From the land of skyscrapers and Abraham Lincoln, of abstract expressionism and impregnable adventurism, of unitarians and transcendentalists, of Hayes and Wilson, Swami Vivekananda moved to the metropolis of the mighty British Empire which projected the acme of splendour and discipline, of prudery and hypocrisy, of a style of life and a manner of living, which characterised the Victorian period. London which was in the Swami's words "a sea of human heads—ten or fifteen Calcuttas put together"—hummed with a medley of activities—commercial and intellectual, political and ecumenical, epicurean and puritanical. It attracted "preachers and pleaders" of varied views from all corners of the globe. Each new idea was examined before it became a concept and each dogma pricked till it became defunct. To a contemporary observer, London appeared "a very volcano of eruptions, sometimes pious, sometimes philosophical, sometimes pretentious but mainly eager and earnest". It was in this Kurukshetra of reconnoitres and catechists that Swami Vivekananda landed with his 'gandiva' of Vedanta.

Swami Vivekananda paid three short visits to England—from September to November 1895, from April to July 1896 and from September to December 1896. He toured the Continent from July to September in the same year.

1 The Complete Works, Vol. VII, p. 496
2 Eric Hammond's reminiscences in His Eastern and Western Admirers, p. 299.
3 The name of the magical bow of Soma, the moon-god. It was given by Soma to Varuna, by Varuna to Agni and by Agni to Arjuna of the Mahabharata fame. See Hindu World, Vol. I, pp. 55-56.
When exactly the idea of going to England flashed across Swami Vivekananda's mind is hard to hazard. On the basis of his epistles one could say that he expressed it as early as August 20, 1893. In a letter to Alasinga on August 31, 1894 he remarked that his work in America would form a plank on which he would float to European countries. "Everything one here prepares England." In early 1894 he wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda that his plan to visit England would fructify if it was the will of God. He expressed similar views to Isabelle McKindley on October 26(?), 1894: "I intend going over to England this winter somewhere in January or February... Lady from London with whom one of my friends is staying has sent an invitation to me to go over as her guest."

The said woman was Miss Henrietta Fuller, a theosophist. The man staying with her was one of Akshay Kumar Ghosh whom Swami Vivekananda had first met in the course of his years of travel as a monk at Ahandwa. She is of the view that he created Miss Fuller's interest in Swami Vivekananda—so much so that she invited him to visit England as her guest there. The argument is not quite convincing as Swami himself says that Swami Vivekananda "could not come as he intended to do in January or..."

5 The Complete Works, vol. v, pp. 41-42.
7 The Complete Works, vol. v, p. 49.
8 In an undated letter from Swami Vivekananda wrote to Swamiji Maharaj: "The bearer of this letter, Shri Akshay Kumar Ghosh is a particular friend of mine, he comes of a respectable family of Calcutta. I found him at Ahandwa where I made his acquaintance although I knew his family long before in Calcutta... Knowing your native kindness of heart, I think I am not disturbing you by asking and entreating you to do something for this young lad. 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 patra (a person quite deserving of help) noble and kind as you are."
February 1895 and when he actually came Ghosh had slipped out and it was another person who was instrumental in bringing him to that country.

2.2. Sturdy is said to have assured the Swami that there was "a great field for his work in London and that he would do everything in his power to help the work on." Sturdy was not new to the ranks of the Ramakrishna order. When he visited India in the 1880s to study Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy he came across a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna who impressed him by his profound knowledge, universal vision and saintly silhouette. Though a theosophist he saw in the Vedanta philosophy an answer to the ills of humanity. He expressed his views to the Swami who did not take much interest in him to start with—either because he was too much engrossed in his work or because he took him as one of the many correspondents who applauded his work without offering any concrete help to carry on his mission. However, by April 1895 he seems to have discovered in Sturdy a man of clear vision who was really keen to help him. "I quite agree with you," he wrote to Sturdy, "that only the Advaita philosophy can save mankind.

9 *Har*, pp. 766-67
10 *His Eastern and Western Disciples*, p. 571.
whether in east or west from devil worship and kindred superstitious giving tone and strength to the very nature of man. Though Sturdy did not as yet invite the Swami to England he suggested him to start a Journal which would highlight his mission and expound the Vedanta philosophy. "I agree perfectly as to your idea of a magazine", wrote the Swami. "But I have no business capacity at all to do these things. I can teach and preach and sometime write. But I have intense faith in Truth. The Lord will send help and hands to work with me. In the same communication Swami Vivekananda expressed his inability to come to England: "I am very uncertain about coming to England. I know no one here, and here I am doing some work. The Lord will guide in His own time." It is not known when exactly Sturdy extended an open invitation to the Swami. Probably it must have been before the month of July.

In an undated letter to him Swami Vivekananda wrote: "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. It seems Swami Vivekananda was afraid that Sturdy may not one day fall back on theosophy. In an attempt to convince him of the futility of theosophy he remarked: "Truth alone triumphs not untruth..."

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11 Swami Vivekananda to E.I. Sturdy, April 24, 1895; The Complete Works, vol. VIII, p. 335.
12 Ibid., p. 339.
13 Ibid., p. 335.
14 Letters of Swami Vivekananda, p. 223.
15 Ibid., p. 223.
Meanwhile Swami Vivekananda received an invitation from Francis H. Legget—a wealthy businessman of New York whose hospitality he had already enjoyed at Percy—to accompany him to Paris to attend his marriage with Mrs. Sturges—a widow who was an ardent admirer of the Swami and had attended his lectures in the city of New York along with her fiancé and Miss Josephine Macleod. This invitation coupled with those of Miss Bullers and Sturdy's was considered by the Swami as a divine opportunity to visit the Continent. "I do not want to lose this opportunity of working in London," he wrote to Francis Legget, "And so your invitation coupled with the London one, is I know, a divine call for further work."  

Swami Vivekananda left New York for Paris along with Francis H. Legget on August 17, 1895 and reached there on the 24th instant. Two days after he wrote toturley from the Hotel Continental that he would come to England after the marriage ceremony of her American friend. He wrote to him again after about a week that since he

16 From the Thousand Island Park Swami Vivekananda wrote to Francis H. Legget on July 7, 1895: "Since leaving Percy I have invitations to come over to London from unexpected quarters, and that I look forward to with great expectations." The Complete Works, Vol. V, p. 91.

17 Mrs. Sturges and Miss Macleod were introduced to Swami Vivekananda by an occultist Mrs. Nora M. Pesher er.

18 Swami Vivekananda to Francis H. Legget, July 1, 1895: The Complete Works, Vol. V, p. 91. In another letter to Legget in August 19, 1895 the Swami wrote: ...now here is another letter from Mr. Turley. I send it over to you. See how things are being prepared ahead. Don't you think this coupled with Legget's invitation as a divine call? I think so and am following it. I am going by the end of August with Mr. Legget to Paris and then I go to London." Ibid., p. 93.

19 Swami Vivekananda to W. J. Sturdy, August 26, 1895: Ibid., pp. 94-95.
had received a cordial invitation from Miss Henrietta Muller, he would stay with her for a day or two before coming over to him. The French metropolis, which was variously known as "the centre of European culture," "the matchless creator of life's greater ironies," "the factory of greed and gaiety, of vice and art," and in earnest Hemingway's inimitable words, "a moveable feast," evoked Swami Vivekananda's fascination. He tried to make the most of his short stay by visiting museums, cathedrals, churches, art galleries, the tomb of Napoleon, and other historical places. He exchanged views with some of the enlightened friends of Francis Edgeworth and gathered as much information about the country as he could. In the Paris of "the opera and the great boulevards," of balls, dinners, and soirées, Swami Vivekananda seems to have observed the culmination of materialism and sensualism which characterised the body-politic of Western culture. He appreciated the artistic proclivities of the French nevertheless.

Swami Vivekananda left Paris for London on September 10, 1895, and was warmly welcomed by Miss Muller and Sturdy. He was surprised to see some Englishmen including several retired generals from India showing utmost courtesy and regard to him.

