

# VIVEKANANDA IN GERMANY AND HOLLAND, 1896

SWAMI VIDYATMANANDA

In the summer of 1896 Swami Vivekananda took a vacation trip on the continent of Europe. He left London on Sunday, 19 July, and was back again in London on Thursday, 17 September. The first two weeks were spent in Geneva, and the French Alps. The next four weeks in Switzerland. The following two weeks in Germany. Then three or four days in Holland on the way back to England.

Swamiji was the guest of three English devotees, Miss Henrietta Müller, Captain J. H. Sevier, and Mrs. Charlotte Sevier. Although Swamiji is reported to have taken an interest in the planning of the trip, it seems likely that his English hosts worked out most of the details as to where to go and what to see. Thus the itinerary was presumably in accordance with what Britshers of the period going to the Continent considered significant. The preferences Swamiji expressed were, first, that he should have a period of calm, reminiscent of his old days as wandering sadhu. This occurred during the two weeks' halt at Saas-Fee, Switzerland. A second wish of Swamiji's was that he should meet Paul Deussen, who had cordially invited him to visit him at his residence in Kiel. He had already established a warm relation with Max Müller, Sanskrit scholar at Oxford. Professor Deussen, Professor of Philosophy at Kiel University in northern Germany, was the second Sanskrit scholar of importance in Europe.

A step-by-step account of the first six weeks of the journey was given in my article on 'Vivekananda in Switzerland, 1896' published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of March and April, 1973. The present article will encompass the party's progress through the last three weeks, from 29 August to 17

September.

As was explained in the article about Switzerland, considerable supposition is involved in establishing the itinerary of the party. The most substantial sources of material available are sixteen letters written by Swamiji while on the trip (and references in two or three other letters written by him before and after the trip) and Chapter xci of the original authentic biography of Vivekananda, issued in four volumes at Mayavati a few years after the Swami's death.<sup>1</sup>

The letters, of course, contain indications essential in establishing dates and places. We may have, also, considerable faith in the biography. Although the chapter on the Continental journey has been found to contain some inaccuracies, it was probably written with the collaboration of one of the persons who made the tour, namely Mrs. Sevier. She herself wrote an article, published first in the *Prabuddha Bharata*, September 1905, and reprinted in the biography, describing the day spent with Professor Deussen. The bulk of the biography was written by an American devotee, Frank Alexander, who worked at Mayavati, where Mrs. Sevier was living at the time.

Swamiji himself wrote an article mentioning his contact with Paul Deussen, although this is more of an appreciation than a reporting of facts; one finds it in his published *Works*.<sup>2</sup> And in his autobiography, *Mein Leben*, Deussen devotes two pages to Swamiji's visit to his home and their subsequent voyage together to Hamburg,

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<sup>1</sup> His Eastern and Western Disciples: *The Life of the Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Dt. Pithoragarh, U.P.), Vol. III (1915)

<sup>2</sup> *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama), Vol. IV (1962), pp. 272-7

Bremen, and Amsterdam, and on over to England.

Due to the Second World War, what traces of Swamiji's party one could have expected to find in Germany have disappeared. In some German cities up to 80 per cent of the old quarters were destroyed by bombing. Efforts to find traces of the party in old newspaper columns, city archives, and hotel registers, although conscientiously pursued, were on the whole devoid of success.

To flesh out the bare details given in the sources mentioned, we are thus reduced to citing probabilities, based on known travel habits of the period. What the voyagers probably did can be hypothecated on the basis of the recommendations given in the great travel guides of the epoch, loyally used by most English voyagers, the Baedeker Handbooks for Travellers. In the descriptions that follow, thus, I have relied on Baedeker's *The Rhine*, 1886; *Southern Germany*, 1895; *Northern Germany*, 1893; and *Belgium and Holland*, 1897. It is more than likely that these very volumes formed a part of the Seviere's baggage.

