PREFACE

Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta on the 12th of January, 1863 and peacefully passed away on July 4, 1902 in the Monastery at Belur Math near Calcutta. After remaining an unknown figure for nearly thirty years of his life he emerged as a World Teacher in the true sense of the term and blessed innumerable souls all over the globe.

It was on January 27, 1900 during his second visit to America that Swami Vivekananda delivered to the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, California, somewhat reluctantly a touching account of "My life and Mission". In it the Swami naturally gave out very little of his great and eventful life. Fortunately for us, however, we are able to gather a fund of information about his life and work in the East and the West from the large number of his letters to his disciples, friends and admirers in both the Hemispheres as also from a few other very reliable sources.

In fact the present book is a documentation of selected notes and utterances of Swamiji about himself and his work collected from the books mentioned below. These are arranged chronologically so as to form what may be called a near autobiography of the great Saint. And for this very important work we are much indebted to a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order, who prefers to remain anonymous. The original manuscript prepared by him was the product of patient labour for a long period and it was passed on to a senior Swami of the Bombay Ashrama, who jointly with Prof. Charu Chandra Chatterjee went through the manuscript, weighing and judging the passages, collating and comparing them with the
source books, removing a passage here, or replacing a passage there. As a result of these changes, the book seemed to take a definite shape and Prof. Chatterjee was then asked to prepare a Press Copy exercising all editorial power so that it might become a good readable and presentable volume when it came out of the press.

Prof. Chatterjee was very ably assisted by Smt. S. Bhargava M.A. who was entrusted with the heavy and responsible work of maintaining proper reference of the books and passages from which the materials of the manuscript were culled as also noting the dates of Swamiji's letters included in the manuscript. It is thus intended to be an authentic record for future guidance.

We are indebted to these Swamis and friends for the commendable work they did with devotion and care and also to the Proprietor of the Saxon Press without whose active co-operation it would have been very difficult for us to bring out the present volume.

The excerpts are from:

1. The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda—8 volumes (published by the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14)

2. The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. (published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4)

3. Sri Ramakrishna — The Great Master, (published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4)

4. The Master as I saw Him (published by the Udbodhan Office, Calcutta 3)
5. The life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western disciples (Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14)


This selected compilation, which includes Swamiji’s own words about his beloved Guru Sri Ramakrishna, we believe, will be a highly valuable and handy document and will remain a source of inspiration to the coming generation.

Publisher