21 His Eastern and Western Disciples, p. 371.
22 Robertson, J. C., Disarck, p. 249.
23 DeVinne, Leonard Louis, Artlett's Unfamiliar Quotations, p. 212.
24 The International Thesaurus of Quotations, p. 665.
25 Swami Vivekananda to Alasinga, September 9, 1895; The Complete Works, vol. v, p. 36.
even though he came from a nation which lay prostrate politically, he was sceptic about the English attitude before his arrival but changed his opinion very soon. He was happy to observe that the English did not "identify every blackman with the negro" like Americans. "No body even stares at me in the street", he remarked. "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".

...Swarup holds that Swami Vivekananda did not come with "the intention of doing constructive work, or with a plan or a programme" on his first visit to England. One may, however, argue that it was not merely an excursion trip or a visit to recuperate his health which had been shattered in the course of extensive work in America. It is certain that Swarni Vivekananda had a mind to visit Europe even before he left India to attend the Chicago Parliament. The objectives could have been amassing money for the poor, spreading the gospel of Vedanta, or studying the culture of the West. The Swami who never sat idle during his life would not go aimlessly to a country.

27 Swami Vivekananda who was staying with O.T. Sturdy was particularly impressed by the noble and philanthropic nature of his wife. To Miss Macleod he wrote: "is wife is surely an angel, and his life is full of India". Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Char, p. 771.
which had been partly responsible for the woes of his countrymen and which had brazen-facedly used "three boors, brandy and bayonets", to 'civilize' India. Like Naja Ramchun Roy or Sopel Arishan Bokhale his aim could have been to enlighten the British intelligentsia about the misdeeds of ruling bureaucracy in India. It is well known that he did not set foot on English soil with 'the friendliest of feelings'. During his first visit, it was not his intention to stay in England for long, and he merely wanted to know the extent to which his mission could be spread. Moreover he was preoccupied with establishing his work on a firm footing in New York. "So far as I see now", he had informed his sturdy on August 2, 1895, "I can stay only a few weeks in London. But if the time wills, that small time may prove to be the beginning of greater things.

After reaching the shores of Thames he wrote to Shashi: "This time I have come to England just to prove a little. Next summer, I shall try to make some stir."

After relaxing for a few days Swami Vivekananda commenced his work in a quiet way. He visited places of historical interest and met some of the enlightened friends of his host. He worked on the commentaries on Shankaracharya along with S. T. Stacey.

30 Mikhilamanda, Swami, p. 176.
32 Swami Vivekananda to Shashi (not dated) 1895; The Complete Works, Vol. VI, p. 139.
33 His Eastern and Western Disciples, p. 373.
Or should one say he was assisting the latter in grasping the Advaita doctrine? "I have not done any visible work as yet except helping Mr. Sturdy in studying Sanskrit," he wrote to Mrs. Ole Bull on September 24, 1895. In another letter to Mrs. Francis H. Leget he wrote: "I am living with my friend on philosophy, leaving a little margin for eating and smoking. We are getting nothing else but dualism and monism and all the rest of them." It seems that Swami Vivekananda discussed with his host almost all types of Advaita and Dvaita doctrines of Hindu philosophy—the non-dualism of Shankaracharya, the qualified monism of Ramanuja, the dualism of Madhava, "the dualistic monism" of Vacchya and "the pure monism" of Vallabhacharya.

With in a week after his arrival Swami Vivekananda was planning along with Sturdy to get hold of "a few of the best, say, strong and intelligent men in England to form a society." But "we must proceed slowly," he cautioned. He sought the assistance of his host in translating a small book on Shakti with copious purports. It appears that he wanted to attract the seekers of spiritual wisdom by publishing such a work. Till the first week of October Swami Vivekananda was not quite satisfied with the progress of his work. "At present there is not much prospect

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35 Swami Vivekananda to Mrs. Ole Bull, September 24, 1895; Complete Works, VI, p.343.
36 Swami Vivekananda to Mrs. Francis H. Leget, October 1, 1895; Ibid.
37 Swami Vivekananda to Mrs. Ole Bull, September 17, 1895; Ibid., p.342.
38 Ibid.
39 Swami Vivekananda to Mrs. Ole Bull, October 6, 1895; Ibid., p.342.
in England", he wrote to Kakha on October 4, 1905, "but the word is omnipotent. Let us wait and see... In another letter to Josephine Macleod he expressed that he had not been quite successful in making a mark in England. "Of course", he wrote, "breaking the ice is slow always. It took me two years in America to work up that little which we had in New York".

By the middle of October Swami Vivekananda seems to have broken the ice. His class lectures were a tremendous success. At times there was so much rush that many Britons would stand the whole time without sensing the inconvenience. He was frequently visited during the day and received many invitations from the elite of the city. Among the early visitors to the swami's class rooms was Lady Isabel Margesson and several of the nobility. He met one Professor Fraser who was a high official in England and had spent half his life in India. Well versed in ancient thought and wisdom he did not "care a fig for anything out of India", wrote the swami. He was astonished to meet some English intellectuals who justified the caste system and described it as "the only solution" to the social problems of India. Swami Vivekananda worked strenuously, as he had done in New York "without respite, living his whole spirit to those who came to be taught". Sometime in the month of October he wrote to Gall (Swami

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40 Swami Vivekananda to Kakha, October 4, 1905; *The Complete Works*, vol. VIII, p. 354.
41 Swami Vivekananda to Josephine Macleod, October 4, 1905; *The Complete Works*, vol. VIII, p. 354.
42 *His Eastern and Western Disciples*, p. 274.
43 Swami Vivekananda to Francis C. Legget, October 1, 1905; *The Complete Works*, vol. VI, p. 344.
44 *His Eastern and Western Disciples*, p. 374.
Abhedananda) in India that he and sturdy were trying hard "to create a stir in England."

Swami Vivekananda delivered his first public lecture on October 22, 1895 at princes' hall, Picadilly, which was one of the posh localities in the metropolis. It was attended by people from all walks of life including some of the best thinkers of the day. Donning the orange coloured robe with "a monk-like girdle" round his waist and wearing a "massive turban" over his head, Swami Vivekananda spoke for an hour and a quarter in impeccable and fluent English on "Self knowledge"- a topic which endeared to him most and formed the kernel of his philosophy. According to a press report the lecture was a most fearless and eloquent exposition of the pantheistic philosophy of the Vedanta school. It was nicely interwoven with the ethical precepts of yoga especially the doctrine of renunciation. He explained how the spiritual currents of different varieties were combating the tide of materialism which had engulfed the west from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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45 Swami Vivekananda to Kali, October 22, 1895; The complete works, vol. viii, p. 535. 
46 The Westminster Gazette, October 23, 1895; facsimile in The complete works, vol. v, p. 150. 
47 "Swami Vivekananda in England", The Indian Mirror, November 15, 1895.
Tie delineated the origin and nature of knowledge which, as the Hindu scriptures say, is "a lamp destroying darkness of ignorance; "a divine quality", which brings"perception and enjoyment of the Self". His views were described as akin to the German philosopher, Fichte, who had rejected Kant's doctrine of the "thing-in-itself" and sought to deduce the diversity of knowledge from only one "subjective-idealistic element", and who had postulated the existence of some kind of absolute subject with boundless activity which created the world—thereby deducing "the individual ego" from "this mystical absolute ego". His explanation was succinct and clear. It was marked with examples and illustrations which "no German transcendentalist would have made". Swami Vivekananda discussed the concept of Gaya to explain the existence of "the gross material

49 the Gaya, X/11; 14/9. Knowledge is not treated merely as an epistemological factor in Hindu philosophy but is regarded as a basic element in the path to salvation, for it can break the cycle of Jeeva (birth—death—rebirth). True knowledge, in its essence is the knowledge of the eternal and of the Soul. Walker, Benjamin, Hindu World, vol. I, pp. 102-104. Lord Krishna says:

"A man's intelligence, mind, faith and refuge are all fixed in the Supreme, then one becomes fully cleansed of misgivings through complete knowledge and thus proceeds straight on the path of liberation".