During the days in the French Alps and in Switzerland, the travel had been rude. Stagecoaches were the only means of transport in many places, and in going to the Little St. Bernard hospice and to the village of Saas-Fee, travellers were forced to use mules or horses, or to walk. This probably created little difficulty for Swamiji. As a wandering sadhu in India only three years before, he had been accustomed to travel by foot. We know also that in India two years after the Continental trip he rode horseback in Almora; he made also, partly on foot, the taxing pilgrimage in Kashmir up to the Himalayan shrine of Amarnath. Such difficulties seem to have matched Swamiji's mood. He was delighted with their two weeks' quiet stay at Saas-Fee as he felt there that he could imagine himself for

a time an unknown *sannyāsin* (monk) back in India.

But when crossing over into Germany, all that was left behind. By 1896 the rail system in Germany was well developed. During the next three weeks the Seviere and Swamiji (Miss Müller went back to England at the end of the Swiss part of the journey) moved ahead as typical tourists, 'doing' the Rhine and taking in the main sight-seeing attractions of eight important European cities.

Perhaps Swamiji would have been just as happy to have stayed longer at Saas-Fee; on the other hand, he was anxious to get on to meet Deussen. Also he was interested in observing Germany and judging its mood, as we learn from his observations on this country recounted in his long essay 'Memoirs of European Travel'.<sup>3</sup> We may suppose also that considerations as to the Seviere's wishes played a part in the decision to move on and 'do' Germany as thoroughly as time allowed. They were paying for the trip and naturally must have been anxious for all to gain as much from it as possible.

Swamiji and party seem to have been in Lucerne, Switzerland, on 26 August. From there they went to Schaffhausen for a day or two to see the Falls of the Rhine. About Saturday, 29 August, the three travellers crossed over into Germany. They probably went by rail from Schaffhausen to Stuttgart, a matter of 123 miles and five or six hours. Here they would have changed trains and proceeded to Heidelberg sixty-nine miles farther.

Now the party was in romantic Germany, a land famed for picturesque castles, fairy-tale villages with their Baroque churches, healthy, hearty people, and a heritage of Teuton legend. The most romantic spot of all was Heidelberg, whose tales of student

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. VII (1958), pp. 297 ff.

life—blond youths in uniform, singing, drinking, duelling—were well known. (It is interesting that this picture has existed in the American psyche almost up to the present. Before World War I good families sent their sons to German universities, believing that opportunities for education abroad were better than those at home. Even during World War II, Heidelberg was still regarded with such affection by Americans that it was the one German city not marked out for bombing. The U. S. Army command had determined to make its headquarters there during the Occupation, and did so.)

This is what the original biography of Swamiji says about the stop at Heidelberg:

'From Schaffhausen the three tourists went to Heidelberg, the centre of one of the greatest German universities, where two days were spent. A visit to the university was made. The Swami was much surprised at the great culture of the Germans, and saw from the general character of the university curriculum what splendid opportunities for education the German students enjoyed. A visit was also paid to the castle above the city, where there is a cellar containing the largest cask in the world.'<sup>4</sup>

The site of Heidelberg is slightly reminiscent of that of Rishikesh, being a place where a river—the Neckar—emerges from a backdrop of hills. The city occupies a narrow strip alongside the stream, heights rising steeply behind. A few hundred feet up stands the old castle, overhanging and dominating the city. Mark Twain in his *A Tramp Abroad* admired the castle looking down upon 'the compact brown-roofed town. I have never enjoyed a view which has such a serene and satisfying charm about it as this one gives'.

The wine cask that Swamiji saw in the castle is generally called the Great Tun. It was constructed in 1751 and has a capacity

of some 50,000 gallons. In 1896, as today, a grotesque wooden figure stood beside the tun, of Perkeo, a court jester, who is supposed on one occasion to have drained the entire contents singlehanded. The castle is still a popular tourist attraction, as it was then. One can go up to the castle by rack railway today; in Swamiji's time one walked up or took one of the town's two-horse cabs.

The university of Heidelberg is considered the cradle of science of southern Germany. It was founded in 1386 and has received students continually during the nearly six hundred years since. Following the Reformation it became the chief intellectual seat of humanism—that is to say, of Renaissance ideas about the intrinsic worth and educability of man. In 1896 Heidelberg university had about a thousand students.

