of doing good is this: to evolve out a few giants, and not to strew pearls before swine, and so lose time, health, and energy.

Just now I got a letter from Flagg. He cannot help me in lecturing. He says, "First go to Boston." Well, I do not care for lecturing any more. It is too disgusting, this attempt to bring me to suit anybody's or any audience's fads. However, I shall come back to Chicago for a day or two at least before I go out of this country. Lord bless you all.

Ever gratefully your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 19

XVIII Sister Mary

XVIII

To Miss Mary Hale

DETROIT,

18th March, 1894.

DEAR SISTER MARY,

My heartfelt thanks for your kindly sending me the letter from Calcutta. It was from my brethren at Calcutta, and it is written on the occasion of a private invitation to celebrate the birthday of my Master about whom you have heard so much from me — so I send it over to you. The letter says that Mazoomdar has gone back to Calcutta and is preaching that Vivekananda is committing every sin under the sun in America. . . . This is your America's wonderful spiritual man! It is not their fault; until one is really spiritual, that is, until one has got a real insight into the nature of one's own soul and has got a glimpse of the world of the soul, one cannot distinguish chaff from seed, tall talk from depth, and so on. I am sorry for poor Mazoomdar that he should stoop so low! Lord bless the old boy!

The address inside the letter is in English and is my old, old name as written by a companion of my childhood who has also taken orders. It is a very poetic name. That written in the letter is an abbreviation, the full name being Narendra meaning the "Chief of men" ("nara" means "man", and "indra" stands for "ruler", "chief") — very ludicrous, isn't it? But such are the names in our country; we cannot help, but I am glad I have given that up.

I am all right. Hoping it is same with you.

I remain your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 20

XIX Sister

XIX

To Miss Mary Hale

life brings queer experiences! My inexpressible love for you all, my holy family.

Your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

DETROIT,

30th March, 1894.

DEAR SISTER,

Your and Mother Church's letters came together just now, acknowledging the receipt of the money. I am very glad to receive the Khetri letter, which I send back for your perusal. You would find from it that he wants some newspaper clippings. I do not think I have any except the Detroit one, which I will send to him. If you can get hold of some others, kindly send some over to him if it be possible and convenient. You know his address — H. H. the Maharajah of Khetri, Rajputana, India. Of course, this letter is for the perusal of the holy family alone. Mrs. Breed wrote to me a stiff burning letter first, and then today I got a telegram from her inviting me to be her guest for a week. Before this I got a letter from Mrs. Smith of New York writing on her behalf and another lady Miss Helen Gould and another Dr. ___ to come over to New York. As the Lynn Club wants me on the 17th of next month, I am going to New York first and come in time for their meeting at Lynn.

Next summer, if I do not go away, which Mrs. Bagley insists I should not, I may go to Annisquam where Mrs. Bagley has engaged a nice house. Mrs. Bagley is a very spiritual lady, and Mr. Palmer a spirituous gentleman but very good. What shall I write more? I am all right in nice health of body and mind. May you all be blessed, ever blessed, my dear, dear sisters. By the by, Mrs. Sherman has presented me with a lot of things amongst which is a nail set and letter holder and a little satchel etc., etc. Although I objected, especially to the nail set, as very duds with mother-of-pearl handles, she insisted and I had to take them, although I do not know what to do with that brushing instrument. Lord bless them all. She gave me one advice — never to wear this Afrikee dress in society. Now I am a society man! Lord! What comes next? Long

Chapter 21

XX Diwanji Saheb

XX

To Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai

CHICAGO,

20th June, 1894.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB,

Your very kind note came today. I am so sorry that I could have caused pain to such a noble heart as yours with my rash and strong words. I bow down to your mild corrections. “Thy son am I, teach me thus bowing” — Gita. But you well know, Diwanji Saheb, it was my love that prompted me to say so. The backbiters, I must tell you, have not indirectly benefited me; on the other hand, they have injured me immensely in view of the fact that our Hindu people did not move a finger to tell the Americans that I represented them. Had our people sent some words thanking the American people for their kindness to me and stating that I was representing them! . . . have been telling the American people that I have donned the Sannyasin’s garb only in America and that I was a cheat, bare and simple. So far as reception goes, it has no effect on the American nation; but so far as helping me with funds goes, it has a terrible effect in making them take off their helping hands from me. And it is one year since I have been here, and not one man of note from India has thought it fit to make the Americans know that I am no cheat. There again the missionaries are always seeking for something against me, and they are busy picking up anything said against me by the Christian papers of India and publishing it here. Now you must know that the people here know very little of the distinction in India between the Christian and the Hindu.

Primarily my coming has been to raise funds for an enterprise of my own. Let me tell it all to you again.

The whole difference between the West and the East is in this: They are nations, we are not, i.e., civilisation, education here is general, it penetrates into the masses.

The higher classes in India and America are the same, but the distance is infinite between the lower classes of the two countries. Why was it so easy for the English to conquer India? It was because they are a nation, we are not. When one of our great men dies, we must sit for centuries to have another; they can produce them as fast as they die. When our Diwanji Saheb will pass away (which the Lord may delay long for the good of my country), the nation will see the difficulty at once of filling his place, which is seen even now in the fact that they cannot dispense with your services. It is the dearth of great ones. Why so? Because they have such a bigger field of recruiting their great ones, we have so small. A nation of 300 millions has the smallest field of recruiting its great ones compared with nations of thirty, forty, or sixty millions, because the number of educated men and women in those nations is so great. Now do not mistake me, my kind friend, this is the great defect in our nation and must be removed.

Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible. Our reformers do not see where the wound is, they want to save the nation by marrying the widows; do you think that a nation is saved by the number of husbands its widows get? Nor is our religion to blame, for an idol more or less makes no difference. The whole defect is here: The real nation who live in cottage have forgotten their manhood, their individuality. Trodden under the foot of the Hindu, Mussulman, or Christian, they have come to think that they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody who has money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated. Whether idols will remain or not, whether widows will have husbands enough or not, whether caste is good or bad, I do not bother myself with such questions. Everyone must work out his own salvation. Our duty is to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation will come through God’s laws. Let us put ideas into their heads, and they will do the rest. Now this means educating the masses. Here are these difficulties. A pauper government cannot, will not, do anything; so no help from that quarter.

Even supposing we are in a position to open schools in each village free, still the poor boys would rather go to

the plough to earn their living than come to your school. Neither have we the money, nor can we make them come to education. The problem seems hopeless. I have found a way out. It is this. If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere. How? You have seen my brethren. Now I can get hundreds of such, all over India, unselfish, good, and educated. Let these men go from village to village bringing not only religion to the door of everyone but also education. So I have a nucleus of organising the widows also as instructors to our women.

Now suppose the villagers after their day's work have come to their village and sitting under a tree or somewhere are smoking and talking the time away. Suppose two of these educated Sannyasins get hold of them there and with a camera throw astronomical or other pictures, scenes from different nations, histories, etc. Thus with globes, maps, etc. — and all this orally — how much can be done that way, Diwanji? It is not that the eye is the only door of knowledge, the ear can do all the same. So they would have ideas and morality, and hope for better. Here our work ends. Let them do the rest. What would make the Sannyasins do this sacrifice, undertake such a task? — religious enthusiasm. Every new religious wave requires a new centre. The old religion can only be revived by a new centre. Hang your dogmas or doctrines, they never pay. It is a character, a life, a centre, a God-man that must lead the way, that must be the centre round which all other elements will gather themselves and then fall like a tidal wave upon the society, carrying all before it, washing away all impurities. Again, a piece of wood can only easily be cut along the grain. So the old Hinduism can only be reformed through Hinduism, and not through the new-fangled reform movements. At the same time the reformers must be able to unite in themselves the culture of both the East and the West. Now do you not think that you have already seen the nucleus of such a great movement, that you have heard the low rumblings of the coming tidal wave? That centre, that God-man to lead was born in India. He was the great Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and round him this band is slowly gathering. They will do the work. Now, Diwanji Maharaj, this requires an organisation, money — a little at least to set the wheel in motion. Who would have given us money in India? — So, Diwanji Maharaj, I crossed over to America. You may remember I begged all the money from the poor, and the offers of the rich I would not accept because they could not understand my ideas. Now lecturing for a year in this country, I could not succeed at all (of course, I have no wants for myself) in my plan for raising some funds for setting up my work. First, this year is a very bad year in America; thousands of their poor are without work. Secondly, the missionaries and the Brahma Samajists try to thwart all my views. Thirdly, a year has rolled by, and our

countrymen could not even do so much for me as to say to the American people that I was a real Sannyasin and no cheat, and that I represented the Hindu religion. Even this much, the expenditure of a few words, they could not do! Bravo, my countrymen! I love them, Diwanji Saheb. Human help I spurn with my foot. He who has been with me through hills and dales, through deserts or forests, will be with me, I hope; if not, some heroic soul would arise some time or other in India, far abler than myself, and carry it out. So I have told you all about it. Diwanji, excuse my long letter, my noble friend, one of the few who really feel for me, have real kindness for me. You are at liberty, my friend, to think that I am a dreamer, a visionary; but believe at least that I am sincere to the backbone, and my greatest fault is that I love my country only too, too well. May you and yours be blessed ever and ever, my noble, noble friend. May the shadow of the Almighty ever rest on all those you love. I offer my eternal gratitude to you. My debt to you is immense, not only because you are my friend, but also because you have all your life served the Lord and your motherland so well.

Ever yours in gratitude,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 22

XXI Dear—

XXI

To a Madras disciple

541 DEARBORN AVE.,

CHICAGO,

28 June, 1894.

DEAR__ ,

The other day I received a letter from G. G., Mysore. G. G. unfortunately thinks that I am all-knowing, else he would have written his Canarese address on the top of the letter more legibly. Then again it is a great mistake to address me letters to any other place but Chicago. It was my mistake of course at first, because I ought to have thought of the fine Buddhi (intellect) of our friends who are throwing letters at me anywhere they find an address at the top. But tell our Madras Brihaspatis (i.e. wise fellows) that they already knew full well that before their letters reach, I may be 1000 miles away from that particular place, for I am continuously travelling. In Chicago there is a friend whose house is my headquarters.

Now as to my prospects here — it is well-nigh zero. Why, because although I had the best purpose, it has been made null and void by these causes. All that I get about India is from Madras letters. Your letters say again and again how I am being praised in India. But that is between you and me, for I never saw a single Indian paper writing about me, except the three square inches sent to me by Alasinga. On the other hand, everything that is said by Christians in India is sedulously gathered by the missionaries and regularly published, and they go from door to door to make my friends give me up. They have succeeded only too well, for there is not one word for me from India. Indian Hindu papers may laud me to the skies, but not a word of that ever came to America, so that many people in this country think me a fraud. In the face of the missionaries and with the jealousy of the Hindus here to back them, I have not a word to say.

I now think it was foolish of me to go to the Parliament on the strength of the urging of the Madras boys. They

are boys after all. Of course, I am eternally obliged to them, but they are after all enthusiastic young men without any executive abilities. I came here without credentials. How else to show that I am not a fraud in the face of the missionaries and the Brahmo Samaj? Now I thought nothing so easy as to spend a few words; I thought nothing would be so easy as to hold a meeting of some respectable persons in Madras and Calcutta and pass a resolution thanking me and the American people for being kind to me and sending it over officially, i.e. through the Secretary of the function, to America, for instance, sending one to Dr. Barrows and asking him to publish it in the papers and so on, to different papers of Boston, New York, and Chicago. Now after all, I found that it is too terrible a task for India to undertake. There has not been one voice for me in one year and every one against me, for whatever you may say of me in your homes, who knows anything of it here? More than two months ago I wrote to Alasinga about this. He did not even answer my letter. I am afraid his heart has grown lukewarm. So you must first think of that and then show this letter to the Madras people. On the other hand, my brethren foolishly talk nonsense about Keshab Sen; and the Madrasis, telling the Theosophists anything I write about them, are creating only enemies. . . . Oh! If only I had one man of some true abilities and brains to back me in India! But His will be done. I stand a fraud in this country. It was my foolishness to go to the Parliament without any credentials, hoping that there would be many for me. I have got to work it out slowly.

On the whole, the Americans are a million times nobler than the Hindus, and I can work more good here than in the country of the ingrate and the heartless. After all, I must work my Karma out. So far as pecuniary circumstances go I am all right and will be all right. The number of Theosophists in all America is only 625 by the last census. Mixing up with them will smash me in a minute rather than help me in any way. What nonsense does Alasinga mean by my going to London to see Mr. Old etc. Fool! the boys there don't know what they are talking. And this pack of Madras babies cannot even keep a counsel in their blessed noodles! Talk nonsense all day, and when it comes to the least business, they are nowhere! Boobies, who cannot get up a few meetings

of 50 men each and send up a few empty words only to help me, talk big about influencing the world. I have written to you about the phonograph. Now there is here an electric fan costing \$20 and working beautifully. The battery works 100 hours and then can be replenished at any electric plant. Good-bye, I have had enough of the Hindus. Now His will be done, I obey and bow down to my Karma. However, do not think me ungrateful. . . . The Madras people have done for me more than I deserved and more than was in their power. It was my foolishness — the forgetting for a moment that we Hindus have not yet become human beings and giving up for a moment my self-reliance and relying upon the Hindus — that I came to grief. Every moment I expected something from India. No, it never came. Last two months especially I was in torture at every moment. No, not even a newspaper from India! My friends waited — waited month after month; nothing came, not a voice. Many consequently grew cold and at last gave me up. But it is the punishment for relying upon man and upon brutes, for our countrymen are not men as yet. They are ready to be praised, but when their turn comes even to say a word, they are nowhere.

My thanks eternal to the Madras young men. May the Lord bless them for ever. America is the best field in the world to carry on my idea; so I do not think of leaving America soon. And why? Here I have food and drink and clothes, and everybody so kind, and all this for a few good words! Why should I give up such a noble nation to go to the land of brutes and ingrates and the brainless boobies held in eternal thralldom of superstitious, merciless, pitiless wretches? So good-bye again. You may show this letter to the people with discretion, even Alasinga upon whom I built so much. By the by, will you kindly send up a few copies of the sketch of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life written by Mazumdar to Chicago? They have lots in Calcutta. Don't forget the address 541 Dearborn Avenue (not Street), Chicago, or c/o Thomas Cook, Chicago. Any other address would cause much delay and confusion, as I am continually travelling, and Chicago is my headquarters, although even this much did not come to the brains of our Madras friends. Kindly give G. G., Alasinga, Secretary, and all others my eternal blessings. I am always praying for their welfare, and I am not in the least displeased with them, but I am not pleased with myself. I committed a terrible error — of calculating upon others' help — once in my life — and I have paid for it. It was my fault and not theirs. Lord bless all the Madras people. They are at least far superior to the Bengalis, who are simply fools and have no souls, no stamina at all. Good-bye, good-bye. I have launched my boat in the waves, come what may. Regarding my brutal criticisms, I have really no right to make them. You have done for me infinitely more than I deserve. I must bear my own Karma, and that without a murmur. Lord bless you all.

Yours truly,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I am afraid Alasinga's college has closed, but I have no intimation of it, and he never gave me his home address. Kidi has dropped out, I am afraid.

v.

Chapter 23

XXII Mother

XXII

To Mrs. George W. Hale

C/O Dr. E. Guernsey,

FISHKILL LANDING, N.Y.,

July, 1894.

DEAR MOTHER,

I came yesterday to this place, and shall remain here a few days. I received in New York a letter from you but did not receive any Interior, for which I am glad, because I am not perfect yet, and knowing the “unselfish love” the Presbyterian priests, especially the Interior has for “me”, I want to keep aloof from rousing bad feelings towards these “sweet Christian gentlemen” in my heart.

Our religion teaches that anger is a great sin, even if it is “righteous”. Each must follow his own religion. I could not for my soul distinguish ever the distinction between “religious anger” and “commonplace anger”, “religious killing” and “commonplace killing”, “religious slandering and irreligious”, and so forth. Nor may that “fine” ethical distinction ever enter into the ethics of our nation! Jestings apart, Mother Church, I do not care the least for the gambols these men play, seeing as I do through and through the insincerity, the hypocrisy, and love of self and name that is the only motive power in these men.

As to the photographs, the first time the Babies got a few copies, and the second time you brought a few copies; you know they are to give 50 copies in all. Sister Isabelle knows better than I.

With my sincerest love and respects for you and Father Pope.

I remain,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. How are you enjoying the heat? I am bearing the heat very well here. I had an invitation to Swampscott on the sea from a very rich lady whose acquaintance I made last winter in New York, but I declined with thanks. I am very careful not to take the hospitality of anybody here, especially the rich. I had a few other invitations from some very rich people here. I refused; I have by this time seen the whole business through. Lord bless you and yours, Mother Church, for your sincerity. Oh! it is so rare in this world.

Yours affectionately,

V.

Chapter 24

XXIII Sisters

XXIII

To the Hale Sisters (about the Calcutta meeting of 5th Sept., 1894)

NEW YORK

9th July (Sept.?), 1894.

O MY SISTERS,

Glory unto Jagadambâ (Mother of the Universe)! I have gained beyond expectations. The prophet has been honoured and with a vengeance. I am weeping like a child at His mercy — He never leaves His servant, sisters. The letter I send you will explain all, and the printed things are coming to the American people. The names there are the very flower of our country. The President was the chief nobleman of Calcutta, and the other man Mahesh Chandra Nyâyaratna is the principal of the Sanskrit College and the chief Brahmin in all India and recognised by the Government as such. The letter will tell you all. O sisters! What a rogue am I that in the face of such mercies sometimes the faith totters — seeing every moment that I am in His hands. Still the mind sometimes gets despondent. Sister, there is a God — a Father — a Mother who never leaves His Children, never, never, never. Put uncanny theories aside and becoming children take refuge in Him. I cannot write more — I am weeping like a woman.

Blessed, blessed art Thou, Lord God of my soul!

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 25

XXIV Babies

XXIV

To the Hale Sisters

SWAMPSCOTT,

26th July, 1894.

DEAR BABIES,

Now don't let my letters stray beyond the circle, please. I had a beautiful letter from sister Mary. See how I am getting the dash, sister Jeany teaches me all that. She can jump and run and play and swear like a devil and talk slang at the rate of 500 a minute; only she does not much care for religion, only a little. She is gone today home, and I am going to Greenacre. I had been to see Mrs. Breed. Mrs. Stone was there, with whom is residing Mrs. Pullman and all the golden bugs, my old friends hereabouts. They are kind as usual. On my way back from Greenacre I am going to Annisquam to see Mrs. Bagley for a few days.

Darn it, forget everything. I had duckings in the sea like a fish. I am enjoying every bit of it. What nonsense was the song Harriet taught me "dans la plaine" the deuce take it. I told it to a French scholar and he laughed and laughed till the fellow was well-nigh burst at my wonderful translation. That is the way you would have taught me French! You are a pack of fools and heathens, I tell you. Now are you gasping for breath like a huge fish stranded? I am glad that you are sizzling. Oh! how nice and cool it is here, and it is increased a hundred-fold when I think about the gasping, sizzling, boiling, frying four old maids, and how cool and nice I am here. Whoooooo!

Miss Phillips has a beautiful place somewhere in N.Y. State — mountain, lake, river, forest altogether — what more? I am going to make a Himalayas there and start a monastery as sure as I am living — I am not going to leave this country without throwing one more apple of discord into this already roaring, fighting, kicking, mad whirlpool of American religion. Well, dear old maids, you sometimes have a glimpse of the lake and on every hot noon, think of going down to the bottom of the

lake, down, down, down, until it is cool and nice, and then to lie down on the bottom, with that coolness above and around, and lie there still, silent, and just doze — not sleep, but dreamy dozing half unconscious sort of bliss — very much like that which opium brings; that is delicious; and drinking lots of iced water. Lord bless my soul — I had such cramps several times as would have killed an elephant. So I hope to keep myself away from the cold water.

May you be all happy, dear fin de siècle young ladies, is the constant prayer of VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 26

XXV Sisters

XXV

To the Hale Sisters

GREENACRE,

11th August, 1894.

DEAR SISTERS,

I have been all this time in Greenacre. I enjoyed this place very much. They have been all very kind to me. One Chicago lady, Mrs. Pratt of Kenilworth, wanted to give me \$500; she became so much interested in me; but I refused. She has made me promise that I would send word to her whenever I need money, which I hope the Lord will never put me in. His help alone is sufficient for me. I have not heard anything from you nor from Mother. Neither have I any news from India as to the arrival of the phonograph.

If there was anything in my letter to you which was offensive, I hope you all know that I meant everything in love. It is useless to express my gratitude to you for your kindness. Lord bless you and shower His choicest blessings on you and those you love. To your family I am ever, ever beholden. You know it. You feel it. I cannot express it. On Sunday I am going to lecture at Plymouth at the "Sympathy of Religions" meetings of Col. Higginson. Herewith I send a photograph Cora Stockham took of the group under the tree. It is only a proof and will fade away under exposure, but I cannot get anything better at present. Kindly tender my heartfelt love and gratitude to Miss Howe. She has been so, so kind to me. I do not need anything at present. I shall be very glad to let you know if I need anything. I think I am going to Fishkill from Plymouth, where I will be only a couple of days. I will write you again from Fishkill. Hope you are all happy, or rather I know you are. Pure and good souls can never be unhappy. I shall have a very nice time the few weeks I am here. I will be in New York next fall. New York is a grand and good place. The New York people have a tenacity of purpose unknown in any other city. I had a letter from Mrs. Potter Palmer asking me to see her in August. She is a very gracious and kind lady, etc. I have

not much to say. There is my friend Dr. Janes of New York, President of the Ethical Culture Society, who has begun his lectures. I must go to hear him. He and I agree so much. May you be always happy!

Ever your well-wishing brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 27

XXVI Sister

XXVI

To Miss Mary Hale

C/O. MRS. BAGLEY,

ANNISQUAM,

31st August, 1894.

DEAR SISTER,

The letter from the Madras people was published in yesterday's Boston Transcript. I hope to send you a copy. You may have seen it in some Chicago paper. I am sure there is some mail for me at Cook & Sons — I shall be here till Tuesday next at least, on which day I am going to lecture here in Annisquam.

Kindly inquire at Cook's for my mail and send it over at Annisquam.

I had no news of you for some time. I sent two pictures to Mother Church yesterday and hope you will like them. I am very anxious about the Indian mail. With love for all, I am your ever affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. As I do not know where you are I could not send something else which I have to send over to you.

V.

Chapter 28

XXVII Leon

XXVII

To Mr. Leon Landsberg

HOTEL BELLEVUE,

BOSTON,

13th September, 1894.

DEAR LEON,

Forgive me, but I have the right, as your Guru, to advise you, and I insist that you buy some clothes for yourself, as the want of them stands in the way of your doing anything in this country. Once you have a start, you may dress in whatever way you like. People do not object.

You need not thank me, for this is only a duty. According to Hindu law, if a Guru dies, his disciple is his heir, and not even his son — supposing him to have had one before becoming a Sannyasin. This is, you see, an actual spiritual relationship, and none of your Yankee “tutor” business!

With all blessings and prayers for your success,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 29

XXVIII Sister

XXVIII

To Miss Mary Hale

**HOTEL BELLEVUE,
BEACON ST., BOSTON,**

13th September, 1894.

DEAR SISTER,

Your kind note reached me this morning. I have been in this hotel for about a week. I will remain in Boston some time yet. I have plenty of gowns already, in fact, more than I can carry with ease. When I had that drenching in Annisquam, I had on that beautiful black suit you appreciate so much, and I do not think it can be damaged any way; it also has been penetrated with my deep meditations on the Absolute. I am very glad that you enjoyed the summer so well. As for me, I am vagabondising. I was very much amused the other day at reading Abe Hue's description of the vagabond lamas of Tibet — a true picture of our fraternity. He says they are queer people. They come when they will, sit at everybody's table, invitation or no invitation, live where they will, and go where they will. There is not a mountain they have not climbed, not a river they have not crossed, not a nation they do not know, not a language they do not talk. He thinks that God must have put into them a part of that energy which makes the planets go round and round eternally. Today this vagabond lama was seized with a desire of going right along scribbling, and so I walked down and entering a store bought all sorts of writing material and a beautiful portfolio which shuts with a clasp and has even a little wooden inkstand. So far it promises well. Hope it will continue. Last month I had mail enough from India and am greatly delighted with my countrymen at their generous appreciation of my work. Good enough for them. I cannot find anything more to write. Prof. Wright, his wife, and children were as good as ever. Words cannot express my gratitude to them.

Everything so far is not going bad with me except that I had a bad cold. Now I think the fellow is gone. This

time I tried Christian Science for insomnia and really found it worked very well. Wishing you all happiness, I remain, ever your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Kindly tell Mother that I do not want any coat now.

Chapter 30

XXIX Diwanji Saheb

XXIX

CHICAGO,

September, 1894.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai),

Your kind letter reached long ago, but as I had not anything to write I was late in answering.

Your kind note to G. W. Hale has been very gratifying, as I owed them that much. I have been travelling all over this country all this time and seeing everything. I have come to this conclusion that there is only one country in the world which understands religion — it is India; that with all their faults the Hindus are head and shoulders above all other nations in morality and spirituality; and that with proper care and attempt and struggle of all her disinterested sons, by combining some of the active and heroic elements of the West with the calm virtues of the Hindus, there will come a type of men far superior to any that have ever been in this world.

I do not know when I come back; but I have seen enough of this country, I think, and so soon will go over to Europe and then to India.

With my best love, gratitude to you and all your brothers,

I remain, yours faithfully,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 31

XXX Diwanji Saheb

XXX

CHICAGO(?),

September, 1894(3?),[6]*

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai),

Very kind of you to send up a man inquiring about my health and comfort. But that's quite of a piece with your fatherly character. I am all right here. Your kindness has left nothing more to be desired here. I hope soon to see you in a few days. I don't require any conveyance while going down. Descent is very bad, and the ascent is the worst part of the job, that's the same in everything in the world. My heartfelt gratitude to you.

Yours faithfully,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 32

XXXI Mother

XXXI

To Mrs. George W. Hale

1125 ST. PAUL ST.,

BALTIMORE,

October, 1894.

DEAR MOTHER,

You see where I am now. Did you see a telegram from India in the Chicago Tribune? Did they print the address from Calcutta? From here I go to Washington, thence to Philadelphia and then to New York; send me the address of Miss Mary in Philadelphia so that I may look in on my way to New York. Hope your worry is over.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 33

XXXII Sister

XXXII

I remain, yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

To Miss Mary Hale

C/O MRS. E. TOTTEN,

1703, 1ST STREET,

WASHINGTON,

[November 1(?), 1894]

DEAR SISTER,

I have received two letters which you were very kind to take the trouble to write. I am going to talk here today, tomorrow at Baltimore, then again Monday at Baltimore, and Tuesday at Washington again. So I will be in Philadelphia a few days after that. I shall write to you the day I start from Washington. I shall be in Philadelphia a few days only to see Prof. Wright, and then I go to New York and run for a little while between New York and Boston, and then go to Chicago via Detroit; and then "whist" . . ., as Senator Palmer says, to England.

The word "Dharma" means religion. I am very sorry they treated Petro very badly in Calcutta. I have been very well treated here and am doing very well. Nothing extraordinary in the meantime except I got vexed at getting loads of newspapers from India; so after sending a cart-load to Mother Church and another to Mrs. Guernsey, I had to write them to stop sending their newspapers. I have had "boom" enough in India. Alasinga writes that every village all over the country now has heard of me. Well, the old peace is gone for ever and no rest anywhere from heretofore. These newspapers of India will be my death, I am sure. They will now talk what I ate on such and such a date and how I sneezed. Lord bless them, it was all my foolery. I really came here to raise a little money secretly and go over but was caught in the trap and now no more of a reserved life.

Wishing you all enjoyments,

Chapter 34

XXXIII Diwanji Saheb

XXXIII

CHICAGO,

15th November, 1894(3?).

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai),

I here received your kind note. So very kind of you to remember me even here, I have not seen your Narayan Hemchandra. He is not in America, I believe. I have seen many strange sights and grand things. I am glad that there is a good chance of your coming over to Europe. Avail yourself of it by any means. The fact of our isolation from all the other nations of the world is the cause of our degeneration and its only remedy is getting back into the current of the rest of the world. Motion is the sign of life. America is a grand country. It is a paradise of the poor and women. There is almost no poor in the country, and nowhere else in the world women are so free, so educated, so cultured. They are everything in society.

This is a great lesson. The Sannyasin has not lost a bit of his Sannyasinship, even his mode of living. And in this most hospitable country, every home is open to me. The Lord who guides me in India, would He not guide me here? And He has.

You may not understand why a Sannyasin should be in America, but it was necessary. Because the only claim you have to be recognised by the world is your religion, and good specimens of our religious men are required to be sent abroad to give other nations an idea that India is not dead.

Some representative men must come out of India and go to all the nations of the earth to show at least that you are not savages. You may not feel the necessity of it from your Indian home, but, believe me, much depends upon that for your nation. And a Sannyasin who has no idea of doing good to his fellows is a brute, not a Sannyasin.

I am neither a sightseer nor an idle traveller; but you will see, if you live to see, and bless me all your life.

Mr. Dvivedi's papers were too big for the Parliament, and they had to be cut short.

I spoke at the Parliament of Religions, and with what effect I may quote to you from a few newspapers and magazines ready at hand. I need not be self-conceited, but to you in confidence I am bound to say, because of your love, that no Hindu made such an impression in America, and if my coming has done nothing, it has done this that the Americans have come to know that India even today produces men at whose feet even the most civilised nations may learn lessons of religion and morality. Don't you think that is enough to say for the Hindu nation sending over here their Sannyasin? You would hear the details from Virchand Gandhi.

These I quote from the journals: "But eloquent as were many of the brief speeches, no one expressed as well the spirit of the Parliament (of religions) and its limitations as the Hindu monk. I copy his address in full, but I can only suggest its effect upon the audience; for he is an orator by Divine right, and his strong intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich rhythmical utterance he gave them." (Here the speech is quoted in extenso.) New York Critique.

"He has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has become familiar to us. . . . His culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea of Hindu civilisation His fine, intelligent face and his deep musical voice, prepossessing one at once in his favour. . . . He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art and the most convincing sincerity, and rising often to rich inspiring eloquence." (ibid.)

"Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation." Herald (the greatest paper here).

I cease from quoting more lest you think me conceited; but this was necessary to you who have become nearly

frogs in the well and would not see how the world is going on elsewhere. I do not mean you personally, my noble friend, but our nation in general.

I am the same here as in India, only here in this highly cultural land there is an appreciation, a sympathy which our ignorant fools never dream of. There our people grudge us monks a crumb of bread, here they are ready to pay one thousand rupees a lecture and remain grateful for the instructions for ever.

I am appreciated by these strangers more than I was ever in India. I can, if I will, live here all my life in the greatest luxury; but I am a Sannyasin, and "India, with all thy faults I love thee still". So I am coming back after some months, and go on sowing the seeds of religion and progress from city to city as I was doing so long, although amongst a people who know not what appreciation and gratefulness are.

I am ashamed of my own nation when I compare their beggarly, selfish, unappreciative, ignorant ungratefulness with the help, hospitality, sympathy, and respect which the Americans have shown to me, a representative of a foreign religion. Therefore come out of the country, see others, and compare.

Now after these quotations, do you think it was worth while to send a Sannyasin to America?

Please do not publish it. I hate notoriety in the same manner as I did in India.

I am doing the Lord's work, and wherever He leads I follow. I can cross a mountain, He will help me. I do not care for human help. He is ready to help me in India, in America, on the North Pole, if He thinks fit. If He does not, none else can help me. Glory unto the Lord for ever and ever.

Yours with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 35

XXXIV Diwanji

XXXIV

541 DEARBORN AVENUE,

CHICAGO,

November(?), 1894.

DEAR DIWANJI (Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai),

Your letter pleased me extremely. I, of course, understand the joke, but I am not the baby to be put off with a joke; now take more.

The secret of success of the Westerners is the power of organisation and combination. That is only possible with mutual trust and co-operation and help. Now here is Virchand Gandhi, the Jain, whom you well knew in Bombay. This man never takes anything but pure vegetables even in this terribly cold climate, and tooth and nail tries to defend his countrymen and religion. The people of this country like him very well, but what are they doing who sent him over? They are trying to outcast him. Jealousy is a vice necessarily generated in slaves. Again it is jealousy that holds them down.

Here were . . .; they were all trying to lecture and get money thereby. They did something, but I succeeded better than they — why, I did not put myself as a bar to their success. It was the will of the Lord. But all these . . . except . . . have fabricated and circulated the most horrible lies about me in this country, and behind my back. Americans will never stoop to such meanness.

. . . If any man tries to move forward here, everybody is ready to help him. In India you may try tomorrow by writing a single line of praise for me in any of our papers (Hindu), and the next day they would be all against me. Why? It is the nature of slaves. They cannot suffer to see any one of their brethren putting his head the least above their rank. . . . Do you mean to compare such stuff with these children of liberty, self-help, and brotherly love? The nearest approach to our people are the freed slaves of the U.S.A., the Negroes. Why, in the South they are about twenty millions and are now free. The whites are a handful, still the whites hold them down all the same.

Why, even when they have every right by law, a bloody war between the brothers has been fought to free these slaves? The same defect — jealousy. Not one of these Negroes would bear to see his brother-Negro praised or pushing on. Immediately they would join the whites to crush him down. You can have no idea about it until you come out of India. It is all right for those who have plenty of money and position to let the world roll on such, but I call him a traitor who, having been educated, nursed in luxury by the heart's blood of the downtrodden millions of toiling poor, never even takes a thought for them. Where, in what period of history your rich men, noblemen, your priests and potentates took any thought for the poor — the grinding of whose faces is the very life-blood of their power?

But the Lord is great, the vengeance came sooner or later, and they who sucked the life-blood of the poor, whose very education was at their expense, whose very power was built on their poverty, were in their turn sold as slaves by hundreds and thousands, their wives and daughters dishonoured, their property robbed for the last 1,000 years, and do you think it was for no cause?

Why amongst the poor of India so many are Mohammedans? It is nonsense to say, they were converted by the sword. It was to gain their liberty from the . . . zemindars and from the . . . priest, and as a consequence you find in Bengal there are more Mohammedans than Hindus amongst the cultivators, because there were so many zemindars there. Who thinks of raising these sunken downtrodden millions? A few thousand graduates do not make a nation, a few rich men do not make a nation. True, our opportunities are less, but still there is enough to feed and clothe and made 300 millions more comfortable, nay, luxurious. Ninety per cent of our people are without education — who thinks of that? — these Babus, the so-called patriots?

Now, let me tell you — still there is a God, no joke. He is ordering our lives, and although I know a nation of slaves cannot but try to bite at the hand that wants to give them medicine, yet, pray with me, you — one of the few that have real sympathy for everything good, for everything great, one at least whom I know to be a man of true ring, nobility of nature, and a thorough sincerity of head and

heart — pray with me:

“Lead, kindly Light,
amid th' encircling gloom.”

I do not care what they say. I love my God, my religion, my country, and above all, myself, a poor beggar. I love the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, I feel for them — the Lord knows how much. He will show me the way. I do not care a fig for human approbation or criticism. I think of most of them as ignorant, noisy children — they have not penetrated into the inner nature of sympathy, into the spirit which is all love.

I have that insight through the blessing of Ramakrishna. I am trying to work with my little band, all of these poor beggars like me, you have seen them. But the Lord's works have been always done by the lowly, by the poor. You bless me that I may have faith in my Guru, in my God, and in myself.

