THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA.

The order of the Sannyasin, of whom the Swami (master) Vivekananda* was the first to appear in this country, is the most ancient order of monks in the world. Max Müller speaks of them as known before the rise of Buddhism. In the Bhagavad-gita (v. 3) we read: “He is to be known as a Sannyasin who does not hate and does not love anything.” To-day there are thousands of them in India, many who have passed directly from the student life into that of the spiritual man, taking the vows of poverty, chastity, and homelessness. In their long ochre robe, with staff and alms-bowl, they wander barefoot from village to village. Children are taught to read, the sick are cared for, the people are shown better habits of life, and the profound philosophies of the Vedanta are taught. In India, religion and philosophy are one. They have no organization, as we understand the word. They have no monasteries. They hold no property. It is a voluntary, undogmatized brotherhood, with recognized freedom of thought. The true Sannyasin may be said to represent no religion. His religion is a life—a realization; it is not a theory. The Jewish prophets living in lowly places; John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness; Jesus of Nazareth, who had not where to lay his head;—these were but living the life of a Sannyasin. Literally, “Sannyasin” means saint.

Formerly, the status of a Sannyasin implied to the Hindu years of discipline—first as a student, then as a householder or married man. After a period of fulfilling these duties he retires from the world to the forest, performing certain exercises, and is often accompanied by his wife and children. The fourth and last stage implies a complete surrender of worldly interests. He has no fixed habitation. He lives alone and becomes a Rishi—seer of truth. Max Müller tells us “the Buddhist re-

*Vivekananda: Sanskrit, Ananda—bliss; Viveka—discrimination. [See frontispiece.]