The biography goes on: 'From Heidelberg to Coblenz! Here a halt was made for one night.'

It is likely that the group took a train from Heidelberg via Darmstadt to Mayence, a matter of some sixty miles. From Mayence one continued by train to Coblenz another sixty miles farther north. It is possible that they passed through Wiesbaden, then as now a renowned health resort, where some forty years later Swami Yatiswarananda was to establish a beginning Vedānta work in Europe.

Coblenz, a walled city at the confluence of the Mozelle and Rhine rivers, must have seemed very old-world German. Baedeker says, 'Few towns on the Rhine can vie with Coblenz in beauty of situation, standing as it does at the junction of two of the most picturesque rivers in Europe, and commanding charming views in every direction.'

The next morning, possibly Tuesday, 1 September, the party, according to the biography: '...boarded a steamer to journey up the far-famed Rhine as far as the

<sup>4</sup> *Life*: Vol. III, p. 39

city of Cologne. The trip occupied from two to three days, during which the Swami showed great enthusiasm over the pretty scenery and peopled the old castles with the stories current in the German folklore.'

The Rhine River trip was one of the renowned excursions of Europe, and is just as popular as ever to the present day. However, the biographer has made two errors in the account. From Coblenz to Cologne one travels down, not up, the Rhine. And, the trip being only sixty miles, it required, according to Baedeker, about five hours by steamer. Probably what is meant is that the day on the river plus the sightseeing in Cologne occupied from two to three days. or Mrs. Sevier's memory may have tricked her.

On both sides of the river one saw forests, vineyards, and old hamlets with their ancient churches. On the heights above, crumbling watchtowers, castles, convents, some constructions going back to Roman times. Bonn, the present capital of West Germany, then a city of some 35,000 population, appeared on the left bank.

At Rolandseck ruins of a castle and convent recall the legend of Roland and Hildegunde, which, being mentioned in Baedeker's *Rhine* of 1886, may be one of the Rhine folktales Swamiji had read about. Roland, one of Charlemagne's knights, scouring the Rhine in search of adventure, found himself the guest of Count Heribert, Lord of the Seven Mountains. Roland and the count's beautiful daughter, Hildegunde, fell in love and became affianced. The knight was called away to war and was gone a long time. Hildegunde awaited him, then heard that he had been killed 'in battle with the Infidels'. Inconsolable, she entered a convent. But Roland had only been wounded, and came back to Heribert's castle to claim his bride. There he found that she was forever lost to him. In despair, he built a castle not far from the convent, and

here he lived alone, content to catch an occasional glimpse of Hildegunde going to and from her devotions in the convent chapel. One day he missed her. The tolling of the chapel bell told him she had died. Roland never spoke again. Soon he too was dead, found with his dead eyes turned in the direction of Hildegunde's convent.

The biography account continues:

'At Cologne the travellers left the steamer to spend several days in that interesting city. The Swami marvelled at the great cathedral and attended a service there, and also visited its sanctuary and treasury, rich in gold plate, jewelled crosses and religious vestments, almost unparalleled for their artistic fineness and wrought altogether by the hands of nuns and noble ladies.'<sup>5</sup>

From a distance, and especially when approached by steamboat, Cologne with its numerous towers (in addition to the cathedral, there were at least thirteen other major churches) presented an imposing appearance, but most of the old streets were narrow, gloomy, and badly drained. Many of them, however, contained interesting old houses going back to the thirteenth century. Later, of course, much of this was destroyed by the heavy bombardments of the Second World War.

The cathedral, which largely escaped damage in 1940-45, is a marvel of gothic art, begun in 1248. Baedeker calls it 'probably the most magnificent gothic structure in the world'.

To have attended Mass at Cologne Cathedral would have been an impressive experience. The interior is 400 feet long and 145 feet high. It is not clear what the biographer means by 'sanctuary', but probably the choir, at the end of which stands the high altar. Baedeker tells us that the walls behind the choir stalls were covered with

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 39-40

tapestry worked by the ladies of Cologne—presumably the 'noble ladies' of the biography account.