The only way is love and sympathy. The only worship is love.

May He help you and yours ever and ever!

With prayers and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 36

XXXV Sister

XXXV

To Miss Mary Hale

168, BRATTLE STREET,

CAMBRIDGE,

8th December, 1894.

DEAR SISTER,

I have been here three days. We had a nice lecture from Lady Henry Somerset. I have a class every morning here on Vedanta and other topics. Perhaps you have got the copy of Vedantism by this time which I left with Mother Temple to be sent over. I went to dine with the Spaldings another day. That day they urged me, against my repeated protests, to criticise the Americans. I am afraid they did not relish it. It is of course always impossible to do it. What about Mother Church and the family at Chicago? I had no letters from them a long time. I would have run into town to see you before this, had I time. I am kept pretty busy the whole day. Then there is the fear of not meeting you.

If you have time, you may write, and I shall snatch the first opportunity to see you. My time of course is always in the afternoon, so long I shall be here, that is until the 27th or 28th of this month; I will have to be very busy in the morning till 12 or 1.

With my love to you all,

Ever your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 37

XXXVI Sister

XXXVI

To Miss Mary Hale

CAMBRIDGE,

December, 1894.

DEAR SISTER,

I received your letter just now. If it is not against the rules of your society, why do you not come to see Mrs. Ole Bull, Miss Farmer, and Mrs. Adams the physical culturist from Chicago?

Any day you will find them there.

Yours ever affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 38

XXXVII Sister

XXXVII

To Miss Mary Hale

CAMBRIDGE,

21st December, 1894.

DEAR SISTER,

I had not anything from you since your last. I am going away next Tuesday to New York. You must have received Mrs. Bull's letter in the meanwhile. If you cannot accept it, I shall be very glad to come over any day — I have time now as the lectures are at an end, except Sunday next.

Yours ever affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 39

XXXVIII Miss Bell

XXXVIII

To Miss Isabelle McKindley

528, 5TH AVE., NEW YORK,

24th Jan., 1895.

DEAR MISS BELL,

I hope you are well. . . .

My last lecture was not very much appreciated by the men but awfully so by vemen. You know this Brooklyn is the centre of anti-women's rights movements; and when I told them that women deserve and are fit for everything, they did not like it of course. Never mind, the women were in ecstasies.

I have got again a little cold. I am going to the Guernseys. I have got a room downtown also where I will go several hours to hold my classes etc. Mother Church must be all right by this time, and you are all enjoying this nice weather. Give Mrs. Adams mountain high love and regard from me when you see her next.

Send my letters as usual to the Guernseys.

With love for all,

Ever your aff. bro.,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 40

XXXIX Friend

XXXIX

To Mr. Francis Leggett

NEW YORK,

10th April, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND,

It is impossible to express my gratitude for your kindly inviting me to your country seat [Ridgely]. I am involved in a mistake now and find it impossible for me to come tomorrow. Tomorrow I have a class at Miss Andrews' of 40 W. 9th Street. As I was given to understand by Miss MacLeod that that class could be postponed, I was only too glad at the prospect of joining the company tomorrow. But I find that Miss MacLeod was mistaken and Miss Andrews came to tell me that she could not by any means stop the class tomorrow or even give notice to the members, who are about 50 or 60 in number.

In view of this I sincerely regret my inability and hope that Miss MacLeod and Mrs. Sturges will understand that it is an unavoidable circumstance, and not the will, that stands in the way of my taking advantage of your kind invitation.

I shall only be too glad to come day after tomorrow, or any other day this week, as it suits you.

Ever sincerely yours,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 41

XL Friend

XL

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

54 W. 33RD STREET,

NEW YORK,

24th April, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND,

I am perfectly aware that although some truth underlies the mass of mystical thought which has burst upon the Western world of late, it is for the most part full of motives, unworthy, or insane. For this reason, I have never had anything to do with these phases of religion, either in India or elsewhere, and mystics as a class are not very favourable to me. . . .

I quite agree with you that only the Advaita philosophy can save mankind, whether in East or West, from “devil worship” and kindred superstitions, giving tone and strength to the very nature of man. India herself requires this, quite as much or even more than the West. Yet it is hard uphill work, for we have first to create a taste, then teach, and lastly proceed to build up the whole fabric.

Perfect sincerity, holiness, gigantic intellect, and an all-conquering will. Let only a handful of men work with these, and the whole world will be revolutionised. I did a good deal of platform work in this country last year, and received plenty of applause, but found that I was only working for myself. It is the patient upbuilding of character, the intense struggle to realise the truth, which alone will tell in the future of humanity. So this year I am hoping to work along this line — training up to practical Advaita realisation a small band of men and women. I do not know how far I shall succeed. The West is the field for work if a man wants to benefit humanity, rather than his own particular sect or country. I agree perfectly as to your idea of a magazine. But I have no business capacity at all to do these things. I can teach and preach, and sometimes write. But I have intense faith in Truth. The

Lord will send help and hands to work with me. Only let me be perfectly pure, perfectly sincere, and perfectly unselfish.

“Truth alone triumphs, not untruth; through truth alone stretches the way to the Lord” (Atharva-Veda). He who gives up the little self for the world will find the whole universe his. . . . I am very uncertain about coming to England. I know no one there, and here I am doing some work. The Lord will guide, in His own time.

Chapter 42

XLI Friend

XLI

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

19 W. 38TH ST.,

NEW YORK

DEAR FRIEND,

I received your last duly, and as I had a previous arrangement to come to Europe by the end of this August, I take your invitation as a Divine Call.

“Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone lies the way to Devayâna (the way to the gods).” Those who think that a little sugar-coating of untruth helps the spread of truth are mistaken and will find in the long run that a single drop of poison poisons the whole mass. . . . The man who is pure, and who dares, does all things. May the Lord ever protect you from illusion and delusion! I am ever ready to work with you, and the Lord will send us friends by the hundred, if only we be our own friends first. “The Atman alone is the friend of the Atman.”

Europe has always been the source of social, and Asia of spiritual power; and the whole history of the world is the tale of the varying combinations of those two powers. Slowly a new leaf is being turned in the story of humanity. The signs of this are everywhere. Hundreds of new plans will be created and destroyed. Only the fit will survive. And what but the true and the good is the fit?

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 43

XLII Babies

XLII

To the Hale Sisters

NEW YORK,

5th May, 1895.

DEAR BABIES,

What I expected has come. I always thought that although Prof. Max Muller in all his writings on the Hindu religion adds in the last a derogatory remark, he must see the whole truth in the long run. As soon as you can, get a copy of his last book Vedantism; there you will find him swallowing the whole of it — reincarnation and all.

Of course, you will not find it difficult at all to understand, as it is only a part of what I have been telling you all this time.

Many points you will find smack of my paper in Chicago.

I am glad now the old man has seen the truth, because that is the only way to have religion in the face of modern research and science.

Hope you are enjoying Todd's Rajasthan.

With all love, your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. When is Miss Mary coming to Boston? — V.

Chapter 44

XLIII Alasinga

XLIII

C/O MISS PHILIPS,

19 WEST 38TH STREET,

NEW YORK

28th May, 1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

Herewith I send a hundred dollars or £20-8-7 in English money. Hope this will go just a little in starting your paper. Hoping to do more by and by.

I remain, ever yours, with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Reply immediately to it C/o the above address. New York will be my headquarters henceforth.

I have succeeded in doing something in this country at last.

V.

Chapter 45

XLIV Joe

XLIV

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

21 W. 34TH ST.,

NEW YORK,

June, 1895.

DEAR JOE,

Experiences are gathering a bit thick round you. I am sure they will lift many a veil more.

Mr. Leggett told me of your phonograph. I told him to get a few cylinders — I talk in them through somebody's phonograph and send them to Joe — to which he replied that he could buy one, because "I always do what Joe asks me to do." I am glad there is so much of hidden poetry in his nature.

I am going today to live with the Guernseys as the doctor wants to watch me and cure me. . . . Doctor Guernsey, after examining other things, was feeling my pulse, when suddenly Landsberg (whom they had forbidden the house) got in and retreated immediately after seeing me. Dr. Guernsey burst out laughing and declared he would have paid that man for coming just then, for he was then sure of his diagnosis of my case. The pulse before was so regular, but just at the sight of Landsberg it almost stopped from emotion. It is sure only a case of nervousness. He also advises me strongly to go on with Doctor Helmer's treatment. He thinks Helmer will do me a world of good, and that is what I need now. Is not he broad?

I expect to see "the sacred cow" today in town. I will be in New York a few days more. Helmer wants me to take three treatments a week for four weeks, then two a week for four more, and I will be all right. In case I go to Boston, he recommends me to a very good ostad (expert) there whom he would advise on the matter.

I said a few kind words to Landsberg and went upstairs to Mother Guernsey to save poor Landsberg from embarrassment.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 46

XLV Sister

XLV

To Miss Mary Hale

(Written on birch bark)

PERCY N. H.,

17 June, 1895.

DEAR SISTER,

Going tomorrow to the Thousand Islands care Miss Dutcher's, Thousand Island Park, N.Y. Where are you now? Where will you all be in summer? I have a chance of going to Europe in August, I will come to see you before I go. So write to me. Also I expect books and letters from India. Kindly send them care Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38th Street, N.Y. This is the bark in which all holy writings are written in India. So I write Sanskrit: May the husband of Uma (Shiva) protect you always.

May you all be blessed ever and ever.

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 47

XLVI Sister

XLVI

Atlantic and are at last coming.

To Miss Mary Hale

54 W. 33RD STREET,

NEW YORK,

22nd June, 1895.

DEAR SISTER,

The letters from India and the parcel of books reached me safe. I am so happy to know of Mr. Sam's arrival. I am sure he is "bewareing of the vidders" nicely. I met a friend of Mr. Sam's one day on the street. He is an Englishman with a name ending in "ni". He was very nice. He said he was living in the same house with Sam somewhere in Ohio.

I am going on pretty nearly in the same old fashion. Talking when I can and silent when forced to be. I do not know whether I will go to Greenacre this summer. I saw Miss Farmer the other day. She was in a hurry to go away, so I had but very little talk with her. She is a noble, noble lady.

How are you going on with your Christian Science lessons? I hope you will go to Greenacre. There you will find quite a number of them and also the Spiritualists, table turnings, palmists, astrologers, etc., etc. You will get all the "cures" and all the "isms" presided over by Miss Farmer.

Landsberg has gone away to live in some other place, so I am left alone. I am living mostly on nuts and fruits and milk, and find it very nice and healthy too. I hope to lose about 30 to 40 lbs. this summer. That will be all right for my size. I am afraid I have forgotten all about Mrs. Adam's lessons in walking. I will have to renew them when she comes again to N.Y. Gandhi has gone to England en route to India from Boston, I suppose.

I would like to know about his "chaperon" Mrs. Howard and her present bereaved state. I am very glad to hear that the rugs did not go down to the bottom of the

This year I could hardly keep my head up, and I did not go about lecturing. The three great commentaries on the Vedanta philosophy belonging to the three great sects of dualists, qualified dualists, and monists are being sent to me from India. Hope they will arrive safe. Then I will have an intellectual feast indeed. I intend to write a book this summer on the Vedanta philosophy. This world will always be a mixture of good and evil, of happiness and misery; this wheel will ever go up and come down; dissolution and resolution is the inevitable law. Blessed are those who struggle to go beyond. Well, I am glad all the babies are doing well but sorry there was no "catch" even this winter, and every winter the chances are dwindling down. Here near my lodgings is the Waldorf-Hotel, the rendezvous of lots of titled but penniless Europeans on show for "Yankee" heiresses to buy. You may have any selection here, the stock is so full and varied. There is the man who talks no English; there are others who lisp a few words which no one can understand; and others are there who talk nice English, but their chance is not so great as that of the dumb ones — the girls do not think them enough foreign who talk plain English fluently.

I read somewhere in a funny book that an American vessel was being foundered in the sea; the men were desperate and as a last solace wanted some religious service being done. There was "Uncle Josh" on board who was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. They all began to entreat, "Do something religious, Uncle Josh! We are all going to die." Uncle Joseph took his hat in his hand and took up a collection on the spot!

That is all of religion he knew. And that is more or less characteristic of the majority of such people. Collections are about all the religion they know or will ever know. Lord bless them. Good-bye for present. I am going to eat something; I feel very hungry.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 48

XLVII Sister

XLVII

To Miss Mary Hale

C/O MISS DUTCHER,

THOUSAND ISLAND PARK, N.Y.

26th June, 1895.

DEAR SISTER,

Many thanks for the Indian mail. It brought a good deal of good news. You are enjoying by this time, I hope, the articles by Prof. Max Müller on the "Immortality of the Soul" which I sent to Mother Church. The old man has taken in Vedanta, bones and all, and has boldly come out. I am so glad to know the arrival of the rugs. Was there any duty to pay? If so I will pay that, I insist on it. There will come another big packet from the Raja of Khetri containing some shawls and brocades and nick-nacks. I want to present them to different friends. But they are not going to arrive before some months, I am sure.

I am asked again and again, as you will find in the letters from India, to go over. They are getting desperate. Now if I go to Europe, I will go as the guest of Mr. Francis Leggett of N.Y. He will travel all over Germany, England, France, and Switzerland for six weeks. From there I shall go to India, or I may return to America. I have a seed planted here and wish it to grow. This winter's work in N.Y. was splendid, and it may die if I suddenly go over to India, so I am not sure about going to India soon.

Nothing noticeable has happened during this visit to the Thousand Islands. The scenery is very beautiful and I have some of my friends here with me to talk about God and soul ad libitum. I am eating fruits and drinking milk and so forth, and studying huge Sanskrit books on Vedanta which they have kindly sent me from India.

If I come to Chicago I cannot come at least within six weeks or more. Baby needn't alter any of her plans for

me. I will see you all somehow or other before I go.

You fussed so much over my reply to Madras, but it has produced a tremendous effect there. A late speech by the President of the Madras Christian College, Mr. Miller, embodies a large amount of my ideas and declares that the West is in need of Hindu ideas of God and man and calls upon the young men to go and preach to the West. This has created quite a furore of course amongst the Missions. What you allude to as being published in the Arena I did not see a bit of it. The women did not make any fuss over me at all in New York. Your friend must have drawn on his imagination. They were not of the "bossing" type at all. I hope Father Pope will go to Europe and Mother Church too. Travelling is the best thing in life. I am afraid I shall die if made to stick to one place for a long time. Nothing like a nomadic life!

The more the shades around deepen, the more the ends approach and the more one understands the true meaning of life, that it is a dream; and we begin to understand the failure of everyone to grasp it, for they only attempted to get meaning out of the meaningless. To get reality out of a dream is boyish enthusiasm. "Everything is evanescent, everything is changeful" — knowing this, the sage gives up both pleasure and pain and becomes a witness of this panorama (the universe) without attaching himself to anything.

"They indeed have conquered Heaven even in this life whose mind has become fixed in sameness. God is pure and same to all, therefore they are said to be in God" (Gita, V.19). Desire, ignorance, and inequality — this is the trinity of bondage.

Denial of the will to live, knowledge, and same-sightedness is the trinity of liberation.

Freedom is the goal of the universe.

"Nor love nor hate nor pleasure nor pain nor death nor life nor religion nor irreligion: not this, not this, not this."

Yours ever,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 49

XLVIII Sister

XLVIII

To Miss Mary Hale

C/O MISS DUTCHER,

THOUSAND ISLAND PARK, N.Y.

26th June, 1895.

DEAR SISTER,

Many thanks for the Indian mail. I cannot express in words my gratitude to you. As you have already read in Max Müller's article on Immortality I sent Mother Church, that he thinks that those we love in this life we must have loved in the past, so it seems I must have belonged to the Holy Family in some past life. I am expecting some books from India. I hope they have arrived. If so, will you kindly send them over here? If any postage is due I shall send it as soon as I get intimation. You did not write about the duty on the rugs; there will be another big packet from Khetri containing carpets and shawls and some brocades and other nick-nacks. I have written them to get the duty paid there if it is possible through the American Consul in Bombay. If not I shall have to pay it here. I do not think they will arrive for some months yet. I am anxious about the books. Kindly send them as soon as they arrive.

My love to Mother and Father Pope and all the sisters. I am enjoying this place immensely. Very little eating and good deal of thinking and talking and study. A wonderful calmness is coming over my soul. Every day I feel I have no duty to do; I am always in eternal rest and peace. It is He that works. We are only the instruments. Blessed be His name! The threefold bondage of lust and gold and fame is, as it were, fallen from me for the time being, and once more, even here, I feel what sometimes I felt in India, "From me all difference has fallen, all right or wrong, all delusion and ignorance has vanished, I am walking in the path beyond the qualities." What law I obey, what disobey? From that height the universe looks like a mud-puddle. Hari Om Tat Sat. He exists; nothing

else does. I in Thee and Thou in me. Be Thou Lord my eternal refuge! Peace, Peace, Peace! Ever with love and blessings,

Your brother,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 50

IL Friend

IL

May the Sat in you be always your infallible guide! May He speedily attain to freedom and help others to attain it!

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

Ever yours in the Sat,

VIVEKANANDA.

19 WEST 38TH ST., NEW YORK,

2nd August, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND,

Your kind note received today. I am going to Paris first with a friend and start for Europe on the 17th of August. I will however remain in Paris only a week to see my friend married, and then I go over to London.

Your advice about an organisation was very good indeed. And I am trying to act on that line.

I have many strong friends here, but unfortunately they are most of them poor. So the work here must be slow. Moreover it requires a few months more of work in New York to carry it to some visible shape: as such I will have to return to New York early this winter, and in summer I will return to London again. So far as I see now I can stay only a few weeks in London. But if the Lord wills, that small time may prove to be the beginning of great things. From Paris I will inform you by wire when I arrive in England.

Some Theosophists came to my classes in New York, but as soon as human beings perceive the glory of the Vedanta, all abracadabras fall off of themselves. This has been my uniform experience. Whenever mankind attains a higher vision, the lower vision disappears of itself. Multitude counts for nothing. A few heart-whole, sincere, and energetic men can do more in a year than a mob in a century. If there is heat in one body, then those others that come near it must catch it. This is the law. So success is ours, so long as we keep up the heat, the spirit of truth, sincerity, and love. My own life has been a very chequered one, but I have always found the eternal words verified: "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone lies the way to God."

Chapter 51

L Friend

L

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

19, WEST 38TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

9th August, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND,

. . . It is only just that I should try to give you a little of my views. I fully believe that there are periodic ferments of religion in human society, and that such a period is now sweeping over the educated world. While each ferment, moreover, appears broken into various little bubbles, these are all eventually similar, showing the cause or causes behind them to be the same. That religious ferment which at present is every day gaining a greater hold over thinking men, has this characteristic that all the little thought-whirlpools into which it has broken itself declare one single aim — a vision and a search after the Unity of Being. On planes physical, ethical, and spiritual, an ever-broadening generalisation — leading up to a concept of Unity Eternal — is in the air; and this being so, all the movements of the time may be taken to represent, knowingly or unknowingly, the noblest philosophy of the unity man ever had — the Advaita Vedanta.

Again, it has always been observed that as a result of the struggles of the various fragments of thought in a given epoch, one bubble survives. The rest only arise to melt into it and form a single great wave, which sweeps over society with irresistible force.

In India, America, and England (the countries I happen to know about) hundreds of these are struggling at the present moment. In India, dualistic formulae are already on the wane, the Advaita alone holds the field in force. In America, many movements are struggling for the mastery. All these represent Advaita thought more or less, and that series, which is spreading most rapidly, approaches nearer to it than any of the others. Now if

anything was ever clear to me, it is that one of these must survive, swallowing up all the rest, to be the power of the future. Which is it to be?

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive, and what makes fit to survive but character? Advaita will be the future religion of thinking humanity. No doubt of that. And of all the sects, they alone shall gain the day who are able to show most character in their lives, no matter how far they may be.

Let me tell you a little personal experience. When my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men. Against us were a hundred powerful organisations, struggling hard to nip us in the bud. But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift, the desire, and the lifelong struggle not to talk alone, but to live the life. And today all India knows and reverences the Master, and the truths he taught are spreading like wild fire. Ten years ago I could not get a hundred persons together to celebrate his birthday anniversary. Last year there were fifty thousand.

Neither numbers nor powers nor wealth nor learning nor eloquence nor anything else will prevail, but purity, living the life, in one word, anubhuti, realisation. Let there be a dozen such lion-souls in each country, lions who have broken their own bonds, who have touched the Infinite, whose whole soul is gone to Brahman, who care neither for wealth nor power nor fame, and these will be enough to shake the world.

Here lies the secret. Says Patanjali, the father of Yoga, "When a man rejects all the superhuman powers, then he attains to the cloud of virtue." He sees God. He becomes God and helps others to become the same. This is all I have to preach. Doctrines have been expounded enough. There are books by the million. Oh, for an ounce of practice!

As to societies and organisations, these will come of themselves. Can there be jealousy where there is nothing to be jealous of? The names of those who will wish to injure us will be legion. But is not that the surest sign of

our having the truth? The more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found expression. I have been driven and worshipped by princes. I have been slandered by priests and laymen alike. But what of it? Bless them all! They are my very Self, and have they not helped me by acting as a spring-board from which my energy could take higher and higher flights?

. . . I have discovered one great secret — I have nothing to fear from talkers of religion. And the great ones who realise — they become enemies to none! Let talkers talk! They know no better! Let them have their fill of name and fame and money and woman. Hold we on to realisation, to being Brahman, to becoming Brahman. Let us hold on to truth unto death, and from life to life. Let us not pay the least attention to what others say, and if, after a lifetime's effort, one soul, only one, can break the fetters of the world and be free, we have done our work. Hari Om!

. . . One word more. Doubtless I do love India. But every day my sight grows clearer. What is India, or England, or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN. He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree?

There is but one basis of well-being, social, political or spiritual — to know that I and my brother are one. This is true for all countries and all people. And Westerners, let me say, will realise it more quickly than Orientals, who have almost exhausted themselves in formulating the idea and producing a few cases of individual realisation.

Let us work without desire for name or fame or rule over others. Let us be free from the triple bonds of lust, greed of gain, and anger. And this truth is with us!

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 52

LI Friend

LI

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

C/O MISS MACLEOD,

HOTEL HOLLANDE,

RUE DE LA PAIX,

PARIS,

5th September, 1895.

DEAR AND BLESSED FRIEND,

It is useless to express my gratitude for your kindness; it is too great for expression. . . .

I have a cordial invitation from Miss Müller, and as her place is very near to yours, I think it will be nice to come to her place first for a day or two and then to come over to you.

My body was very ill for a few days, which caused this delay in writing you.

Hoping soon for the privilege of mingling hearts and heads together.

I remain, ever yours in love, and fellowship in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 53

LII Joe Joe

LII

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,

READING, ENGLAND,

September, 1895.

DEAR JOE JOE,

A thousand pardons for not promptly writing to you. I arrived safe in London, found my friend, and am all right in his home. It is beautiful. His wife is surely an angel, and his life is full of India. He has been years there — mixing with the Sannyasins, eating their food, etc., etc.; so you see I am very happy. I found already several retired Generals from India; they were very civil and polite to me. That wonderful knowledge of the Americans that identify every black man with the negro is entirely absent here, and nobody even stares at me in the street.

I am very much more at home here than anywhere out of India. The English people know us, we know them. The standard of education and civilisation is very high here — that makes a great change, so does the education of many generations.

Have the Turtle-doves returned? The Lord bless them and theirs for ever and ever. How are the babies — Alberta and Holister? Give them my oceans of love and know it yourself.

My friend being a Sanskrit scholar, we are busy working on the great commentaries of Shankara etc. Nothing but philosophy and religion here, Joe Joe. I am going to try to get up classes in October in London.

Ever affectionately with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 54

LIII Kali

LIII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Abhedananda

**C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,
HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,
READING, ENGLAND,**

October, 1895.

DEAR KALI,

You may have got my earlier letter. At present send all letters to me at the above address. Mr. Sturdy is known to Târakdâ. He has brought me to his place, and we are both trying to create a stir in England. I shall this year leave again in November for America. So I require a man well-up in Sanskrit and English, particularly the latter language — either Shashi or you or Sâradâ. Now, if you have completely recovered, very well, you come; otherwise send Sharat. The work is to teach the devotees I shall be leaving here, to make them study the Vedanta, to do a little translation work into English, and to deliver occasional lectures. “Work is apt to cloud spiritual vision.” X__ is very eager to come, but unless the foundation is strongly laid, there is every likelihood of everything toppling down. I am sending you a cheque along with this letter. Buy clothes and other necessary things — whoever comes. I am sending the cheque in the name of Master Mahashay Mahendra Babu. Gangâdhar’s Tibetan choga is in the Math; get the tailor to make a similar choga of gerua colour. See that the collar is a little high, that is, the throat and neck should be covered. . . . Above all, you must have a woolen overcoat, for it is very cold. If you do not put on an overcoat on the ship, you will suffer much. . . . I am sending a second class ticket, as there is not much difference between a first class and a second class berth. . . . If it is decided to send Shashi then inform the purser of the ship beforehand to provide him with vegetarian diet.

Go to Bombay and see Messrs. King, King & Co., Fort, Bombay, and tell them that you are Mr. Sturdy’s man. They will then give you a ticket to England. A letter is being sent from here to the Company with instructions. I am writing to the Maharaja of Khetri to instruct his Bombay agent to look after the booking of your passage. If this sum of Rs. 150/- is not sufficient for your outfit, get the remainder from Rakhhal. I shall send him the amount afterwards. Keep another Rs. 50/- for pocket expenses — take it from Rakhhal; I shall pay back later. I have not up to now got any acknowledgement of the amount I sent to Chuni Babu. Start as quickly as possible. Inform Mahendra Babu that he is my Calcutta agent. Tell him to send a letter to Mr. Sturdy by next mail informing him that he is ready to look after all business transactions in Calcutta on your behalf. In effect, Mr. Sturdy is my secretary in England, Mahendra Babu in Calcutta, and Alasinga in Madras. Send this information to Madras also. Can any work be done unless all of us gird up our loins? And be up and doing! “Fortune favours the brave and energetic.” Don’t look back — forward, infinite energy, infinite enthusiasm, infinite daring, and infinite patience — then alone can great deeds be accomplished. We must set the whole world afire.

Now on the day the steamer is due to start, write a letter to Mr. Sturdy informing him by which steamer you are leaving for England. Otherwise there is some likelihood of your having difficulties when you reach London. Take the ship that comes directly to London, for even if it takes a few days longer on the voyage, the fares are less. At the moment our purse is lean. In time we shall send preachers in large numbers to all the quarters of the globe.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Write at once to the Maharaja of Khetri, that you are going to Bombay and that you will be glad if his agent attends to the booking of your passage and sees you off the board.

Keep my address with you written in a pocket-book, lest there should be difficulties afterwards.

Chapter 55

LIV Joe Joe

LIV

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,

READING, ENGLAND,

October, 1895.

DEAR JOE JOE,

I was so glad to hear from you. I was afraid you had forgotten me.

I am going to have a few lectures in and about London. One of them, a public one, will be at Princes' Hall on the 22nd at 8-30.

Come over and try to form a class. I have as yet done almost nothing here. Of course, breaking the ice is slow always. It took me two years in America to work up that little which we had in New York.

With love for all,

Yours ever,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 56

LV Joe Joe

LV

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,

READING, ENGLAND,

20th October, 1895.

DEAR JOE JOE,

This note is to welcome the Leggetts to London. This being in a sense my native country, I send you my welcome first, I shall receive your welcome next Tuesday the 22nd at Princes' Hall half past eight p.m.

I am so busy till Tuesday, I am afraid, I shall not be able to run in to see you. I, however, shall come to see you any day after that. Possibly I may come on Tuesday.

With everlasting love and blessings,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 57

LVI Joe Joe

LVI

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

80 OAKLEY STREET,

CHELSEA,

31st October, 1895.

DEAR JOE JOE,

I shall be only too glad to come to lunch on Friday and see Mr. Coit at the Albemarle.

Two American ladies, mother and daughter, living in London came in to the class last night — Mrs. and Miss Netter. They were very sympathetic of course. The class there at Mr. Chamier's is finished. I shall begin at my lodgings from Saturday night next. I expect to have a pretty good-sized room or two for my classes. I have been also invited to Moncure Conways's Ethical Society where I speak on the 10th. I shall have a lecture in the Balboa Society next Tuesday. The Lord will help. I am not sure whether I can go up with you on Saturday. You will have great fun in the country anyway, and Mr. and Mrs. Sturdy are such nice people.

With love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Kindly order some vegetables for me. I don't care much for rice — bread will do as well. I have become an awful vegetarian now.

V.

Chapter 58

LVII Friend

LVII

80 OAKLEY ST., CHELSEA,

31st October, 1895 (5 p.m.).

DEAR FRIEND (Mr. E. T. Sturdy),

Just now two young gentlemen, Mr. Silverlock and his friend, left. Miss Müller also came this afternoon and left just when these gentlemen came in.

One is an Engineer and the other is in the grain trade. They have read a good deal of modern philosophy and science and have been much struck by the similarity with the latest conclusions of both with the ancient Hindu thought. They are very fine, intelligent, and educated men. One has given up the Church, the other asked me whether he should or not. Now, two things struck me after this interview. First, we must hurry the book through. We will touch a class thereby who are philosophically religious without the least mystery-mongering. Second, both of them want to know the rituals of my creed! This opened my eyes. The world in general must have some form. In fact, in the ordinary sense religion is philosophy concretised through rituals and symbols.

It is absolutely necessary to form some ritual and have a Church. That is to say, we must fix on some ritual as fast as we can. If you can come Saturday morning or sooner, we shall go to the Asiatic Society library or you can procure for me a book which is called Hemâdri Kosha, from which we can get what we want, and kindly bring the Upanishads. We will fix something grand, from birth to death of a man. A mere loose system of philosophy gets no hold on mankind.

If we can get it through, before we have finished the classes, and publish it by publicly holding a service or two under it, it will go on. They want to form a congregation, and they want ritual; that is one of the causes why — will never have a hold on Western people.

The Ethical Society has sent me another letter thanking me for the acceptance of this offer. Also a copy of their

forms. They want me to bring with me a book from which to read for ten minutes. Will you bring the Gita (translation) and the Buddhist Jâtaka (translation) with you?

I would not do anything in this matter without seeing you first.

Yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 59

LVIII Friend

LVIII

80 OAKLEY STREET,

CHELSEA,

1st November, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND (Mr. E. T. Sturdy),

The tickets of the Balleren (?) Society are 35 in number.

The subject is "Indian Philosophy and Western Society".
Chairman blank.

As you did not ask me to send them over, I do not. I got
your letters properly.

Yours in the Sat,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 60

LIX Friend

LIX

2nd November, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND (Mr. E. T. Sturdy),

I think you are right; we shall work on our own lines and let things grow.

I send you the note of the lecture.

I shall come on Sunday if nothing extraordinary prevents me.

Yours with love,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 61

LX Blessed and Beloved

LX

R.M.S. "BRITANNIC"

BLESSED AND BELOVED (Mr. E. T. Sturdy),

So far the journey has been very beautiful. The purser has been very kind to me and gave me a cabin to myself. The only difficulty is the food — meat, meat, meat. Today they have promised to give me some vegetables.

We are standing at anchor now. The fog is too thick to allow the ship to proceed. So I take this opportunity to write a few letters.

It is a queer fog almost impenetrable though the sun is shining bright and cheerful. Kiss baby for me; and with love and blessings for you and Mrs. Sturdy,

I remain, Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Kindly convey my love to Miss Müller. I left the night shirt at Avenue Road. So I shall have to do without any until the trunk is brought out of the hold.

Chapter 62

LXI Friend

LXI

228 WEST 39TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

8th December, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND (Mr. E. T. Sturdy),

After ten days of a most tedious and rough voyage I safely arrived in New York. My friends had already engaged some rooms at the above where I am living now and intend to hold classes ere long. In the meanwhile the Theosophists have been alarmed very much and are trying their best to hurt me; but they and their followers are of no consequence whatever.

I went to see Mrs. Leggett and other friends, and they are as kind and enthusiastic as ever.

Did you hear anything from India about the coming Sannyasin?

I will write later fuller particulars of the work here.

Kindly convey my best love to Miss Müller and to Mrs. Sturdy and all the other friends and kiss baby for me.

Yours ever in the Sat,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 63

LXII Joe Joe

LXII

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

228 WEST 39TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

8th December, 1895.

DEAR JOE JOE,

After 10 days of the most disastrous voyage I ever had I arrived in New York. I was so so sick for days together.

After the clean and beautiful cities of Europe, New York appears very dirty and miserable. I am going to begin work next Monday. Your bundles have been safely delivered to the heavenly pair, as Alberta calls them. They are as usual very kind. Saw Mrs. and Mr. Salomon and other friends. By chance met Mrs. Peak at Mrs. Guernsey's but yet have no news of Mrs. Rothinburger. Going with the birds of paradise to Ridgely this Christmas. Wish ever so much you were there.

Had you a nice visit with Lady Isabelle? Kindly give my love to all our friends and know oceans yourself.

Excuse this short letter. I shall write bigger ones by the next.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 64

LXIII Sturdy

LXIII

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

NEW YORK,

1895.

The work here is going on splendidly. I have been working incessantly at two classes a day since my arrival. Tomorrow I go out of town with Mr. Leggett for a week's holiday. Did you know Madame Antoinette Sterling, one of your greatest singers? She is very much interested in the work.

I have made over all the secular part of the work to a committee and am free from all that botheration. I have no aptitude for organising. It nearly breaks me to pieces.

. . . What about the Nârada-Sutra? There will be a good sale of the book here, I am sure. I have now taken up the Yoga-Sutras and take them up one by one and go through all the commentators along with them. These talks are all taken down, and when completed will form the fullest annotated translation of Patanjali in English. Of course it will be rather a big work.

At Trübner's I think there is an edition of Kurma Purâna. The commentator, Vijnâna Bhikshu, is continually quoting from that book. I have never seen the book myself. Will you kindly find time to go and see if in it there are some chapters on Yoga? If so, will you kindly send me a copy? Also of the Hatha-Yoga-Pradipikâ, Shiva-Samhitâ, and any other book on Yoga? The originals of course. I shall send you the money for them as soon as they arrive. Also a copy of Sâmkhya-Kârikâ of Ishwara Krishna by John Davies. Just now your letter reached along with Indian letters. The one man who is ready is ill. The others say that they cannot come over on the spur of the moment. So far it seems unlucky. I am sorry they could not come. What can be done? Things go slow in India!

Ramanuja's theory is that the bound soul or Jiva has its perfections involved, entered, into itself. When this

perfection again evolves, it becomes free. The Advaitin declares both these to take place only in show; there was neither involution nor evolution. Both processes were Maya, or apparent only.

In the first place, the soul is not essentially a knowing being. Sachchidânanda is only an approximate definition, and Neti Neti is the essential definition. Schopenhauer caught this idea of willing from the Buddhists. We have it also in Vâsanâ or Trishnâ, Pali tanhâ. We also admit that it is the cause of all manifestation which are, in their turn, its effects. But, being a cause, it must be a combination of the Absolute and Maya. Even knowledge, being a compound, cannot be the Absolute itself, but it is the nearest approach to it, and higher than Vasana, conscious or unconscious. The Absolute first becomes the mixture of knowledge, then, in the second degree, that of will. If it be said that plants have no consciousness, that they are at best only unconscious wills, the answer is that even the unconscious plant-will is a manifestation of the consciousness, not of the plant, but of the cosmos, the Mahat of the Sankhya Philosophy. The Buddhist analysis of everything into will is imperfect, firstly, because will is itself a compound, and secondly, because consciousness or knowledge which is a compound of the first degree, precedes it. Knowledge is action. First action, then reaction. When the mind perceives, then, as the reaction, it wills. The will is in the mind. So it is absurd to say that will is the last analysis. Deussen is playing into the hands of the Darwinists.