The Hindu scriptures exhort human beings to distinguish between Vidya and Avidya. Says the Ishavasya Upaniṣad (verse 11): "He who understands Vidya and Avidya both together attains to the nature of immortals through Vidya (knowledge of ritualistic philosophy), having conquered death by Avidya (cure rituals).

"world". Relying on his argument on the *Ishavasvo Upanishad*, he contended that the soul was the eternal and unchangeable principle at the back of the changing nature. Mind was "a river litter", no doubt, but behind it was the soul of men, which was immanent and transcendent. "There is only one Soul in the universe", he said. "There is no 'you' or 'me'; all variety is merged into the absolute unity, the One Infinite Existence—God". According to a newspaper report, Swami Vivekananda worked out "this pantheistic conception of the personal identity of man and God with great comprehensiveness and an ample wealth of illustration, and in passage after passage of great beauty, solemnity and earnestness", besides explaining the Hindu doctrine of the immortality of human soul and its transmigration from one body to another. Swami Vivekananda lashed at the material civilization of the West which contained in it the seeds of its own destruction. He argued that the Western science and inventions could not achieve for mankind what half a dozen spoken words of Buddha or Jesus could do. Swami Vivekananda's discourse proved a

50 अनजाने नानेका अंगीया तैनाते क्रियाव्रद्धमध्ये तत्कालीन रोकन्याचे विषयसत्ता या ड्रम विचारात प्रकट नसल्याच अनिवार्य अद्यावधि

-Ishavasvo Upanishad, verse 4.

splendid success. The London press eulogised the swami on the following day. The most influential but conservative daily The Standard wrote: "Since the days of Sam, there has not appeared on an English platform, a more interesting Indian figure than the Hindu who lectured in Princes Hall!..." The Westminster Gazette described the swami as a "striking figure" whose face "lights up like that of a child", it is so simple, straightforward and honest. The London Daily Chronicle felt that his physiognomy bore the most striking resemblance to the classic face of Gokula. Swami Vivekananda himself was happy over the wonderful impression he had created in England. In a letter to L.Sanga on October 24, 1893, he wrote, "I have delivered my first address, and you may see how well it has been received by the notice in the Standard (underlining)."

The correspondent of The Westminster Gazette who interviewed the swami after the lecture published a report entitled "An Indian Yogi in London" on the following day. Swami Vivekananda

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52 cited in his eastern and western disciples, p.374. As also in The Indian Mirror, November 15, 1893.
54 Cited in his eastern and western disciples, p.374.
answered various questions ranging from the significance of his ascetic title, his Guru, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to his mission in the West. He told the interviewer that he was against sectarianism and bigotry, and regarded all religions as so many ways to reach the Almighty. He made it clear that he had no intention to form a new sect or society. "I teach only the Self," he remarked, "hidden in the heart of every individual and common to all. I can propound philosophy which can serve as a basis to every possible religious system in the world and my attitude towards all of them is one of extreme sympathy—I teach is antagonistic to none. I direct my attention to the individual, to make his own, to teach him that he himself is divine, and I call upon him to make themselves conscious of this divinity within. That is real, the ideal-conscious or unconscious of every religion."

Swami Vivekananda further stated that none of his activities was "undertaken for a pecuniary reward." The interviewer was intensely impressed by the Swami's pithy and straightforward replies and remarks. In conclusion: "I then took my leave from one of the most original of men that I have the honour of meeting."

It is not known as to how many public lectures were delivered by Swami Vivekananda during his first visit to England. For

"In his letter to Mrs. Jull on October 6, 1895, we learn that he was to give two lectures in London and one in Maidenhead in the month of October. This will open the way to some classes and parlour lectures," he wrote in an optimistic vein. There is no record of his second public lecture in London, or his discourse at Maidenhead. It is, however, certain that he gained much reputation after the Piccadilly lecture and received numerous invitations to hold classes in private "drawing-rooms" and clubs. He addressed the Kellogg Society on November 5 and the Converse Conway's Society on November 10. He delivered a lecture at the weekly meeting of the Kellogg Society on "Man and Society in the Light of Vedanta." The exact date of the lecture is not known but from the brief report which appeared in The London Mirror on December 1, 1895, one could make out that the Swami was at his best.

If knowledge was the highest gain that science could give, he remarked, "that could be greater than the knowledge of God, ..."


Swami Vivekananda's Vedanta classes were becoming popular day by day. In a letter to Miss Josephine Macleod on October 19, 1905: "Two American ladies, mother and daughter, living in London came into the class last night — ours and Miss' letter. They were very sympathetic, of course. The class there at Mr. Justice's is finished. I shall be in at my lodgings from Saturday night next. I expect to have a pretty-sized room or two for my classes."

of the Soul, of man's own nature which was given by the study of religion? "He denounced the attempts of Christians to christianize the whole world. It was not only impossible that there should be one religion, he said, but it would be dangerous too. Referring to Vedanta he remarked that it was synthetic in character and suited to men of all temperaments, whether emotional, mystical or philosophical.

'As far as you see the seed is well sown in England," wrote Swami Vivekananda to Alasinga on October 24, 1895. No doubt he had created immense interest in Vedantic thought among a good number of Englishmen. This does not imply, however, that English intellectuals were ignorant of Indian philosophy before his arrival. But most of the expositors of Eastern wisdom who travelled to England were "entirely western in thought and training" and could not delineate the subtle mysteries of Vedanta in its true spirit. Swami Vivekananda, who had been "brought up in the traditions of the East," was considered more competent than any of his predecessors - a real 'Indian Yogi' whose spiritual knowledge did not stem only from books but also from his personal association with ascetics especially his guru Sri Ramakrishna Pared. In a letter to Ahobalamanda on November 13, 1895 he wrote that the Vedanta movement was steadily gaining ground in England. In another communication to Alasinga on November 11, 1895, he observed: "In England my work

60 The Indian Mirror, December 1, 1895.
is really splendid. I am astonished myself at it. He wrote in a similar vein to Mr. Ole Bull: "My work has so far been very satisfactory here, and I am sure to do splendid work here next season."

Swami Vivekananda who had come to England "just to probe a little" laid "an unshakable foundation for any future work he might find it fit to initiate". In contrast to the superficial infatuation of the American public he felt the seriousness of his English hearers. "Less brilliant, more conservative than the Americans, the English at first reserved their adherence; but when they gave it, they did not give it by halves. Moreover, the English did not like sensationalism; nor did they take up every new idea that came their way. Unlike Americans they did not believe in newspaper advertising but worked silently. "Every enterprise in this country takes sometime to have a go", said the swami. "But once John Bull sets his hand to a thing, he will never let it go. The Americans are quick but they are something like straw on fire, ready to be extinguished."
During his short stay in England Swami Vivekananda evoked the admiration of many, the most important being Miss Margaret Noble, who later became his disciple and acquired the ascetic title of Sister Nivedita. She was to the Swami what St. Clara was to St. Francis. Miss Margaret Noble was the first Western woman to be initiated into an Indian monastic order. To begin with she was sceptical about Swami Vivekananda's views on religion and philosophy; then she came to admire him and finally she accepted him as her guru. Born on October 28, 1867 in Ireland, Miss Noble was a prodigious child. She got her Bible lessons from her grandmother and her father who was a Protestant Minister in the Wesleyan Church. Her religious proclivities took her to the Congregationalists, the Tractarians and the Church of England. But she was not satisfied and yearned for "a more humane religion." Neither the Church nor its doctrines could sustain her, till she met the Swami at the house of Lady Isabell Margesson on a cold Sunday.