The chief treasure in the cathedral's treasury is a golden reliquary of very ancient date, supposed to contain the bones of the Magi, the three oriental kings who visited the infant Jesus. This is probably the 'gold plate' mentioned in the biography. Guarded in the church's treasury are also 'jewelled crosses and religious vestments' in profusion.

It was now the 3rd or 4th of September. The telegram that Swamiji had received from Paul Deussen on 9 August at Saas-Fee had set their rendezvous at Kiel for 10 September. What happened next is explained by the following passage from the biography: 'Mr. and Mrs. Sevier had planned to take their guest from Cologne direct to Kiel, but he was anxious to see the great city of Berlin. His hosts, eager to please him, made a large detour, intending not only to visit Berlin but Dresden as well.' (Dresden was presumably chosen because of its artistic associations.)

Detour it was. It is about 450 miles from Cologne to Kiel. To go from Cologne to Berlin and Dresden and thence to Kiel nearly doubles the distance.

From Cologne to Berlin is 360 miles. In 1896 express trains made the run in about twelve hours. Again the biography:

'Every mile that the train journeyed onwards, found the Swami occupied with German subjects. He was struck with the general prosperity of the country and with the large number of its cities built after the modern style. When he arrived in Berlin he granted that he now understood the greatness of the German people. The city, with its wide streets, fine monuments and beautiful parks, made him draw a favourable contrast even with Paris itself. During their three days' stay the Swami's friends took him to every place of historic and intellectual importance. As for the German soldiery, he said, "What fine bearing and

real military appearance they have!"'<sup>6</sup>

When Swamiji visited Germany it was a country that had been vigorously on the rise for some fifty years. It felt a rivalry with France, its neighbour to the west, and had indeed defeated her in 1870-71. After that, Germany was bent on surpassing not only the French but mighty England as well, which ambition was a major contributing cause of the war of 1914-18 and was influential in causing yet another terrible conflict twenty-five years after that.

What Swamiji saw in 1896 was a young giant rapidly gaining in strength. His travels on the Rhine had shown him the old Germany of happy burghers and romantic legends. The journey from Cologne through Dortmund, Hanover, and other industrial centres on the way to Berlin, and Berlin itself revealed Germany's new tough, aggressive side.

The capital, having in 1896 some 1,660,000 inhabitants, was the showcase of this dynamic young empire. As the biography says, Berlin had been ornamented with wide avenues, imposing buildings, monuments, and public parks. Hotels, restaurants, wine houses, and beer gardens were numerous. In addition to the Royal Opera House, a dozen other theatres were operating. The guidebook lists fourteen museums and four picture galleries. There was a botanical garden and a zoological garden. And everywhere, splendid uniforms.

In his 'Memoirs of European Travel', written in 1899 and 1900, Swamiji reveals some of his feelings about Germany. He admired the country's high rate of literacy. But in comparing Berlin to Paris, he found German architecture heavy, lacking in taste. In contrast to the French, the German appeared hardworking but stolid. And everywhere in Europe, most noticeable in Germany and Austria, there rose in his nostrils

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 40

—at least fourteen years before the fact—the pervasive smell of war.<sup>7</sup>

In Berlin, explains the biography, ‘when he was informed that their next destination was Dresden, he hesitated, saying, “Professor Deussen will be expecting us. We must not defer our visit longer.”’ Accordingly, Dresden was omitted from the itinerary, and the party proceeded directly the 230 miles to Kiel. They got there on Tuesday, 8 September, and put up at a hotel, spent all day, 9 September, at the home of Professor Deussen, and on the 10th went sight-seeing. These dates are confirmed by the article of Mrs. Sevier, who speaks of spending the whole day at the Deussen residence the day after the arrival at Kiel, and going sightseeing on the following day; and a letter from Swamiji written to Mr. E. T. Sturdy from Kiel on 10 September saying that ‘yesterday’ they had spent the whole day with Deussen.