But evolution must be brought in accordance with the more exact science of Physics, which can demonstrate that every evolution must be preceded by an involution. This being so, the evolution of the Vasana or will must be preceded by the involution of the Mahat or cosmic consciousness. (See also Vol VIII [6] Sayings and Utterances & Vol V [7] Letter to Mr. Sturdy.) There is no willing without knowing. How can we desire unless we know the object of desire?

The apparent difficulty vanishes as soon as you divide knowledge also into subconscious and conscious. And why not? If will can be so treated, why not its father?

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 65

LXIV Blessed and Beloved

LXIV

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

228 WEST 39TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

16th December, 1895.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

All your letters reached by one mail today. Miss Müller also writes me one. She has read in the Indian Mirror that Swami Krishnananda is coming over to England. If that is so, he is the strongest man that I can get.

The classes I had here were six in the week, besides a question class. The general attendance varies between 70 to 120. Besides every Sunday I have a public lecture. The last month my lectures were in a small hall holding about 600. But 900 will come as a rule, 300 standing, and about 300 going off, not finding room. This week therefore I have a bigger hall, with a capacity of holding 1200 people.

There is no admission charged in these lectures, but a collection covers the rent. The newspapers have taken me up this week, and altogether I have stirred up New York considerably this year. If I could have remained here this summer and organised a summer place, the work would be going on sure foundations here. But as I intended to come over in May to England, I shall have to leave it unfinished. If, however, Krishnananda comes to England, and you find him strong and able, and if you find the work in London will not be hurt by my absence this summer, I would rather be here this summer.

Again, I am afraid my health is breaking down under constant work. I want some rest. We are so unused to these Western methods, especially the keeping to time. I will leave you to decide all these. The Brahmavâdin is going on here very satisfactorily. I have begun to write articles on Bhakti; also send them a monthly account of

the work. Miss Müller wants to come to America. I do not know whether she will or not. Some friends here are publishing my Sunday lectures. I have sent you a few copies of the first one. I shall send you next mail a few of the next two lectures, and if you like them I shall ask them to send you a number. Can you manage to get a few hundred copies sold in England? That will encourage them in publishing the subsequent ones.

Next month I go to Detroit, then to Boston, and Harvard University. Then I shall have a rest, and then I come to England, unless you think that things go on without me and with Krishnananda.

Ever yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 66

LXV Sharat

LXV

To Swami Saradananda

228 WEST 39TH STREET,
NEW YORK,

23rd December, 1895.

DEAR SHARAT,

Your letter only made me sad. I see you have lost all enthusiasm. I know all of you, your powers and your limitations. I would not have called you to any task which you are incompetent to do. The only task I would have given you was to teach elementary Sanskrit, and with the help of dictionaries and other things assist S. in his translations and teachings. I would have moulded you to it. Anyone could have done as well — only a little smattering of Sanskrit was absolutely necessary. Well, everything is for the best. If it is the Lord's work the right man for the right place will be forthcoming in the right time. None of you need feel disturbed. As for Sanyal, I don't care who takes money or not, but I have a strong hatred for child-marriage. I have suffered terribly from it, and it is the great sin for which our nation has to suffer. As such, I would hate myself if I help such a diabolical custom directly or indirectly. I wrote to you pretty plain about it, and Sanyal had no right to play a hoax upon me about his "law-suit" and his attempts to become free. I am sorry for his playing tricks on me who have never done him any harm. This is the world. What good you do goes for nothing, but if you stop doing it, then, Lord help you, you are counted as a rogue. Isn't it? Emotional natures like mine are always preyed upon by relatives and friends. This world is merciless. This world is our friend when we are its slaves and no more. This world is broad enough for me. There will always be a corner found for me somewhere. If the people of India do not like me, there will be others who do. I must set my foot to the best of my ability upon this devilish custom of child-marriage. No blame will entail on you. You keep at a safe distance if you are afraid. I am sorry,

very sorry, I cannot have any partnership with such doings as getting husbands for babies. Lord help me, I never had and never will have. Think of the case of M__ Babu! Did you ever meet a more cowardly or brutal one than that? I can kill the man who gets a husband for a baby. The upshot of the whole thing is — I want bold, daring, adventurous spirits to help me. Else I will work alone. I have a mission to fulfil. I will work it out alone. I do not care who comes or who goes. Sanyal is already done for by Samsâra. Beware, boy! That was all the advice I thought it my duty to give you. Of course, you are great folks now — my words will have no value with you. But I hope the time will come when you will see clearer, know better, and think other thoughts than you are now doing.

Good-bye! I would not bother you any more, and all blessings go with you all. I am very glad I have been of some service to you sometimes if you think so. At least I am pleased with myself for having tried my best to discharge the duties laid on me by my Guru, and well done or ill, I am glad that I tried. So good-bye. Tell Sanyal that I am not at all angry with him, but I am sorry, very sorry. It is not the money — that counts nothing — but the violation of a principle that pained me, and the trick he played on me. Good-bye to him also, and to you all. One chapter of my life is closed. Let others come in their due order. They will find me ready. You need not disturb yourselves at all about me. I want no help from any human being in any country. So good-bye! May the Lord bless you all for ever and ever!

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 67

LXVI Friend

LXVI

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

RIDGELY MANOR,

29th December, 1895.

DEAR FRIEND,

By this time the copies of the lectures must have reached you. Hope they may be of some use.

I think, in the first place, there are so many difficulties to overcome; in the second place, they think that they are fit for nothing — that is the national disease; thirdly, they are afraid to face the winter at once; the Tibet man they don't think is a very strong man to work in England. Some one will come sooner or later.

Yours in the Sat,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. My Christmas greetings to all our friends — to Mrs. and Mr. Johnson, to Lady Margesson, Mrs. Clark, Miss Hawes, Miss Müller, Miss Steel, and all the rest. — V.

Kiss baby for me and bless him. My greetings to Mrs. Sturdy. We will work. “Wah guru ki fateh.” — V.

Chapter 68

LXVII Sister

LXVII

To Miss Mary Hale

NEW YORK,

6th January, 1896.

DEAR SISTER,

Many thanks for your kind New Year's greetings. I am glad to learn you enjoyed your six weeks with the Esq. although they be only golf playing. I have been in the midst of the genuine article in England. The English people received me with open arms, and I have very much toned down my ideas about the English race. First of all, I found that those fellows as Lund etc. who came over from England to attack me were nowhere. Their existence is simply ignored by the English people. None but a person belonging to the English Church is thought to be genteel. Again, some of the best men of England belonging to the English Church and some of the highest in position and fame became my truest friends. This was quite another sort of experience from what I met in America, was it not?

The English people laughed and laughed when I told them about my experience with the Presbyterians and other fanatics here and my reception in hotels etc. I also found at once the difference in culture and breeding between the two countries and came to understand why American girls go in shoals to be married to Europeans. Everyone was kind to me there, and I have left many noble friends of both sexes anxiously waiting my return in the spring.

As to my work there, the Vedantic thought has already permeated the higher classes of England. Many people of education and rank, and amongst them not a few clergymen, told me that the conquest of Rome by Greece was being re-enacted in England.

There are two sorts of Englishmen who have lived in India. One consisting of those who hate everything Indian, but they are uneducated. The other, to whom

India is the holy land, its very air is holy. And they try to out-Herod Herod in their Hinduism. They are awful vegetarians, and they want to form a caste in England. Of course, the majority of the English people are firm believers in caste. I had eight classes a week apart from public lectures, and they were so crowded that a good many people, even ladies of high rank, sat on the floor and did not think anything of it. In England I find strong-minded men and women to take up the work and carry it forward with the peculiar English grip and energy. This year my work in New York is going on splendidly. Mr. Leggett is a very rich man of New York and very much interested in me. The New Yorker has more steadiness than any other people in this country, so I have determined to make my centre here. In this country my teachings are thought to be queer by the "Methodist" and "Presbyterian" aristocracy. In England it is the highest philosophy to the English Church aristocracy.

Moreover those talks and gossips, so characteristic of the American woman, are almost unknown in England. The English woman is slow; but when she works up to an idea, she will have a hold on it sure; and they are regularly carrying on my work there and sending every week a report — think of that! Here is I go away for a week, everything falls to pieces. My love to all — to Sam and to yourself. May the Lord bless you ever and ever!

Your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 69

LXVIII Blessed and Beloved

LXVIII

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

228 WEST 39TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

16th January, 1896.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

Many many thanks for the books. The Sankhya Karika is a very good book, and the Kurma Purana, though I do not find in it all expected, has a few verses on Yoga. The words dropped in my last letter were Yoga-Sutra, which I am translating with notes from various authorities. I want to incorporate the chapter in Kurma Purana in my notes. I have very enthusiastic accounts of your classes from Miss MacLeod. Mr. Galsworthy seems to be very much interested now.

I have begun my Sunday lectures here and also the classes. Both are very enthusiastically received. I make them all free and take up a collection to pay the hall etc. Last Sunday's lecture was very much appreciated and is in the press. I shall send you a few copies next week. It was the outline of our work.

As my friends have engaged a stenographer (Goodwin), all these class lessons and public lectures are taken down. I intend to send you a copy of each. They may suggest you some ideas.

My great want here is a strong man like you, possessing intellect, and ability, and love. In this nation of universal education, all seem to melt down into a mediocrity, and the few able are weighed down by the eternal money-making.

I have a chance of getting a piece of land in the country, and some buildings on it, plenty of trees and a river, to

serve as a summer meditation resort. That, of course, requires a committee to look after it in my absence, as also the handling of money and printing and other matters.

I have separated myself entirely from money questions, yet without it the movement cannot go on. So necessarily I have to make over everything executive to a committee, which will look after these things in my absence. Steady work is not in the line of the Americans. The only way they work, is in a herd. So let them have it. As to the teaching part, my friends will go over this country from place to place, each one independent, and let them form independent circles. That is the easiest way to spread. Then, when there will be sufficient strength, we shall have yearly gatherings to concentrate our energies.

The committee is entirely executive and it is confined to New York alone. . . .

Ever yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 70

LXIX Alasinga

LXIX

23rd January, 1896.

DEAR ALASINGA,

By this time you must have got enough of matter on Bhakti from me. The last copy, dated 21st December, of Brahnavadin is in. I have been smelling something since the last few issues of the Brahnavadin. Are you going to join the Theosophists? This time you simply gave yourselves up. Why, you get in a notice of the Theosophists' lectures in the body of your notes! Any suspicion of my connection with the Theosophists will spoil my work both in America and England, and well it may. They are thought by all people of sound mind to be wrong, and true it is that they are held so, and you know it full well. I am afraid you want to overreach me. You think you can get more subscribers in England by advertising Annie Besant? Fool that you are.

I do not want to quarrel with the Theosophists, but my position is entirely ignoring them. Had they paid for the advertisement? Why should you go forward to advertise them? I shall get more than enough subscribers in England when I go next.

Now, I would have no traitors, I tell you plainly, I would not be played upon by any rogue. No hypocrisy with me. Hoist your flag and give public notice in your paper that you have given up all connections with me, and join the . . . camp of the Theosophists or cease to have anything whatsoever to do with them. I give you very plain words indeed. I shall have one man only to follow me, but he must be true and faithful unto death. I do not care for success or no success. I am tired of this nonsense of preaching all over the world. Did any of Annie Besant's people come to my help when I was in England? Fudge! I must keep my movement pure or I will have none.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Reply sharp your decision. I am very decided on this point. You ought to have told me so before, had your intentions been such from the very beginning. The Brah-

mavadin is for preaching Vedanta and not Theosophy. I almost lose my patience when I see these underhand dealings. This is the world — those whom you love best and help most try to cheat you. — V.

Chapter 71

LXX Blessed and Beloved

LXX

Yours with all blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

228 WEST 39TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

29th February, 1896.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

I am coming before May if possible. You need not worry about that. The pamphlet was beautiful. The newspaper cuttings from here will be forwarded if we can get them.

The books and pamphlets here have been got up this way. A committee was formed in New York. They paid all the expenses of stenographing and printing on condition the books will belong to them. So these pamphlets and books are theirs. One book, the Karma-Yoga has been already published; the Raja-Yoga, a much bigger one, is in the course of publication; the Jnana-Yoga may be published later on. These will be popular books, the language being that of talk, as you have seen already. I have purged everything that is objectionable, and they help me in getting up the books.

The books are the property of this Committee, of which Mrs. Ole Bull is the principal backer, also Mrs. Leggett.

It is only just that they should have the books as they paid all the expenses. There is no fear of the publishers meddling with them, as they are the publishers themselves.

If any books come from India please keep them.

The stenographer, who is an Englishman named Goodwin, has become so interested in the work that I have now made him a Brahmachârin, and he is going round with me, and we shall come over together to England. He will be very helpful as he has been always.

Chapter 72

LXXI Blessed and Beloved

LXXI

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

NEW YORK,

17th March, 1896.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

I received your last just now and it frightened me immensely.

The lectures were delivered under the auspices of certain friends who paid for the stenography and all other expenses on condition they alone will have the right to publish them. As such, they have already published the Sunday lectures as well as three books on "Karma-Yoga", "Raja-Yoga", and "Jnana-Yoga". The Raja-Yoga especially has been much altered and re-arranged along with the translation of "Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali". The Raja-Yoga is in the hands of Longmans. The friends here are furious at the idea of these books being published in England; and as they have been made over to them by me legally, I am at a loss what to do. The publication of the pamphlets was not so serious, but the books have been so much re-arranged and changed that the American edition will not recognise the English one. Now pray don't publish these books, as they will place me in a very false position and create endless quarrel and destroy my American work.

By last mail from India I learn that a Sannyasin has started from India. I had a beautiful letter from Miss Müller, also one from Miss MacLeod; the Leggett family has become very attached to me.

I do not know anything about Mr. Chatterji. I hear from other sources that his trouble is money, which the Theosophists cannot supply him with. Moreover the help he will be able to give me is very rudimentary and useless in the face of the fact of a much stronger man coming from India. So far with him. We need not be in a hurry.

I pray you again to think about this publishing business and write some letters to Mrs. Ole Bull and through her ask the opinion of the American friends of the Vedanta, remembering "ours is the Gospel of oneness of all beings", and all national feelings are but wicked superstitions. Moreover I am sure that the person who is always ready to give way to other's opinions finds at last that his opinion has triumphed. Yielding always conquers at last. With love to all our friends,

Yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I am coming sure in March as early as possible.

V.

Chapter 73

LXXII Sister

LXXII

To Miss Mary Hale

DEAR SISTER,

I am afraid you are offended and did not answer any of my letters. Now I beg a hundred thousand pardons. By very good luck, I have found the orange cloth and am going to have a coat made as soon as I can. I am glad to hear you met Mrs. Bull. She is such a noble lady and kind friend. Now, sister, there are two very thin Sanskrit pamphlets in the house. Kindly send them over if it does not bother you. The books from India have arrived safe, and I had not to pay any duty on them. I am surprised that the rugs do not arrive yet. I have not been to see Mother Temple any more. I could not find time. Every little bit of time I get I spend in the library.

With everlasting love and gratitude to you all,

Ever your loving brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Mr. Howe has been a very constant student except the last few days. Kindly give my love to Miss Howe.

V.

Chapter 74

LXXIII Sisters

LXXIII

To the Hale Sisters

6 WEST 43RD STREET,

NEW YORK,

14th April, 1896.

DEAR SISTERS,

I arrived safe on Sunday and on account of illness could not write earlier. I sail on board the White Star Line Germanic tomorrow at 12 noon. With everlasting memory of love, gratitude and blessings,

I am, your ever loving brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 75

LXXIV Sturdy

LXXIV

WAVENEY MANSIONS,

FAIRHAZEL GARDENS,

LONDON N.W.

April, 1896 Thursday Afternoon.

DEAR STURDY,

I forgot to tell you in the morning that Prof. Max Müller also offered in his letter to me to do everything he could if I went to lecture at Oxford.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Have you written for the Artharva-Veda Samhita edited by Shankara Pandurang?

V.

Chapter 76

LXXV Sisters

LXXV

To the Hale sisters

HIGH VIEW, READING,

20th April, 1896.

DEAR SISTERS,

Greetings to you from the other shore. The voyage has been pleasant and no sickness this time. I gave myself treatment to avoid it. I made quite a little run through Ireland and some of the Old English towns and now am once more in Reading amidst Brahma and Maya and Jiva, the individual and the universal soul, etc. The other monk is here; he is one of the nicest of men I see, and is quite a learned monk too. We are busy editing books now. Nothing of importance happened on the way. It was dull, monotonous, and prosaic as my life. I love America more when I am out of it. And, after all, those years there have been some of the best I have yet seen.

Are you trying to get some subscribers for the Brah-mavadin? Give my best love and kindest remembrance to Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Conger. Write me as soon as is convenient all about yourselves, and what you are doing, what breaks the monotony of eating, drinking, and cycling. I am in a hurry just now, shall write a bigger letter later; so good-bye and may you be always happy.

Your ever affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I will write to Mother Church as soon as I get time. Give my love to Sam and sister Locke.

V.

Chapter 77

LXXVI Mary

LXXVI

To Miss Mary Hale

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD,

LONDON, S.W.,

30th May, 1896.

DEAR MARY,

Your letter reached just now. Of course, you were not jealous but all of a sudden were inspired with sympathy for poor India. Well, you need not be frightened. Wrote a letter to Mother Church weeks ago, but have not been able to get a line from her yet. I am afraid the whole party have taken orders and entered a Catholic convent — four old maids are enough to drive any mother to a convent. I had a beautiful visit with Prof. Max Müller. He is a saint — a Vedantist through and through. What think you? He has been a devoted admirer of my old Master for years. He has written an article on my Master in *The Nineteenth Century*, which will soon come out. We had long talk on Indian things. I wish I had half his love for India. We are going to start another little magazine here. What about *The Brahmavadin*? Are you pushing it? If four pushful old maids cannot push a journal, I am blowed. You will hear from me now and then. I am not a pin to be lost under a bushel. I am having classes here just now. I begin Sunday lectures from next week. The classes are very big and are in the house. We have rented it for the season. Last night I made a dish. It was such a delicious mixture of saffron, lavender, mace, nutmeg, cubebs, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, cream, limejuice, onions, raisins, almonds, pepper, and rice, that I myself could not eat it. There was no asafetida, though that would have made it smoother to swallow.

Yesterday I went to a marriage à la mode. Miss Müller, a rich lady, a friend who has adopted a Hindu boy and to help my work has taken rooms in this house, took us to see it. One of her nieces was married to somebody's

nephew I suppose. What tiring nonsense! I am glad you do not marry. Good-bye, love to all. No more time as I am going to lunch with Miss MacLeod.

Yours ever affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 78

LXXVII Babies

LXXVII

To the Hale sisters

LONDON,

7th July, 1896.

DEAR BABIES,

The work here progressed wonderfully. I had one monk here from India. I have sent him to the U.S.A. and sent for another from India. The season is closed; the classes, therefore, and the Sunday lectures are to be closed on the 16th next. And on the 19th I go for a month or so for quiet and rest in the Swiss Mountains to return next autumn to London and begin again. The work here has been very satisfactory. By rousing interest here I really do more for India than in India. Mother wrote to me that if you could rent your flat, she would be glad to take you with her to see Egypt. I am going with three English friends to the Swiss Hills. Later on, towards the end of winter, I expect to go to India with some English friends who are going to live in my monastery there, which, by the by, is in the air yet. It is struggling to materialise somewhere in the Himalayas.

Where are You? Now the summer is in full swing, even London is getting very hot. Kindly give my best love to Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Conger, and all the rest of my friends in Chicago.

Your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 79

LXXVIII Blessed and Beloved

LXXVIII

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

GRAND HOTEL,

VALAIS,

SWITZERLAND.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

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

By the by, whatever scruples I may have had as to the Swiss-lake origin of the Aryans have been taken clean off my mind. The Swiss is a Tartar minus a pigtail. . . .

Yours ever affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 80

LXXIX Blessed and Beloved

LXXIX

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

SWITZERLAND,

5th August, 1896.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

A letter came this morning from Prof. Max Müller telling me that the article of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has been published in The XIX Century August number. Have you read it? He asked my opinion about it. Not having seen it yet, I can't write anything to him. If you have it, kindly send it to me. Also The Brahmavadin, if any have arrived. Max Müller wants to know about our plans . . . and again about the magazine. He promises a good deal of help and is ready to write a book on Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

I think it is better that you should directly correspond with him about the magazine etc. You will see from his letter which I shall send you as soon as I have replied (after reading The XIX Century) that he is very much pleased with our movement and is ready to help it as much as he can. . . .

Yours with blessings and love,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I hope you will consider well the plan for the big magazine. Some money can be raised in America, and we can keep the magazine all to ourselves at the same time. I intend to write to America on hearing about the plan you and Prof. Max Muller decide upon. "A great tree is to be taken refuge in, when it has both fruits and shade. If, however, we do not get the fruit, who prevents our enjoyment of the shade?" So ought great attempts to be made, is the moral.

Chapter 81

LXXX Dear—

LXXX

do to this country!

To Kripananda

SWITZERLAND,

August, 1896.

DEAR—,

Be you holy and, above all, sincere; and do not for a moment give up your trust in the Lord, and you will see the light. Whatever is truth will remain for ever; whatever is not, none can preserve. We are helped in being born in a time when everything is quickly searched out. Whatever others think or do, lower not your standard of purity, morality, and love of God; above all, beware of all secret organisations. No one who loves God need fear any jugglery. Holiness is the highest and divinest power in earth and in heaven. "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone is opened the way to God" (Mundaka, III. i. 6). Do not care for a moment who joins hands with you or not, be sure that you touch the hand of the Lord. That is enough. . . .

I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life. . . .

Your dream was very, very beautiful. In dream our souls read a layer of our mind which we do not read in our waking hours, and however unsubstantial imagination may be, it is behind the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie. Take heart. We will try to do what we can for the good of humanity — the rest depends upon the Lord. . . .

Well, do not be anxious, do not be in a hurry. Slow, persistent and silent work does everything. The Lord is great. We will succeed, my boy. We must. Blessed be His name! . . .

Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one! How would I like it and what an amount of good it would

Chapter 82

LXXXI Goodwin

LXXXI

To Mr. J. J. Goodwin

SWITZERLAND,

8th August, 1896.

DEAR GOODWIN,

I am now taking rest. I read from different letters a lot about Kripananda. I am sorry for him. There must be something wrong in his head. Let him alone. None of you need bother about him.

As for hurting me, that is not in the power of gods or devils. So be at rest. It is unswerving love and perfect unselfishness that conquer everything. We Vedantists in every difficulty ought to ask the subjective question, "Why do I see that?" "Why can I not conquer this with love?"

I am very glad at the reception the Swami has met with, also at the good work he is doing. Great work requires great and persistent effort for a long time. Neither need we trouble ourselves if a few fail. It is in the nature of things that many should fall, that troubles should come, that tremendous difficulties should arise, that selfishness and all the other devils in the human heart should struggle hard when they are about to be driven out by the fire of spirituality. The road to the Good is the roughest and steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed, no wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles.

I am much refreshed now. I look out of the window and see the huge glaciers just before me and feel that I am in the Himalayas. I am quite calm. My nerves have regained their accustomed strength; and little vexations, like those you write of, do not touch me at all. How shall I be disturbed by this child's play? The whole world is a mere child's play — preaching, teaching, and all included. "Know him to be the Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires" (Gita, V.3). And what is there to be desired in this little mud-puddle of a world, with its ever-recurring misery, disease, and death? "He who has given up all desires, he alone is happy."

This rest, eternal, peaceful rest, I am catching a glimpse of now in this beautiful spot. "Having once known that the Atman alone, and nothing else, exists, desiring what, or for whose desire, shall you suffer misery about the body?" (Brihadâranyaka, IV. iv. 12.)

I feel as if I had my share of experience in what they call "work". I am finished, I am longing now to get out. "Out of thousands, but one strives to attain the Goal. And even of those who struggle hard, but few attain" (Gita, VII. 3); for the senses are powerful, they drag men down.

"A good world", "a happy world", and "social progress", are all terms equally intelligible with "hot ice" or "dark light". If it were good, it would not be the world. The soul foolishly thinks of manifesting the Infinite in finite matter, Intelligence through gross particles; but at last it finds out its error and tries to escape. This going-back is the beginning of religion, and its method, destruction of self, that is, love. Not love for wife or child or anybody else, but love for everything else except this little self. Never be deluded by the tall talk, of which you will hear so much in America, about "human progress" and such stuff. There is no progress without corresponding digression. In one society there is one set of evils; in another, another. So with periods of history. In the Middle Ages, there were more robbers, now more cheats. At one period there is less idea of married life; at another, more prostitution. In one, more physical agony; in another, a thousandfold more mental. So with knowledge. Did not gravitation already exist in nature before it was observed and named? Then what difference does it make to know that it exists? Are you happier than the Red Indians?

The only knowledge that is of any value is to know that all this is humbug. But few, very few, will ever know this. "Know the Atman alone, and give up all other vain words." This is the only knowledge we gain from all this knocking about the universe. This is the only work, to call upon mankind to "Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached". It is renunciation, Tyâga, that is meant by religion, and nothing else.

Ishwara is the sum total of individuals; yet He Himself also is an individual in the same way as the human body is

a unit, of which each cell is an individual. Samashti or the Collective is God. Vyashti or the component is the soul of Jiva. The existence of Ishwara, therefore, depends on that of Jiva, as the body on the cell, and vice versa. Jiva, and Ishwara are co-existent beings. As long as the one exists, the other also must. Again, since in all the higher spheres, except on our earth, the amount of good is vastly in excess of the amount of bad, the sum total or Ishwara may be said to be All-good, Almighty, and Omniscient. These are obvious qualities, and need no argument to prove, from the very fact of totality.

Brahman is beyond both of these, and is not a state. It is the only unit not composed of many units. It is the principle which runs through all, from a cell to God, and without which nothing can exist. Whatever is real is that principle or Brahman. When I think "I am Brahman", then I alone exist. It is so also when you so think, and so on. Each one is the whole of that principle. . . .

A few days ago, I felt a sudden irresistible desire to write to Kripananda. Perhaps he was unhappy and thinking of me. So I wrote him a warm letter. Today from the American news, I see why it was so. I sent him flowers gathered near the glaciers. Ask Miss Waldo to send him some money and plenty of love. Love never dies. The love of the father never dies, whatever the children may do or be. He is my child. He has the same or more share in my love and help, now that he is in misery.

Yours with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 83

LXXXII Blessed and Beloved

LXXXII

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

GRAND HOTEL, SAAS FEE,

VALAIS, SWITZERLAND,

8th August, 1896

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

A large packet of letters came along with yours. Herewith I send you the letter written to me by Max Müller. It is very kind and good of him.

Miss Müller thinks that she will go away very soon to England. In that case I will not be able to go to Berne for that Purity Congress I have promised. Only if the Seviars consent to take me along, I will go to Kiel and write to you before. The Seviars are good and kind, but I have no right to take advantage of their generosity. Nor can I take the same of Miss Müller, as the expenses there are frightful. As such, I think it best to give up the Berne Congress, as it will come in the middle of September, a long way off.

I am thinking, therefore, of going towards Germany, ending in Kiel, and thence back to England.

Bala Gangadhara Tilak (Mr. Tilak) is the name and Orion that of the book.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. There is also one by Jacobi — perhaps translated on the same lines and with the same conclusions.

PS. I hope you will ask Miss Müller's opinion about the lodgings and the Hall, as I am afraid she will be very displeased if she and others are not consulted.

V.

Miss Müller telegraphed to Prof. Deussen last night; the reply came this morning, 9th August, welcoming me; I am to be in Kiel at Deussen's on the 10th September. So where will you meet me? At Kiel? Miss Müller goes to England from Switzerland. I am going with the Seviars to Kiel. I will be there on the 10th September.

V.

PS. I have not fixed yet anything about the lecture. I have no time to read. The Salem Society most probably is a Hindu community and no faddists.

V.

Chapter 84

LXXXIII Blessed and Beloved

LXXXIII

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

SWITZERLAND,

12th August, 1896.

BLESSED AND BELOVED,

Today I received a letter from America, which I send to you. I have written them that my idea of course is concentration, at least for the present beginning. I have also suggested them that instead of having too many papers, they may start by putting in a few sheets in The Brahmavadin — written in America — and raise the subscription a little which will cover the American expenses. Do not know what they will do.

We will start from here towards Germany next week. Miss Müller goes to England as soon as we have crossed over to Germany.

Capt. and Mrs. Sevier and myself will expect you at Kiel.

I haven't yet written anything nor read anything. I am indeed taking a good rest. Do not be anxious, you will have the article ready. I had a letter from the Math stating that the other Swami is ready to start. He will, I am sure, be just the man you want. He is one of the best Sanskrit scholars we have . . . and as I hear, he has improved his English much. I had a number of newspaper cuttings from America about Saradananda — I hear from them that he has done very well there. America is a good training ground to bring out all that is in a man. There is such a sympathy in the air. I had letters from Goodwin and Saradananda. S. sends his love to you and Mrs. Sturdy and the baby.

With everlasting love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 85

LXXXIV Friend

LXXXIV

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

KIEL,

10th September, 1896.

DEAR FRIEND,

I have at last seen Prof. Deussen. . . . The whole of yesterday was spent very nicely with the Professor, sight-seeing and discussing about the Vedanta.

He is what I should call “a warring Advaitist”. No compromise with anything else. “Ishwara” is his bug-bear. He would have none of it if he could. He is very much delighted with the idea of your magazine and wants to confer with you on these subjects in London, where he is shortly going. . . .

Chapter 86

LXXXV Sister

LXXXV

To Miss Mary Hale

AIRLIE LODGE, RIDGEWAY GARDENS,
WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND,

17th September, 1896.

DEAR SISTER,

Today I reached London, after my two months of climbing and walking and glacier seeing in Switzerland. One good it has done me — a few pounds of unnecessary adipose tissue have returned back to the gaseous state. Well, there is no safety even in that, for the solid body of this birth has taken a fancy to outstrip the mind towards infinite expansion. If it goes on this way, I would have soon to lose all personal identity even in the flesh — at least to all the rest of the world.

It is impossible to express my joy in words at the good news contained in Harriet's letter. I have written to her today. I am sorry I cannot come over to see her married, but I will be present in "fine body" with all good wishes and blessings. Well, I am expecting such news from you and other sisters to make my joy complete. Now, my dear Mary, I will tell you a great lesson I have learnt in this life. It is this: "The higher is your ideal, the more miserable you are"; for such a thing as an ideal cannot be attained in the world, or in this life even. He who wants perfection in the world is a madman, for it cannot be.

How can you find the Infinite in the finite? Therefore I tell you, Harriet will have a most blessed and happy life, because she is not so imaginative and sentimental as to make a fool of herself. She has enough of sentiment as to make life sweet, and enough of common sense and gentleness as to soften the hard points in life which must come to everyone. So has Harriet McKindley in a still higher degree. She is just the girl to make the best of wives, only this world is so full of idiots that very

few can penetrate beyond the flesh! As for you and Isabelle, I will tell you the truth, and my "language is plain".

You, Mary, are like a mettlesome Arab — grand, splendid. You will make a splendid queen — physically, mentally. You will shine alongside of a dashing, bold, adventurous, heroic husband; but, my dear sister, you will make one of the worst of wives. You will take the life out of our easy-going, practical, plodding husbands of the everyday world. Mind, my sister, although it is true that there is more romance in actual life than in any novel, yet it is few and far between. Therefore my advice to you is that until you bring down your ideals to a more practical level, you ought not to marry. If you do, the result will be misery for both of you. In a few months you will lose all regard for a commonplace, good, nice, young man, and then life will become insipid. As to sister Isabelle, she has the same temperament as you; only this kindergarten has taught her a good lesson of patience and forbearance. Perhaps she will make a good wife.

There are two sorts of persons in the world. The one — strong-nerved, quiet, yielding to nature, not given to much imagination, yet good, kind, sweet, etc. For such is this world; they alone are born to be happy. There are others again with high-strung nerves, tremendously imaginative, with intense feeling, always going high one moment and coming down the next. For them there is no happiness. The first class will have almost an even tenor of happiness; the last will have to run between ecstasy and misery. But of these alone what we call geniuses are made. There is some truth in the recent theory that "genius is a sort madness".

Now, persons of this class if they want to be great, they must fight to finish — clear out the deck for battle. No encumbrance — no marriage, no children, no undue attachment to anything except the one idea, and live and die for that. I am a person of this sort. I have taken up the one idea of "Vedanta" and I have "cleared the deck for action". You and Isabelle are made of this metal; but let me tell you, though it is hard, you are spoiling your lives in vain. Either take up one idea, clear the deck, and to it dedicate the life; or be contented and practical; lower the ideal, marry, and have a happy life.

Either “Bhoga” or “Yoga” — either enjoy this life, or give up and be a Yogi; none can have both in one. Now or never, select quick. “He who is very particular gets nothing”, says the proverb. Now sincerely and really and for ever determine to “clear the deck for fight”, take up anything, philosophy or science or religion or literature, and let that be your God for the rest of your life. Achieve happiness or achieve greatness. I have no sympathy with you and Isabelle; you are neither for this nor for that. I wish to see you happy, as Harriet has well chosen, or great. Eating, drinking, dressing, and society nonsense are not things to throw a life upon — especially you, Mary. You are rusting away a splendid brain and abilities, for which there is not the least excuse. You must have ambition to be great. I know you will take these rather harsh remarks from me in the right spirit knowing I like you really as much or more than what I call you, my sisters. I had long had a mind to tell you this, and as experience is gathering I feel like telling you. The joyful news from Harriet urged me to tell you this. I will be overjoyed to hear that you are married also and happy, so far as happiness can be had here, or would like to hear of you as doing great deeds.

I had a pleasant visit with Prof. Deussen in Germany. I am sure you have heard of him as the greatest living German philosopher. He and I travelled together to England and today came together to see my friend here with whom I am to stop for the rest of my stay in England. He (Deussen) is very fond of talking Sanskrit and is the only Sanskrit scholar in the West who can talk in it. As he wants to get a practice, he never talks to me in any other language but Sanskrit.

I have come over here amongst my friends, shall work for a few weeks, and then go back to India in the winter.

Ever your loving brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 87

LXXXVI Joe

LXXXVI

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

GREY COAT GARDENS,

WESTMINSTER, S.W.,

LONDON,

3rd December, 1896.

DEAR JOE,

Many, many thanks, dear Joe Joe, for your kind invitation; but the Dear God has disposed it this way, viz I am to start for India on the 16th with Captain and Mrs. Sevier and Mr. Goodwin. The Seviere and myself take steamer at Naples. And as there will be four days at Rome, I will look in to say good-bye to Alberta.

Things are in a "hum" here just now; the big hall for the class, 39 Victoria, is full and yet more are coming.

Well, the good old country now calls me; I must go. So good-bye to all projects of visiting Russia this April.

I just set things a-going a little in India and am off again for the ever beautiful U.S. and England etc.