70 Rolland Romain, p. 90.
71 It is recorded that during the question classes of Swami Vivekananda, Miss Noble was always ready with a 'but' and 'why' on her lips. "I fought my Master for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way!" she wrote. See Atmaprana Pravrajika, Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, p. 13
72 Ibid., p. 6
afternoon in November she was at that time a very influential lady - headmistress of the Auxilium School, member of the "Free Ireland" group, and secretary of the Xeresa club which attracted scholars like Bernard Shaw and A. E. Housman. In her famous book The Master as I saw him she records how her contact with Swami Vivekananda metamorphosed her life bit by bit till all her doubts withered away. The majestic eyes of the swami reminded her of "Mephael'sistine Child". When he chanted Sanskrit verses "in those wonderful Eastern tones" she became reminiscent of the Gregorian music of the Churches. Though the truth of his gospel was as old as the Himalayas she was wonder-struck at the way he presented it. His ideas were broad and liberal and his intellectual outlook was not tainted by dogma, superstition or any bias. Miss Nobel saw in the swami "the heoric

73 After the publication of her book The web of living life, Sister Mivedita wrote to Miss Josepaine Mcleod on July 26, 1904: "Suppose swami had not come to London that time! Life would have been like a headless torso for I always knew that I was waiting for something. I always said that a call would come, and it did..." cited in Atma Prana, p.18. 74 Mivedita Sister, The Master as I saw him, p.4.
75 "To not a few of us", said Sister Mivedita, "the words of Swami Vivekananda came as a living water to men perishing of thirst...as of us have been conscious for years past of that growing uncertainty and despair with regard to religion which has set the intellectual life of Europe for half a century. Belief in the corpus of Christianity had become impossible to us, and we had no means, such as we now hold, by which to separate the doctrinal shell from the kernel of reality in our faith...to these, the Vedanta has given intellectual confirmation and philosophical expression of their own intuited intuitions. The peoples that walked in darkness have seen a great light". She complete works of Sister Mivedita, vol.11, p.303.
fiver of the man" and thought of making herself "the servant of his love for his own people". She carried aloft the torch of Vedanta in England after the Swami's return to India. Later she came to India and devoted herself to social service especially women education. Miss Noble was Swami Vivekananda's greatest discovery during his first visit to India.

"I have left some strong friends in England who will work in my absence expecting my arrival next summer", so wrote the Swami to Mrs Oie Bull on December 8, 1895. Swami Vivekananda did not leave behind him an organisation perhaps because he was convinced that societies only created new sects, and organisations bred corruption, as E.T. Sturdy argued: the great strength of Vedanta lay in its being completely free of organisations and giving individuals perfect freedom of development. He had however urged the Swami to call a monk of the Ramakrishna order from India who could help him when he was away to America. E.T. Sturdy offered to bear all expenses in that connection. Swami Vivekananda accepted the suggestion and wrote to Thakur in India that he wished to call a monk who was well versed in English and Sanskrit, and capable of teaching. In another letter to Kali whom he had invited to England he informed that the work was

76 Ibid., vol. I, p. 22.
77 The complete works, vol. VI, p. 362.
78 E.T. Sturdy to The Indian Mirror, November 21, 1895.
79 Swami Vivekananda to Mrs Oie Bull, September 24, 1895; The complete works, vol. VI, p. 343.
80 Swami Vivekananda to Thakur, October 4, 1895, Ibid, p. 345.
81 Pre-monastic name of Swami Abhedananda.
to teach Vedanta to the western people,"to do a little
translation work into English and to deliver occasional
lectures". He further wrote that if he was not keeping well
he should arrange to send either Shashi, Sarja or Sharat. Swami
Vivekananda wanted to lay a strong foundation for his future
work... he himself wrote that if it was not firmly laid there
was every likelihood of everything toppling down. About the
middle of November Swami Vivekananda had taken a final decision
about the selection of a monk, most probably Sharat. In a letter
to Sharat Alasinga on November 18, 1895, he wrote: "I have sent
for a sannyasin from Calcutta and shall leave him to work
in London. I want one more for America". Though the said Ind-
ian sannyasi did not arrive till April 1, 1896, Swami Vivekananda
left England in the last week of November 1895 and reached
New York on December 6. In his absence, the work was taken up
by W. J. Sturdy and some other disciples of the Swami who held
class lectures and published a considerable number of pamph-
lets containing excerpts from his speeches.

True to his promise Swami Vivekananda returned to London in
the last week of April 1896 and plunged into activity along-
with W. J. Sturdy and some other disciples of the Swami who had arrived from Calcutta at
the former's invitation. Swami Saradananda appraised his brother

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32 Swami Vivekananda to Bali, October 7, 1895; The Complete
33 Pre-monastic name of Swami Samakrishnananda.
34 Pre-monastic name of Swami Tri-unatita.
35 Pre-monastic name of Swami Saradananda.
36 Swami Vivekananda to Bali, October 7, 1895; The Complete
38 "Swami Vivekananda's Immm work in London"—a letter by
W. J. Sturdy to the editor of The Brahmavadin, April 11, 1896.
Also see Sturdy's "London Letter" in The Brahmavadin, May 9, 1896.
monk of the working of the Lambazar monastery and the well-being of his guru's brother. Swami Vivekananda's brother Chandramath Datta had also arrived in London for higher studies, he brought with him the famous Sanskrit encyclopaedia Vachaspatyaohitam, which Swami Vivekananda badly needed for reference work. "We are busy editing books now," he wrote to the palli sisters on April 20, 1899. Deeply absorbed in philosophical contemplation he felt as if at Sturdy's house he was "a mystic drama and rasa and diva, the individual and the universal soul.

After staying for about a week at High View, Caversham reading - Sturdy's permanent home - Swami Vivekananda left for Miss Muller's country resort at Kinsey's Green, at a distance of about three miles from Aidsmead. He was accompanied by Swami Saradananda and joined later by his brother, Chandramath Datta. After returning to London he made his home at 37, St. George's Road, Belgravia - a fashionable district in the metropolis, adjoining Hyde Park - and started five classes a week on Indian lore or the path of Jnana Yoga or the path of wisdom, and a Friday session for discussion. The classes became

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The complete works, vol. VIII, p. 377.

We have a whole house to ourselves, you know, this time," wrote Swami Vivekananda to his sister, "it is all but convenient, and in London they do not cost so much as in America. The complete works, vol. VII, p. 479. Swami Vivekananda occupied a room with an attached bathroom on the ground floor, and held classes in a well-furnished room on the first floor which could accommodate about one hundred and sixty persons. Vair Saradananda and Chandramath lived in a size room on the third floor, while Miss Muller occupied the garret, which had remained unused for a long time and was full of fleas. Miss Muller lived in a room on the second floor. Shar, p. 736.
Immensely popular so much so that even the Queen wondered how the swami had been able to attract so many men in a materialistic city like Bombay "where none cares a fig for religion, while politics reigns supreme in the minds of the people, specially now at the time of the London season - the season of balls, feasts and all sorts of entertainments". Towards the end of May he delivered three lectures at the Royal Institute of Painters in India, noted for its fashionable shops, clubs, theatres and residences. The topics were "The necessity of religion", "A Universal Religion" and "The soul and the apparent man". In the first lecture he argued that religion could serve as the most potent force in moulding the destiny of the human race; in the second, he contended that even though religions differed in matter of their philosophy, ethics and rituals, they expressed the same truth in different ways; in the third, he discussed the "though art that" philosophy of the Vedanta according to which every man was like a beam of the divine light. Though these discourses were hailed by the general public, some orthodox clergy viewed them with disfavour and spread the rumour that the swami was an atheist and anti-Christian. The result was that when Goodwin sent notices of the lectures for publication under the Church News column, some of the newspapers refused to publish them.

Shattered by this criticism which was only from an infinitesimal section of society, Swami Vivekananda gave another course...
of lectures in Prince's Hall on Sunday afternoons. The lectures began towards the end of June and lasted till the middle of July. Besides these public lectures Swami Vivekananda spoke to private gatherings in some aristocratic houses and addressed well-known clerics. Numerous talks mention may be made of one on "SWAYAM" at a certain houses house in St. John's Wood on "The Kumri Aka of Soul" at the house of Mr Victor Haliuchard, and on "education" at the Swayne Club. Western and Eastern Disciples of the Swami record that he also spoke at sitting will rate at the residence of Mr Hunt, as well as at Witleydon, "when a good deal of discussion followed the lecture and several other meetings of a similar nature were arranged for".