We know a good deal not only about Paul Deussen and Swamiji’s attitude toward him, but also about what happened on that Wednesday, 9 September. In the *Prabuddha Bharata* article entitled ‘A Day in Kiel’ Mrs. Sevier told in detail of the Deussen-Vivekananda encounter. Swamiji himself tells something of the meeting in the 10th September letter and in an article written later about Deussen. And Deussen refers to his contacts with Swamiji in his autobiography.

Paul Deussen was born in 1845 and died in 1919. He was thus about fifty at the time of his meeting with Swami Vivekananda. He had been a school friend of Nietzsche, who had interested him profoundly in Schopenhauer. Deussen studied Sanskrit with Christian Lassen at Bonn. He taught in Geneva, Aachen, and Berlin, and

<sup>7</sup>vide *The Works*, Vol. VII, p. 389; also Romain Rolland: *Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel* (Advaita Ashrama, 1947), p. 171

in 1889 became Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kiel. He wrote numerous books on philosophy, particularly on the philosophy of India. He made a German translation of the *Vedānta-sūtras* with Śaṅkara’s commentary in 1887, of Sixty Upaniṣads in 1897, and of philosophic texts from the *Mahābhārata* in 1906. From the beginning he considered all religions as authentic, and Indian philosophy as equal in importance to any other. He preferred the idea that man errs through ignorance rather than, as Christianity claims, through sin. He accepted the idea of the Ātman and felt that Christianity could be strengthened through the acceptance of Vedāntic ideas.

From November, 1892, to March, 1893, Deussen and his wife visited India. We know what happened on this trip from a book Deussen wrote about his experiences: *Erinnerungen an Indien*. It was a real voyage of research. Deussen was delighted to meet pandits and discuss with them in Sanskrit numerous questions relating to Indian philosophy. At the close of the visit, in Bombay, he delivered a lecture on Vedānta before the Royal Asiatic Society; this was at the same time a farewell address to his Indian friends. He had the lecture printed in English in advance, together with a poem ‘Farewell to India’, and was able to distribute these at the lecture, as well as to send them to the friends he had made on the trip. The lecture concluded with: ‘And so the Vedānta, in its unfalsified form, is the strongest support of pure morality, is the greatest consolation in the sufferings of life and death—Indians, keep to it!’

These are the bare facts of Deussen’s life and professional career. But in *Mein Leben* Deussen tells many human things about himself that reveal him as a sweet and sympathetic figure—worthy of Swamiji’s liking and admiration.

Deussen was from the beginning an en-

thusiastic and hard-working seeker of knowledge. He was a real scholar, and at the same time a thoughtful man who tried to understand the meaning of what he was learning. He came from a strict Protestant background. His father was a minister, and his mother was from a minister's family. He himself took the pulpit at times in his father's church. Yet Deussen loved Plato from an early age and was stirred by the wisdom of Greek philosophy. He did his university thesis in Greek philosophy. Later he became an ardent admirer of Indian thought, and long before it was fashionable to do so, he placed Hindu wisdom on a par with Greek and Christian philosophy. Incidentally, Deussen was not a nationalist. He found the war of 1914-18 stupid.

Deussen nearly wore himself out studying. In addition to German, he knew Russian, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, English, and Sanskrit, and he understood Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Arabic. On his trip to India in 1892 he succeeded in communicating in Hindi, as well as in Sanskrit. He did not find occasion to marry until he was forty-two years old.

In his *Mein Leben* Deussen relates an incident that gives us a picture of him at a congress of orientologists in Sweden in 1889. Max Müller also was present. Max Müller was supposed to give an address, but could not think of any subject to speak about. Deussen suggested the 'Creation Hymn' from the Rg-Veda as a subject. 'But', said Müller, 'I don't have the text of it with me.' 'But I know the hymn by heart,' responded Deussen. He dictated the hymn immediately. At the meeting Müller spoke about the poem in a general way. An Indian delegate chanted it in Sanskrit. And Deussen commented on it. He spoke at length about the Highest Being as identical and immanent in all things. There was wild applause from many in the audience, but,

relates Deussen, the theologians present shook their heads. The Prince of Sweden, who was the President of the meeting, congratulated Deussen.