So very kind of you to send Mabel's letter — good news indeed. Only I am a little sorry for poor Fox. However, Mabel escaped him; that is better.

You did not write anything about how things are going on in New York. I hope it is all well there. Poor Cola! is he able now to make a living?

The coming of Goodwin was very opportune, as it captured the lectures here which are being published in a periodical form. Already there have been subscribers enough to cover the expenses.

Three lectures next week, and my London work is finished for this season. Of course, everybody here thinks it foolish to give it up just now the "boom" is on, but the Dear Lord says, "Start for Old India". I obey.

To Frankincense, to Mother, to Holister and everyone else my eternal love and blessings, and with the same for you,

Yours ever sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 88

LXXXVII Rakhāl

LXXXVII

To Swami Brahmananda

the proverb. Let them bark a little. Their occupation is gone. Poor souls! Let them have a little satisfaction in barking.

HOTEL MINERVA, FLORENCE,

20th December, 1896.

DEAR RAKHAL,

As you see, by this time I am on my way. Before leaving London, I got your letter and the pamphlet. Take no heed of Mazoomdar's madness. He surely has gone crazy with jealousy. Such foul language as he has used would only make people laugh at him in a civilised country. He has defeated his purpose by the use of such vulgar words.

All the same, we ought not to allow Hara Mohan or any one else to go and fight Brahmos and others in our name. The public must know that we have no quarrel with any sect, and if anybody provokes a quarrel, he is doing it on his own responsibility. Quarrelling and abusing each other are our national traits. Lazy, useless, vulgar, jealous, cowardly, and quarrelsome, that is what we are, Bengalīs. Anyone who wants to be my friend must give up these. Neither do you allow Hara Mohan to print any book, because such printing as he does is only cheating the public.

If there are oranges in Calcutta, send a hundred to Madras care of Alasinga, so that I may have them when I reach Madras.

Mazoomdar writes that the Sayings of Shri Ramakrishna published in The Brahmadin are not genuine and are lies! In that case ask Suresh Dutt and Ram Babu to give him the lie in The Indian Mirror. As I did not do anything about the collection of the Uktis (Sayings), I cannot say anything.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Don't mind these fools; "No fool like an old fool" is

Chapter 89

LXXXVIII Mary

LXXXVIII

To Miss Mary Hale

DAMPFER, "PRINZ-REGENT LEOPOLD"

3rd January, 1897.

DEAR MARY,

I received your letter forwarded from London in Rome. It was very very kind of you to write such a beautiful letter, and I enjoyed every bit of it. I do not know anything about the evolution of the orchestra in Europe. We are nearing Port Said after four days of frightfully bad sailing from Naples. The ship is rolling as hard as she can, and you must pardon my scrawls under such circumstances.

From Suez begins Asia. Once more Asia. What am I? Asiatic, European, or American? I feel a curious medley of personalities in me. You didn't write anything about Dharmapala, his goings and doings. I am much more interested in him than in Gandhi.

I land in a few days at Colombo and mean to "do" Ceylon a bit. There was a time when Ceylon had more than 20 million inhabitants and a huge capital of which the ruins cover nearly a hundred square miles!

The Ceylonese are not Dravidians but pure Aryans. It was colonised from Bengal about 800 B.C., and they have kept a very clear history of their country from that time. It was the greatest trade centre of the ancient world, and Anuradhapuram was the London of the ancients.

I enjoyed Rome more than anything in the West, and after seeing Pompeii I have lost all regard for the so-called "Modern Civilisation". With the exception of steam and electricity they had everything else and infinitely more art conceptions and executions than the Moderns.

Please tell Miss Locke that I was mistaken when I told her that sculpturing of the human figure was not developed in India as among the Greeks. I am reading in Fergusson and

other authorities that in Orissa or Jagannath, which I did not visit, there are among the ruins human figures which for beauty and anatomical skill would compare with any production of the Greeks. There is a colossal figure of Death, a huge female skeleton covered with a shrivelled skin — the awful fidelity to anatomical details are frightening and disgusting. Says my author, one of the female figures in the niche is exactly like the Venus de Medici and so on. But you must remember that everything almost has been destroyed by the iconoclastic Mohammedan, yet the remnants are more than all European debris put together! I have travelled eight years and not seen many of the masterpieces.

Tell sister Locke also that there is a ruined temple in a forest in India which and the Parthenon of Greece Fergusson considers as the climax of architectural art — each of its type — the one of conception, the other of conception and detail. The later Mogul buildings etc., the Indo-Saracenic architecture, does not compare a bit with the best types of the ancients. . . .

With all my love,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Just by chance saw Mother Church and Father Pope at Florence. You know of it already.

V.

Chapter 90

LXXXIX Rakhhal

LXXXIX

To Swami Brahmananda

MADRAS,

12th February, 1897.

DEAR RAKHAL,

I am to start by S.S. Mombasa next Sunday. I had to give up invitations from Poona and other places on account of bad health. I am very much pulled down by hard work and heat.

The Theosophists and others wanted to intimidate me. Therefore I had to give them a bit of my mind. You know they persecuted me all the time in America, because I did not join them. They wanted to begin it here. So I had to clear my position. If that displeases any of my Calcutta friends, "God help them". You need not be afraid, I do not work alone, but He is always with me. What could I do otherwise?

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Take the house if furnished — V.

Chapter 91

XC Shashi

XC

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Ramakrishnananda

DARJEELING,

20th April, 1897.

DEAR SHASHI,

All of you have doubtless reached Madras by this time. I should think Biligiri is certainly taking great care of you, and that Sadananda serves you as your attendant. In Madras the worship should be done in a completely Sattvic manner, without a trace of Rajas in it. I hope Alasinga has by now returned to Madras. Don't enter into wrangles with anybody — always maintain a calm attitude. For the present let the worship of Shri Ramakrishna be established and continued in the house of Biligiri. But see that the worship does not become very elaborate and long. Time thus saved should be utilised in holding classes and doing some preaching. It is good to initiate as many as you can. Supervise the work of the two papers, and help in whatever way you can. Biligiri has two widowed daughters. Kindly educate them and make special efforts that through them more such widowed women get a thorough grounding in their own religion and learn a little English and Sanskrit. But all this work should be done from a distance. One has to be exceedingly careful before young women. Once you fall, there is no way out, and the sin is unpardonable.

I am very sorry to hear that Gupta was bitten by a dog; but I hear that the dog was not a mad one, so there is no cause for alarm. In any case, see that he takes the medicine sent by Gangadhar.

Early morning, finish daily your worship and other duties briefly, and calling together Biligiri with his family, read before them the Gita and other sacred books. There is not the least necessity for teaching the divine Love of Râdhâ and Krishna. Teach them pure devotion to

Sitâ-Râm and Hara-Pârvati. See that no mistake is made in this respect. Remember that the episodes of the divine relationship between Radha and Krishna are quite unsuitable for young minds. Specially Biligiri and other followers of Râmânujâchârya are worshippers of Rama; so see to it that their innate attitude of pure devotion is never disturbed.

In the evenings give some spiritual teaching like that to the general public. Thus gradually “even the mountain is crossed”. See that an atmosphere of perfect purity is always maintained, and that there enters not the slightest trace of Vâmâchâra. For the rest, the Lord Himself will guide you, there is no fear. Give to Biligiri my respectful salutations and loving greetings, and convey my salutations to similar devotees.

My illness is now much less — it may even be cured completely, if the Lord wills. My love, blessings, and greetings to you.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Please tender my specially affectionate greetings and blessings to Dr. Nanjunda Rao and help him as much as you can. Try your best to particularly encourage the study of Sanskrit among the non-Brahmins.

V.

Chapter 92

XCI Miss Noble

XCI

To Sister Nivedita

ALAMBAZAR MATH,

CALCUTTA,

5th May, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

Your very very kind, loving, and encouraging letter gave me more strength than you think of.

There are moments when one feels entirely despondent, no doubt — especially when one has worked towards an ideal during a whole life's time and just when there is a bit of hope of seeing it partially accomplished, there comes a tremendous thwarting blow. I do not care for the disease, but what depresses me is that my ideals have not had yet the least opportunity of being worked out. And you know, the difficulty is money.

The Hindus are making processions and all that, but they cannot give money. The only help I got in the world was in England, from Miss Müller, and Mr. Sevier. I thought there that a thousand pounds was sufficient to start at least the principal centre in Calcutta, but my calculation was from the experience of Calcutta ten or twelve years ago. Since then the prices have gone up three or four times.

The work has been started anyhow. A rickety old little house has been rented for six or seven shillings, where about twenty-four young men are being trained. I had to go to Darjeeling for a month to recover my health, and I am glad to tell you I am very much better, and would you believe it, without taking any medicine, only by the exercise of mental healing! I am going again to another hill station tomorrow, as it is very hot in the plains. Your society is still living, I am sure. I will send you a report, as least every month, of the work done here. The London work is not doing well at all, I hear, and that was

the main reason why I would not come to England just now — although some of our Rajas going for the Jubilee tried their best to get me with them — as I would have to work hard again to revive the interest in Vedanta. And that would mean a good deal more trouble physically.

I may come over for a month or so very soon however. Only if I could see my work started here, how gladly and freely would I travel about!

So far about work. Now about you personally. Such love and faith and devotion and appreciation like yours, dear Miss Noble, repays a hundred times over any amount of labour one undergoes in this life. May all blessings be yours. My whole life is at your service, as we may say in our mother tongue.

It never was and never will be anything but very very welcome, any letters from you and other friends in England. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond wrote two very kind and nice letters and Mr. Hammond a beautiful poem in *The Brahmavadin*, although I did not deserve it a bit. I will write to you again from the Himalayas, where thought will be clear in sight of the snows and the nerves more settled than in this burning plains. Miss Müller is already in Almora. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier go to Simla. They have been in Darjeeling so long. So things come and go, dear friend. Only the Lord is unchangeable and He is Love. May He make our heart His eternal habitation is the constant prayer of,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 93

XCII Rakhal

XCII

To Swami Brahmananda

ALMORA,

20th May, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

From your letter I got all the important news. I got a letter from Sudhir also and also one from Master Mahashay. I have also got two letters from Nityananda (Yogen Chatterjee) from the famine areas.

Even now money is floating on the waters, as it were, . . . but it will surely come. When it comes, buildings, land, and a permanent fund — everything will come all right. But one can never rest assured until the chickens are hatched; and I am not now going down to the hot plains within two or three months. After that I shall make a tour and shall certainly secure some money. This being so, if you think that the [land with a] frontage of eight Kâthâs cannot be acquired . . ., there is no harm in paying the earnest money to the middle-man vendor as though you were losing it for nothing. In all these matters use your own discretion; I cannot give any further advice. There is particularly a chance of making mistake through hurry. . . . Tell Master Mahashay that I quite approve of what he had said.

Write to Gangadhar that if he finds it difficult to get alms etc. there, he should feed himself by spending from his own pocket, and that he should publish a weekly letter in Upen's paper (The Basumati). In that case others also may help.

I understand from a letter of Shashi . . . he wants Nirbhayananda. If you think this course to be the best, then send Nirbhayananda and bring back Gupta. . . . Send Sashi a copy of the Bengali Rules and Regulations of the Math or an English version of it, and write to him to see that the work there is done in accordance with the Rules and Regulations.

I am glad to learn that the Association in Calcutta is going on nicely. It does not matter if one or two keep out. Gradually everyone will come. Be friendly and sympathetic with everybody. Sweet words are heard afar; it is particularly necessary to try and make new people come. We want more and more new members.

Yogen is doing well. On account of the great heat in Almora, I am now in an excellent garden twenty miles from there. This place is comparatively cool, but still warm. The heat does not seem to be particularly less than that of Calcutta. . . .

The feverishness is all gone. I am trying to go to a still cooler place. Heat or the fatigue of walking, I find, at once produces trouble of the liver. The air here is so dry that there is a burning sensation in the nose all the time, and the tongue becomes, as it were, a chip of wood. You have stopped criticising; otherwise I would have gone to a colder place by this time just for the fun of it. "He constantly neglects diet restrictions" — what rot do you talk? Do you really listen to the words of these fools? It is just like your not allowing me to take Kalâi-dâl (black pulses), because it contains starch! And what is more — there will be no starch if rice and Roti (bread) are eaten after frying them! What wonderful knowledge, my dear. The fact of the matter is my old nature is coming back — this I am seeing clearly. In this part of the country now, an illness takes on the colour and fashion of this locality; and in that part of the country, it takes on the colour and fashion of the illnesses in that locality. I am thinking of making my meals at night very light; I shall eat to the full in the morning and at noon; at night milk, fruits, etc. That is why I am staying in this orchard, "in expectation of fruits"! Don't you see?

Now don't be alarmed. Does a companion of Shiva die so quickly? Just now the evening lamp has been lighted, and singing has to be done throughout the whole night. Nowadays my temper also is not very irritable, and feverishness is all due to the liver — I see this clearly. Well, I shall make that also come under control — what fear? . . . Bravely brace yourself up and do work; let us create a mighty commotion.

Tender my love to all at the Math. At the next meeting of the Association give my greetings to everybody and tell them that though I am not physically present there, yet my spirit is where the name of our Lord is sung — " goes the round on the earth" — because, you see, the Atman is omnipresent.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 94

XCIII Sudhir

XCIII

ALMORA,

20th May, 1897.

DEAR SUDHIR,

Your letter gave me much pleasure. One thing, perhaps, I forget to tell you — to keep a copy of the letter you sent me. Also all important communications to the Math from different persons and to different persons should be copied and preserved.

I am very glad to learn that things are going on well, that the work there is steadily progressing as well as that of Calcutta.

I am all right now except for the fatigue of the travel which I am sure will go off in a few days.

My love and blessings to you all.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 95

XCIV Marie

XCIV

To Marie Halboister

ALMORA,

2nd June, 1897.

DEAR MARIE,

I begin here my promised big chatty letter with the best intention as to its growth, and if it fails, it will be owing to your own Karma. I am sure you are enjoying splendid health. I have been very, very bad indeed; now recovering a bit — hope to recover very soon.

What about the work in London? I am afraid it is going to pieces. Do you now and then visit London? Hasn't Sturdy got a new baby?

The plains of India are blazing now. I cannot bear it. So I am here in this hill station — a bit cooler than the plains.

I am living in a beautiful garden belonging to a merchant of Almora — a garden abutting several miles of mountains and forests. Night before last a leopard came here and took away a goat from the flock kept in this garden. It was a frightful din the servants made and the barking of the big Tibet watchdogs. These dogs are kept chained at a distance all night since I am here, so that they may not disturb my sleep with their deep barks. The leopard thus found his opportunity and got a decent meal, perhaps, after weeks. May it do much good to him!

Do you remember Miss Müller? She has come here for a few days and was rather frightened when she heard of the leopard incident. The demand for tanned skins in London seems very great, and that is playing havoc with our leopards and tigers more than anything else.

As I am writing to you, before me, reflecting the afternoon's flow, stand long, long lines of huge snow peaks. They are about twenty miles as the crow flies from here, and forty through the circuitous mountain roads.

I hope your translations have been well received in the Countess's paper. I had a great mind and very good opportunity of coming over to England this Jubilee season with some of our Princes, but my physicians would not allow me to venture into work so soon. For going to Europe means work, isn't it? No work, no bread.

Here the yellow cloth is sufficient, and I would have food enough. Anyhow I am taking a much desired rest, hope it will do me good.

How are you going on with your work? With joy or sorrow? Don't you like to have a good rest, say for some years, and no work? Sleep, eat, and exercise; exercise, eat, and sleep — that is what I am going to do some months yet. Mr. Goodwin is with me. You ought to have seen him in his Indian clothes. I am very soon going to shave his head and make a full-blown monk of him.

Are you still practising some of the Yogas? Do you find any benefit from them? I learn that Mr. Martin is dead. How is Mrs. Martin — do you see her now and then?

Do you know Miss Noble? Do you ever see her? Here my letter comes to an end, as a huge dust storm is blowing over me, and it is impossible to write. It is all your Karma, dear Marie, for I intended to write so many wonderful things and tell you such fine stories; but I will have to keep them for the future, and you will have to wait.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 96

XCV Miss Noble

XCV

To Sister Nivedita

ALMORA,

20th June, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

. . . Let me tell you plainly. Every word you write I value, and every letter is welcome a hundred times. Write whenever you have a mind and opportunity, and whatever you like, knowing that nothing will be misinterpreted, nothing unappreciated. I have not had any news of the work for so long. Can you tell me anything? I do not expect any help from India, in spite of all the jubilation over me. They are so poor!

But I have started work in the fashion in which I myself was trained — that is to say, under the trees, and keeping body and soul together anyhow. The plan has also changed a little. I have sent some of my boys to work in the famine districts. It has acted like a miracle. I find, as I always thought, that it is through the heart, and that alone, that the world can be reached. The present plan is, therefore, to train up numbers of young men (from the highest classes, not the lowest. For the latter I shall have to wait a little), and the first attack will be made by sending a number of them over a district. When these sappers and miners of religion have cleared the way, there will then be time enough to put in theory and philosophy.

A number of boys are already in training, but the recent earthquake has destroyed the poor shelter we had to work in, which was only rented, anyway. Never mind. The work must be done without shelter and under difficulties. . . . As yet it is shaven heads, rags, and casual meals. This must change, however, and will, for are we not working for it, head and heart? . . .

It is true in one way that the people here have so little to give up — yet renunciation is in our blood. One of my boys in training has been an executive engineer, in charge of a district. That means a very big position here. He gave it up like straw! . . .

With all love,

Yours in the Truth,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 97

XCVI Miss Noble

XCVI

With all love, yours ever in the Truth,
VIVEKANANDA.

To Sister Nivedita

ALMORA,

4th July, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

I am being played upon curiously by both good and evil influences from London these times here. . . . On the other hand, your letters are full of life and sunshine, and bring strength and hope to my spirits, and they sadly want these now. God knows.

Although I am still in the Himalayas, and shall be here for at least a month more, I started the work in Calcutta before I came, and they write progress every week.

Just now I am very busy with the famine, and except for training a number of young men for future work, have not been able to put more energy into the teaching work. The "feeding work" is absorbing all my energy and means. Although we can work only on a very small scale as yet, the effect is marvellous. For the first time since the days of Buddha, Brahmin boys are found nursing by the bedside of cholera-stricken pariahs.

In India, lectures and teaching cannot do any good. What we want is Dynamic Religion. And that, "God willing", as the Mohammedans say, I am determined to show. . . . I entirely agree with the prospectus of your Society, and you may take for granted my agreement with everything you will do in the future. I have entire faith in your ability and sympathy. I already owe you an immense debt, and you are laying me every day under infinite obligations. My only consolation is that it is for the good of others. Else I do not deserve in the least the wonderful kindness shown to me by the Wimbledon friends. You good, steady, genuine English people, may the Lord always bless you. I appreciate you every day more and more from a distance. Kindly convey my love everlasting to ___ and all the rest of our friends there.

Chapter 98

XCVII Joe Joe

XCVII

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

ALMORA,

10th July, 1897.

MY DEAR JOE JOE,

I am glad to learn that you have at last found out that I have time to read your letters.

I have taken to the Himalayas, tired of lecturing and orating. I am so sorry the doctors would not allow my going over with the Raja of Khetri to England, and that has made Sturdy mad.

The Seviars are at Simla and Miss Müller here in Almora.

The plague has subsided, but the famine is still here, and as it looks (on account of no rain as yet), it may wear yet a terrible aspect.

I am very busy from here directing work by my boys in some of the famine districts.

Do come by all means; only you must remember this. The Europeans and the Hindus (called "Natives" by the Europeans) live as oil and water. Mixing with Natives is damning to the Europeans.

There are no good hotels to speak of even at the capitals. You will have to travel with a number of servants about you (cost cheaper than hotels). You will have to bear with people who wear only a loin cloth; you will see me with only a loin cloth about me. Dirt and filth everywhere, and brown people. But you will have plenty of men to talk to you philosophy. If you mix with the English much here, you will have more comforts but see nothing of the Hindus as they are. Possibly I will not be able to eat with you, but I promise that I will travel to good many places with you and do everything in my power to make your journey pleasant. These are what you expect; if anything good comes, so much the better. Perhaps Mary Hale may

come over with you. There is a young lady, Miss Campbell, Orchard Lake, Orchard Island, Michigan, who is a great worshipper of Krishna and lives alone in that Island, fasting and praying. She will give anything to be able to see India once, but she is awfully poor. If you bring her with you, I will anyhow manage to pay her expenses. If Mrs. Bull brings old Landsberg with her, that will be saving that fool's life as it were.

Most probably I may accompany you back to America. Kiss Holister for me and the baby. My love to Alberta, to the Leggetts, and to Mabel. What is Fox doing? Give him my love when you see him. To Mrs. Bull and S. Saradananda my love. I am as strong as ever, but it all depends upon leading a quiet life ever afterwards. No hurly-burly any more.

I had a great mind to go to Tibet this year; but they would not allow me, as the road is dreadfully fatiguing. However, I content myself with galloping hard over precipices on mountain ponies. (This is more exciting than your bicycle even, although I had an experience of that at Wimbledon.) Miles and miles of uphill and miles and miles of downhill, the road a few feet broad hanging over sheer precipices several thousand feet deep below.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. The best time to come is to arrive in India by October or beginning of November. December, January, and February you see things all over and then start by the end of February. From March it begins to get hot. Southern India is always hot.

V.

Goodwin has gone to work in Madras on a paper to be started there soon.

V.

Chapter 99

XCVIII Rakhhal

XCVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

DEULDHAR, ALMORA,

13th July, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Going to Almora from here I made special efforts for Yogen. But he left for the plains as soon as he had recovered a little. From Subhala valley he will write to me of his safe arrival there. As it is impossible to procure a Dandi (a carrying chair) or any other conveyance, Latu could not go. Achyut and myself have again come back to this place. Today my health is a little bad owing to this riding on horseback at breakneck speed in the sun. I took Shashi Babu's medicine for two weeks — I find no special benefit. . . . The pain in the liver is gone, and owing to plenty of exercise my hands and legs have become muscular, but the abdomen is distending very much. I feel suffocated while getting up or sitting down. Perhaps this is due to the taking of milk. Ask Shashi if I can give up milk. Previously I suffered from two attacks of sunstroke. From that time, my eyes become red if I expose myself to the sun, and the health continues to be bad for two or three days at a stretch.

I was very pleased to get all the news from the Math, and I also heard that the famine relief work is going on well. Please let me know if any money has been received from the office of the Brahmavadin for famine relief. Some money will be sent soon from here also. There is famine in many other places as well, so it is not necessary to stay so long in one place. Tell them to move to other localities and write to each man to go to a separate place. All such work is real work. If the field is made ready in this way, the seeds of spiritual knowledge can be sown. Remember this always — that the only answer to those conservative fanatics who abuse us is such work. I have no objection to getting the thing printed as Shashi and

Sarada have suggested.

You yourselves come to a decision as to what the name of the Math should be. . . . The money will come within seven weeks; but I have no further news about the land. In this matter it seems to me that it will be good if we can get the garden of Kristo Gopal in Cossipore. (Where Shri Ramakrishna passed his last days.) What do you say? In future great works will be accomplished. If you agree with me, don't let this matter out to anybody either within the Math or outside, but quietly make inquiries. The work is spoiled if plans are not kept secret. If it can be bought with fifteen or sixteen thousand, then buy at once — of course, only if you think it good. If something more is demanded, make some advance payment and wait for those seven weeks. My view is that for the present it is better to buy it. Everything else will come by and by. All our associations centre round that garden. In reality that is our first Math. Let the thing be done very privately.

A work can be judged by its results only, just as one can infer the nature of previous mental tendencies by their resultant in present behaviour. . . .

Undoubtedly the price of the land of the garden at Cossipore has increased; but our purse has, on the other hand, dwindled. Do something or other, but do it quickly. All work is spoiled by dilatoriness. This garden also has to be acquired — if not today, tomorrow — however big the Math on the banks of the Ganga may be. It will be still better if you can broach the subject through a proxy. If they hear that we are willing to buy, they will bid high. Do the work very confidentially. Be fearless; Shri Ramakrishna is our helper, what fear? Give my love to all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. (on the cover): . . . Make special efforts for Cossipore. . . . Give up the land at Belur. Should the poor (The famine-stricken people for whom the Mahabodhi Society agreed to pay, on condition that the work would be done in its name.) die of starvation while you people at the top are indulging in controversy regarding to whom the credit should go? If "Mahabodhi" takes all the credit, let it. Let

the poor be benefited. That the work is going on well is good news. Work on with greater energy. I am beginning to send articles. The saccharine and lime have reached.

V.

Chapter 100

IC Marie

IC

To Marie Halboister

ALMORA,

25th July, 1897.

MY DEAR MARIE,

I have time, will, and opportunity now to clear my promise. So my letter begins. I have been very weak for some time, and with that and other things my visit to England this Jubilee season had to be postponed.

I was very sorry at first not to be able to meet my nice and very dear friends once more, but Karma cannot be avoided, and I had to rest contented with my Himalayas. It is a sorry exchange, after all; for the beauty of the living spirit shining through the human face is far more pleasurable than any amount of material beauty.

Is not the soul the Light of the world?

The work in London had to go slow — for various reasons, and last though not the least was l'argent, mon amie! When I am there l'argent comes in somehow, to keep the mare going. Now everybody shrugs his shoulder. I must come again and try my best to revive the work.

I am having a good deal of riding and exercise, but I had to drink a lot of skimmed milk per prescription of the doctors, with the result that I am more to the front than back! I am always a forward man though — but do not want to be too prominent just now, and I have given up drinking milk.

I am glad to learn that you are eating your meals with good appetite.

Do you know Miss Margaret Noble of Wimbledon? She is working hard for me. Do correspond with her if you can, and you help me a good deal there. Her address is, Brantwood, Worple Road, Wimbledon.

So you saw my little friend Miss Orchard and you liked her too — good. I have great hopes for her. And how I should like to be retired from life's activities entirely when I am very old, and hear the world ringing with the names of my dear, dear young friends like yourself and Miss Orchard etc.!

By and by, I am glad to find that I am aging fast, my hair is turning grey. "Silver threads among the gold" — I mean black — are coming in fast.

It is bad for a preacher to be young, don't you think so? I do, as I did all my life. People have more confidence in an old man, and it looks more venerable. Yet the old rogues are the worst rogues in the world, isn't it?

The world has its code of judgment which, alas, is very different from that of truth's.

So your "Universal Religion" has been rejected by the Revue de deux Mondes. Never mind, try again some other paper. Once the ice is broken, you get in at a quick rate, I am sure. And I am so glad that you love the work: it will make its way, I have no doubt of it. Our ideas have a future, ma chere Marie — and it will be realised soon.

I think this letter will meet you in Paris — your beautiful Paris — and I hope you will write me lots about French journalism and the coming "World's Fair" there.

I am so glad that you have been helped by Vedanta and Yoga. I am unfortunately sometimes like the circus clown who makes others laugh, himself miserable!

You are naturally of a buoyant temperament. Nothing seems to touch you. And you are moreover a very prudent girl, inasmuch as you have scrupulously kept yourself away from "love" and all its nonsense. So you see you have made your good Karma and planted the seed of your lifelong well-being. Our difficulty in life is that we are guided by the present and not by the future. What gives us a little pleasure now drags us on to follow it, with the result that we always buy a mass of pain in the future for a little pleasure in the present.

I wish I had nobody to love, and I were an orphan in my childhood. The greatest misery in my life has been my own people — my brothers and sisters and mother etc. Relatives are like deadly clogs to one's progress, and is it not a wonder that people will still go on to find new ones by marriage!!!

He who is alone is happy. Do good to all, like everyone, but do not love anyone. It is a bondage, and bondage brings only misery. Live alone in your mind — that is happiness. To have nobody to care for and never minding who cares for one is the way to be free.

I envy so much your frame of mind — quiet, gentle, light, yet deep and free. You are already free, Marie, free already — you are Jivanmukta. I am more of a woman than a man, you are more of a man than woman. I am always dragging other's pain into me — for nothing, without being able to do any good to anybody — just as women, if they have no children, bestow all their love upon a cat!!!

Do you think this has any spirituality in it? Nonsense, it is all material nervous bondage — that is what it is. O! to get rid of the thralldom of the flesh!

Your friend Mrs. Martin very kindly sends me copies of her magazine every month — but Sturdy's thermometer is now below zero, it seems. He seems to be greatly disappointed with my non-arrival in England this summer. What could I do?

We have started two Maths (monasteries) here, one in Calcutta, the other in Madras. The Calcutta Math (a wretched rented house) was awfully shaken in the late earthquake.

We have got in a number of boys, and they are in training; also we have opened famine relief in several places and the work is going on apace. We will try to start similar centres in different places in India.

In a few days I am going down to the plains and from thence go to the Western parts of the mountains. When it is cooler in the plains, I will make a lecture tour all over and see what work can be done.

Here I cannot find any more time to write — so many people are waiting — so here I stop, dear Marie, wishing you all joy and happiness.

May you never be lured by flesh is the constant prayer of —

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 101

C Shashi

C

(Translated from Bengali.)

To Swami Ramakrishnananda

ALMORA,

29th July, 1897.

DEAR SHASHI,

I got information that your work there is going on very well. Get a thorough mastery of the three Bhâshyas (commentaries), and also study well European philosophy and allied subjects — see to it without fail. To fight with others one requires sword and shield — this fact should never be forgotten. I hope Sukul has now reached there and is attending on you all right. If Sadananda does not like to stay there, send him to Calcutta. Don't forget to send to the Math every week a report of the work including income and expenditure and other information.

Alasinga's sister's husband borrowed four hundred rupees from Badridas here, promising to send it back as soon as he reached Madras; inquire from Alasinga and tell him to send it quickly. For I am leaving this place the day after tomorrow — whether for Mussoorie Hills or somewhere else I shall decide later.

Yesterday I delivered a lecture in the circle of the local English people, and all were highly pleased with it. But I was very much pleased with the lecture in Hindi that I delivered the previous day — I did not know before that I could be oratorical in Hindi.

Are there any new boys joining the Math? If so, then carry on the work in the same manner as it is being done in Calcutta. At present don't use up your wisdom too much, lest it should become completely exhausted — you can do that later on.

Pay particular attention to your health, but too much coddling of the body will, on the contrary, also spoil the

health. If there is not the strength of knowledge, nobody would care twopence for your ringing of the bell — this is certain; and knowing this for certain equip yourself accordingly. My heart's love and blessings to you and to Goodwin and others.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 102

CI Shashi

CI

(Translated from Bengali.)

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

To Swami Ramakrishnananda

AMBALA,

19th August, 1897.

DEAR SHASHI,

I am very much pained to hear that the work in Madras is not prospering for want of funds. I am glad to learn that the amount borrowed by Alasinga's brother-in-law (sister's husband) has been received back in Almora. Goodwin has written to me to inform the Reception Committee to take some money for expenses from the amount that is left as a result of the lecture. It is a very mean thing to spend the money received on the occasion of that lecture for the purpose of the Reception — and I do not like to tell anybody anything about this matter. I have understood quite well what the people of our country are when it comes to money-matters. . . . On my behalf, you personally talk with the friends there and politely make them understand that it is all right if they can find ways and means to bear the expenses; but if they cannot do so, all of you come back to the Math at Calcutta or go to Ramnad and establish the Math there.

I am now going to the hills at Dharamsala. Niranjana, Dinu, Krishnalal, Latu, and Achyut will stay at Amritsar. Why did you not, all these days, send Sadananda to the Math? If he is still there, then send him to the Punjab on receipt of a letter from Niranjana from Amritsar. I intend to start work in the Punjab after a few days' more rest in the Punjab hills. The Punjab and Rajputana are indeed fields for work. I shall write to you again soon after starting work. . . .

My health was very bad recently. Now I am very slowly recovering. It will be all right, if I stay in the hills for some more days. My love to you and to Alasinga, G. G., R. A., Goodwin, Gupta, Sukul, and all others.

Chapter 103

CII Rakhhal

CII

(Translated from Bengali.)

To Swami Brahmananda

AMRITSAR,

2nd September, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Yogen tells me in a letter to buy the house at Baghbazar for Rs. 20,000. Even if we buy that house, there are still a lot of difficulties; for example, we shall have to break it down in part and make the drawing room into a big hall, and similar alterations and repairs. Moreover the house is very old and ramshackle. However, consult Girish Babu and Atul and do what you decide to be best. Today I am leaving by the two o'clock train with all my party for Kashmir. The recent stay at Dharamsala Hills has improved my health much, and the tonsillitis, fever, etc. have completely disappeared. From a letter of yours I got all the news. Niranjana, Lata, Krishnalal, Dinanath, Gupta, and Achyut are all going to Kashmir with me.

The gentleman from Madras who donated Rs. 1,500 for famine relief wants an account of how exactly the money was expended. Send him such an account. We are doing more or less well.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Give my love to all at the Math.

V.

Chapter 104

CIII Rakhāl

CIII

(Translated from Bengali.)

To Swami Brahmananda

C/O RISHIBAR MUKHOPADHYAYA,

CHIEF JUSTICE,

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

13th September, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Now Kashmir. The excellent accounts you heard of this place are all true. There is no place so beautiful as this; and the people also are fair and good-looking, though their eyes are not beautiful. But I have also never seen elsewhere villages and towns so horribly dirty. In Srinagar I am now putting up at the house of Rishibar Babu. He is very hospitable and kind. Send all my letters to his address. In a few days I shall go out somewhere else on excursions; but while returning, I shall come by way of Srinagar, and so shall get the letters also. I have read the letter that you sent regarding Gangadhar. Write to him that there are many orphans in Central India and in Gorakhpur. From there the Punjabis are getting many children. You must persuade Mahendra Babu and get up an agitation about this matter, so that the people of Calcutta are induced to take up the charge of these orphans — such a movement is very desirable. Especially a memorial should be sent to the Government requesting it to see that orphans taken over by the missionaries are returned to the Hindus. Tell Gangadhar to come over; and on behalf of the Ramakrishna Society a tearing campaign should be made. Gird up your loins, and go to every house to carry on the campaign. Hold mass meetings etc. Whether you succeed or not, start a furious agitation. Get all the facts from the important Bengali friends at Gorakhpur by writing to them, and let there be a countrywide agitation over this. Let the Ramakrishna Society

be fully established. The secret of the whole thing is to agitate and agitate without respite. I am much pleased to see the orderliness of Sarada's work. Gangadhar and Sarada should not rest satisfied until they have succeeded in creating a centre in every place they visit.

Just now I received a letter from Gangadhar. It is good news that he is determined to start a centre in that district. Write to him saying that his friend, the Magistrate, has sent an excellent reply to my letter. As soon as we come down to the plains from Kashmir, I shall send back Latu, Niranjana, Dinu, and Khoka. For there is no suitable work for them here any more; also within three to four weeks send Shuddhananda, Sushil, and one other to me. Send them to the house of Mr. Shyamacharan Mukhopadhyaya, Medical Hall, Cantonment, Ambala. From there I shall go to Lahore. They should have each two thick gerua-coloured jerseys, and two blankets for bedding. I shall buy them woollen chaddars, and other woollen necessities in Lahore. If the translation of Râja-Yoga has been completed, get it published bearing all the cost. . . . Where the language is obscure, make it very simple and clear, and let Tulsi make a Hindi translation of it if he can. If these books are published, they will help the Math very greatly.