"If it pleases the Lord, yellow-carried Sanyasins will be common here and in England". This is what Swami Vivekananda had written to Hisania from New York in the March of 1898. The statement might appear as an emotional outburst but it neverless depicted the extent to which Swami Vivekananda was hopeful about the success of his mission. The popularity of the Swami's book on KALI YOGA created a niche for him in intellectual circles. He was invited to attend a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society of London. He was made the Hon. President of the London.

Swami Vivekananda's greatest intellectual attainment during his second visit consisted in his discourses on the hindu concept of "siva," or "kara was not an illusion or delusion but's simple statement of facts." He who broke through the shackles of "kara became free, he contended that man was not a slave of nature, but the soul for out of put nature for the soul." Such bold assertions of Vedanta captivated the Western public.

His Eastern and Western Disciples, p. 144.

Hindu Association and presided over its conference sometime in July, at which Madanlal Vaorajji was also present. The secretary of the Association, Dr. J. Veerni records in his reminiscences that Swami Vivekananda electrified the audience by his speech. He had a commanding figure and by landlady who had come to the meeting with him was 'entirely impressed.' At another occasion he wrote the text of the beauty of England surrounded the Swami after he had delivered "a magnificent speech in a magnificent hall in the east end of London.'

The general attitude of English clergy-men was quite friendly towards Swami Vivekananda, one found his message interesting. Some appreciated his eloquence, the beauty of his thought, and his universality. At none used opprobrious words to slander his or cast aspersions on his character as some Americans had done. "In England," said Swami Vivekananda, "there was not one missionary or anybody (who) said anything against me; not one who tried to scandalize me. To my astonishment one of my friends belong to the church of England, I learn that these missionaries who holl about the lowest classes in England, Englishmen will mix with them... the English churchmen belong to the classes of gentlemen..."
They may differ in opinion from you, but that is no bar to their being friends with you. A canon whose name was mentioned in the Anglican church at the Parliament of Religions was a great admirer of the Swami and came to hear his discourse at the seance club. Later he preached two sermons at the St. James Chapel, London, on him. Another who was present at one occasion noted that the canon had fully acknowledged his indebtedness to Swami Vivekananda and remarked that Christianity would greatly benefit if it accepted his ideas on Shakti and devotion and devoted. Another high dignitary of the English church, Canon Wilberforce held a levee in his honour at which some distinguished members of the elite were present. He was also invited by the well-known English theosophist, who disagreed with him and though he disapproved of her occultism, he expressed admiration for her work and sympathy for the people of India.

The most remarkable event during Swami Vivekananda's second visit to England was his meeting with a great disciple of the master and hence invited Swami Vivekananda to lunch with him in Oxford on May 20, 1896. The outcome of their meeting was that the Swami commissioned Swami Vivekananda to classify the

101 The Admet Call, February 7, 1897.
102 Char, p. 80.
103 The Indian Mirror, January 14, 1896.
sayings of Sri Ramakrishna on various subjects such as *karma* (action), *vairagya* (renunciation), *bhakti* (devotion), *jnana* (knowledge) etc. and Max Muller incorporated them all in his esteemed little book *The Life and Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* which aroused immense interest in the West and gave a boost to Swami Vivekananda's work in England. Reminiscing his meeting with the German savant he wrote: "What an extraordinary man is Professor Max Muller.... It was neither the philologist nor the scholar that I saw, but a soul that is everyday realising its oneness with the Brahman, a heart, that is, every moment expanding to reach oneness with the Universal.... And what love he bears towards India! I wish I had a hundredth part of that love for my own motherland... he has lived and moved in the world of Indian thought for fifty years or more, and watched the sharp interchange of light and shade in the interminable forest of Sanskrit literature with deep interest and heartfelt love, till they have all sunk into his very soul and coloured his whole being". Though Swami Vivekananda described Max Muller as "a Vedantist of Vedantists" he did not entirely agree with him on the interpretation of Hindu philosophical thought and knew that he was at times hypercritical of Hinduism. After the publication of Max Muller's book on Vedantism he had written to the Hale sisters from New York on May 5, 1895: "What I expected has come. I always thought that although Professor 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.... 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".

Swami Vivekananda and Max Muller frequently corresponded with each other and became good friends. When the Swami first visited him he took him around several colleges in Oxford and showed him the Bodleian library which was famous for its rich collection of manuscripts and books. He also came to see him off at the Railway station. The meeting was indeed historic. "The strongest have their moments of fatigue", wrote Nietzsche in The Will to Power. The Swami was much exhausted by brisk and constant activities in London. To Alasinga he wrote on November 18, 1845: "I have no time even to die". His health

107. From Swami Vivekananda's letter to E.T. Sturdy written either in March or April of 1896 we learn that Max Muller had offered to do everything he could to arrange the Swami's lecture at Oxford. The Complete Works, Vol.VIII, p.376. In an undated letter sometime in 1896 the Swami wrote to Alasinga that he was going to deliver two lectures at Oxford. The Complete Works, Vol.V, p.118. There is no record to substantiate this statement.
108. "When are you coming to India? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in the true light", said Swami Vivekananda to Max Muller at the time of his departure from Oxford. The face of the aged sage brightened up—there was almost a tear in his eyes, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out: "I would not return then; you would have to cremate me there". The Complete Works, Vol.IV, pp.281-82.
was deteriorating day by day. "I am very nervous", he wrote to Miss Mary Hale from New York. "I have not slept a single night soundly this winter. I am sure I am working too much yet a big work awaits me in England". It was to recuperate his debilitated organism that he accepted the invitation of the Seviers and Henrie Muller for a holiday tour on the continent. He was particularly anxious to rove over the mountainous regions of Switzerland—"the helvetia of ancient times"—"Oh! I long to see the snows and wander on the mountain paths", he said. Towards the end of July 1896 Swami Vivekananda left for Switzerland along with his friends. The party visited Geneva, Montreux, Chillon, Chamounix, the St. Bernard, Lucerne, the Rigi, Zermatt, and Schaffhausen. The invigorating climate, the exquisite landscapes, the splendour of the Alps, the grand spectacle of Mont Blanc, the tints of green in the sky, the fields, the waters and the crevasses and the serenity of village life, soothed his tired body and mind and brought him in direct communion with nature. He nestled the snow-capped peaks of Mount Rigi, strolled in the woods, visited the glacier of Monte Rosa and gathered "a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow", watched the majestic falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen and got ample opportunity to meditate in the aromatic air of the

112. His Eastern and Western disciples, p.421.
113. In a letter to Dr. Nanjunda Rao on July 14, 1896, Swami Vivekananda wrote: "I am going to Switzerland next Sunday, and shall return to London in autumn and take up the work again.... I want rest very badly, you know". The Complete Works, Vol.V, p.109.
114. Swami Vivekananda sent one such flower to Swami Kripananda in America. In a letter to him in August 1896 he wrote: "I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life". The Complete Works, Vol.VIII, p.382.
hills. The Svami was in a mood of ecstasy and felt much refreshed. In a letter to J.J. Goodwin on August 8, 1896 he wrote: "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".

While in Switzerland Swami Vivekananda not only communicated with his friends and disciples in England and America but also inspired and instructed his brother-monks in India. For example when Alasinga informed him that the Brahmayadin magazine was running in a bad financial state he wrote to him that he must not lose heart or close down the publication. "The Brahmayadin is a jewel- it must not perish", he observed in an animating tone, "of course such a paper has to be kept by private help always, and we will do it. Hold on a few months more". After

115. The Eastern and Western disciples of Swami Vivekananda record that one of those who accompanied him had this to say about him: "There seemed to be a great light about him, and a great stillness and peace. Never have I seen the Swami to such advantage. He seemed to communicate spirituality by a look or with a touch. One could almost read his thoughts which were of the highest, so transfigured had his personality become!" The Life of Swami Vivekananda, p. 424.