*Mein Leben* was published in 1922, three years after its author's death. It contains an epilogue by Deussen's daughter, Erika, twenty-five years old at the time of publication. She tells about her father's last days. Again we see the intrepidity of this man. He died of tumour of the kidney on 6 July 1919.

Yet on 3 July he had lectured at Kiel University, as usual to a full auditorium. He was as interesting as ever, and the audience was as enthusiastic as always. Next day he tried to keep his regular schedule. By the end of the day he was shaking with chills. The following day, a Saturday, he said, 'I'll be all right on Monday.' He had no thought of death. But that night he went into a coma and the following day he died. His ashes were placed beside the remains of his father and wife in the churchyard of Oberdreis near Cologne.

No sooner had Swami Vivekananda's party reached their hotel than Deussen sent a note asking them to come to breakfast the next day. They arrived at his house at 10 a.m. and were subsequently persuaded to stay for lunch and then to tea. The family consisted of Deussen, his wife, and their daughter Erika, who happened to be celebrating her second birthday anniversary that day. Mrs. Sevier describes Erika, whom she mentions, incorrectly, as having turned four that day, as being hostess at a child's birthday party at which 'amongst much chat and merriment' she dispensed 'tea and cakes to her youthful guests'.

From the first moment Swamiji and Deussen struck it off well. Swamiji wrote later in a September 22nd letter to Alasinga Perumal: 'I had a beautiful time with Prof. Deussen in Germany.... We have become great friends.' At Kiel that

day they talked steadily the whole time, of Indian scriptures and philosophy, probably some of the time in Sanskrit, for Swamiji remarked later in a letter to Mary Hale that 'Deussen always insists on talking to me in Sanskrit'. 'He is', Swamiji wrote to Sturdy in his letter of the 10th, 'a warring Advaitist. No compromise with anything else. Ishwara is his bugbear. He would have none of it if he could.'

According to the biography:

'During the day the Professor found Swamiji turning over the pages of a poetical work. He spoke to Swamiji, wishing to draw him into conversation, but failed, as he got no response from him. When Swamiji came to know of it afterwards, he apologized, saying that he was so absorbed in reading that he had not heard him. The Professor could not feel satisfied with this explanation until in the course of conversation Swamiji went on quoting verses from the book and interpreting them in places. Dr. Deussen was dumbfounded and . . . asked Swamiji how he could accomplish such a feat of memory. Thereupon the conversation turned upon the subject of concentration of the mind practised by the Indian yogi, with so much perfection that, the Swami said from personal knowledge, in that state he would be unconscious even if a piece of burning charcoal were placed on his body. The Professor remarked that he could now easily believe that.'<sup>8</sup>

In the article on Paul Deussen which he wrote for the *Brahmavadin* in the autumn of 1896 (later incorporated in his *Complete Works*), Swamiji paid homage to the pioneering Sanskrit studies of Müller. Then he went on:

'If Max Müller is thus the old pioneer of the new movement, Deussen is certainly one of its younger advance-guards. Philological interest had hidden long from view the germs of thought and spirituality to be found in the mine

of our ancient scriptures. Max Müller brought out a few of them and exhibited them to the public gaze. . . . Deussen . . . took up the cue and plunged boldly into the metaphysical depths of the Upanishads, found them to be fully safe and satisfying, and then—equally boldly declared the fact before the whole world. Deussen is certainly the freest among scholars in the expression of his opinion about the Vedānta. . . . The greater is the glory therefore to Max Müller and to Deussen for their bold and open advocacy of truth!'<sup>9</sup>

Earlier in the same article Swamiji had written:

'...Paul Deussen—or, as he prefers to be called in Sanskrit, Deva-Sena, and the veteran Max Müller, have impressed me as being the truest friends of India and Indian thought. It will always be among the most pleasing episodes of my life—my first visit to this ardent Vedantist at Kiel, his gentle wife who travelled with him in India, and his little daughter, the darling of his heart—and our travelling together through Germany and Holland to London, and the pleasant meetings we had in and about London.'<sup>10</sup>

During the tea Professor and Mrs. Deussen described in an animated way their recent trip to India. They had loved many things about the country but deplored the poverty that they had seen there.