I hope your health is now quite all right. Since reaching Dharamsala I have been all right. I like the cold places; there the body keeps well. I have a desire either to visit a few places in Kashmir and then choose an excellent site and live a quiet life there, or to go on floating on the water. I shall do what the doctor advises. The Raja is not here now. His brother, the one just next to him in age, is the Commander-in-Chief. Efforts are being made to arrange a lecture under his chairmanship. I shall write all about this afterwards. If the meeting for the lecture is held in a day or two, I shall stay back, otherwise I go out again on my travels. Sevier is still at Murree. His health is very bad — going about in the jolting tongas and jutkas. The Bengali gentlemen of Murree are very good and courteous. Give my respects to G. C. Ghosh, Atul, Master Mahashay, and others, and keep up the spirits of everybody. What is the news about the house which Yogen suggested we should buy? In October I shall go down from here and shall deliver a few lectures in the Punjab. After that I may go via Sind to Cutch, Bhuj, and Kathiawar — even

down to Poona if circumstances are favourable; otherwise I go to Rajputana via Baroda. From Rajputana I go to the North-Western Province, (In those days this was made up of Uttar Pradesh and part of the Punjab.) then Nepal, and finally Calcutta — this is my present programme. Everything, however, is in God's hands. My love and greetings to all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 105

CIV Shuddhananda

CIV

To Swami Shuddhananda

C/O RISHIBAR MUKHOPADHYAYA,

CHIEF JUSTICE,

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

15th September, 1897.

MY DEAR SHUDDHANANDA,

We are in Kashmir at last. I need not tell you of all the beauties of the place. It is the one land fit for Yogis, to my mind. But the land is now inhabited by a race who though possessing great physical beauty are extremely dirty. I am going to travel by water for a month seeing the sights and getting strong. But the city is very malarious just now, and Sadananda and Kristolal have got fever. Sadananda is all right today, but Kristolal has fever yet. The doctor came today and gave him a purgative. He will be all right by tomorrow, we hope; and we start also tomorrow. The State has lent me one of its barges, and it is fine and quite comfortable. They have also sent orders to the Tahsildars of different districts. The people here are crowding in banks to see us and are doing everything they can to make us comfortable.

A clipping from The Indian Mirror, quoting passages from an article written by Dr. Barrows in an American paper, has been sent over to me by somebody without a name and asking me what reply to give. I send back the cutting to Brahmananda with my answer to the passages which are damned lies!

I am glad to learn you are doing well there and going on with your usual work. I also had a letter from Shivananda giving the details of work there.

After a month I go back to the Punjab, and I will expect three of you at Ambala. In case a centre is founded, one of you will be left in charge. Nirranjan, Latu, and Kristolal will be sent back.

I intend to make a rapid march through the Punjab and Sind via Kathiawar and Baroda, back to Rajputana, and thence to Nepal and last Calcutta.

Write to me C/o Rishibar Babu at Srinagar. I will get the letter on my way back.

With love to all and blessings,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 106

CV Haripada

CV

(Translated from Bengali)

To Sri Haripada Mitra

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

1897.

DEAR HARIPADA,

My health has been very bad for the last nine months, and the heat made it still worse. So I have been wandering over the hills from place to place. Now I am in Kashmir. I have travelled far and wide, but I have never seen such a country. I shall soon leave for the Punjab and again go to work. From Sadananda I have heard all the news about you and continue to get it. I am sure to go to Karachi after visiting the Punjab. So we shall meet in person there.

With blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 107

CVI Miss MacLeod

CVI

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

30th September, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS MACLEOD,

Come soon if you intend to come really. From November to the middle of February India is cool; after that it is hot. You will be able to see all you want within that time, but to see all takes years.

I am in a hurry; therefore excuse this hasty card. Kindly tender my love to Mrs. Bull and my good wishes and earnest thoughts for Goodwin's speedy recovery. My love to Mother, to Alberta, to the baby, to Holister, and last, not the least, to Franky.

Yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 108

CVII Rakhal

CVII

To Swami Brahmananda

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

30th September, 1897

DEAR RAKHAL,

I received your affectionate letter and also the letter from the Math. I am leaving for the Punjab in two or three days. I have received the foreign mail. The following are my answers to Miss Noble's questions in her letter:

1. Nearly all the branches have been started, but the movement is only just beginning.

2. Most of the monks are educated. Those that are not are also having secular education. But above all, to do good, perfect unselfishness is absolutely necessary. To ensure that, more attention is given to spiritual exercises than to anything else.

3. Secular educators: We get mostly those who have already educated themselves. What is needed is training them into our method and building up of character. The training is to make them obedient and fearless; and the method is to help the poor physically first and then work up to higher regions of mentality.

Arts and Industries: This part of the programme alone cannot be begun for want of funds. The simplest method to be worked upon at present is to induce Indians to use their own produce and get markets for Indian artware etc. in other countries. This should be done by persons who are not only not middlemen themselves, but will devote the entire proceeds of this branch to the benefit of the workmen.

4. Wandering from place to place will be necessary till "people come to education". The religious character of the wandering monks will carry with it a much greater

weight than otherwise.

5. All castes are open to our influence. So long the highest only have been worked upon. But since the work department is in full operation in different famine-centres, we are influencing the lower classes more and more.

6. Nearly all the Hindus approve our work, only they are not used to practical co-operation in such works.

7. Yes, from the very start we are making no distinction in our charities or other good works between the different religions of India.

Reply to Miss N. according to these hints.

See that there is no remissness whatever in the medical treatment of Yogen — if necessary spend money by drawing on the capital. Did you go and meet Bhavanath's wife?

If Brahmachari Hariprasanna can come, it will be very helpful. Mr. Sevier has become very impatient about acquiring a house somewhere; it will be good if something is done quickly about it! Hariprasanna is an engineer; so he will be able to do something quickly about it. Also he understands better about the suitability of places. They (the Seviars) like to have a place somewhere near about Dehra Dun or Mussoorie; that is to say, the place must not be too cold and must be habitable throughout the year. So send Hariprasanna at once straight to Sj. Shyamapada Mukherjee, Medical Hall, Ambala Cantonment. As soon as I go down to the Punjab, I shall send Mr. Sevier along with him. I am returning (to the Math) in a trice after a tour of the Punjab, Karachi, and then via Rajputana, not via Kathiawar and Gujarat — to Nepal. Tulsī has gone to Madhya Bharat — is it for the famine-relief work? . . .

My blessings and love to all. I have got the news that Kali has reached New York; but he has not written any letter. Sturdy writes that his work had increased so much that people were amazed — and a few persons have also written me praising him highly. However, there is

not so much difficulty in America; the work will go on somehow or other. Send Shuddhananda and his brother along with Hariprasanna. Of the party only Gupta and Achyut will accompany me.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 109

CVIII Shashi

CVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Ramakrishnananda

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

30th September, 1897

MY DEAR SHASHI,

Now I am returning from a visit to places in Kashmir. In a day or two I shall leave for the Punjab. As my health is now much better, I have decided to tour again in the same way as before. Not too much lecturing — one or two lectures, perhaps, in the Punjab, otherwise none. The people of our country have not yet offered me even as much as a pice for my travelling expenses — and to cap it all, to take with you a whole party, well, you can easily understand how troublesome it all is. It is also a matter of shame to have to draw upon only the English disciples. So, as before, I start out “with only a blanket”. In this place there is no need for any person like Goodwin, as you can see.

A monk from Ceylon, P. C. Jinawar Vamar by name, has written to me among other things that he wants to visit India. Perhaps he is the same monk who comes of the Siamese royal family. His address is Wellawatta, Ceylon. If convenient, invite him to Madras. He believes in the Vedanta. It will not be so difficult to send him to other places from Madras. It is also good to have such a person in the Order. My love and blessings to you and all others.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. The Maharaja of Khetri is reaching Bombay on the 10th October. Don't forget to present him an address of welcome.

V.

Chapter 110

CIX Rakhhal

CIX

To Swami Brahmananda

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

30th September, 1897

DEAR RAKHAL,

I understand from a letter of Gopal Dada that you have seen that piece of land at Konnagar. It seems that that site is rent-free and measures 16 bighas (about 5 acres), and that the price is below eight or ten thousand rupees. Do what you think best after considering the healthiness and other factors. In a day or two I shall leave for the Punjab. So don't write any more letters to me at this address. I shall telegraph to you my next address. Don't forget to send Hariprasanna. Tell Gopal Dada thus: "Your health will soon be all right — winter is coming, what fear? Eat well and be merry." Write a letter to Mrs. C. Sevier at Spring Dale, Murree, as to Yogen's present state of health, marking on the cover "to await arrival". Give my love and blessings to all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. The Maharaja of Khetri reaches Bombay on the 10th October. Don't forget to give him an address of welcome.

V.

Chapter 111

CX Margo

CX

To Sister Nivedita

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

1st October, 1897.

DEAR MARGO,

Some people do the best work when led. Not every one is born to lead. The best leader, however, is one who “leads like the baby”. The baby, though apparently depending on everyone, is the king of the household. At least, to my thinking, that is the secret. . . . Many feel, but only a few can express. It is the power of expressing one’s love and appreciation and sympathy for others, that enables one person to succeed better in spreading the idea than others. . . .

I shall not try to describe Kashmir to you. Suffice it to say, I never felt sorry to leave any country except this Paradise on earth; and I am trying my best, if I can, to influence the Raja in starting a centre. So much to do here, and the material so hopeful! . . .

The great difficulty is this: I see persons giving me almost the whole of their love. But I must not give anyone the whole of mine in return, for that day the work would be ruined. Yet there are some who will look for such a return, not having the breadth of the impersonal view. It is absolutely necessary to the work that I should have the enthusiastic love of as many as possible, while I myself remain entirely impersonal. Otherwise jealousy and quarrels would break up everything. A leader must be impersonal. I am sure you understand this. I do not mean that one should be a brute, making use of the devotion of others for his own ends, and laughing in his sleeve meanwhile. What I mean is what I am, intensely personal in my love, but having the power to pluck out my own heart with my own hand, if it becomes necessary, “for the good of many, for the welfare of many”, as Buddha said. Madness of love,

and yet in it no bondage. Matter changed into spirit by the force of love. Nay, that is the gist of our Vedanta. There is but One, seen by the ignorant as matter, by the wise as God. And the history of civilisation is the progressive reading of spirit into matter. The ignorant see the person in the non-person. The sage sees the non-person in the person. Through pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, this is the one lesson we are learning. . . .

Yours ever with love and truth,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 112

CXI Rakhai

CXI

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

MURREE,

11th October, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I feel I have been working as if under an irresistible impulse for the last ten days, beginning from Kashmir. It may be either a physical or a mental disease. Now I have come to the conclusion that I am unfit for further work. . . . I now understand that I have been very harsh to all of you. But I knew, however, that you would bear with all my shortcomings; in the Math there is no one else who will do so. I have been increasingly harsh to you. Whatever has happened is now past — it is all the result of past Karma. What is the good of my repentance? I do not believe in it. It is all Karma. Whatever of Mother's work was to be accomplished through me, She made me do, and has now flung me aside breaking down my body and mind. Her will be done!

Now I retire from all this work. In a day or two I shall give up everything and wander out alone; I shall spend the rest of my life quietly in some place or other. Forgive me if you all will, or do what you like.

Mrs. Bull has given much of the money. She has implicit confidence in Sharat. Do the work of the Math with Sharat's advice; or do as you will.

But I have all along been like a hero — I want my work to be quick like lightning, and firm as adamant. Likewise shall I die also. Therefore kindly do my work for me — no question of success or defeat enters here at all. I have never retreated in a fight — shall I now . . . ? There is success and failure in every work. But I am inclined to believe that one who is a coward will be born after death as an insect or a worm, that there is no salvation for a coward even after millions of years of penance. Well, shall I after all be born as

a worm? . . . In my eyes this world is mere play — and it will always remain as such. Should one spend six long months brooding over the questions of honour and disgrace, gain and loss pertaining to this? . . . I am a man of action. Simply advice upon advice is being given — this one says this, that one says that; again that man threatens, and this one frightens! This life is not, in my view, such a sweet thing that I would long to live through so much care and caution and fear. Money, life, friends, and relatives, and the love of men and myself — if one wants to enter into work fully assured beforehand of all these — if one has to be so much ridden with fear, then one will get just what Gurudeva used to say, "The crow thinks itself very clever but . . ." (The crow thinks itself very clever, but it cannot help eating filth.) — well, he will get that. After all, what is the purpose behind all these — money and wealth, Maths and institutions, preaching and lecturing? There is only one purpose in the whole of life — education. Otherwise what is the use of men and women, land and wealth?

So loss of money, or loss of anything else — I cannot bother about, and I will not. When I fight, I fight with girded loins — that much I fully understand; and I also understand that man, that hero, that god, who says, "Don't care, be fearless. O brave one, here I am by your side!" To such a man-god I offer a million salutations. Their presence purifies the world, they are the saviours of the world. And the others who always wail, "Oh, don't go forward, there is this danger, there is that danger" — those dyspeptics — they always tremble with fear. But through the grace of the Divine Mother my mind is so strong that even the most terrible dyspepsia shall not make me a coward. To cowards what advice shall I offer? — nothing whatsoever have I to say. But this I desire, that I should find shelter at the feet of those brave souls who dared to do great deeds even though they failed to succeed, of those heroes who never quailed nor shirked, of those fighters who never disobeyed orders through fear or pride. I am the child of the Divine Mother, the source of all power and strength. To me, cringing, fawning, whining, degrading inertia and hell are one and the same thing. O Mother of the Universe, O my Gurudeva, who would constantly say, "This is a hero!" — I pray that I may not have to die a coward.

This is my prayer, O brother. " [111_rakhal_01.jpg] — certainly there is, or there will be born one equal to me"; some one or other will certainly arise from these thousands of devotees of Shri Ramakrishna who will be like me, and who will be able to understand me.

O hero, awake, and dream no more. Death has caught you by the forelock . . . still fear not. What I have never done — fleeing from the battle — well, will that happen today? For fear of defeat shall I retreat from the fight? Defeat is the ornament the hero adorns himself with. What, to acknowledge defeat without fighting! O Mother, Mother! . . . Not one capable of even playing second fiddle and yet the mind filled with petty self-importance, "We understand everything". . . . Now I retire; . . . everything I leave in your control. If Mother sends me men again in whose heart there is courage, in whose hands strength, in whose eyes there is fire, real children of the Mother — if She gives me even one such, then I shall work again, then I shall return. Otherwise, I shall take it that, by Mother's will, this is the end. I am in a tremendous hurry, I want to work at hurricane speed, and I want fearless hearts.

I have rebuked poor Sarada severely. What to do? . . . I do scold; but I also have much to complain. . . . Almost suffocated by short breathing, standing and standing, I have written an article for him. . . . It is all good, otherwise how will renunciation come? . . . Will Mother in the end kill me with attachment? I have offended all of you — do what you want.

I bless you all with a full heart. May Mother enshrine Herself in your hearts as strength: [111_rakhal_02.jpg] — the support that is fearlessness — may She make you all fearless. This I have seen in life — he who is over-cautious about himself falls into dangers at every step; he who is afraid of losing honour and respect, gets only disgrace; he who is always afraid of loss always loses. . . . May all good attend you all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 113

CXII Rakhhal

CXII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

MURREE,

12th October, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I wrote at length in yesterday's letter. I think it desirable to give you special directions about certain matters. . . . (1) To all those who collect money and send it to the Math . . . the acknowledgment of the amounts will be issued from the Math. (2) The acknowledgment must be in duplicate, one for the sender, and one for filing in the Math. (3) There must be a big register in which all the names and addresses of the donors will be entered. (4) Accounts, accurate to the last pie, must be kept of the amounts that are donated to the Math Fund, and fully accurate accounts should be obtained from Sarada and others to whom money is given. For lack of accurate account-keeping . . . see that I am not accused as a cheat. These accounts should afterwards be published. (5) Immediately go and register a will under lawyer's advice to the effect that in case you and I die then Hari and Sharat will succeed to all that there is in our Math.

I have not yet got any news from Ambala, whether Hariprasanna and others have reached there or not. Give the other half-sheet of this letter to Master Mahashay.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 114

CXIII Miss Noble

CXIII

To Sister Nivedita

JAMMU,

3rd November, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE, (This was the last letter received in England by Sister Nivedita.)

. . . Too much sentiment hurts work. "Hard as steel and soft as a flower" is the motto.

I shall soon write to Sturdy. He is right to tell you that in case of trouble I will stand by you. You will have the whole of it if I find a piece of bread in India — you may rest assured of that. I am going to write to Sturdy from Lahore, for which I start tomorrow. I have been here for 15 days to get some land in Kashmir from the Maharaja. I intend to go to Kashmir again next summer, if I am here, and start some work there.

With everlasting love,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 115

CXIV Rakhhal

CXIV

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

LAHORE,

11th November, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

The lecture at Lahore is over somehow. I shall start for Dehra Dun in a day or two. I have now postponed my tour to Sind, as none of you are agreeable to it, and also because of various other obstacles. Somebody has opened my two letters from England on the way. So don't send me letters any further for the present. Send them after I have written for them from Khetri. If you go to Orissa, then make arrangements that some one will do all the work as your representative — say Hari, especially now, when I am daily expecting letters from America.

Perhaps the will that I asked you to make in favour of Hari and Sharat has now been made.

Probably I shall leave Sadananda and Sudhir here after establishing a Society. Now no more lecturing — I go in a hurry straight to Rajputana.

The establishment of the Math must have precedence over everything.

Without regular exercise the body does not keep fit; talking, talking all the time brings illness — know this for certain. My love to all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 116

CXV Rakhhal

CXV

V.

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

LAHORE,

15th November, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I hope you and Hari are now in good health. The work in Lahore went off with great éclat. Now I go to Dehra Dun. The Sind tour is postponed. I have yet no news whether Dinu, Latu, and Krishnalal have reached Jaipur. Babu Nagendranath Gupta will collect subscriptions and donations from here and send them to the Math to meet expenses. Send him regular receipts. Let me know if you have received anything from Murree, Rawalpindi, and Sialkot.

Reply to me C/o Post Master, Dehra Dun. Other letters you may send me after hearing from me from Dehra Dun. My health is good; only I have to get up at night once or twice. I am having sound sleep; sleep is not spoiled even after exhausting lectures; and I am doing exercise every day. . . . There is no trouble at all. Now, come on, work with redoubled energy. Keep an eye on that big piece of land — in all secrecy. We are making regular efforts so that big Utsava (Celebration — of Shri Ramakrishna's birthday.) can be held there. My love to all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. It will be a very good thing if Master Mahashay will write now and then about us in The Tribune, so that Lahore will not become cold again — now it is quite warmed up. Spend money a little economically; pilgrimage expenses should be borne by you personally; preaching and propaganda expenses should be charged to the Math.

Chapter 117

CXVI Baburam

CXVI

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Premananda

DEHRA DUN,

24th November, 1897.

MY DEAR BABURAM,

I got all news about you from Hariprasanna. I am especially pleased to hear that Rakhai and Hari are now quite well.

Now Babu Raghunath Bhattacharya of Tehri is suffering very much from some pain in the neck; I also have been suffering for a long time from some pain at the back of my neck. If you can get hold of some very old ghee, then send some of it to him at Dehra Dun and some of it to me also at my Khetri address. You are sure to get it from Habu or Sharat (lawyer). Address it to Babu Raghunath Bhattacharya, Dehra Dun, N.W.P. . . . and it will reach him.

The day after tomorrow I am leaving for Saharanpur; from there to Rajputana.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. My love to all.

V.

Chapter 118

CXVII Rakhhal

CXVII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

DELHI,

30th November, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Part of the money that Miss Müller promised has reached Calcutta. The balance will come afterwards in a short while. We have also some amount. Miss Müller will deposit the money in your name as well as mine with Messrs. Grindlay & Co. As you have got the power of attorney, you alone can draw all the money. As soon as the money is deposited, you yourself with Hari go to Patna and meet that gentleman and by some means or other influence him; and if the price of the land is reasonable, buy it. If it cannot be had, try for some other plot of ground. I am trying to get some money in these parts too. We must hold the big festival on our own plot of ground — remember this must be your first and foremost work, come what may.

You have shown great pluck; the work you have done these last eight or nine months does you great credit. Now you must see to it that a Math and a centre in Calcutta are steadily established before everything else. Work hard to this end but quietly and in secret. Get information about the Cossipore house also. Tomorrow I am going to Khetri via Alwar. My health is good, even though I have caught a cold. Send all letters to Khetri. My love to all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. What about the will I asked you to make in favour of Sharat and Hari? Or will you buy the land and other things in my name, and I shall make a will?

V.

Chapter 119

CXVIII Rakhhal

CXVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

DELHI,

8th December, 1897.

MYDEAR RAKHAL,

We shall start for Khetri tomorrow. Gradually the luggage has greatly increased. After Khetri I intend to send everybody to the Math. I could get done through them none of the work which I had hoped. That is to say, it is quite certain that none of them can do anything if he always remains with me. Unless each goes about independently, he will not be able to do anything. The fact is, who will care for them if they are in my company? Only waste of time. So I am sending them to the Math.

Keep as a fund for some permanent work the balance of the money left after the famine relief. Do not spend that money for any other purpose, and after giving the full accounts of the famine work, note down thus, "So much balance is left for some other good work". . . .

Work I want — I don't want any humbug. To those who have no desire to work I say, "My dear fellow, now go and follow your own way." As soon as I reach Khetri, I will send you the power of attorney with my signature if the document has reached there meanwhile. Open only those letters from America which bear the Boston postmark, not the others. Send all my letters to Khetri. I shall get money in Rajputana itself; no cause for anxiety on that score. Try energetically for the piece of land; we must have the celebration on our own ground this time.

Is the money in the Bengal Bank, or have you kept it elsewhere? Be very careful about money matters; keep detailed accounts, and regarding money know for certain that one cannot rely even on one's own father.

Give my love to all. Write to me how Hari is doing. Recently I met at Dehra Dun the Udâsi Sâdhu, Kalyân Dev,

and a few others. I hear the people at Hrishikesh are very eager to see me and are asking again and again about me.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 120

CXIX Rakhhal

CXIX

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

KHETRI,

14th December, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I have today sent your power of attorney with my signature. . . . Draw the money as early as you can, and wire to me as soon as you have done so. A Raja of a place in Bundelkhand named Chatrapur has invited me. I shall visit the place on my way to the Math. The Raja of Limbdi, too, is writing earnestly. I cannot avoid going there also. I shall make a lightning tour of Kathiawar — that is what it will come to. I shall feel great relief as soon as I reach Calcutta. . . . There is no news from Boston as yet; perhaps Sharat is coming; anyway, whenever any news comes from anywhere, write to me immediately.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. How is Kanai? I hear that his health is not good. Pay special attention to him and see that nobody is unduly bossed over. Write to me about your health as well as Hari's.

V.

Chapter 121

CXX Shivananda

CXX

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Shivananda

JAIPUR,

27th December, 1897.

MY DEAR SHIVANANDA,

Mr. Setlur of Girgaon, Bombay, whom you know very well from Madras writes to me to send somebody to Africa to look after the religious needs of the Indian emigrants in Africa. He will of course send the man and bear all expenses.

The work will not be congenial at present, I am afraid, but it is really the work for a perfect man. You know the emigrants are not liked at all by the white people there. To look after the Indians, and at the same time maintain cool — headedness so as not to create more strife — is the work there. No immediate result can be expected, but in the long run it will prove a more beneficial work for India than any yet attempted. I wish you to try your luck in this. If you agree, please write to Setlur, about your willingness and ask for more information, mentioning this letter. And godspeed to you! I am not very well, but am going to Calcutta in a few days and will be all right.

Yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 122

CXXI Rajaji

CXXI

To Raja Pyari Mohan Mukherjee

THE MATH, BELUR,

25th February, 1898.

MY DEAR RAJAJI,

My gratitude for your very kind invitation to speak. I had a talk with Mr. Bhattacharya on the subject a few days back, and I am trying my best as a result to find time for your Society. I also promised to let them know the result on Sunday.

A friend to whom I owe much is here, presumably, to take me to his place in Darjeeling.

There are some American friends come, and every spare moment is occupied in working for the new Math and several organisations therein, and I expect to leave India next month for America.

Believe me, I am trying my best to be able to take advantage of this invitation of yours and shall communicate the result to you on Sunday through Mr. Bhattacharya.

Yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 123

CXXII Shashi

CXXII

To Swami Ramakrishnananda

MATH, BELUR,

HOWRAH P.O.,

25th February, 1898.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

Our congratulations for the successful carrying out of the Mahotsava (Big celebration of Shri Ramakrishna's birthday.) in Madras. Hope you had a good gathering and plenty of spiritual food. We are all so glad that you have girded yourself to teach more of spirituality to the Madras people than those finger twistings and kling phat (Cryptic Mantras or sound formulae.) you are so fond of. Really your lecture on Shriji (Shri Ramakrishna.) was splendid. I could only catch a report in the Madras Mail in Khandwa, and the Math people have not had any. Why don't you send us over a copy?

I learn that you complain about my silence, is it? I have written you more letters, however, than you ever wrote me, from Europe and America even. You ought to give me all the news you can from Madras every week. Simplest way is to put down a few lines and a few items of news every day on a sheet.

My health has not been all right of late; at present it is much better. Calcutta is unusually cool just now, and the American friends who are here are enjoying it ever so much. Today we take possession of the land we have bought, and though it is not practicable to have the Mahotsava on it just now, I must have something on it on Sunday. Anyhow, Shriji's relics must be taken to our place for the day and worshipped. Gangadhar is here and asks me to write to you that though he has succeeded in getting some subscriptions for the Brahmavadin, the delivery being very irregular, he is afraid of losing them also soon. I received your letter of recommendation for the young man with the old story of "having nothing to eat, Your Honour"; only added in the Madras edition: "got a number of children too",

for generating whom no recommendation was needed! I would be very glad to help him, but the fact is, I have no money; every cent I had I have made over to Raja, (Rakhal or Swami Brahmananda.) as they all say I am a spendthrift and are afraid of keeping money with me. I have, however, sent the letter to Rakhal if he can find the way to help your friend, the young man, in having some more children. He writes that the Christians will help him out if he becomes a convert, but he won't. Perhaps he is afraid that his conversion will make Hindu India lose one of her brightest jewels and Hindu society the benefit of his propagating power to eternal misery!

The boys here are rather seedy owing to the unusual amount of pure and cool air they are made to breathe in and live on the bank of the Ganga in the new Math. Sarada has his malaria brought over from Dinajpur. I made him eat a dose of opium the other day without much benefit to him except his brain which progressed for some hours towards its natural direction, namely, idiocy. Hari also has a touch; I hope it will take off a good bit of their avoirdupois. By the by, we have once more started the dancing business here, and it would make your heart glad to see Hari and Sarada and my own good self in a waltz. How we keep balance at all is a wonder to me.

Sharat has come and is hard at work as usual. We have got some good furniture now, and a big jump from the old Châtâi (mat) in the old Math to nice tables and chairs and three Khâts (cots), mind you. We have curtailed the Pujâ (worship) work a good deal, and the amount of pruning your klings and phats and svâhâs have undergone would make you faint. The puja occupied only the day, and they slept soundly all night. How are Tulsi and Khoka? Are they more tractable with you than under Rakhal? You may run in to Calcutta for a few days giving charge to Tulsi, but it is so expensive, and then you must go back, as Madras has to be thoroughly worked up. I am going to America again with Mrs. Bull in a few months.

Give my love to Goodwin and tell him that we are going to see him at any rate on our way to Japan. Shivananda is here, and I have toned down a bit his great desire to go to the Himalayas for food! Is Tulsi contemplating the same? The bandicoot-hole will be a sufficient cave for

him, I suppose.

So the Math here is a fait accompli, and I am going over to get more help. . . . Work on with energy. India is a rotten corpse inside and outside. We shall revive it by the blessings of Shri Maharaj. With all love,

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 124

CXXIII Mary

CXXIII

To Miss Mary Hale

**MATH, BELUR,
HOWRAH DISTRICT,
BENGAL, INDIA,**

2nd March, 1898.

MY DEAR MARY,

You have news of me already, I hope, through the letter I wrote to Mother Church. You are all so kind, the whole family, to me, I must have belonged to you in the past, as we Hindus say. My only regret is that the millionaires do not materialise: and I want them so badly just now that I am growing decrepit and old and hot in the midst of building and organising. Though Harriet has got one of a million virtues, a few millions of cash virtue would have made it more shining, I am sure; so you do not commit the same mistake.

A certain young couple had everything favourable to make them man and wife except that the bride's father was determined not to give his daughter to anyone who had not a million. The young people were in despair when a clever matchmaker came to the rescue. He asked the bridegroom whether he was willing to part with his nose on payment of a million — which he refused. The matchmaker then swore before the bride's father that the bridegroom had in store goods worth several millions, and the match was completed. Don't you take like millions.

Well, well, you could not get the millionaire, so I could not get the money; so I had to worry a good deal and work hard to no purpose; so I got the disease. It requires brains like mine to find out the true cause — I am charmed with myself!

Well, it was in Southern India, when I came from London and when the people were feting and feasting and pumping all the work out of me, that an old hereditary disease made its appearance. The tendency was always there, and excess of mental work made it "express" itself. Total collapse and extreme prostration followed, and I had to leave Madras immediately for the cooler North; a day's delay meant waiting for a week in that awful heat for another steamer. By the by, I learnt afterwards that Mr. Barrows arrived in Madras next day and was very much chagrined at not finding me as he expected, though I helped getting up an address for him and arranged for his reception. Poor man, he little knew I was at death's door then.

I have been travelling in the Himalayas all through last summer; and a cold climate, I found immediately, brought me round; but as soon as I come into the heat of the plains I am down again. From today the heat in Calcutta is becoming intense, and I will soon have to fly. This time to cool America as Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod are here. I have bought a piece of land for the institution on the river Ganga near Calcutta, on which is a little house where they are living now; within a stone's throw is the house where the Math is situated at present in which we live.

So I see them every day and they are enjoying it immensely à L'Inde. They intend making a trip to Kashmir in a month, and I am going with them as a guide and friend and philosopher perhaps, if they are willing. After that we all sail for the land of freedom and scandal.

You need not be alarmed with me as the disease will take two or three years at worst to carry me off. At best it may remain a harmless companion. I am content. Only I am working hard to set things all right and always so that the machine moves forward when I am off the stage. Death I have conquered long ago when I gave up life. My only anxiety is the work, and even that to the Lord I dedicate, and He knows best.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 125

CXXIV Shashi

CXXIV

To Swami Ramakrishnananda

MATH, BELUR,

(Howrah), March, 1898.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

I forgot to write you about two things. 1. That Tulsi ought to learn shorthand from Goodwin, at least the beginning. 2. I had to write a letter almost every mail to Madras while I was out of India. I have in vain written for a copy of those letters. Send me all those letters. I want to write out my travels. Do not fail, and I shall send them back as soon as they have been used up. The Dawn can manage with 200 subscribers to come out regularly on Rs. 40/- an issue expenditure. This is a great fact to know. The P.B. (Prabuddha Bhârata) seems to be very disorganised; try best to organise it. Poor Alasinga, I am sorry for him. Only thing I can do is to make him entirely free for a year so that he may devote all his energy to the Brahmavadin work. Tell him not to worry; I have him always in mind, poor child; his devotion I can never repay.

I am thinking of going to Kashmir again with Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod. (I) return to Calcutta and start for America from here.

Miss Noble is really an acquisition. She will soon surpass Mrs. Besant as a speaker, I am sure.

Do look after Alasinga. I have an idea that he is breaking himself with work. Tell him, the best work is only done by alternate repose and work. Give him all my love. We had two public lectures in Calcutta, one from Miss Noble and the other from our Sharat. Both of them did very well indeed; there was great enthusiasm, which shows that the Calcutta public has not forgotten us. Some of the members of the Math had a touch of influenza. They are all right now. The thing is working nicely. Shri (Holy) Mother is here, and the European and American ladies went the other day to see her, and what do you think, Mother ate with them even there! Is not that grand? The

Lord is watching over us; there is no fear; do not lose your nerves, keep your health and take things easy. It is always good to give a few strong strokes and rest on your oars. Rakhai is living with the new land and buildings. I was not satisfied with the Mahotsava this year. What it should be is a grand mixture of all the different phases here. We shall try it next year — I shall send instructions. With love to all of you there and blessings.

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 126

CXXV Joe Joe

CXXV

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

DARJEELING,

18th April, 1898.

MY DEAR JOE JOE,

I was down with fever brought upon, perhaps, by excessive mountain climbing and the bad health in the station.

I am better today and intend leaving this in a day or two. In spite of the great heat there, I used to sleep well in Calcutta and had some appetite. Here both have vanished — this is all the gain.

I could not see Miss Müller yet on the subject of Marguerite; but I intend to write her today. She is making all arrangements to receive her here. Mr. Gupta is also invited to teach them Bengali. She may now do something about her. I shall, however, write.

It will be easy for Marguerite to see Kashmir any time during her stay; but if Miss M. is not willing, there will be a big row again to injure both her and Marguerite.

I am not sure whether I go to Almora again. Much riding it seems is sure to bring on a relapse. I will wait for you at Simla — whilst you pay your visit to the Seviers. We will think on it when I am in. I am so glad to learn that Miss Noble delivered an address at the R.K. Mission. With all love to the Trinity,

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 127

CXXVI Rakhal

CXXVI

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

DARJEELING,

23rd April, 1898.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

My health was excellent on my return from Sandukphu (11,924 ft.) and other places; but after returning to Darjeeling, I had first an attack of fever, and after recovering from that, I am now suffering from cough and cold. I try to escape from this place every day; but they have been constantly putting it off for a long time. However, tomorrow, Sunday, I am leaving; after halting at Kharsana for a day I start again for Calcutta on Monday. I shall send you a wire after starting. We should hold an annual meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission, and also one for the Math. In both the meetings the accounts of famine relief must be submitted, and the report of the famine relief must be published. Keep all this ready.

Nityagopal says, managing an English magazine will not cost much. So let us first get this one out, and we shall see to the Bengali magazine afterwards. All these points will have to be discussed. Is Yogen willing to shoulder the responsibility of running the paper? Shashi writes that if Sharat goes some time to Madras, they may make a lecture tour jointly. Oh, how hot it is now! Ask Sharat if G. G., Sarada, Shashi Babu, and others have got their articles ready. Give my love and blessing to Mrs. Bull, Miss MacLeod, and Nivedita.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 128

CXXVII Joe Joe

CXXVII

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

DARJEELING,

29th April, 1898.

MY DEAR JOE JOE,

I have had several attacks of fever, the last being influenza.

It has left me now, only I am very weak yet. As soon as I gather strength enough to undertake the journey, I come down to Calcutta.

On Sunday I leave Darjeeling, probably stopping for a day or two at Kurseong, then direct to Calcutta. Calcutta must be very hot just now. Never mind, it is all the better for influenza. In case the plague breaks out in Calcutta, I must not go anywhere; and you start for Kashmir with Sadananda. How did you like the old gentleman, Devendra Nath Tagore? Not as stylish as "Hans Baba" with Moon God and Sun God of course. What enlightens your insides on a dark night when the Fire God, Sun God, Moon God, and Star Goddesses have gone to sleep? It is hunger that keeps my consciousness up, I have discovered. Oh, the great doctrine of correspondence of light! Think how dark the world has been all these ages without it! And all this knowledge and love and work and all the Buddhas and Krishnas and Christs — vain, vain have been their lives and work, for they did not discover that "which keeps the inner light when the Sun and Moon were gone to the limbo" for the night! Delicious, isn't it?