116. The Complete Works, Vol. VIII, p. 383. In a letter to E.T. Sturdy Swami Vivekananda wrote about his daily activities and the ethnology of the Swiss people: "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 bye, 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....Ibid., p. 380.

two days he wrote to him again that he would give an amount of Rs100 a month to keep up the journal. He also asked him to send an account of the income and expenses of the Brahmayadin so that he could balance it financially. "Let this paper be your Ishtadevatz, and then you will see how success comes", he exhorted. Apart from taking the infant magazine out of the financial mess he framed a code of conduct for the organisers of the Ramakrishna anniversary festival at Dakshineshwar. In response to a letter from one Ramdayal Babu in which he had asked whether the public women should be allowed to attend the festival, and should separate days be fixed for men and women to come?, the Swami admonished Shashi: "Let distinctions of sex, caste, wealth learning, and the whole host of them be confined to the world alone. If such distinctions persist in holy places of pilgrimage, where then lies the difference between them and hell itself?"

From Swami Vivekananda's letter to E.T.Sturdy dated August 5, 1896 we learn that Max Muller sought the Swami's view on his article on Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa which had been published in The XIX Century in that month. He enquired about the Swami's plans, appreciated his work, promised a good deal of help and expressed his willingness to write a book on the Saint of Dakshineshwar.

It was in a small town at the foot of the Alps, between Mont blanc and the little St.Bernard that Swami Vivekananda thought of establishing a monastery in the Himalayas where he could retire from the labours of his life and spend the rest of 118. Swami Vivekananda to Alasinga, August 8, 1896, The Complete Works, Vol.V, p.111.
his days in meditation. The seviers who were accompanying him did not "let the idea lapse: It became their life work".

Swami Vivekananda cut short his itinerary in Switzerland at the invitation of the renowned German Orientalist, Paul Deussen, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kiel. On his way he visited famous German cities such as Heidelberg, Coblenz, Cologne and Berlin. Unlike Nietzsche who had remarked in 1886 that everything ponderous, viscous and solemnly clumsy, all long-winded and boring types of styles were developed in

121. Swami Vivekananda explained the objective of this monastery in these words: "It will be a centre for work and meditation, where my Indian and Western disciples can live together and then I shall train as workers, the former to go out as preachers of Vedanta to the West and the latter to devote their lives to the good of India". His Eastern and Western disciples, p.423.

122. Rolland, p.97. To the end of his life Swami Vivekananda remained grateful to the Seviers for their munificence in helping him in his mission. In a letter to E.T.Sturdy in November(?)1899, he wrote: "I remember in England Capt. and Mrs. Sevier, who have clad me when I was cold, nursed me better than my own mother would have, borne with me in my weakness, my trials; and they have nothing but blessings for me. And that Mrs. Sevier, because she did not care for honour, has the worship of thousands today; and when she is dead millions will remember her as one of the great benefactresses of the poor Indians". Refuting the charge that he had wallowed in luxury in England, he observed in the same communication: "With the exception of Capt. and Mrs.Sevier, I do not remember even one piece of rag as big as a handkerchief I got from England. On the other hand, the incessant demand on my body and mind in England is the cause of my breakdown in health. This was all you English people gave me, whilst working me to death; and now I am cursed for luxuries I lived in!! Whosoever of you have given me a coat? Whosoever a cigar? Whosoever a bit of fish or flesh? Whosoever of you dare say I asked food or drink or smoke or dress or money from you? Ask, Sturdy, ask for God's sake, ask your friends, and first ask your own "God within who never sleeps". You have given me money for my work. Every penny of it is there. Before your eyes I sent my brother away, perhaps to his death; and I would not give him a farthing of the money which was not my private property. The Complete Works, Vol.VII,p.513.

profuse variety among Germans, the Swami praised the material advancement of the nation, its exquisite monuments, its delectable gardens, its general prosperity and its cultural milieu. Reaching Kiel, a sea port in the North West Germany, situated on the Baltic Sea, he was warmly received by the German savant. Well versed in Sanskrit, Paul Deussen was the only oriental scholar in Europe who could speak it fluently. Like Schopenhauer he predicted that India would one day be the spiritual leader of the world. He reminded Swami Vivekananda of his opinion about Vedanta which he had expressed before the Indian branch of the Royal Asiatic Society: It was one of "the most majestic structures and valuable products of the genius of man in his search for truth" as also "the strongest support of pure morality and the greatest consolation in the sufferings of life and death".

According to Mrs. Sevier the Swami interested himself in some translation Professor Deussen was making and a discussion followed on the precise significance and correct understanding of various obscure passages. The former pointed out that clearness of definition was of primary, and elegance of diction of very secondary importance. "The vigorous and lucid interpretations given by the Oriental exegetist....eventually quite won over the German savant..." Swami Vivekananda pointed out to Deussen that Schopenhauer and Von Hartman had committed an error when they based their philosophy upon "the blind will, the Unconscious as contrasted with Universal Thought which must

126. Rolland, pp.97-98.
127. His Eastern and Western disciples, p.427.
precede all desiring or willing”. It is said that one of the purposes of Deussen's meeting the Swami was his propensity to learn from the latter the hidden secrets of Yogic powers.

Professor Deussen took the Swami around the city, showed him an Industrial exhibition and the famous harbour of Kiel which had been opened by the Kaiser only recently. He asked him to prolong his stay for a few days but the Swami insisted that he should return to London to resume his work. Deussen was so much anxious to be with him that he proposed to join him at Hamburg and thence to go to England in his company. Together, they travelled to Holland and spent three days in Amsterdam where they visited the art galleries, museums and other places of historical interest. After they arrived in London, Deussen met the Swami almost every day for about two weeks and sought his opinion and guidance on some intricate aspects of Indian philosophy. During the same time Swami Vivekananda visited Max Muller again at Oxford. Should one say the three mighty rivers of human minds were emerging as Triveni in the "desert" of material culture?

"There is a big London work waiting for me from next month", wrote Swami Vivekananda to Alasinga on August 6, 1896 from Switzerland. He returned to England on September 17, 1896 and

128. L.T. Sturdy's reminiscences in His Eastern and Western Admires, pp.303-4.
129. Milhilananda, Swami, p.199.
130. His Eastern and Western Disciples, p.427.
spent another three months delivering lectures in private houses and posh clubs, giving interviews to the press and meeting men of distinction such as Frederick Myers, a famous psychologist, the Rev. John Page Hopps, a nonconformist minister, Moncure D. Conway, a positivist, and the Rev. Charles Voysey, a Theistic leader. Edward Carpenter, famous for his book *Towards Democracy* was so much enthralled by Swami Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta that he acknowledged his debt to him in the appendices to his *Pagan and Christian creeds*. Canon Wilberforce invited him to his house at Westminster and became "a keen student of Vedanta philosophy". The adherents of the Anglican Church too held him in high regard.

The most notable lectures that Swami Vivekananda gave during his third visit were "Vedanta as a factor in civilisation" delivered towards the end of September, a series of about ten lectures on Jnana Yoga in October, and a series of four lectures on Practical Vedanta in November. In these discourses Swami

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133. Marlow A.N. in Ghanaanda and Parrinder, p.126.
Vivekananda delineated the epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and practice of Vedanta on the basis of ancient Indian scriptures especially the Upanishadas and brought forth its monistic and pantheistic character, its harmony with science, its superiority to other religious schools, and its capacity to answer all human queries about existence and non-existence, the microcosm and the macrocosm, the absolute and the manifestation, the illusion and the reality, and the whys and hows about mind matter. He held his audiences spellbound by making "the dizzy heights of Advaita appear like a land rich with the verdure of noblest human aspiration and fragrant with the flowers of finest emotions". His discourses on the Hindu concept of Maya evoked immense applause from his hearers. "The absolute is the ocean", he said, "while you and I and Sun and Stars and everything else are various waves of that ocean. And what makes the waves different? Only the form, and that form is time, space, and causation, all entirely dependent on the wave....If the wave subsides, the form vanishes in a moment, and yet the form was not a delusion....This is Maya". As and when man starts realising the distinction between the discerning and the non-discerning "The God of heaven becomes the God in nature, and the God in nature becomes the God who is nature, and the God who is nature becomes the God within this temple of the body, and the God dwelling in the temple of the body at last becomes the temple itself". Swami Vivekananda urged his western hearers

137. His Eastern and Western Disciples, p.431.
139. Excerpt from the Swami's discourse "Maya and Freedom", Ibid., p.128
to discover 'the infinite mine of bliss' in them. The Kingdom
of heaven is within you", said Jesus Christ. So says the Vedanta
philosophy. The world was nothing but 'a shadow of the Reality'.
"We must go to the Reality", he said, "Renunciation will take
us to it....This little separate self must die". He said that
the goal of Vedanta was realisation for which one need not go
to 'the depths of forests or caves'. Every person was 'the pal-
pable, blissful, living God'. "Who says God is unknown?" he
asked, "who says He is to be searched after?....We have been
living in Him eternally".