If the plague comes to my native city, I am determined to make myself a sacrifice; and that I am sure is a "Darn sight, better way to Nirvâna" than pouring oblations to all that ever twinkled.

I have had a good deal of correspondence with Madras with the result that I need not send them any help just now. On the other hand I am going to start a paper in

Calcutta. I will be ever so much obliged if you help me starting that. As always with undying love,

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 129

CXXVIII Rakhhal

CXXVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

ALMORA,

20th May, 1898.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I have got all the news from your letter and have replied to your wire already. Niranjan and Govindalal Shah will wait at Kathgodam for Yogen-Ma. After I reached Naini Tal, Baburam went from here to Naini Tal on horseback against everybody's advice, and while returning, he also accompanied us on horseback. I was far behind as I was in a Dandi. When I reached the dak bungalow at night, I heard that Baburam had again fallen from the horse and had hurt one of his arms — though he had no fractures. Lest I should rebuke him, he stayed in a private lodging house. Because of his fall, Miss MacLeod gave him her Dandi and herself came on the horse. He did not meet me that night. Next day I was making arrangements for a Dandi for him, when I heard that he had already left on foot. Since then I have not heard of him. I have wired to one or two places, but no news. Perhaps he is putting up at some village. Very well! They are experts in increasing one's worries.

There will be a Dandi for Yogen-Ma; but all the rest will have to go on foot.

My health is much better, but the dyspepsia has not gone, and again insomnia has set in. It will be very helpful if you can soon send some good Ayurvedic medicine for dyspepsia.

Since only one or two sporadic cases of plague have occurred there, there is plenty of accommodation in the Government plague hospital, and there is a talk of having hospitals in every Ward. Taking all this into consideration, do what the situation demands. But remember that

something said by somebody in Baghbazar does not constitute public opinion. . . . Take care that funds do not run short in times of need and that there is no waste of money. For the present buy a plot of ground for Ramlal in the name of Raghuvir (The family deity of Shri Ramakrishna's birthplace, Kamarpukur, Ramlal being his nephew.) after careful consideration. . . . Holy Mother will be the Sebait (worshipper-in-charge); after her will come Ramlal, and Shibu will succeed them as Sebait; or make any other arrangement that seems best. You can, if you think it right, begin the construction of the building even now. For it is not good to live in a new house for the first one or two months, as it will be damp. . . . The anti-erosion wall can be completed afterwards. I am trying to raise money for the magazine. See that the sum of Rs. 1,200 which I gave for the magazine is kept only for that account.

All the others are well here. Sadananda sprained his foot yesterday. He says he will be all right by the evening. The climate at Almora is excellent at this time. Moreover the bungalow rented by Sevier is the best in Almora. On the opposite side Annie Besant is staying in a small bungalow with Chakravarty. Chakravarty is now the son-in-law of Gagan (of Ghazipur). One day I went to see him. Annie Besant told me entreatingly that there should be friendship between her organisation and mine all over the world, etc., etc. Today Besant will come here for tea. Our ladies are in a small bungalow near by and are quite happy. Only Miss MacLeod is a little unwell today. Harry Sevier is becoming more and more a Sadhu as the days pass by. . . . Brother Hari sends you his greetings and Sadananda, Ajoy, and Suren send you their respectful salutations. My love to you and all the others.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Give my love to Sushil and Kanai and all the others.

V.

Chapter 130

CXXIX Sturdy

CXXIX

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

KASHMIR,

3rd July, 1898.

DEAR STURDY,

Both the editions had my assent, as it was arranged between us that we would not object to anybody's publishing my books. Mrs. Bull knows about it all and is writing to you.

I had a beautiful letter from Miss Souter the other day. She is as friendly as ever.

With love to the children, Mrs. Sturdy, and yourself

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 131

CXXX Rakhhal

CXXX

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

SRINAGAR,

17th July, 1898.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I got all the news from your letter. . . . My opinion regarding what you have written about Sarada is only that it is difficult to make a magazine in Bengali paying; but if all of you together canvass subscribers from door to door, it may be possible. In this matter do as you all decide. Poor Sarada has already been disappointed once. What harm is there if we lose a thousand rupees by supporting such an unselfish and very hardworking person? What about the printing of Raja-Yoga? As a last resort, you may give it to Open on certain terms of sharing the profit in the sales. . . . About money matters, the advice given previously is final. Henceforward do what you consider best regarding expenditure and other things. I see very well that my policy is wrong, and yours is correct, regarding helping others; that is to say, if you help with money too much at a time, people instead of feeling grateful remark on the contrary that they have got a simpleton to bank upon. I always lost sight of the demoralising influence of charity on the receiver. Secondly, we have no right to deviate even slightly from the purposes for which we collect the donations. Mrs. Bull will get her rosary all right if you send it care of Chief Justice Rishibar Mukhopadhyaya, Kashmir. Mr. Mitra and the Chief Justice are taking every care of them. We could not get a plot of ground in Kashmir yet, but there is a chance that we shall do so soon. If you can spend a winter here, you are sure to recoup your health. If the house is a good one and if you have enough fuel and warm clothing, then life in a land of snow is nothing but enjoyable. Also for stomach troubles a cold climate is an unfailing remedy. Bring Yogen with you; for the earth here is not stony, it is clay like that of Bengal.

If the paper is brought out in Almora, the work will progress much; for poor Sevier will have something to do, and the local people also will get some work. Skilful management lies in giving every man work after his own heart. By all the means in our power the Nivedita Girls' School in Calcutta should be put on a firm footing. To bring Master Mahashay to Kashmir is still a far cry, for it will be long before a college is established here. But he has written that it is possible to start a college in Calcutta, with him as the principal, at an initial expense of a thousand rupees. I hear that you all also favour this proposal. In this matter do what you all consider best. My health is all right. I have to get up seldom at night, even though I take twice a day rice and potatoes, sugar, or whatever I get. Medicine is useless — it has no action on the system of a Knower of Brahman! Everything will be digested — don't be afraid.

The ladies are doing well, and they send you their greetings. Two letters from Shivananda have come. I have also received a letter from his Australian disciple. I hear that the outbreak of plague in Calcutta has completely subsided.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 132

CXXXI Rakhāl

CXXXI

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

SRINAGAR,

1st August, 1898.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

You are always under a delusion, and it does not leave you because of the strong influence, good or bad, of other brains. It is this: whenever I write to you about accounts, you feel that I have no confidence in you. . . . My great anxiety is this: the work has somehow been started, but it should go on and progress even when we are not here; such thoughts worry me day and night. Any amount of theoretical knowledge one may have; but unless one does the thing actually, nothing is learnt. I refer repeatedly to election, accounts, and discussion so that everybody may be prepared to shoulder the work. If one man dies, another — why another only, ten if necessary — should be ready to take it up. Secondly, if a man's interest in a thing is not roused, he will not work whole-heartedly; all should be made to understand that everyone has a share in the work and property, and a voice in the management. This should be done while there is yet time. Give a responsible position to everyone alternately, but keep a watchful eye so that you can control when necessary; thus only can men be trained for the work. Set up such a machine as will go on automatically, no matter who dies or lives. We Indians suffer from a great defect, viz we cannot make a permanent organisation — and the reason is that we never like to share power with others and never think of what will come after we are gone.

I have already written everything regarding the plague. Mrs. Bull and Miss Müller and others are of opinion that it is not desirable to spend money uselessly when hospitals have been started in every Ward. We lend our services as nurses and the like. Those that pay the piper must command the tune.

The Maharaja of Kashmir has agreed to give us a plot of land. I have also visited the site. Now the matter will be finalised in a few days, if the Lord wills. Right now, before leaving, I hope to build a small house here. I shall leave it in the charge of Justice Mukherjee when departing. Why not come here with somebody else and spend the winter? Your health will improve, and a need, too, will be fulfilled. The money I have set apart for the press will be sufficient for the purpose, but all will be as you decide. This time I shall surely get some money from N.W.P., Rajputana, and other places. Well, give as directed . . . money to a few persons. I am borrowing this amount from the Math and will pay it back to you with interest.

My health is all right in a way. It is good news that the building work has begun. My love to all.

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 133

CXXXII Mary

CXXXII

To Miss Mary Hale

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

28th August, 1898.

MY DEAR MARY,

I could not make an earlier opportunity of writing you, and knowing that you were in no hurry for a letter, I will not make apologies. You are learning all about Kashmir and ourselves from Miss MacLeod's letter to Mrs. Leggett, I hear — therefore needless going into long rigmaroles about it.

The search for Heinscholdt's Mahatmas in Kashmir will be entirely fruitless; and as the whole thing has first to be established as coming from a creditable source, the attempt will also be a little too early. How are Mother Church and Father Pope and where? How are you ladies, young and old? Going on with the old game with more zest now that one has fallen off the ranks? How is the lady that looks like a certain statue in Florence? (I have forgotten the name) I always bless her arms when I think of the comparison.

I have been away a few days. Now I am going to join the ladies. The party then goes to a nice quiet spot behind a hill, in a forest, through which a murmuring stream flows, to have meditation deep and long under the deodars (trees of God) cross-legged à la Buddha.

This will be for a month or so, when by that time our good work will have spent its powers and we shall fall from this Paradise to earth again; then work out our Karma a few months and then will have to go to hell for bad Karma in China, and our evil deeds will make us sink in bad odours with the world in Canton and other cities. Thence Purgatory in Japan? And regain Paradise once more in the U.S. of America. This is what Pumpkin Swami, brother of the Coomra Swami, foretells (in Bengali Coomra means squash). He is very clever with his hands. In fact his cleverness with his

hands has several times brought him into great dangers.

I wished to send you so many nice things, but alas! the thought of the tariff makes my desires vanish "like youth in women and beggars' dreams".

By the by, I am glad now that I am growing grey every day. My head will be a full-blown white lotus by the time you see me next.

Ah! Mary, if you could see Kashmir — only Kashmir; the marvellous lakes full of lotuses and swans (there are no swans but geese — poetic licence) and the big black bee trying to settle on the wind-shaken lotus (I mean the lotus nods him off refusing a kiss — poetry), then you could have a good conscience on your death-bed. As this is earthly paradise and as logic says one bird in the hand is equal to two in the bush, a glimpse of this is wiser, but economically the other better; no trouble, no labour, no expense, a little namby-pamby dolly life and later, that is all.

My letter is becoming a bore . . . so I stop. (It is sheer idleness). Good night.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

My address always is:

Math, Belur,

Howrah Dist., Bengal, India.

Chapter 134

CXXXIII Haripada

CXXXIII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Shri Haripada Mitra

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,

17th September, 1898.

DEAR HARIPADA,

I got all news from your letter and wire. That you may easily pass your examination in Sindhi is my prayer to the Lord.

Recently my health was very bad, and so I have been delayed, otherwise I had intended to leave for the Punjab this week. The doctor had advised me not to go to the plains at the present time, as it is very hot there. Perhaps I may reach Karachi by about the last week of October. Now I am doing somewhat well. There is nobody else with me now excepting two American friends — ladies. Probably I shall part from them at Lahore. They will wait for me in Calcutta or in Rajputana. I shall probably visit Cutch, Bhuj, Junagad, Bhavnagar, Limbdi, and Baroda and then proceed to Calcutta. My present plan is to go to America via China and Japan in November or December, but it is all in the hands of the Lord. The above-mentioned American friends bear all my expenses, and I shall take from them all my expenses including railway fare up to Karachi. But if it is convenient to you, send me Rs. 50/- by wire C/o Rishibar Mukhopadhyaya, Chief Justice, Kashmir State, Srinagar. It will be a great help to me, for I have incurred much extra expense of late owing to illness, and I feel a little ashamed to have to depend always on my foreign devotees. With best wishes,

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 135

CXXXIV Haripada

CXXXIV

(Translated from Bengali)

To Shri Haripada Mitra

LAHORE,

16th October, 1898.

MY DEAR HARIPADA,

In Kashmir my health has completely broken down, and I have not witnessed the Durga-Puja for the last nine years; so I am starting for Calcutta. I have for the present given up the plan of going to America. I think I shall have plenty of time to go to Karachi during the winter.

My brother-disciple Saradananda will send Rs. 50/- from Lahore to Karachi. Don't yield to sorrow — everything is in God's hands. Certainly I won't go anywhere this year without meeting all of you. My blessings to all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 136

CXXXV Joe

CXXXV

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

57 RAM KANTA BOSE STREET,

CALCUTTA,

12th November, 1898.

MY DEAR JOE,

I have invited a few friends to dinner tomorrow, Sunday.

. . .

We expect you at tea. Everything will be ready then.

Shri Mother is going this morning to see the new Math. I am also going there. Today at 6 p.m. Nivedita is going to preside. If you feel like it, and Mrs. Bull strong, do come.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 137

CXXXVI Mary

CXXXVI

To Miss Mary Hale

**MATH, BELUR,
HOWRAH DISTRICT,**

16th March, 1899.

MY DEAR MARY,

Thanks to Mrs. Adams; she roused you naughty girls to a letter at last. "Out of sight out of mind" — as true in India as in America. And the other young lady, who just left her love as she flitted by, deserves a ducking I suppose.

Well, I have been in a sort of merry-go-round with my body which has been trying to convince me for months that it too much exists.

However, no fear, with four mental-healing sisters as I have, no sinking just now. Give me a strong pull and a long pull, will you, all together, and then I am up!

Why do you talk so much about me in your one-letter-a-year and so little about the four witches mumbling Mantras over the boiling pot in a corner of Chicago?

Did you come across Max Müller's new book, Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings?

If you have not, do, and let Mother see it. How is Mother? Growing grey? And Father Pope? Who have been our last visitors from America do you suppose? "Brother, love is a drawing card" and "Misses Meel"; they have been doing splendid in Australia and elsewhere; the same old "fellies", little changed if any. I wish you could come to visit India — that will be some day in the future. By the by, Mary, I heard a few months ago, when I was rather worrying over your long silence, that you were just hooking a "Willy", and so busy with your dances and parties; that explained of course your inability to write. But

"Willy" or no "Willy", I must have my money, don't forget. Harriet is discreetly silent since she got her boy; but where is my money, please? Remind her and her husband of it. If she is Woolley, I am greasy Bengali, as the English call us here — Lord, where is my money?

I have got a monastery on the Ganga now, after all, thanks to American and English friends. Tell Mother to look sharp. I am going to deluge your Yankee land with idolatrous missionaries.

Tell Mr. Woolley he got the sister but has not paid the brother yet. Moreover, it was the fat black queerly dressed apparition smoking in the parlour that frightened many a temptation away, and that was one of the causes which secured Harriet to Mr. Woolley; therefore, I want to be paid for my great share in the work etc., etc. Plead strong, will you?

I do so wish I could come over to America with Joe for this summer; but man proposes and who disposes? Not God surely always. Well, let things slide as they will. Here is Abhayananda, Marie Louse you know, and she has been very well received in Bombay and Madras. She will be in Calcutta tomorrow, and we are going to give her a good reception too.

My love to Miss Howe, Mrs. Adams, to Mother Church, and Father Pope and all the rest of my friends across the seven oceans. We believe in seven oceans — one of milk, one of honey, one of curd, one wine, one sugar-cane juice, one salt, one I forget what. To you four sisters I waft my love across the ocean of honey. . . .

Ever sincerely, your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Write when you find time between dances.

V.

Chapter 138

CXXXVII Sturdy

CXXXVII

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

PORT SAID,

14th July, 1899.

MY DEAR STURDY,

I got your letter all right just now. I have one from M. Nobel of Paris too. Miss Noble has several from America.

M. Nobel writes to me to defer my visit to him at Paris to some other date, from London, as he will have to be away for a long time. As you know sure, I shall not have many friends staying now in London, and Miss MacLeod is so desirous I should come. A stay in England under these circumstances is not advisable. Moreover, I do not have much life left. At least I must go on with that supposition. I mean, if anything has to be done in America, it is high time we bring our scattered influence in America to a head — if not organise regularly. Then I shall be free to return to England in a few months and work with a will till I return to India.

I think you are absolutely wanted to gather up, as it were, the American work. If you can, therefore, you ought to come over with me. Turiyananda is with me. Saradananda's brother is going to Boston. . . . In case you cannot come to America, I ought to go, ought I not?

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 139

CXXXVIII Joe

CXXXVIII

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

THE LYMES,

WOODSIDES, WIMBLEDON,

3rd August, 1899.

MY DEAR JOE,

We are in at last. Turiyananda and I have beautiful lodgings here. Saradananda's brother is with Miss Noble and starts Monday next.

I have recovered quite a bit by the voyage. It was brought about by the exercise on the dumb-bells and monsoon storms tumbling the steamer about the waves. Queer, isn't it? Hope it will remain. Where is our Mother, the Worshipful Brahmini cow of India? She is with you in New York, I think.

Sturdy is away, Mrs. Johnson and everybody. Margo is rather worried at that. She cannot come to U.S. till next month. Already I have come to love the sea. The fish Avatâra is on me, I am afraid — good deal of him in me, I am sure, a Bengali.

How is Alberta, . . . the old folks and the rest of them? I had a beautiful letter from dear Mrs. Brer Rabbit; she could not meet us in London; she started before we arrived.

It is nice and warm here; rather too much they say. I have become for the present a Shunyavâdi, a believer in nothingness, or void. No plans, no afterthought, no attempt, for anything, laissez faire to the fullest. Well, Joe, Margo would always take your side on board the steamer, whenever I criticised you or the Divine cow. Poor child, she knows so little! The upshot of the whole is, Joe, that there cannot be any work in London, because you are not here. You seem to be my fate! Grind on, old lady; it is Karma and none can avoid. Say, I look several years younger by this voyage. Only when the heart gives a lurch, I feel my age. What is this osteopathy, anyway? Will they cut off a rib or two to cure me? Not I, no

manufacturing of . . . from my ribs, sure. Whatever it be, it will be hard work for him to find my bones. My bones are destined to make corals in the Ganga. Now I am going to study French if you give me a lesson every day; but no grammar business — only I will read and you explain in English. Kindly give my love to Abhedananda, and ask him to get ready for Turiyananda. I will leave with him. Write soon.

With all love etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 140

CXXXIX Marie

CXXXIX

To Miss Marie Halboister

C/O MISS NOBLE,

21A HIGH STREET, WIMBLEDON.

August, 1899.

MY DEAR MARIE,

I am in London again. This time not busy, not hustling about but quietly settled down in a corner — waiting to start for the U.S. America on the first opportunity. My friends are nearly all out of London in the country and elsewhere, and my health not sufficiently strong.

So you are happy in the midst of your lakes and gardens and seclusion in Canada. I am glad, so glad to know that you are up again on top of the tide. May you remain there for ever!

You could not finish the Raja-Yoga translation yet — all right, there is no hurry. Time and opportunity must come if it is to be done you know, otherwise we vainly strive.

Canada must be beautiful now, with its short but vigorous summer, and very healthy.

I expect to be in New York in a few weeks, and don't know what next. I hope to come back to England next spring.

I fervently wish no misery ever came near anyone; yet it is that alone that gives us an insight into the depths of our lives, does it not?

In our moments of anguish, gates barred for ever seem to open and let in many a flood of light.

We learn as we grow. Alas! we cannot use our knowledge here. The moment we seem to learn, we are hurried off the stage. And this is Mâyâ!

This toy world would not be here, this play could not go on, if we were knowing players. We must play blindfolded. Some of us have taken the part of the rogue of the play, some heroic — never mind, it is all play. This is the only consolation. There are demons and lions and tigers and what not on the stage, but they are all muzzled. They snap but cannot bite. The world cannot touch our souls. If you want, even if the body be torn and bleeding, you may enjoy the greatest peace in your mind.

And the way to that is to attain hopelessness. Do you know that? Not the imbecile attitude of despair, but the contempt of the conqueror for things he has attained, for things he struggled for and then throws aside as beneath his worth.

This hopelessness, desirelessness, aimlessness, is just the harmony with nature. In nature there is no harmony, no reason, no sequence; it was chaos before, it is so still.

The lowest man is in consonance with nature in his earthy-headness; the highest the same in the fullness of knowledge. All three aimless, drifting, hopeless — all three happy.

You want a chatty letter, don't you? I have not much to chat about. Mr. Sturdy came last two days. He goes home in Wales tomorrow.

I have to book my passage for N.Y. in a day or two.

None of my old friends have I seen yet except Miss Souter and Max Gysic, who are in London. They have been very kind, as they always were.

I have no news to give you, as I know nothing of London yet. I don't know where Gertrude Orchard is, else would have written to her. Miss Kate Steel is also away. She is coming on Thursday or Saturday.

I had an invitation to stay in Paris with a friend, a very well-educated Frenchman, but I could not go this time. I hope another time to live with him some days.

I expect to see some of our old friends and say good day to them.

I hope to see you in America sure. Either I may unexpectedly turn up in Ottawa in my peregrinations or you come to N.Y.

Good-bye, all luck be yours.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 141

CXL Rakhhal

CXL

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Brahmananda

LONDON,

10th August, 1899.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I got a lot of news from your letter. My health was much better on the ship, but, after landing, owing to flatulence it is rather bad now. . . . There is a lot of difficulty here — all friends have gone out of town for the summer. In addition my health is not so good, and there is a lot of inconvenience regarding food etc. So in a few days I leave for America. Send an account to Mrs. Bull as to how much was spent on purchase of land, how much on buildings, how much on maintenance etc.

Sarada writes that the magazine is not going well. . . . Let him publish the account of my travels, and thoroughly advertise it beforehand — he will have subscribers rushing in. Do people like a magazine if three-fourths of it are filled with pious stuff? Anyway pay special attention to the magazine. Mentally take it as though I were not. Act independently on this basis. “We depend on the elder brother for money, learning, everything” — such an attitude is the road to ruin. If all the money even for the magazine is to be collected by me and all the articles too are from my pen — what will you all do? What are our Sahibs then doing? I have finished my part. You do what remains to be done. Nobody is there to collect a single penny, nobody to do any preaching, none has brains enough to take proper care of his own affairs, none has the capacity to write one line, and all are saints for nothing! . . . If this be your condition, then for six months give everything into the hands of the boys — magazine, money, preaching work, etc. If they are also not able to do anything, then sell off everything, and returning the proceeds to the donors go about as mendicants. I get no news at all from the Math. What is Sharat doing? I want

to see work done. Before dying, I want to see that what I have established as a result of my lifelong struggle is put in a more or less running condition. Consult the Committee in every detail regarding money matters. Get the signatures of the Committee for every item of expenditure. Otherwise you also will be in for a bad name. This much is customary that people want some time or other an account of their donations. It is very wrong not to have it ready at every turn. . . . By such lethargy in the beginning, people finally become cheats. Make a committee of all those who are in the Math, and no expenditure will be made which is not countersigned by them — none at all! I want work, I want vigour — no matter who lives or dies. What are death and life to a Sannyasin?

If Sharat cannot rouse up Calcutta, . . . if you are not able to construct the embankment this year, then you will see the fun! I want work — no humbug about it. My respectful salutations to Holy Mother.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 142

CXLI Mother

CXLI

To Mrs. Ole Bull

RIDGELY MANOR,

4th September, 1899.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

It is an awful spell of the bad turn of fortune with me last six months. Misfortune follows me ever wherever I go. In England, Sturdy seems to have got disgusted with the work; he does not see any asceticism in us from India. Here no sooner I reach than Olea gets a bad attack.

Shall I run up to you? I know I cannot be of much help, but I will try my best in being useful.

I hope everything will soon come right with you, and Olea will be restored to perfect health even before this reaches you. Mother knows best; that is all about me.

Ever yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 143

CXLII Sturdy

CXLII

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

RIDGELY MANOR,

14th September, 1899.

MY DEAR STURDY,

I have simply been taking rest at the Leggetts' and doing nothing. Abhedananda is here. He has been working hard.

He goes in a day or two to resume his work in different places for a month. After that he comes to New York to work.

I am trying to do something in the line you suggested, but don't know how far an account of the Hindus will be appreciated by the Western public when it comes from a Hindu. . . .

Mrs. Johnson is of opinion that no spiritual person ought to be ill. It also seems to her now that my smoking is sinful etc., etc. That was Miss Müller's reason for leaving me, my illness. They may be perfectly right, for aught I know — and you too — but I am what I am. In India, the same defects plus eating with Europeans have been taken exception to by many. I was driven out of a private temple by the owners for eating with Europeans. I wish I were malleable enough to be moulded into whatever one desired, but unfortunately I never saw a man who could satisfy everyone. Nor can anyone who has to go to different places possibly satisfy all.

When I first came to America, they ill-treated me if I had not trousers on. Next I was forced to wear cuffs and collars, else they would not touch me etc., etc. They thought me awfully funny if I did not eat what they offered etc., etc. . . .

In India the moment I landed they made me shave my head and wear "Kaupin" (loin cloth), with the result that I got diabetes etc. Saradananda never gave up his underwear — this saved his life, with just a touch of rheumatism and much comment from our people.

Of course, it is my Karma, and I am glad that it is so. For, though it smarts for the time, it is another great experience of life, which will be useful, either in this or in the next. . . .

As for me, I am always in the midst of ebbs and flows. I knew it always and preached always that every bit of pleasure will bring its quota of pain, if not with compound interest. I have a good deal of love given to me by the world; I deserve a good deal of hatred therefore. I am glad it is so — as it proves my theory of "every wave having its corresponding dip" on my own person.

As for me, I stick to my nature and principle — once a friend, always a friend — also the true Indian principle of looking subjectively for the cause of the objective.

I am sure that the fault is mine, and mine only, for every wave of dislike and hatred that I get. It could not be otherwise. Thanking you and Mrs. Johnson for thus calling me once more to the internal,

I remain as ever with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 144

CXLIII Mary

CXLIII

To Miss Mary Hale

RIDGELY MANOR,

September 1899.

MY DEAR MARY,

Yes, I have arrived. I had a letter from Isabelle from Greenacre. I hope to see her soon and Harriet. Harriet Woolley has been uniformly silent. Never mind, I will bide my time, and as soon as Mr. Woolley becomes a millionaire, demand my money. You did not write any particulars about Mother Church and Father Pope, only the news of something about me in some newspapers. I have long ceased to take any interest in papers; only they keep me before the public and get a sale of my books "anyway" as you say. Do you know what I am trying to do now? Writing a book on India and her people — a short chatty simple something. Again I am going to learn French. If I fail to do it this year, I cannot "do" the Paris Exposition next year properly. Well, I expect to learn much French here where even the servants talk it.

You never saw Mrs. Leggett, did you? She is simply grand. I am going to Paris next year as their guest, as I did the first time.

I have now got a monastery on the Ganga for the teaching of philosophy and comparative religion and a centre of work.

What have you been doing all this time? Reading? Writing? You did not do anything. You could have written lots by this time. Even if you had taught me French, I would be quite a Froggy now, and you did not, only made me talk nonsense. You never went to Greenacre. I hope it is getting strength every year.

Say, you 24 feet and 600 lbs. of Christian Science, you could not pull me up with your treatments. I am losing much faith in your healing powers. Where is Sam?

"Bewareing" all this time as he could; bless his heart, such a noble boy!

I was growing grey fast, but somehow it got checked. I am sorry, only a few grey hairs now; a research will unearth many though. I like it and am going to cultivate a long white goaty. Mother Church and Father Pope were having a fine time on the continent. I saw a bit on my way home. And you have been Cinderella-ing in Chicago — good for you. Persuade the old folks to go to Paris next year and take you along. There must be wonderful sights to see; the French are making a last great struggle, they say, before closing business.

Well, you did not write me long, long. You do not deserve this letter, but — I am so good you know, especially as death is drawing near — I do not want to quarrel with anyone. I am dying to see Isabelle and Harriet. I hope they have got a great supply of healing power at Greenacre Inn and will help me out of my present fall. In my days the Inn was well stored with spiritual food, and less of material stuff. Do you know anything of osteopathy? Here is one in New York working wonders really.

I am going to have my bones searched by him in a week. Where is Miss Howe? She is such a noble soul, such a friend. By the by, Mary, it is curious your family, Mother Church and her clergy, both monastic and secular, have made more impression on me than any family I know of. Lord bless you ever and ever.

I am taking rest now, and the Leggetts are so kind. I feel perfectly at home. I intend to go to New York to see the Dewy procession. I have not seen my friends there.

Write me all about yourselves. I so long to hear. You know Joe Joe of course. I marred their visit to India with my constant break-downs, and they were so good, so forgiving. For years Mrs. Bull and she have been my guardian angels. Mrs. Bull is expected here next week.

She would have been here before this, but her daughter

(Olea) had a spell of illness. She suffered much, but is now out of danger. Mrs. Bull has taken one of Leggett's cottages here, and if the cold weather does not set in faster than usual, we are going to have a delightful month here even now. The place is so beautiful — well wooded and perfect lawns.

I tried to play golf the other day; I do not think it difficult at all — only it requires good practice. You never went to Philadelphia to visit your golfing friends? What are your plans? What do you intend to do the rest of your life? Have you thought out any work? Write me a long letter, will you? I saw a lady in the streets of Naples as I was passing, going along with three others, must be Americans, so like you that I was almost going to speak to her; when I came near I saw my mistake. Good-bye for the present. Write sharp. . . .

Ever your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 145

CXLIV Mary

CXLIV

To Miss Mary Hale

RIDGELY MANOR,

3rd October, 1899.

MY DEAR MARY,

Thanks for your very kind words. I am much better now and growing so every day. Mrs. Bull and her daughter are expected today or tomorrow. We hope thus to have another spell of good time — you are having yours all the time, of course. I am glad you are going to Philadelphia, but not so much now as then — when the millionaire was on the horizon. With all love,

Ever your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 146

CXLV Optimist

CXLV

To Miss Mary Hale

RIDGELY MANOR,

30th October, 1899.

MY DEAR OPTIMIST,

I received your letter and am thankful that something has come to force optimistic *laissez faire* into action. Your questions have tapped the very source of pessimism, however. British rule in modern India has only one redeeming feature, though unconscious; it has brought India out once more on the stage of the world; it has forced upon it the contact of the outside world. If it had been done with an eye to the good of the people concerned, as circumstances favoured Japan with, the results could have been more wonderful for India. No good can be done when the main idea is blood-sucking. On the whole the old regime was better for the people, as it did not take away everything they had, and there was some justice, some liberty.

A few hundred, modernised, half-educated, and denationalised men are all the show of modern English India — nothing else. The Hindus were 600 million in number according to Ferishta, the Mohammedan historian, in the 12th century — now less than 200 million.

In spite of the centuries of anarchy that reigned during the struggles of the English to conquer, the terrible massacre the English perpetrated in 1857 and 1858, and the still more terrible famines that have become the inevitable consequence of British rule (there never is a famine in a native state) and that take off millions, there has been a good increase of population, but not yet what it was when the country was entirely independent — that is, before the Mohammedan rule. Indian labour and produce can support five times as many people as there are now in India with comfort, if the whole thing is not taken off from them.

This is the state of things — even education will no more be permitted to spread; freedom of the press stopped already, (of course we have been disarmed long ago), the bit of self-government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken off. We are watching what next! For writing a few words of innocent criticism, men are being hurried to transportation for life, others imprisoned without any trial; and nobody knows when his head will be off.

There has been a reign of terror in India for some years. English soldiers are killing our men and outraging our women — only to be sent home with passage and pension at our expense. We are in a terrible gloom — where is the Lord? Mary, you can afford to be optimistic, can I? Suppose you simply publish this letter — the law just passed in India will allow the English Government in India to drag me from here to India and kill me without trial. And I know all your Christian governments will only rejoice, because we are heathens. Shall I also go to sleep and become optimistic? Nero was the greatest optimistic person! They don't think it worth while to write these terrible things as news items even! If necessary, the news agent of Reuter gives the exactly opposite news fabricated to order! Heathen-murdering is only a legitimate pastime for the Christians! Your missionaries go to preach God and dare not speak a word of truth for fear of the English, who will kick them out the next day.

All property and lands granted by the previous governments for supporting education have been swallowed up, and the present Government spends even less than Russia in education. And what education?

The least show of originality is throttled. Mary, it is hopeless with us, unless there really is a God who is the father of all, who is not afraid of the strong to protect the weak, and who is not bribed by wealth. Is there such a God? Time will show.

Well, I think I am coming to Chicago in a few weeks and talk of things fully! Don't quote your authority.

With all love, ever your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. As for religious sects — the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, and other sects have been useless mixtures; they were only voices of apology to our English masters to allow us to live! We have started a new India — a growth — waiting to see what comes. We believe in new ideas only when the nation wants them, and what will be true for us. The test of truth for this Brahmo Samaj is “what our masters approve”; with us, what the Indian reasoning and experience approves. The struggle has begun — not between the Brahmo Samaj and us, for they are gone already, but a harder, deeper, and more terrible one.

V.

Chapter 147

CXLVI Sturdy

CXLVI

To Mr. E. T. Sturdy

C/O F. LEGGETT ESQ.,

RIDGELY MANOR,

ULSTER COUNTY, N.Y.

MY DEAR STURDY,

Your last letter reached me after knocking about a little through insufficient address.

It is quite probable that very much of your criticism is just and correct. It is also possible that some day you may find that all this springs from your dislike of certain persons, and I was the scapegoat.

There need be no bitterness, however, on that account, as I don't think I ever posed for anything but what I am. Nor is it ever possible for me to do so, as an hour's contact is enough to make everybody see through my smoking, bad temper, etc. "Every meeting must have a separation" — this is the nature of things. I carry no feeling of disappointment even. I hope you will have no bitterness. It is Karma that brings us together, and Karma separates.

I know how shy you are, and how loath to wound others' feelings. I perfectly understand months of torture in your mind when you have been struggling to work with people who were so different from your ideal. I could not guess it before at all, else I could have saved you a good deal of unnecessary mental trouble. It is Karma again.

The accounts were not submitted before, as the work is not yet finished; and I thought of submitting to my donor a complete account when the whole thing was finished. The work was begun only last year, as we had to wait for funds a long time, and my method is never to ask but wait for voluntary help.

I follow the same idea in all my work, as I am so conscious of my nature being positively displeasing to

many, and wait till somebody wants me. I hold myself ready also to depart at a moment's notice. In the matter of departure thus, I never feel bad about it or think much of it, as, in the constant roving life I lead, I am constantly doing it. Only so sorry, I trouble others without wishing it. Will you kindly send over if there is any mail for me at your address?

May all blessings attend you and yours for ever and ever will be the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 148

CXLVII Mrs. Bull

CXLVII

With all love,
VIVEKANANDA.

To Mrs. Ole Bull

C/O E. GUERNSEY, M.D.,

THE MADRID, 180 W. 59,

15th November, 1899.

MY DEAR MRS. BULL,

After all I decide to come to Cambridge just now. I must finish the stories I began. The first one I don't think was given back to me by Margo.

My clothes will be ready the day after tomorrow, and then I shall be ready to start; only my fear is, it will be for the whole winter a place for becoming nervous and not for quieting of nerves, with constant parties and lectures. Well, perhaps you can give me a room somewhere, where I can hide myself from all the goings on in the place. Again I am so nervous of going to a place where indirectly the Indian Math will be. The very name of these Math people is enough to frighten me. And they are determined to kill with these letters etc.

Anyhow, I come as soon as I have my clothes — this week. You need not come to New York for my sake. If you have business of your own, that is another matter. I had a very kind invitation from Mrs. Wheeler of Montclair. Before I start for Boston, I will have a turn-in in Montclair for a few hours at least.

I am much better and am all right; nothing the matter with me except my worry, and now I am sure to throw that all overboard.

Only one thing I want — and I am afraid I cannot get it of you — there should be no communication about me in your letters to India even indirect. I want to hide for a time or for all time. How I curse the day that brought me celebrity!

Chapter 149

CXLVIII Rakhal

CXLVIII

(Translated from Bengali.)

To Swami Brahmananda

U.S.A.,

20th November, 1899.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Got some news from Sharat's letter. . . . Get experience while still there is a chance; I am not concerned whether you win or lose. . . . I have no disease now. Again. . . . I am going to tour from place to place. There is no reason for anxiety, be fearless. Everything will fly away before you; only don't be disobedient, and all success will be yours. . . . Victory to Kāli! Victory to the Mother! Victory to Kali! Wāh Guru, Wah Guru ki Fateh (Victory unto the Guru)!

. . . Really, there is no greater sin than cowardice; cowards are never saved — that is sure. I can stand everything else but not that. Can I have any dealings with one who will not give that up? . . . If one gets one blow, one must return ten with redoubled fury. . . . Then only one is a man. . . . The coward is an object to be pitied.

I bless you all; today, on this day sacred to the Divine Mother, on this night, may the Mother dance in your hearts, and bring infinite strength to your arms. Victory to Kali! Victory to Kali! Mother will certainly come down — and with great strength will bring all victory, world victory. Mother is coming, what dear? Whom to fear? Victory to Kali! At the tread of each one of you the earth will tremble. . . . Victory to Kali! Again onward, forward! Wah Guru! Victory to the Mother! Kali! Kali! Kali! Disease, sorrow, danger, weakness — all these have departed from you all. All victory, all good fortune, all prosperity yours. Fear not! Fear not! The threat of calamity is vanishing, fear not! Victory to Kali! Victory to Kali!

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I am the servant of the Mother, you are all servants of the Mother — what destruction, what fear is there for us? Don't allow egoism to enter your minds, and let love never depart from your hearts. What destruction can touch you? Fear not. Victory to Kali! Victory to Kali!

V.

Chapter 150

CXLIX Mary

CXLIX

To Miss Mary Hale

1 EAST 39 ST., NEW YORK,

20th November, 1899.

MY DEAR MARY,

I start tomorrow most probably for California. On my way I would stop for a day or two in Chicago. I send a wire to you when I start. Send somebody to the station, as I never was so bad as now in finding my way in and out.

Ever your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 151

CL Brahmananda

CL

To Swami Brahmananda

21 WEST 34 ST.,

NEW YORK,

21st November, 1899.

MY DEAR BRAHMANANDA,

The accounts are all right. I have handed them over to Mrs. Bull who has taken charge of reporting the different parts of the accounts to different donors. Never mind what I have said in previous harsh letters. They would do you good. Firstly, they will make you business-like in the future to keep regular and clear accounts and get the brethren into it. Secondly, if these scolding don't make you brave, I shall have no more hopes of you. I want to see you die even, but you must make a fight. Die in obeying commands like a soldier, and go to Nirvana, but no cowardice.

It is necessary that I must disappear for some time. Let not anyone write me or seek me during that time, it is absolutely necessary for my health. I am only nervous, that is all, nothing more.

All blessings follow you. Never mind my harshness. You know the heart always, whatever the lips say. All blessings on you. For the last year or so I have not been in my senses at all. I do not know why. I had to pass through this hell — and I have. I am much better — well, in fact. Lord help you all. I am going to the Himalayas soon to retire for ever. My work is done.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Mrs. Bull sends her love.

V.

Chapter 152

CLI Dhira Mata

CLI

To Mrs. Ole Bull

22nd December, 1899.

MY DEAR DHIRA MATA,

I have a letter from Calcutta today, from which I learn your cheques have arrived; a great many thanks and grateful words also came.

Miss Souter of London sends me a printed New Year's greetings. I think she must have got the accounts you sent her by this time.

Kindly send Saradananda's letters that have come to your care.

As for me, I had a slight relapse of late, for which the healer has rubbed several inches of my skin off.

Just now I am feeling it, the smart. I had a very hopeful note from Margo. I am grinding on in Pasadena; hope some result will come out of my work here. Some people here are very enthusiastic; the Raja-Yoga book did indeed great services on this coast. I am mentally very well; indeed I never really was so calm as of late. The lectures for one thing do not disturb my sleep, that is some gain. I am doing some writing too. The lectures here were taken down by a stenographer, the people here want to print them.

I learn they are well and doing good work at the Math — from Swami Saradananda's letter to Joe. Slowly as usual plans are working; but Mother knows, as I say. May She give me release and find other workers for Her plans. By the by, I have made a discovery as to the mental method of really practising what the Gita teaches, of working without an eye to results. I have seen much light on concentration and attention and control of concentration, which if practised will take us out of all anxiety and worry. It is really the science of bottling up our minds whenever we like. Now what about yourself, poor Dhira Mata! This is the result of motherhood and its penalties; we all think of ourselves, and never of the Mother. How are you? How are things going on with you? What about

your daughter? about Mrs. Briggs?

I hope Turiyananda is completely recovered now and working. Poor man, suffering is the lot! Never mind; there is a pleasure in suffering even, when it is for others, is there not? Mrs. Leggett is doing well; so is Joe; I — they say — I too am. May be they are right. I work anyway and want to die in harness; if that be what Mother wants, I am quite content.

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 153

CLII Dhira Mata

CLII

To Mrs. Ole Bull

921 W. 21ST STREET,

LOS ANGELES,

27th December, 1899.

BELOVED DHIRA MATA,

An eventful and happy New Year to you and many such returns!

I am much better in health — able enough to work once more. I have started work already and have sent to Saradananda some money — Rs. 1,300 already — as expenses for the law suit. I shall send more, if they need it. I had a very bad dream this morning and had not any news of Saradananda for three weeks. Poor boys! How hard I am on them at times. Well, they know, in spite of all that, I am their best friend.

Mr. Leggett has got a little over £500 I had with Sturdy on account of Raja-Yoga and the Maharaja of Khetri. I have now about a thousand dollars with Mr. Leggett. If I die, kindly send that money to my mother. I wired to the boys three weeks ago that I was perfectly cured. If I don't get any worse, this much health as I have now will do well enough. Do not worry at all on my account; I am up and working with a will.

I am sorry I could not write any more of the stories. I have written some other things and mean to write something almost every day.

I am very much more peaceful and find that the only way to keep my peace is to teach others. Work is my only safety valve.

I only want some clear business head to take care of the details as I push onwards and work on. I am afraid it will be a long time to find such in India, and if there are any,

they ought to be educated by somebody from the West.

Again, I can only work when thrown completely on my own feet. I am at my best when I am alone. Mother seems to arrange so. Joe believes great things are brewing — in Mother's cup; hope it is so.

Joe and Margot have developed into actual prophets, it seems. I can only say, every blow I had in this life, every pang, will only become joyful sacrifice if Mother becomes propitious to India once more.

Miss Greenstidel writes a beautiful letter to me, about you most of it. She thinks a lot about Turiyananda too. Give Turiyananda my love. I am sure he will work well. He has the pluck and stamina.

I am going soon to work in California; when I leave I shall send for Turiyananda and make him work on the Pacific coast. I am sure here is a great field. The Raja-Yoga book seems to be very well known here. Miss Greenstidel had found great peace under your roof and is very happy. I am so glad it is so. May things go a little better with her every day. She has a good business head and practical sense.

Joe has unearthed a magnetic healing woman. We are both under her treatment. Joe thinks she is pulling me up splendidly. On her has been worked a miracle, she claims. Whether it is magnetic healing, California ozone, or the end of the present spell of bad Karma, I am improving. It is a great thing to be able to walk three miles, even after a heavy dinner.

All love and blessings to Olea. My love to Dr. Janes and other Boston friends.

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 154

CLIII Mary

CLIII

To Miss Mary Hale

C/O MRS. BLODGETT,

921, WEST 21ST ST.,

LOS ANGELES,

27th December, 1899.

MY DEAR MARY,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and many, many glorious returns of such for your birthday. All these wishes, prayers, greetings in one breath. I am cured, you will be glad to know. It was only indigestion and no heart or kidney affection, quoth the healers; nothing more. And I am walking three miles a day — after a heavy dinner.

Say — the person healing me insisted on my smoking! So I am having my pipe nicely and am all the better for it. In plain English the nervousness etc. was all due to dyspepsia and nothing more.

. . . I am at work too; working, working, not hard; but I don't care, and I want to make money this time. Tell this to Margot, especially the pipe business. You know who is healing me? No physician, no Christian Science healer, but a magnetic healing woman who skins me every time she treats me. Wonders — she performs operations by rubbing — internal operations too, her patients tell me.

It is getting late in the night. I have to give up writing separate letters to Margot, Harriet, Isabelle, and Mother Church. Wish is half the work. They all know how I love them dearly, passionately; so you become the medium for my spirit for the time, and carry them my New Year's messages.

It is exactly like Northern Indian winter here, only some days a little warmer; the roses are here and the

beautiful palms. Barley is in the fields, roses and many other flowers round about the cottage where I live. Mrs. Blodgett, my host, is a Chicago lady — fat, old, and extremely witty. She heard me in Chicago and is very motherly.

I am so sorry, the English have caught a Tartar in South Africa. A soldier on duty outside a camp bawled out that he had caught a Tartar. "Bring him in", was the order from inside the tent. "He will not come", replied the sentry. "Then you come yourself", rang the order again. "He will not let me come either". Hence the phrase "to catch a Tartar". Don't you catch any.

I am happy just now and hope to remain so for all the rest of my life. Just now I am Christian Science — no evil, and "love is a drawing card".

I shall be very happy if I can make a lot of money. I am making some. Tell Margot, I am going to make a lot of money and go home by way of Japan, Honolulu, China, and Java. This is a nice place to make money quick in; and San Francisco is better, I hear. Has she made any?

You could not get the millionaire. Why don't you start for half or one-fourth million? Something is better than nothing. We want money; he may go into Lake Michigan, we have not the least objection. We had a bit of an earthquake here the other day. I hope it has gone to Chicago and raised Isabelle's mud-puddle up. It is getting late. I am yawning, so here I quit.

Good-bye; all blessings, all love,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 155

CLIV Dhira Mata

CLIV

To Mrs. Ole Bull

17th January, 1900.

MY DEAR DHIRA MATA,

I received yours with the enclosures for Saradananda; and there was some good news. I hope to get some more news this week. You did not write anything about your plans. I had a letter from Miss Greenstidel expressing her deep gratitude for your kindness — and who does not? Turiyananda is getting well by this time, I hope.

I have been able to remit Rs. 2,000 to Saradananda, with the help of Miss MacLeod and Mrs. Leggett. Of course they contributed the best part. The rest was got by lectures. I do not expect anything much here or anywhere by lecturing. I can scarcely make expenses. No, not even that; whenever it comes to paying, the people are nowhere. The field of lecturing in this country has been overworked; the people have outgrown that.

I am decidedly better in health. The healer thinks I am now at liberty to go anywhere I choose, the process will go on, and I shall completely recover in a few months. She insists on this, that I am cured already; only nature will have to work out the rest.

Well, I came here principally for health. I have got it; in addition I got Rs. 2,000, to defray the law expenses. Good.

Now it occurs to me that my mission from the platform is finished, and I need not break my health again by that sort of work.

It is becoming clearer to me that I lay down all the concerns of the Math and for a time go back to my mother. She has suffered much through me. I must try to smooth her last days. Do you know, this was just exactly what the great Shankarâchârya himself had to do! He had to go back to his mother in the last few days of her life! I accept it, I am resigned. I am calmer than ever. The only

difficulty is the financial part. Well, the Indian people owe something. I will try Madras and a few other friends in India. Anyhow, I must try, as I have forebodings that my mother has not very many years to live. Then again, this is coming to me as the greatest of all sacrifices to make, the sacrifice of ambition, of leadership, of fame. I am resigned and must do the penance. The one thousand dollars with Mr. Leggett and if a little more is collected, will be enough to fall back upon in case of need. Will you send me back to India? I am ready any time. Don't go to France without seeing me. I have become practical at least compared to the visionary dreams of Joe and Margot. Let them work their dreams out for me — they are not more than dreams. I want to make out a trust-deed of the Math in the names of Saradananda, Brahmananda, and yourself. I will do it as soon as I get the papers from Saradananda. Then I am quits. I want rest, a meal, a few books, and I want to do some scholarly work. Mother shows this light vividly now. Of course you were the one to whom She showed it first. I would not believe it then. But then, it is now shown that — leaving my mother was a great renunciation in 1884 — it is a greater renunciation to go back to my mother now. Probably Mother wants me to undergo the same that She made the great Âchârya undergo in old days. Is it? I am surer of your guidance than of my own. Joe and Margot are great souls, but to you Mother is now sending the light for my guidance. Do you see light? What do you advise? At least do not go out of this country without sending me home.

I am but a child; what work have I to do? My powers I passed over to you. I see it. I cannot any more tell from the platform. Don't tell it to anyone — not even to Joe. I am glad. I want rest; not that I am tired, but the next phase will be the miraculous touch and not the tongue — like Ramakrishna's. The word has gone to you and the voice to Margo. No more it is in me. I am glad. I am resigned. Only get me out to India, won't you? Mother will make you do it. I am sure.

Ever your son,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 156

CLV Dhira Mata

CLV

To Mrs. Ole Bull

LOS ANGELES,

15th February, 1900.

DEAR DHIRA MATA,

Before this reaches you, I am off to San Francisco. You already know all about the work. I have not done much work, but my heart is growing stronger every day, physically and mentally. Some days I feel I can bear everything and suffer everything. There was nothing of note inside the bundle of papers sent by Miss Müller. I did not write her, not knowing her address. Then again, I am afraid.

I can always work better alone, and am physically and mentally best when entirely alone! I scarcely had a day's illness during my eight years of lone life away from my brethren. Now I am again getting up, being alone. Strange, but that is what Mother wants me to be. "Wandering alone like the rhinoceros", as Joe likes it. I think the conferences are ended. Poor Turiyananda suffered so much and never let me know; he is so strong and good. Poor Niranjana, I learn from Mrs. Sevier, is so seriously ill in Calcutta that I don't know whether he has passed away or not. Well, good and evil both love company; queer, they come in strings. I had a letter from my cousin telling me her daughter (the adopted little child) was dead. Suffering seems to be the lot of India! Good. I am getting rather callous, rather stilted, of late. Good. Mother knows. I am so ashamed of myself — of this display of weakness for the last two years! Glad it is ended.

Ever your loving son,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 157

CLVI Mary

CLVI

always. Mother knows best.

To Miss Mary Hale

Your ever faithful brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PASADENA,

20th February, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

Your letter bearing the sad news of Mr. Hale's passing away reached me yesterday. I am sorry, because in spite of monastic training, the heart lives on; and then Mr. Hale was one of the best souls I met in life. Of course you are sorry, miserable, and so are Mother Church and Harriet and the rest, especially as this is the first grief of its kind you have met, is it not? I have lost many, suffered much, and the most curious cause of suffering when somebody goes off is the feeling that I was not good enough to that person. When my father died, it was a pang for months, and I had been so disobedient. You have been very dutiful; if you feel anything like that, it is only a form of sorrow.

Just now I am afraid life begins for you, Mary, in earnest. We may read books, hear lectures, and talk miles, but experience is the one teacher, the one eye-opener. It is best as it is. We learn, through smiles and tears we learn. We don't know why, but we see it is so; and that is enough. Of course Mother Church has the solace of her religion. I wish we could all dream undisturbed good dreams.

You have had shelter all your life. I was in the glare, burning and panting all the time. Now for a moment you have caught a glimpse of the other side. My life is made up of continuous blows like that, and hundred times worse, because of poverty, treachery, and my own foolishness! Pessimism! You will understand it, how it comes. Well, well, what shall I say to you, Mary? You know all the talks; only I say this and it is true — if it were possible to exchange grief, and had I a cheerful mind, I would exchange mine for your grief ever and

Chapter 158

CLVII Mary

CLVII

To Miss Mary Hale

1251 PINE STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

2nd March, 1900.

DEAR MARY,

Very kind of you to write to invite me to Chicago. I wish I could be there this minute. But I am busy making money; only I do not make much. Well, I have to make enough to pay my passage home at any rate. Here is a new field, where I find ready listeners by hundreds, prepared beforehand by my books.

Of course money making is slow and tedious. If I could make a few hundreds, I would be only too glad. By this time you must have received my previous note. I am coming eastward in a month or six weeks, I hope.

How are you all? Give Mother my heartfelt love. I wish I had her strength, she is a true Christian. My health is much better, but the old strength is not there yet. I hope it will come some day, but then, one had to work so hard to do the least little thing. I wish I had rest and peace for a few days at least, which I am sure I can get with the sisters at Chicago. Well, Mother knows best, as I say always. She knows best. The last two years have been specially bad. I have been living in mental hell. It is partially lifted now, and I hope for better days, better states. All blessings on you and the sisters and Mother. Mary, you have been always the sweetest notes in my jarring and clashing life. Then you had the great good Karma to start without oppressive surroundings. I never know a moment's peaceful life. It has always been high pressure, mentally. Lord bless you.

Ever your loving brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 159

CLVIII Dhira Mata

CLVIII

To Mrs. Ole Bull

1502 JONES STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

4th March, 1900.

DEAR DHIRA MATA,

I have not had a word from you for a month. I am in Frisco. The people here have been prepared by my writing beforehand, and they come in big crowds. But it remains to be seen how much of that enthusiasm endures when it comes to paying at the door. Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills invited me to Oakland and gave me big crowds to preach to. He and his wife have been reading my works and keeping track of my movements all the time. I sent the letter of introduction from Miss Thursby to Mrs. Hearst. She has invited me to one of her musicals Sunday next.

My health is about the same; don't find much difference; it is improving, perhaps, but very imperceptibly. I can use my voice, however, to make 3,000 people hear me, as I did twice in Oakland, and get good sleep too after two hours of speaking.

I learn Margot is with you. When are you sailing for France? I will leave here in April and go to the East. I am very desirous of getting to England in May if I can. Must not go home before trying England once more.

I have nice letters from Brahmananda and Saradananda; they are all doing well. They are trying to bring the municipality to its senses; I am glad. In this world of Maya one need not injure, but "spread the hood, without striking". That is enough.

Things must get round; if they don't, it is all right. I have a very nice letter from Mrs. Sevier too. They are doing

fine in the mountains. How is Mrs. Vaughan? When is your conference to close? How is Turiyananda?

With everlasting love and gratitude.

Your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 160

CLIX Dhira Mata

CLIX

To Mrs. Ole Bull

1502 JONES STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,

7th March, 1900.

DEAR DHIRA MATA,

Your letter, enclosing one from Saradananda only and the accounts, came. I am very much reassured by all the news I since received from India. As for the accounts and the disposal of the Rs. 30,000, do just what you please. I have given over the management to you, the Master will show you what is best to do. The money is Rs. 35,000; the Rs. 5,000, for building the cottage on the Ganga, I wrote to Saradananda not to use just now. I have already taken Rs. 5,000 of that money. I am not going to take more. I had paid back Rs. 2,000 or more of that Rs. 5,000 in India. But it seems, Brahmananda, wanting to show as much of the Rs. 35,000 intact as he could, drew upon my Rs. 2,000; so I owe them Rs. 5,000 still on that score.

Anyway, I thought I could make money here in California and pay them up quietly. Now I have entirely failed in California financially. It is worse here than in Los Angeles. They come in crowds when there is a free lecture and very few when there is something to pay.

I have some hopes yet in England. It is necessary for me to reach England in May. There is not the least use in breaking my health in San Francisco for nothing. Moreover, with all Joe's enthusiasm, I have not yet found any real benefit from the magnetic healer, except a few red patches on my chest from scratching! Platform work is nigh gone for me, and forcing it is only hastening the end. I leave here very soon, as soon as I can make money for a passage. I have 300 dollars in hand, made in Los Angeles. I will lecture here next week and then I stop. As for the Math and the

money, the sooner I am released of that burden the better.

I am ready to do whatever you advise me to do. You have been a real mother to me. You have taken up one of my great burdens on yourself — I mean my poor cousin. I feel quite satisfied. As for my mother, I am going back to her — for my last days and hers. The thousand dollars I have in New York will bring Rs. 9 a month; then I bought for her a bit of land which will bring about Rs. 6; and her old house — that will bring, say, Rs. 6. I leave the house under litigation out of consideration, as I have not got it. Myself, my mother, my grandmother, and my brother will live on Rs. 20 a month easy. I would start just now, if I could make money for a passage to India, without touching the 1,000 dollars in New York.

Anyhow I will scrape three or four hundred dollars — 400 dollars will be enough for a second class passage and for a few weeks' stay in London. I do not ask you to do anything more for me; I do not want it. What you have done is more, ever so much more than I deserve. I have given my place solemnly to you in Shri Ramakrishna's work. I am out of it. All my life I have been a torture to my poor mother. Her whole life has been one of continuous misery. If it be possible, my last attempt should be to make her a little happy. I have planned it all out. I have served the Mother all my life. It is done; I refuse now to grind Her axe. Let Her find other workers — I strike.

You have been one friend with whom Shri Ramakrishna has become the goal of life — that is the secret of my trust in you. Others love me personally. But they little dream that what they love me for is Ramakrishna; leaving Him, I am only a mass of foolish selfish emotions. Anyway this stress is terrible, thinking of what may come next, wishing what ought to come next. I am unequal to the responsibility; I am found wanting. I must give up this work. If the work has not life in it, let it die; if it has, it need not wait for poor workers like myself.

Now the money, Rs. 30,000, is in my name, in Government Securities. If they are sold now, we shall lose fearfully, on account of the war; then, how can they be sent over here without being sold there? To sell them there I must sign them. I do not know how all this is

going to be straightened out. Do what you think best about it all. In the meanwhile, it is absolutely necessary that I execute a will in your favour for everything, in case I suddenly die. Send me a draft will as soon as possible and I shall register it in San Francisco or Chicago; then my conscience will be safe. I don't know any lawyer here, else I would have got it drawn up; neither have I the money. The will must be done immediately; the trust and things have time enough for them.

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 161

CLX Joe

CLX

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

**1502 JONES STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,**

7th March, 1900.

DEAR JOE,

I learn from Mrs. Bull's letter that you are in Cambridge.

I also learn from Miss Helen that you did not get the stories sent on to you. I am sorry. Margot has copies she may give you. I am so so in health. No money. Hard work. No result. Worse than Los Angeles.

They come in crowds when the lecture is free — when there is payment, they don't. That's all. I have a relapse — for some days — and am feeling very bad. I think lecturing every night is the cause. I hope to do something in Oakland at least to work out my passage to New York, where I mean to work for my passage to India. I may go to London if I make money here to pay a few months' lodging there.

Will you send me our General's address? Even the name slips from memory now!

Good-bye. May see you in Paris, may not. Lord bless you, you have done for me more than I ever deserve.

With infinite love and gratitude,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 162

CLXI Rakhhal

CLXI

(Translated from Bengali.)

To Swami Brahmananda

SAN FRANCISCO,

12th March, 1900.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

I got a letter from you some time ago. A letter from Sharat reached me yesterday. I saw a copy of the invitation letters for the birthday anniversary of Gurudeva (Divine Master). I am frightened hearing that Sharat is troubled by rheumatism. Alas, sickness, sorrow, and pain have been my companions for the last two years. Tell Sharat that I am not going to work so hard any more. But he who does not work enough to earn his food will have to starve to death! . . . I hope Durgaprasanna has done by this time whatever was necessary for the compound wall. . . . The raising of a compound wall is not, after all, a difficult thing. If I can, I shall build a small house there and serve my old grandmother and mother. Evil actions leave none scot-free; Mother never spares anybody. I admit my actions have been wrong. Now, brother, all of you are Sâdhus and great saints, kindly pray to the Mother that I do not have to shoulder all this trouble and burden any longer. Now I desire a little peace — it seems there is no more strength left to bear the burden of work and responsibility — rest and peace for the few days that I shall yet live! Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! . . . No more lectures or anything of that sort. Peace!

As soon as Sharat sends the trust-deed of the Math, I shall put my signature to it. You all manage — truly I require rest. This disease is called neurasthenia, a disease of the nerves. Once it comes, it continues for some years. But after a complete rest for three or four years it is cured. This country is the home of the disease, and here it has caught me. However, it is not only no fatal disease, but it makes a man live long. Don't be anxious on my account. I shall go on rolling. But there is only this sorrow that the work of Gurudeva is not

progressing; there is this regret that I have not been able to accomplish anything of his work. How much I abuse you all and speak harshly! I am the worst of men! Today, on the anniversary of his birthday, put the dust of your feet on my head — and my mind will become steady again. Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! You are my only refuge — you are my only refuge! Now that my mind is steady, let me tell you that this resignation is the permanent attitude of my mind. All other moods that come are, you should know, only disease. Please don't allow me to work at all any longer. Now I shall quietly do Japa and meditation for some time — nothing more. Mother knows all else. Victory to the Mother of the Universe!

Yours affectionately,
VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 163

CLXII Mary

CLXII

To Miss Mary Hale

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

12th March, 1900.

DEAR MARY,

How are you? How is Mother, and the sisters? How are things going on in Chicago? I am in Frisco, and shall remain here for a month or so. I start for Chicago early in April. I shall write to you before that of course. How I wish I could be with you for a few days; one gets tired of work so much. My health is so so, but my mind is very peaceful and has been so for some time. I am trying to give up all anxiety unto the Lord. I am only a worker. My mission is to obey and work. He knows the rest.

“Giving up all vexations and paths, do thou take refuge unto Me. I will save you from all dangers” (Gita, XVIII.66).

I am trying hard to realise that. May I be able to do it soon.

Ever your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 164

CLXIII Dhira Mata

CLXIII

weeks now will be, 1719 Turk Street, San Francisco.

To Mrs. Ole Bull

V.

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

12th March, 1900.

MY DEAR DHIRA MATA,

Your letter from Cambridge came yesterday. Now I have got a fixed address, 1719 Turk Street, San Francisco. Hope you will have time to pen a few lines in reply to this. I had a manuscript account sent me by you. I sent it back as you desired; besides that, I had no other accounts. It is all right.

I had a nice letter from Miss Souter from London. She expects to have Mr. . . . to dine with her.

So glad to hear of Margot's success. I have given her over to you, and am sure you will take care of her. I will be here a few weeks more and then go East. I am only waiting for the warm season.

I have not been at all successful financially here, but am not in want. Anyway, things will go on as usual with me, I am sure; and if they don't, what then?

I am perfectly resigned. I had a letter from the Math; they had the Utsava yesterday. I do not intend to go by the Pacific. Don't care where I go, and when. Now perfectly resigned; Mother knows; a great change, peacefulness is coming on me. Mother, I know, will see to it. I die a Sannyasin. You have been more than mother to me and mine. All love, all blessings be yours for ever, is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Kindly tell Mrs. Leggett that my address for some

Chapter 165

CLXIV Mary

CLXIV

To Miss Mary Hale

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

22nd March, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

Many thanks for your kind note. You are correct that I have many other thoughts to think besides Indian people, but they have all to go to the background before the all-absorbing mission — my Master's work.

I would that this sacrifice were pleasant. It is not, and naturally makes one bitter at times; for know, Mary, I am yet a man and cannot wholly forget myself; hope I shall some time. Pray for me.

Of course I am not to be held responsible for Miss MacLeod's or Miss Noble's or anybody else's views regarding myself or anything else, am I? You never found me smart under criticism.

I am glad you are going over to Europe for a long period. Make a long tour, you have been long a house-dove.

As for me, I am tired on the other hand of eternal tramping; that is why I want to go back home and be quiet. I do not want to work any more. My nature is the retirement of a scholar. I never get it! I pray I will get it, now that I am all broken and worked out. Whenever I get a letter from Mrs. Sevier from her Himalayan home, I feel like flying off the Himalayas. I am really sick of this platform work and eternal trudging and seeing new faces and lecturing.

You need not bother about getting up classes in Chicago. I am getting money in Frisco and will soon make enough for my passage home.

How are you and the sisters? I expect to come to Chicago some time towards the first part of April.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 166

CLXV Mary

CLXV

To Miss Mary Hale

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

28th March, 1900.

WELL BLESSED MARY,

This is to let you know “I am very happy”. Not that I am getting into a shadowy optimism, but my power of suffering is increasing. I am being lifted up above the pestilential miasma of this world’s joys and sorrows; they are losing their meaning. It is a land of dreams; it does not matter whether one enjoys or weeps; they are but dreams, and as such, must break sooner or later. How are things going on with you folks there? Harriet is going to have a good time at Paris. I am sure to meet her over there and parler française! I am getting by heart a French dictionnaire! I am making some money too; hard work morning and evening; yet better for all that. Good sleep, good digestion, perfect irregularity.

You are going to the East. I hope to come to Chicago before the end of April. If I can't, I will surely meet you in the East before you go.

What are the McKindley girls doing? Eating grapefruit concoctions and getting plump? Go on, life is but a dream. Are you not glad it is so? My! They want an eternal heaven! Thank God, nothing is eternal except Himself. He alone can bear it, I am sure. Eternity of nonsense!

Things are beginning to hum for me; they will presently roar. I shall remain quiet though, all the same. Things are not humming for you just now. I am so sorry, that is, I am trying to be, for I cannot be sorry for anything and more. I am attaining peace that passeth understanding, which is neither joy nor sorrow, but something above them both. Tell Mother that. My passing through the

valley of death, physical, mental, last two years, has helped me in this. Now I am nearing that Peace, the eternal silence. Now I mean to see things as they are, everything in that peace, perfect in its way. “He whose joy is only in himself, whose desires are only in himself, he has learned his lessons.” This is the great lesson that we are here to learn through myriads of births and heavens and hells — that there is nothing to be asked for, desired for, beyond one’s Self. “The greatest thing I can obtain is my Self.” “I am free”, therefore I require none else for my happiness. “Alone through eternity, because I was free, am free, and will remain free for ever.” This is Vedantism. I preached the theory so long, but oh, joy! Mary, my dear sister, I am realising it now every day. Yes, I am — “I am free.” “Alone, alone, I am the one without a second.”

Ever yours in the Sat-Chit-Ânanda,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Now I am going to be truly Vivekananda. Did you ever enjoy evil! Ha! ha! you silly girl, all is good! Nonsense. Some good, some evil. I enjoy the good and I enjoy the evil. I was Jesus and I was Judas Iscariot; both my play, my fun. “So long as there are two, fear shall not leave thee.” Ostrich method? Hide your heads in the sand and think there is nobody seeing you! All is good! Be brave and face everything — come good, come evil, both welcome, both of you my play. I have no good to attain, no ideal to clench up to, no ambition to fulfil; I, the diamond mine, am playing with pebbles, good and evil; good for you — evil, come; good for you-good, you come too. If the universe tumbles round my ears, what is that to me? I am Peace that passeth understanding; understanding only gives us good or evil. I am beyond, I am peace.

V.

Chapter 167

CLXVI Haribhai

CLXVI

(Translated from Bengali.)

To Swami Turiyananda

SAN FRANCISCO,

March, 1900.

DEAR HARIBHAI,

I have just received a bill of lading from Mrs. Banerji. She has sent some Dâl (pulses) and rice. I am sending the bill of lading to you. Give it to Miss Waldo; she will bring all these things when they come.

Next week I am leaving this place for Chicago; thence I go over to New York. I am getting on somehow. . . . Where are you putting up now? What are you doing?

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 168

CLXVII Joe

CLXVII

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

**1719 TURK STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,**

30th March, 1900.

MY DEAR JOE,

Many thanks for the prompt sending of the books. They will sell quick, I believe. You have become worse than me in changing your plans, I see. I wonder why I have not got any Awakened India yet. My mail is getting so knocked about, I am afraid.

I am working hard — making some money — and am getting better in health. Work morning and evening, go to bed at 12 p.m. after a heavy supper! — and trudge all over the town! And get better too!

So Mrs. Milton is there, give her my love, will you? Has not Turiyananda's leg got all right?

I have sent Margot's letter to Mrs. Bull as she wanted. I am so happy to learn of Mrs. Leggett's gift to her. Things have got to come round; anyway, they are bound to, because nothing is eternal.

I will be a week or two more here if I find it paying, then go to a place near by called Stockton and then — I don't know. Things are going anyhow.

I am very peaceful and quiet, and things are going anyway-just they go. With all love,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Miss Waldo is just the person to undertake editing Karma-Yoga with additions etc.

V.

Chapter 169

CLXVIII Haribhai

CLXVIII

(Translated from Bengali.)

To Swami Turiyananda

DEAR HARIBHAI,

I am glad to hear that your leg is all right and that you are doing splendid work. My body is going on all right. The thing is, I fall ill when I take too much precaution. I am cooking, eating whatever comes, working day and night, and I am all right and sleeping soundly!

I am going over to New York within a month. Has Sarada's magazine gone out of circulation? I am not getting it any longer. Awakened also has gone to sleep, I think. They are not sending it to me any more. Let that go. There is an outbreak of plague in our country; who knows who is alive and who is dead! Well, a letter from Achu has come today. He had hidden himself in the town of Ramgarh in Sikar State. Someone told him that Vivekananda was dead; so he has written to me! I am sending him a reply.

All well here. Hope this finds you and all others well.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 170

CLXIX Joe

CLXIX

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

1719 TURK STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

April, 1900.

MY DEAR JOE,

Just a line before you start for France. Are you going via England? I had a beautiful letter from Mrs. Sevier in which I find that Miss Müller sent simply a paper without any other words to Kali who was with her in Darjeeling.

Congreave is the name of her nephew, and he is in the Transvaal war; that is the reason she underlined that, to show her nephew fighting the Boers in Transvaal. That was all. I cannot understand it any more now than then, of course.

I am physically worse than at Los Angeles, mentally much better, stronger, and peaceful. Hope it will continue to be so.

I have not got a reply to my letter to you; I expect it soon.

One Indian letter of mine was directed by mistake to Mrs. Wheeler; it came all right to me in the end. I had nice notes from Saradananda; they are doing beautifully over there. The boys are working up; well, scolding has both sides, you see; it makes them up and doing. We Indians have been so dependent for so long that it requires, I am sorry, a good lot of tongue to make them active. One of the laziest fellows had taken charge of the anniversary this year and pulled it through. They have planned and are successfully working famine works by themselves without my help. . . . All this comes from the terrific scolding I have been giving, sure!

They are standing on their own feet. I am so glad. See Joe, the Mother is working.

I sent Miss Thursby's letter to Mrs. Hearst. She sent me an invitation to her musical. I could not go. I had a bad

cold. So that was all. Another lady for whom I had a letter from Miss Thursby, an Oakland lady, did not reply. I don't know whether I shall make enough in Frisco to pay my fare to Chicago! Oakland work has been successful. I hope to get about \$100 from Oakland, that is all. After all, I am content. It is better that I tried. . . . Even the magnetic healer had not anything for me. Well, things will go on anyhow for me; I do not care how. . . . I am very peaceful. I learn from Los Angeles, Mrs. Leggett has been bad again. I wired to New York to learn what truth was in it. I will get a reply soon, I expect.

Say, how will you arrange about my mail when the Leggetts are over on the other side? Will you so arrange that they reach me right?

I have nothing more to say; all love and gratitude is yours; already you know that. You have already done more than I ever deserved. I don't know whether I go to Paris or not, but I must go to England sure in May. I must not go home without trying England a few weeks more. With all love,

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Mrs. Hansborough and Mrs. Appenul have taken a flat for a month at 1719 Turk Street. I am with them, and shall be a few weeks.