Swami Vivekananda became so popular that his discourses were
attended by some members of the royal household, By his fine
oratory and penetrating logic he would lift his audiences into
an ecstatic state and even make some cry. "Even down here, a
thousand miles or more of the Swami's work, I hear mention of
his name", wrote Helen F. Huntington from Gainesville, Georgia,
to the Editor of The Brahmavadin. Swami Vivekananda spun the
texture of Practical Vedanta with the threads from scriptures
and science, and won the admiration even of his critics. In one
of his talks he argued that the knowledge of the world did not
emerge out of matter— it was within man. Each one of us had
come out of one proto-plasmic cell and all the powers we posse-
sed were coiled up there. "You cannot say", he argued, "they

140. Excerpt from the Swami's discourse "God In Everything". Ibid.p.150.
141. Ibid.p.148.
145. The Brahmavadin, November 21, 1896.
came from food; for if you heap up food mountains high, what power comes out of it? The energy was there, potentially no doubt... So is infinite power in the soul of man, whether he knows it or not. Its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it. It was indeed a fantastic exegesis of Advaita Vedanta.

In his letter to Mrs. Bull on October 8, 1896, Swami Vivekanand reported: "Things are working very favourably here in England. The work is not only popular but appreciated". After about a month and a half, during which period he had acquired immense popularity by speaking on Jnana Yoga and Practical Vedanta, he wrote in an elated mood: "The work in London has been a roaring success". The reasons for the Swami’s happiness were not far to seek. Swami Abhedananda who had come at his instance around the middle of September proved to be an asset. His maiden speech at a friendly societies meeting in Bloomsbury square on October 27 was highly appreciated by all. The Swami recognised the orator in him and later quipped: "Even if I perish on this plane my message will be sounded through these dear lips and the world will hear it..." The reports in American newspapers about the growing popularity of Swami Sardananda, who had in the meantime left London for New York, further delighted him. The first edition of the Swami’s book on Raja Yoga had been sold out and it was still in constant demand. His

150. His Eastern and Western Disciples, p.434.
ablest disciple, Miss Waldo was conducting Vedanta classes in America with considerable success. His English friends Captain and Mrs. Sevier had decided to accompany him to India and construct an Ashrama in the Himalayas to fulfill his cherished ambition of life. Another English devotee J.J. Goodwin had taken the vow of a Brahmachari and decided to become a Sannyasin. He was also to accompany the Swami to India and work as his secretary. One may mention that it was through the shorthand notes of Goodwin that most of the Swami's lectures in London have been preserved. Miss Henrietta Muller had also decided to go to India and give financial support to the proposed educational institution.

Swami Vivekananda had himself entrusted Miss Waldo with the job of conducting Vedanta classes in America. In a letter to her on October 8, 1896, he wrote: "Why do you not begin to teach? You have a thousand times more philosophy than this boy R. Send notices to the class and hold regular talks and lectures...Make a blaze! Make a blaze!". The Complete Works, Vol.VI, p.377.

Swami Vivekananda told Laxmi Madari Shah, November 21, 1896; The Complete Works, Vol.VI, p.383. A day before he had written to Alasinga: "Mr Sevier and his wife are going to start a place near Almora in the Himalayas which I intend to make my Himalayan centre, as well as a place for Western disciples to live as Brahmacharins and Sannyasins". The Complete Works, Vol.V, p.123. After about a week he revealed his future plans to the Hale Sisters: "Now I am going to start a centre in Calcutta and another in the Himalayas. The Himalayan one...will be the centre for European Workers, as I do not want to kill them by forcing on them the Indians mode of living and the fiery plains. My plan is to send out numbers of Hindu boys to every civilised country to preach—get men and women from foreign countries to work in India. This would be a good exchange. After having established the centres I go about up and down like the gentleman in the book of Job". The Complete Works, Vol.VI, pp.384-85.

Swami Vivekananda was extremely happy with the services rendered to him by J.J. Goodwin. To Alasinga he wrote on October 28, 1896: "It is he to whom we owe all our books. He took shorthand notes of my lectures, which enabled the books to be published". The Complete Works, Vol.V, p.120. In another communication to him on November 20, 1896 he called Mr Goodwin "a Sannyasin". bid, p.123.
for Hindu girls. Miss Margaret E. Noble who later became Sister
Nivedita was among "the fairest flowers of his work in England".
Thus from all points of view, write His Eastern and Western
Disciples, "the prospects of launching a successful campaign
in India seemed bright with a glorious promise, and the Swami
was transported with joy at seeing that the dearest dream of
his life—the rejuvenation of his motherland was going to be
fulfilled at last".

"Well the good old country now calls me; I must go. So good­
bye to all projects of visiting Russia this April.... 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," wrote the Swami to Miss Josephine
Macleod on December 3, 1896. It was during the middle of November
after addressing a class, that Swami Vivekananda had asked Mrs
Sevier to purchase four tickets for India. Goodwin and the
Seviers were to accompany him. Reservations were accordingly m
made to board the Prins Regent Luitpold which was to leave
Naples for Ceylon on December 16. From Ceylon, the Swami was to
go to Madras where a pompous welcome awaited him.

155. Ibid., p.421.
156. Ibid., p.437.
157. Swami Vivekananda's last lecture in London was on the A
Advaita Vedanta. As usual he left the audience spell bound
by his eloquent exposition of the Upanishadic aphorism
'Tat Tvam Asi' or 'That Thou Art'. A special correspondent
of The Indian Mirror covered the discourse which was publ­
ished in its issue of January 7, 1897.
159. The Hindus of Madras had formed a committee under the
Presidency of Justice S. Subramanya Iyer to concert
measures to give the swami a fitting reception on his arr­
ival. The Indian Mirror, January 7, 1897. The Hindus and
Buddhists of Ceylon too joined hands to give 'a splendid
reception' to him 'at the landing stage'. A committee under
the chairmanship of Hon'ble P. Coomar Swami was formed for
the said purpose. The Indian Mirror, January 13, 1897.
Before his departure, Swami Vivekananda was given a magnificent farewell by his English friends and disciples at the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours in Piccadilly on December 13. Eric Hammond who was an eye witness to this meeting records: "Many were silent, tongue tied and sad at heart. Tears were very near to some eyes. Grey and gloom without were intensified and deepened by grey and gloom within. One form, one figure, triumphed over sorrow; arrayed in garments, glistering as of ember, Swami passed among the people like a living shaft of sunshine. "Yes, Yes, he said 'we shall meet again; we shall'." The chairman of the meeting presented an Address to the Swami in which he was thanked for his 'noble and unselfish work'.