V.

Chapter 171

CLXX Dhira Mata

CLXX

To Mrs. Ole Bull

1719 TURK STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,

1st April, 1900.

DEAR DHIRA MATA,

Your kind note came this morning. I am so happy to learn that all the New York friends are being cured by Mrs. Milton. She has been very unsuccessful, it seems, in Los Angeles, as all the people we introduced tell me. Some are in a worse state than before the skin paring. Kindly give Mrs. Milton my love; her rubbings used to do me good at the time at least. Poor Dr. Hiller! We send him over post-haste to Los Angeles to get his wife cured. You ought to have seen him the other morning and heard him too! Mrs. Hiller, it appears, is many times worse for all the rubbings given; and she is only a few bones; and, above all, the doctor had to spend 500 dollars in Los Angeles. That makes him feel very bad. I, of course, would not write this to Joe; she is happy in her dreams of having done so much good to poor sufferers. But oh, if she could hear the Los Angeles folks and this old Dr. Hiller, she would change her mind at once and learn wisdom from an old adage not to recommend medicine to any one. I am so glad I did not write of old Dr. Hiller's alacrity in getting over to Los Angeles when he heard of this cure from Joe. She ought to have seen the old man dance about my room, with greater alacrity! 500 dollars was too much for the old man; he is a German; he dances about, slaps his pockets and says, "You can't have goth the five hundred, both for this silly cure!"

Then there are poor people who paid her three dollars a rubbing sometimes and now complimenting Joe and myself. Don't tell this to Joe. You and she can afford to lose money on anyone. So also the old German doctor, but the poor boy finds it a bit hard. The old doctor is now persuaded that some devils are misarranging his

affairs of late. He had counted on so much to have me as his guest, and his wife righted, but he had to run to Los Angeles and that upset the whole plan; and now, though he tries his best to get me in as his guest, I fight shy, not of him, but of his wife and sister-in-law. He is sure, "Devils must be in it"; he has been a Theosophical student. I told him to write to Miss MacLeod to hunt up a devil-driver somewhere so that he might run with his wife and spend another five hundred! Doing good is not always smooth!

As for me, I get the fun out of it — as long as Joe pays — bone-cracker, or skin-parer, or any system whatever. But this was not fair of Joe — after having got in all these people to get rubbed down, to run off and let me bear all the compliments! I am glad she is not introducing any outsiders to be skinned. Otherwise Joe would be gone to Paris, leaving poor Mr. Leggett to collect the compliments. I sent in a Christian Science healer to Dr. Hiller as a make-up of Joe's misdemeanour, but his wife slammed the door in her face and would have nothing to do with queer healing.

Anyhow, I sincerely hope and pray Mrs. Leggett will be well this time. Did they analyse the sting?

I hope the will will arrive soon; I am a bit anxious about it. I expected to get a draft trust-deed also by this mail from India; no letters came, not even Awakened India, though I find Awakened India has reached San Francisco.

I read in the papers the other day of 500 deaths in one week of plague in Calcutta! Mother knows what is good.

So Mr. Leggett has got the V. Society up. Good.

How is Olea? Where is Margot? I wrote her a letter the other day to 21 W. 34, N.Y. I am so happy that she is making headway. With all love,

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I am getting all the work I can do and more. I will make my passage, anyhow. Though they cannot pay me much, yet they pay some, and by constant work I will

make enough to pay my way and have a few hundred in the pocket anyhow. So you needn't be the least anxious about me.

V.

Chapter 172

CLXXI Margot

CLXXI

To Sister Nivedita

U.S.A.,

6th April, 1900.

DEAR MARGOT,

Glad you have returned. Gladder you are going to Paris. I shall go to Paris of course, only don't know when. Mrs. Leggett thinks I ought to immediately, and take up studying French. Well, take what comes. So you do too.

Finish your books, and in Paris we are going to conquer the Froggies. How is Mary? Give her my love. My work here is done. I will come in fifteen days to Chicago if Mary is there. She is going away to the East soon. With blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. The mind is omnipresent and can be heard and felt anywhere.

V.

Chapter 173

CLXXII American Friend

CLXXII

To an American friend

SAN FRANCISCO,

7th April, 1900.

. . . I am more calm and quiet now than I ever was. I am on my own feet, working hard and with pleasure. To work I have the right. Mother knows the rest.

You see, I shall have to stay here, longer than I intended, and work. But don't be disturbed. I shall work out all my problems. I am on my own feet now, and I begin to see the light. Success would have led me astray, and I would have lost sight of the truth that I am a Sannyasin. That is why Mother is giving me this experience.

My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never more to be driven out. Glory, glory unto Mother! I have no wish, no ambition now. Blessed be Mother! I am the servant of Ramakrishna. I am merely a machine. I know nothing else. Nor do I want to know. Glory, glory unto Shri Guru!

Chapter 174

CLXXIII Dhira Mata

CLXXIII

To Mrs. Ole Bull

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

8th April, 1900.

DEAR DHIRA MATA,

Here is a long letter from A__. He seems to be entirely upset. I am sure a little kindness will completely win him over. He thinks that you want to drive him out of New York, etc. He awaits my orders. I have told him to trust you in everything and remain in New York till I come.

I think, as things stand in New York, they require my presence. Do you? In that case I shall come over soon.

I have been making enough money to pay my passage. I will stop on my way at Chicago and Detroit.

Of course by that time you will be off. A__ has done good work so far; and, of course, you know I do not meddle with my workers at all.

The man who can work has an individuality of his own and resists any pressure there. That is my reason in leaving workers entirely free. Of course you are on the spot and know best. Advise me what to do.

The remittance to Calcutta has duly reached. I got news of it by this mail. My cousin sends her respects and thanks, but she is sorry she cannot write English.

I am getting better every day, and even walking uphill. There are falls now and then, but the duration is decreasing constantly. My thanks to Mrs. Milton.

I had a little note from Siri Gryanander. Poor girl, she is so thankful to be trusted. That is just like Mrs. Leggett — good, good, good. Money is not evil after all —

in good hands. I hope fervently Siri will completely recover, poor child.

I will leave here in about two weeks. I go to a place called Star Klon and then start for the East. It may be I may go to Denver also. With all love to Joe,

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I do not any more doubt my ultimate cure; you ought to see me working like a steam engine cooking, eating anything and everything, and, all the same, sleeping well and keeping well!

I have not done any writing — no time. I am so glad Mrs. Leggett is much better and walking about naturally. I expect her complete recovery soon and pray for it.

V.

PS. I had a nice letter from Mrs. Sevier; they are going on splendidly with the work. Plague has broken out severely at Calcutta, but no hullabaloo over it this time.

V.

PS. Did you reveal to A__ that I have given over to you the charge of the entire work? Well, you know best how to do things; but he seems to be hurt at that.

V.

Chapter 175

CLXXIV Joe

CLXXIV

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

10th April, 1900.

DEAR JOE,

There is a squabble in New York, I see. I got a letter from A__ stating that he was going to leave New York. He thought Mrs. Bull and you have written lots against him to me. I wrote him back to be patient and wait, and that Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod wrote only good things about him.

Well, Joe Joe, you know my method in all these rows; to leave all rows alone! "Mother" sees to all such things. I have finished my work. I am retired, Joe. "Mother" will work now Herself. That is all.

Now, as you say, I am going to send all the money I have made here. I could do it today, but I am waiting to make it a thousand. I expect to make a thousand in Frisco by the end of this week. I will buy a draft on New York and send it or ask the bank the best way to do it.

I have plenty of letters from the Math and the Himalayan centre. This morning came one from Swarupananda. Yesterday one from Mrs. Sevier.

I told Mrs. Hansborough about the photos.

You tell Mr. Leggett from me to do what is best about the Vedanta Society matter. The only thing I see is that in every country we have to follow its own method. As such, if I were you, I would convene a meeting of all the members and sympathisers and ask them what they want to do. Whether they want to organise or not, what sort of organisation they want if any, etc. But Lordy, do it on your own hook. I am quits. Only if you think my presence would be of any help I can come in fifteen days.

I have finished my work here; only, out of San Francisco, Stockton is a little city I want to work a few days

in; then I go East. I think I should rest now, although I can have \$100 a week average in this city, all along. This time I want to let upon New York the charge of the Light Brigade.

With all love,

Ever yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. If the workers are all averse to organising, do you think there is any benefit in it? You know best. Do what you think best. I have a letter from Margot from Chicago. She asks some questions; I am going to reply.

V.

Chapter 176

CLXXV American Friend

CLXXV

To an American friend

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA,

12th April, 1900.

Mother is becoming propitious once more. Things are looking up. They must.

Work always brings evil with it. I have paid for the accumulated evil with bad health. I am glad. My mind is all the better for it. There is a mellowness and a calmness in life now, which was never there before. I am learning now how to be detached as well as attached, and mentally becoming my own master. . . .

Mother is doing Her own work; I do not worry much now. Moths like me die by the thousand every instant. Her work goes on all the same. Glory unto Mother! . . . Alone and drifting about in the will-current of the Mother has been my whole life. The moment I have tried to break this, that moment I have been hurt. Her will be done! . . .

I am happy, at peace with myself, and more of the Sannyasin than I ever was before. The love for my own kith and kin is growing less every day, and that for Mother increasing. Memories of long nights of vigil with Shri Ramakrishna under the Dakshineswar Banyan are waking up once more. And work? What is work? Whose work? Whom shall I work for?

I am free. I am Mother's child. She works, She plays. Why should I plan? What should I plan? Things came and went, just as She liked, without my planning. We are Her automata. She is the wirepuller.

Chapter 177

CLXXVI Joe

CLXXVI

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA,

20th April, 1900.

MY DEAR JOE,

Received your note today. I wrote you one yesterday but directed it to England thinking you will be there.

I have given your message to Mrs. Betts. I am so sorry this little quarrel came with A__. I got also his letter you sent. He is correct so far as he says, "Swami wrote me 'Mr. Leggett is not interested in Vedanta and will not help any more. You stand on your own feet.'" It was as you and Mrs. Leggett desired me to write him from Los Angeles about New York — in reply to his asking me what to do for funds.

Well, things will take their own shape, but it seems in Mrs. Bull's and your mind there is some idea that I ought to do something. But in the first place I do not know anything about the difficulties. None of you write me anything about what that is for, and I am no thought-reader. You simply wrote me a general idea that A__ wanted to keep things in his hands. What can I understand from it? What are the difficulties? Regarding what the differences are about, I am as much in the dark as about the exact date of the Day of Destruction! And yet Mrs. Bull's and your letters show quite an amount of vexation! These things get complicated sometimes, in spite of ourselves. Let them take their shape.

I have executed and sent the will to Mr. Leggett as desired by Mrs. Bull.

I am going on, sometimes well and at other times ill. I cannot say, on my conscience, that I have been the least benefited by Mrs. Milton. She has been good to me, I am very thankful. My love to her. Hope she will benefit others.

For writing to Mrs. Bull this fact, I got a four page sermon, as to how I ought to be grateful and thankful, etc., etc. All that is, sure, the outcome of this A__ business! Sturdy and Mrs. Johnson got disturbed by Margot, and they fell upon me. Now A__ disturbs Mrs. Bull and, of course, I have to bear the brunt of it. Such is life!

You and Mrs. Leggett wanted me to write him to be free and independent and that Mr. Leggett was not going to help them. I wrote it — now what can I do? If John or Jack does not obey you, am I to be hanged for it? What do I know about this Vedanta Society? Did I start it? Had I any hand in it? Then again, nobody condescends to write me anything about what the affair is! Well, this world is a great fun.

I am glad Mrs. Leggett is recovering fast. I pray every moment for her complete recovery. I start for Chicago on Monday. A kind lady has given me a pass up to New York to be used within three months. The Mother will take care of me. She is not going to strand me now after guarding me all my life.

Ever yours gratefully,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 178

CLXXVII Mary

CLXXVII

To Miss Mary Hale

23rd April, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

I ought to have started today but circumstances so happened that I cannot forgo the temptation to be in a camp under the huge red-wood trees of California before I leave. Therefore I postpone it for three or four days. Again after the incessant work I require a breath of God's free air before I start on this bone-breaking journey of four days.

Margot insists in her letter that I must keep my promise to come to see Aunt Mary in fifteen days. It will be kept — only in twenty days instead of fifteen. By that I avoid the nasty snowstorm Chicago had lately and get a little strength too.

Margot is a great partisan of Aunt Mary it seems, and other people besides me have nieces and cousins and aunts.

I start tomorrow to the woods. Woof! get my lungs full of ozone before getting into Chicago. In the meanwhile keep my mail for me when it comes to Chicago and don't send it off here like a good girl as you are.

I have finished work. Only a few days' rest, my friends insist — three or four — before facing the railway.

I have got a free pass for three months from here to New York; no expense except the sleeping car; so, you see, free, free!

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 179

CLXXVIII Mary

CLXXVIII

To Miss Mary Hale

30th April, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

Sudden indisposition and fever prevent my starting for Chicago yet. I will start as soon as I am strong for the journey. I had a letter from Margot the other day. Give her kindly my love, and know yourself my eternal love. Where is Harriet? Still in Chicago? And the McKindley sisters? To all my love.

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 180

CLXXIX Nivedita

CLXXIX

To Sister Nivedita

2nd May, 1900.

MY DEAR NIVEDITA,

I have been very ill — one more relapse brought about by months of hard work. Well, it has shown me that I have no kidney or heart disease whatsoever, only overworked nerves. I am, therefore, going today in the country for some days till I completely recover, which I am sure will be in a few days.

In the meanwhile I do not want to read any India letters with the plague news etc. My mail is coming to Mary; either she or you keep them (you, if she goes away) till I return.

I am going to throw off all worry, and glory unto Mother.

Mrs. C. P. Huntington, a very, very wealthy lady, who has helped me, came; wants to see and help you. She will be in New York by the first of June. Do not go away without seeing her. If I cannot come early enough, I will send you an introduction to her.

Give my love to Mary. I am leaving here in a few days.

Ever yours with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. The accompanying letter is to introduce you to Mrs. M. C. Adams, wife of Judge Adams. Go to see her immediately. Much good may come out of it. She is well known; find out her address.

V.

Chapter 181

CLXXX Nivedita

CLXXX

To Sister Nivedita

SAN FRANCISCO,

26th May, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

All blessings on you. Don't despond in the least. Shri wah Guru! Shri wah Guru! You come of the blood of a Kshatriya. Our yellow garb is the robe of death on the field of battle. Death for the cause is our goal, not success. Shri wah Guru! . . .

Black and thick are the folds of sinister fate. But I am the master. I raise my hand, and lo, they vanish! All this is nonsense. And fear? I am the Fear of fear, the Terror of terror, I am the fearless secondless One, I am the Rule of destiny, the Wiper-out of fact. Shri wah Guru! Steady, child, don't be bought by gold or anything else, and we win!

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 182

CLXXXI Mary

CLXXXI

To Miss Mary Hale

1921 W. 21 STREET,

LOS ANGELES,

17th June, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

It is true I am much better, but not yet completely recovered; anyway, the complexion of the mind is one belonging to everyone that suffers. It is neither gas nor anything else.

Kāli worship is not a necessary step in any religion. The Upanishads teach us all there is of religion. Kali worship is my special fad; you never heard me preach it, or read of my preaching it in India. I only preach what is good for universal humanity. If there is any curious method which applies entirely to me, I keep it a secret and there it ends. I must not explain to you what Kali worship is, as I never taught it to anybody.

You are entirely mistaken if you think the Boses are rejected by the Hindu people. The English rulers want to push him into a corner. They don't of course like that sort of development in the Indian race. They make it hot for him, that is why he seeks to go elsewhere.

By the "anglicised" are meant people who by their manners and conduct show that they are ashamed of us poor, old type Hindus. I am not ashamed of my race or my birth or nationality. That such people are not liked by the Hindus, I cannot wonder.

Ceremonials and symbols etc. have no place in our religion which is the doctrine of the Upanishads, pure and simple. Many people think the ceremonial etc. help them in realising religion. I have no objection.

Religion is that which does not depend upon books or teachers or prophets or saviours, and that which does not make us dependent in this or in any other lives upon others. In this sense Advaitism of the Upanishads is the only religion. But saviours, books, prophets, ceremonials, etc. have their places. They may help many as Kali worship helps me in my secular work. They are welcome.

The Guru, however, is a different idea. It is the relation between the transmitter and the receiver of force — psychic power and knowledge. Each nation is a type, physically and mentally. Each is constantly receiving ideas from others only to work them out into its type, that is, along the national line. The time has not come for the destruction of types. All education from any source is compatible with the ideals in every country; only they must be nationalised, i.e. fall in line with the rest of the type manifestation.

Renunciation is always the ideal of every race; only other races do not know what they are made to do by nature unconsciously. Through the ages one purpose runs sure. And that will be finished with the destruction of this earth and the sun! And worlds are always in progress indeed! And nobody as yet developed enough in any one of the infinite worlds to communicate with us! Bosh! They are born, show the same phenomena, and die the same death! Increasing purpose! Babies! Live in the land of dreams, you babies!

Well, now about me. You must persuade Harriet to give me a few dollars every month, and I will have some other friends do the same. If I succeed, I fly off to India. I am dead tired of the platform work for a living. It does not please me any more. I retire and do some writing if I can do some scholarly work.

I am coming soon to Chicago, hope to be there in a few days. Say, would not Mrs. Adams be able to get up a class for me to pay my passage back?

Of course I shall try different places. So much of optimism has come to me, Mary, that I should fly off to the Himalayas if I had wings.

I have worked for this world, Mary, all my life, and it does not give me a piece of bread without taking a pound of flesh.

If I can get a piece of bread a day, I retire entirely; but this is impossible — this is the increasing purpose that is unfolding all the devilish inwardness, as I am getting older!

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. If ever a man found the vanity of things, I have it now. This is the world, hideous, beastly corpse. Who thinks of helping it is a fool! But we have to work out our slavery by doing good or evil; I have worked it out, I hope. May the Lord take me to the other shore! Amen! I have given up all thoughts about India or any land. I am now selfish, want to save myself!

“He who revealed unto Brahmâ (the first of the gods) the Vedas, who is manifest in every heart, unto Him I take refuge, hoping deliverance from bondage.”

V.

Chapter 183

CLXXXII Mary

CLXXXII

To Miss Mary Hale

VEDANTA SOCIETY,

146 E. 55TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

23rd June, 1900.

MY DEAR MARY,

Many, many thanks for your beautiful letter. I am very well and happy and same as ever. Waves must come before a rise. So with me. I am very glad you are going to pray. Why don't you get up a Methodist camp-meeting? That will have quicker effect, I am sure.

I am determined to get rid of all sentimentalism, and emotionalism, and hang me if you ever find me emotional. I am the Advaitist; our goal is knowledge — no feelings, no love, as all that belongs to matter and superstition and bondage. I am only existence and knowledge.

Greenacre will give you good rest. I am sure. I wish you all joy there. Don't for a moment worry on my account. "Mother" looks after me. She is bringing me fast out of the hell of emotionalism, and bringing me into the light of pure reason. With everlasting wishes for your happiness, Ever your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Margot starts on the 26th. I may follow in a week or two. Nobody has any power over me, for I am the spirit. I have no ambition; it is all Mother's work; I have no part.

V.

I could not digest your letter as the dyspepsia was rather bad last few days.

V.

Non-attachment has always been there. It has come in a minute. Very soon I stand where no sentiment, no feeling, can touch me.

V.

Chapter 184

CLXXXIII Sister

CLXXXIII

To Miss Mary Hale

102 E. 58TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

11th July, 1900.

MY DEAR DEVOTED SISTER,

I was glad to get your note as also to learn that you were going to Greenacre. Hope you will have much profit. I have been much censured by everyone for cutting off my long hair. I am sorry. You forced me to do it.

I had been to Detroit and came back yesterday. Trying as soon as possible to go to France, thence to India. Very little news here; the work is closed. I am taking regularly my meals and sleeping — that is all.

Ever faithful and loving brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Write to the girls to send my mails, if any, at Chicago.

V.

Chapter 185

CLXXXIV Turiyananda

CLXXXIV

To Swami Turiyananda

102 E. 58TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

18th July, 1900.

MY DEAR TURIYANANDA,

Your letter reached me redirected. I stayed in Detroit for three days only. It is frightfully hot here in New York. There was no Indian mail for you last week. I have not heard from Sister Nivedita yet.

Things are going on the same way with us. Nothing particular. Miss Müller cannot come in August. I will not wait for her. I take the next train. Wait till it comes. With love to Miss Boocke,

Yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Kali went away about a week ago to the mountains. He cannot come back till September. I am all alone, and washing; I like it. Have you seen my friends? Give them my love.

V.

Chapter 186

CLXXXV Joe

CLXXXV

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

102 E. 58TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

20th July, 1900.

DEAR JOE,

Possibly before this reaches you I shall be in Europe, London or Paris as the chance of steamer comes.

I have straightened out my business here. The works are at Mr. Whitmarsh's suggestion in the hands of Miss Waldo.

I have to get the passage and sail. Mother knows the rest.

My intimate friend did not materialise yet and writes she will come some time in August, and she is dying to see a Hindu, and her soul is burning for Mother India.

I wrote her I may see her in London. Mother knows again. Mrs. Huntington sends love to Margot and expects to hear from her if she is not too busy with her scientific exhibits.

With all love to "sacred cow" of India, to yourself, to the Leggetts, to Miss (what's her name?), the American rubber plant.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 187

CLXXXVI Joe

CLXXXVI

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

102 E. 58TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

24th July, 1900.

DEAR JOE,

The sun = Knowledge. The stormy water = Work. The lotus = Love. The serpent = Yoga. The swan = the Self. The Motto = May the Swan (the Supreme Self) send us that. It is the mind-lake. (This explains the design on the Ramakrishna Math and Mission seal, printed on the title page of this volume — Ed.) How do you like it? May the Swan fill you with all these anyway.

I am to start on Thursday next, by the French steamer La Champagne. The books are in the hands of Waldo and Whitmarsh. They are nearly ready.

I am well, getting better — and all right till I see you next week.

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 188

CLXXXVII Turiyananda

CLXXXVII

To Swami Turiyananda

102 E. 58TH STREET,

NEW YORK,

25th July, 1900.

DEAR TURIYANANDA,

I received a letter from Mrs. Hansborough telling me of your visit to her. They like you immensely, and I am sure you have found in them genuine, pure, and absolutely unselfish friends.

I am starting for Paris tomorrow. Things all turn that way. Kali is not here. He is rather worried at my going away, but it has got to be.

Address your next letter to me care of Mr. Leggett, 6 Place des Etats Unis, Paris, France.

Give my love to Mrs. Wyckoff, Hansborough, and to Helen. Revive the clubs a bit and ask Mrs. Hansborough to collect the dues as they fall and send them to India. Sarada writes they are having rather hot times. My kind regards for Miss Boocke.

With all love,

Ever yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 189

CLXXXVIII Dear—

CLXXXVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

To a Brahmacharin (Brahmachari Harendra Nath) of the
Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati

NEW YORK,

August, 1900.

DEAR __,

I had a letter from you several days ago, but I could not reply earlier. Mr. Sevier speaks well of you in his letter. I am very pleased at this.

Write to me in minute detail who all are there, and what each one is doing. Why don't you write letters to your mother? What is this? Devotion to the mother is the root of all welfare. How is your brother getting on with his studies at Calcutta? The Sannyasin-names of those there escape my memory — how to address each? Give my love to all conjointly. I got the news that Khagen has now fully recovered. This is happy news. Write to me whether the Seviers are attending to your comforts and other details. I am glad to know that Dinu's health is all right. The boy Kali has a tendency to become fat; but this will all surely go away by constantly climbing up and down the hills there. Tell Swarup that I am very much pleased with his conducting of the paper. He is doing splendid work. Give to all others also my love and blessings. Tell everybody that my health is now all right. From here I shall go to England and from there to India very shortly.

With all blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 190

CLXXXIX Hari

CLXXXIX

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Turiyananda

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,

PARIS,

13th August, 1900.

DEAR BROTHER HARI,

I got your letter from California. So three persons are getting spiritual trances; well, it is not bad. Even out of that much good will come. Shri Ramakrishna knows! Let things happen as they will. His work He knows, you and I are but servants and nothing else.

I am sending this letter to San Francisco — care of Mrs. C. Panel. Just now I got some news from New York. They are well. Kali is on tour. Write in detail about your health and work in San Francisco. And don't be indifferent to the question of sending money to the Math. See that money goes certainly every month, from Los Angeles and San Francisco.

I am on the whole doing well. I am shortly starting for England. I get news of Sharat. Recently he had an attack of dysentery. The rest are all well. This time few got malaria; nor is it so prevalent on the banks of the Ganga. This year, owing to the scarcity of rain, there is fear of famine in Bengal also.

By the grace of Mother, go on doing work, brother. Mother knows, and you know — but I am off! Now I am going to take a rest.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 191

CXC John Fox

CXC

To Mr. John Fox

BOULEVARD HANS SWAN,

PARIS,

14th August, 1900.

JOHN FOX, ESQ.,

6 Dr. Wolf Street,
Dorchester, Mass, U.S., America.

Kindly write Mohin (Mahendranath Datta, younger brother of Swamiji.) that he has my blessings in whatever he does. And what he is doing now is surely much better than lawyering, etc. I like boldness and adventure and my race stands in need of that spirit very much. Only as my health is failing and I do not expect to live long, Mohin must see his way to take care of mother and family. I may pass away any moment. I am quite proud of him now.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 192

CXCI Brother Hari

CXCI

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Turiyananda

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,

PARIS,

August, 1900.

DEAR BROTHER HARI,

Now I am staying on the sea-coast of France. The session of the Congress of History of Religions is over. It was not a big affair; some twenty scholars chattered a lot on the origin of the Shâlagrâma and the origin of Jehovah, and similar topics. I also said something on the occasion.

My body and mind are broken down; I need rest badly. In addition, there is not a single person on whom I can depend; on the other hand so long as I live, all will become very selfish depending upon me for everything. . . . Dealing with people entails constant mental uneasiness. . . . I have cut myself off by a will. Now I am writing to say that nobody will have sole power. All will be done in accordance with the view of the majority. . . . If a trust-deed on similar lines can be executed, then I am free. . . . What you are doing is also Guru Maharaj's work. Continue to do it. Now I have done my part. Don't write to me any more about those things; do not even mention the subject. I have no opinions whatever to give on that subject. . . .

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Convey my love to all.

Chapter 193

CXCII Hari

CXCII

(Translated from Bengali)

To Swami Turiyananda

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,

DA FOREST P.O., SANTA CLARA CO.,

PARIS, FRANCE,

1st September, 1900.

MY DEAR HARI,

I learnt everything from your letter. Earlier I had an inkling of some trouble between the full-fledged Vedantist and the Home of Truth — someone wrote that. Such things do occur; wisdom consists in carrying on the work by cleverly keeping all in good humour.

For some time now I have been living incognito. I shall stay with the French to pick up their language. I am somewhat freed from worries; that is to say, I have signed the trust-deed and other things and sent them to Calcutta. I have not reserved any right or ownership for myself. You now possess everything and will manage all work by the Master's grace.

I have no longer any desire to kill myself by touring. For the present I feel like settling down somewhere and spending my time among books. I have somewhat mastered the French language; but if I stay among the French for a month or two, I shall be able to carry on conversation well. If one can master this language and German sufficiently, one can virtually become well acquainted with European learning. The people of France are mere intellectualists, they run after worldly things and firmly believe God and souls to be superstitious; they are extremely loath to talk on such subjects. This is a truly materialistic country! Let me see what that Lord does. But this country is at the head of Western culture, and Paris is the capital of that culture.

Brother, free me from all work connected with preaching. I am now aloof from all that, you manage it yourselves. It is my firm conviction that Mother will get work done through all of you a hundredfold more than through me.

Many days ago I received a letter from Kali. He must have reached New York by now. Miss Waldo sends news now and then.

I keep sometimes well and sometimes bad. Of late I am again having that massage treatment by Mrs. Milton, who says, "You have already recovered!" This much I see — whatever the flatulence, I feel no difficulty in moving, walking, or even climbing. In the morning I take vigorous exercise, and then have a dip in cold water.

Yesterday I went to see the house of the gentleman with whom I shall stay. He is a poor scholar, has his room filled with books and lives in a flat on the fifth floor. And as there are no lifts in this country as in America, one has to climb up and down. But it is no longer trying to me.

There is a beautiful public park round the house. The gentleman cannot speak English; that is a further reason for my going. I shall have to speak French perforce. It is all Mother's will. She knows best what She wants to have done. She never speaks out, "only keeps mum". But this much I notice that for a month or so I have been having intense meditation and repetition of the Lord's name.

Please convey my love to Miss Boocke, Miss Bell, Mrs. Aspinel, Miss Beckham, Mr. George, Dr. Logan, and other friends and accept it yourself. My love to all in Los Angeles also.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 194

CXCIII Turiyananda

CXCIII

(Translated from Bengali)

Yours in service,
VIVEKANANDA.

To Swami Turiyananda

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,

September, 1900.

MY DEAR TURIYANANDA,

Just now I received your letter. Through Mother's will all work will go on; don't be afraid. I shall soon leave for some other place. Perhaps I shall be on a tour of Constantinople and other places for some time. Mother knows what will come next. I have received a letter from Mrs. Wilmot. From this, too, it appears that she is very enthusiastic. Sit firm and free from worries. Everything will be all right. If hearing the Nada etc. does anyone harm, he can get rid of it if he gives up meditation for a time and takes to fish and meat. If the body does not become progressively weak, there is no cause for alarm. Practice should be slow.

I shall leave this place before your reply comes. So do not send the reply to this letter here. I have received all the issues of Sarada's paper, and wrote to him lots a few weeks ago. I have a mind to send more later on. There is no knowing where my next stop will be. This much I can say that I am trying to be free from care.

I received a letter from Kali, too, today. I shall send him a reply tomorrow. The body is somehow rolling on. Work makes it ill, and rest keeps it well — that is all. Mother knows. Nivedita has gone to England. She and Mrs. Bull are collecting funds. She has a mind to run a school at Kishengarh with the girls she had there. Let her do what she can. I do not intervene any more in any matter — that is all.

My love to you. But I have nothing more to advise as regards work.

Chapter 195

CXCIV Mademoiselle

CXCIV

(Translated from the original in French)

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS, PARIS,

October, 1900.

MY DEAR MADEMOISELLE,

I have been very happy and content here. I am having the best of times after many years. I find life here with Mr. Bois very satisfactory — the books, the calm, and the absence of everything that usually troubles me.

But I don't know what kind of destiny is waiting for me now.

My letter is funny, isn't it? But it is my first attempt.

Yours faithfully,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 196

CXCV Sister Christine

CXCV

(Translated from the original in French)

To Sister Christine

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,

PARIS,

14th October, 1900.

God bless you at each step, my dear Christine, such is my constant prayer!

Your letter, so beautiful and so calm, has given me that fresh energy which I am often losing.

I am happy, yes, I am happy, but the cloud has not left me entirely. It sometimes comes back, unfortunately, but it no longer has the morbidity it used to have.

I am staying with a famous French writer, M. Jules Bois. I am his guest. As he is a man making his living with his pen, he is not rich; but we have many great ideas in common and feel happy together.

He discovered me a few years ago and has already translated some of my pamphlets into French. We shall in the end find what we are looking for, isn't it?

Thus, I shall travel with Madame Calve, Miss MacLeod, and M. Jules Bois. I shall be the guest of Madame Calve, the famous singer. We shall go to Constantinople, the Near East, Greece, and Egypt. On our way back, we shall visit Venice.

It may be that I shall give a few lectures in Paris after my return, but they will be in English with an interpreter. I have no time any more, nor the power to study a new language at my age. I am an old man, isn't it?

Mrs. Funke is ill. I think she works too hard. She already had some nervous trouble. I hope she will soon be well.

I am sending all the money I earned in America to India. Now I am free, the begging-monk as before. I have also resigned from the Presidentship of the Monastery. Thank God, I am free! It is no more for me to carry such a responsibility. I am so nervous and so weak.

“As the birds which have slept in the branches of a tree wake up, singing when the dawn comes, and soar up into the deep blue sky, so is the end of my life.”

I have had many difficulties, and also some very great successes. But all my difficulties and suffering count for nothing, as I have succeeded. I have attained my aim. I have found the pearl for which I dived into the ocean of life. I have been rewarded. I am pleased.

Thus it seems to me that a new chapter of my life is opening. It seems to me that Mother will now lead me slowly and softly. No more effort on roads full of obstacles, now it is the bed prepared with birds' down. Do you understand that? Believe me, I feel quite sure.

The experience of all my life, up to now, has taught me, thank God, that I always find what I am looking for with eagerness. Sometimes it is after much suffering, but it does not matter! All is forgotten in the softness of the reward. You are also going through troubles, my friend, but you shall have your reward. Alas! What you now find is not a reward but an additional affliction.

As to myself, I see the cloud lifting, vanishing, the cloud of my bad Karma. And the sun of my good Karma rises — shining, beautiful, and powerful. This will also be the case for you, my friend. My knowledge of this language has not the power to express my emotion. But which language can really do so?

So I drop it, leaving it to your heart to clothe my thought with a soft, loving, and shining language. Good night, gute Nacht!

Your devoted friend,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. We shall leave Paris for Vienna on October 29th. Mr. Leggett is leaving for the United States by next week. We shall notify the Post Office to forward our letters to our further destinations.

V.

Chapter 197

CXCVI Joe

CXCVI

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

PORT TEWFICK

26th November, 1900.

DEAR JOE,

The steamer was late; so I am waiting. Thank goodness, it entered the Canal this morning at Port Said. That means it will arrive some time in the evening if everything goes right.

Of course it is like solitary imprisonment these two days, and I am holding my soul in patience.

But they say the change is thrice dear. Mr. Gaze's agent gave me all wrong directions. In the first place, there was nobody here to tell me a thing, not to speak of receiving me. Secondly, I was not told that I had to change my Gaze's ticket for a steamer one at the agent's office, and that was at Suez, not here. It was good one way, therefore, that the steamer was late; so I went to see the agent of the steamer and he told me to exchange Gaze's pass for a regular ticket.

I hope to board the steamer some time tonight. I am well and happy and am enjoying the fun immensely. How is Mademoiselle? Where is Bois? Give my everlasting gratitude and good wishes to Mme. Calve. She is a good lady.

Hoping you will enjoy your trip.

Ever affectionately yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 198

CXCVII Mother

CXCVII

To Mrs. Ole Bull

THE MATH, BELUR,

HOWRAH DIST., BENGAL, INDIA,

15 December, 1900.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Three days ago I reached here. It was quite unexpected — my visit, and everybody was so surprised.

Things here have gone better than I expected during my absence, only Mr. Sevier has passed away. It was a tremendous blow, sure, and I don't know the future of the work in the Himalayas. I am expecting daily a letter from Mrs. Sevier who is there still.

How are you? Where are you? My affairs here will be straightened out shortly, I hope, and I am trying my best to straighten them out.

The remittance you send my cousin should henceforth be sent to me direct, the bills being drawn in my name. I will cash them and send her the money. It is better the money goes to her through me.

Saradananda and Brahmananda are much better and this year there is very little malaria here. This narrow strip on the banks of the river is always free from malaria. Only when we get a large supply of pure water the conditions will be perfected here.

VIVEKANANDA.

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