Thus ended the Swami's itenarary in Europe. One may aptly ask why did not he found a Vedanta society in London like the one he had formed in New York. It would be pertinent to observe that though Swami Vivekananda decried the idea of establishing an organisation in his public speeches, he at times hinted at it in his private letters. For example he wrote to Shashi in the last week of June: "The work here is coming to a head. We have already got funds to start a London centre". What did he have already got funds to start a London centre". What did he

160. Cited in His Eastern and Western Disciples, p.438.
161. For full address see The Indian Mirror, January 7, 1897.
mean by saying: "This London is the hub of the world. The heart of India is here. How can I leave without laying a sure foundation here". Could he lay the foundation without leaving an organisation? Could his work be permanent without founding a "church"? Swami Vivekananda was not unaware of these facts. Or else why would he establish Ramakrishna Missions and Vedanta centres in America or India? As early as August 9, 1895 he had written to E.T.Sturdy that Advaita will be the future religion of humanity. "As to societies these will come of themselves". In another letter to Mali in October(?)1895, he wrote: "At the moment our purse is lean. In time we shall send preachers in large numbers to all the quarters of the globe". Preachers for what? of course, for delineating a philosophy which in the Swami's own words, could serve as a basis to every possible religious system in the world. As he once remarked in the course of an interview with a London Journal: "It is no new thing that India should send forth missionaries. She used to do so under the Emperor Ashoka, in the days when the Buddhist faith was young.... In reality my mission to England is an outcome of England's to India". When the Interviewer asked him was India

163. Ibid.
to conquer her conquerors Swami Vivekananda replied: "Yes, in
the world of ideas". It is thus clear that Swami Vivekananda
had a mission to fulfil and he needed a band of selfless and
ergetic persons who could help him in his task. Obviously this
group would observe certain norms and work according to certain
rules—whether those of the monkhood or the new organisation.
Whatever the shape or nature of this body it must have a form.
Or how could it exist without it? Though Swami Vivekananda was
aware that organised sects bred corruption and other evils, he
felt at times that they were a necessary evil. The fact that
some religious seekers always asked him the rituals of his
creed opened up his eyes, as he himself admitted later. He
realised that in the ordinary sense religion was philosophy
concretised through ceremonies and symbols. In a letter to E.T.
Sturdy he wrote that it was absolutely necessary 'to form some
ritual and have a church' as early as possible. He wanted to
go to the Asiatic Society Library for the said purpose and
asked Sturdy to accompany him. He was sure that a study of
Hemadri Kasha and the Upanishadas could help them a lot in
fixing "something grand, from birth to death of a man". "A
mere loose system of philosophy gets no hold on mankind", he
wrote, "If we can get it through, before we have finished the

169. *Swami Vivekananda to E.T.Sturdy, October 31, 1895, The
170. Ibid.
171. Ibid.
172. Ibid.
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 (We) will never have a hold on western people.

The question arises if Swami Vivekananda was convinced of the efficacy of forms, rituals and symbols and believed in the Carlylian dictum that "everywhere the formed world is the only habitable one", why did not he leave an organisation in England? It seems that the Swami's English friends and disciples were not in favour of forming a society. Sturdy rejected the suggestion he had made in his letter of October 31, 1895 that the Vedantic ideas must be clothed in forms and given an abode.

Swami Vivekananda who was depending on Sturdy's financial help could not but agree with him. On November 2, 1895 he wrote back to him: "I think you are right; we shall work on our own lines and let things grow". Swami Vivekananda did not altogether relinquish this idea and wrote to one of his brother monks in India on June 24, 1896 that he had collected sufficient funds to start a London centre. "We want organisation", he wrote, "organisation is power, and the secret of this is obedience".

After about ten days he asked Shashi (Swami Ramakrishnananda) to send Kali (Swami Abhedananda) to England as early as possible.

By this time Swami Sardananda had left for America to work in his absence there. Swami Vivekananda seemed quite optimistic.
about his plan in the July of 1896. "Things are going on with
me very well on this side of the Atlantic", he wrote to Francis
179
H. Legget. He described the British Empire, with all its draw-
backs, as the greatest machine that ever existed for the
dissemination of ideas. "I mean to put my ideas in the centre
of this machine", he wrote, "and they will spread all over the
world. Of course all great work is slow and the difficulties
are too many, especially as we Hindus are the conquered race.
Yet that is the very reason why it is bound to work, for spiri-
tual ideas have always come from the downtrodden".

However, with the passage of time Swami Vivekananda changed
his mind. Though the number of students in his classes was in­
creasing day by day, he had a clear vision of the future of his
work in England. "Of course", he wrote to Alasinga, "as soon as
181
I leave, most of this fabric will tumble down". He was sure,
nevertheless, that the success of his work in England, however
shortlived it may prove, would boost the morale of his country­
men. "By rousing interest here I really do more for India than
182
in India", he wrote to the Hale Sisters on July 7, 1896. In
another communication he observed: "My European work...tells
183
immensely on India".

There could be several reasons as to why Swami Vivekananda
abandoned the idea of forming an organisation in England. Most
179. Swami Vivekananda to Frankincense (Francis H. Legget) July 6,
180. Ibid.
181. Swami Vivekananda to Alasinga, (not dated, 1896); The
183. Swami Vivekananda to Miss S.E. Waldo, October 8, 1896. The
probably he felt that however deep he may dig the foundation he would not be able to complete the edifice, and even if he did, it would not survive the pangs of isolation in a country where people did not care a fig for 'orders and communities as for individual action'. The tide of Vedanta may blow over the intellectual circles but it would not sway the masses along. Hence the Swami consoled himself by leaving disciples and not an organisation in England.

It is sometime suggested that Swami Vivekananda had to take into account "the high intellectuality of England and Europe, which required Hindu missionaries of a spiritual quality rare among the brethren of Baranagore". It does not seem to be correct for the Swami himself never doubted the capability or 'the requisite spiritual quality' of his guru-bhais (brother-monks). In many of his epistles he praised their intellectual attainments and their deep devotion to the cause of humanity. The fact that he called Swami Saradananda to England and later entrusted Swami Abhedananda to work after he left for India shows that he had full faith in their efficiency. Some scholars think that Swami Vivekananda "felt some onset of world-weariness which was, in part, due to disease and that he was reserving his energies for the titanic labour which he knew awaited his return to India". Swami Vivekananda's letter to Mrs. Ole Bull dated August 23, 1896 seems to corroborate, "I think I have
worked enough", wrote the Swami, "I am now going to retire... To set the work going I had to touch money and property, for a
time. Now I am sure my part of the work is done, and I have no
more interest in Vedanta or any philosophy in the World or the
work itself. I am getting ready to depart to return no more to
this hell, this world. Even its religious utility is beginning
to pall me". The letter is characteristic of emotional
overtones and reflects his fatigue after a prolonged spell of
work. But it should not be interpreted to mean that Swami
Vivekananda was gradually losing interest in his mission because
of its monotonous nature or that he was preserving his strength
for the future work in India.

Swami Vivekananda did not leave behind him a 'church'
because he knew that it might prove to be redundant in a country
where "hell and heaven seemed as certain to the people as
tomorrow's sun-rise and the last judgement as real as the
week's balancesheet". Moreover he felt that the gospel of
Vedanta would be more like leaven in this country with its
renowned Sanskrit scholars, its learned and accomplished clergy
and its long sense of history. The paucity of time, the indi­
ferent attitude of Miss Muller and Sturdy in the matter, and
his longing for an early return to India for its rejuvenation

187. Jarman, T.L. A Short History of 20th Century England,
p.84.
188. Marlow, A.N. "Vivekananda in Europe" in Ghanananda Swami
and Parrinder Geoffrey (eds.), p.131.
were some other factors which hushed up his project. Nonetheless the sapling of Vedanta he had planted was watered by his successor, Swami Abhedananda. Brilliant, though he was, he could not prove a St. Peter to his Jesus. Though some curiosity for Vedantic thought remained after his departure, the charisma around it had withered away.

189. Swami Vivekananda was however, very much pleased with the success of his work in London. In reply to the "Address of Welcome" presented to him at Calcutta he observed, "My work in England has been more satisfactory to me than my work in America....I firmly believe that if I should die tomorrow the work in England would not die but go on expanding all the time". The Complete Works, Vol.III,pp.311-12. Whether or not he changed his opinion later is not known, but it is a hard fact that during his second voyage to the West he chose America and not England for his field of work. It may also be mentioned that his opinion about England had completely changed after making three short trips to it "No one ever landed on English soil with more hatred in his heart for a race than I did for the English....There is none among you...who loves the English people more than I do now". Ibid.

190. About three months after the Swami's departure from London E.T.Sturdy wrote: "The new series of lectures began on January 12 under the auspices of Swami Abhedananda. These lectures have been very clear and full of instruction, but for various reasons...have not been very numerously attended". The Brahmatadaj, March 13, 1897.