There was an exhibition in Kiel at that time. So after tea Deussen took Swamiji and the Seviers to the exhibition where:

'...some time was spent in studying the various arts and industries of Germany. Partaking of a light refreshment there, the party returned to the hotel where Swamiji was staying. The Professor suggested that the Swami should see the objects of interest in and about the city and it was decided that on the next day they should all make an excursion

<sup>8</sup> *Life*: Vol. III, p. 45

<sup>9</sup> *The Works*, Vol. IV (1962), pp. 276-7

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 274



to some of the outlying districts, notably to the famous harbour of Kiel opened only a few days previously by the Kaiser [William II]. It is needless to tell that the Swami and his companions enjoyed the day . . . and appreciated the uniform hospitality and kindness of their hosts.<sup>11</sup>

Kiel, at the end of a fortified inlet from the Baltic Sea, was the chief war harbour of Germany and the headquarters of its navy. A concentrated build-up of the German naval war potential was already under way, emphasized by the dedication in 1896 by the Kaiser himself of new installations at the base. As the biography indicates, the harbour was the most interesting thing to see in Kiel. Sightseeing steamers cruised the area. It is conceivable that Deussen and his guests boarded a warship, since Baedeker says that visitors were welcome aboard men-of-war.

From Professor Erich Hofmann of the University of Kiel I learned that all the old hotels of Kiel had been destroyed during World War II; consequently it was unlikely that I should be able to identify where Swamiji and the Seviers had stayed. But Professor Hofmann supplied the address of the old Deussen residence, Beselerallee 39, adding that the house too had been bombed. Since the war a private medical clinic has been built on the site.

I approached Deussen's publisher, F. A. Brockhaus of Wiesbaden, in an effort to contact Erika Deussen should she still be alive, or other descendants. From his data and referrals, I was able to contact Deussen's daughter-in-law and her son, now in the U.S.A., and also a daughter of Erika's who is in Canada and who supplied a photograph of the Deussen family home at Beselerallee, Kiel (herewith reproduced). She further wrote that Erika's other daughter, a doctor, was also settled in the States,

and that Erika, herself a medical doctor and married to a doctor, had emigrated to India in 1935—presumably to escape the Nazis. By a strange fate her husband had then been interned, in India by the British during World War II, and died before release; Erika finally moved to the U.S.A. in 1953 and died three years later.

The biography continues:

'About six weeks [actually nearly eight] had now been spent in holiday touring and the Swami felt that he could now take up his London work with renewed vigour. Accordingly, he asked Mr. and Mrs. Sevier to make plans for returning thither immediately. Dr. Deussen had hoped that the Swami would prolong his visit so that he would have opportunities to discuss many philosophical matters with him in the quiet retreat of his own residence, where his treasure-room of learning and of books would have added much to the interest of their discussions. He therefore tried to induce the Swami to stay there at least for a few days more. But when the latter told him that he was anxious to put his work on a solid basis before returning to India which he intended to do soon, the Professor understood and said, "Well, then, Swami, I shall meet you in Hamburg, and thence, *via* Holland, we shall both journey to London, where I hope to spend many happy hours with you."

'Leaving Kiel Mr. and Mrs. Sevier and their guest made Hamburg their next stopping-place, where they visited the famous Zoological Gardens.

'Three days passed when Professor Deussen arrived, to the great pleasure of all concerned. His family had remained at Kiel, although Mrs. Deussen had hoped to accompany her husband and to meet the Swami again, for she was likewise greatly interested in Vedanta. She spoke English fluently and was thus privileged to come into immediate intellectual contact with the Swami. The party, with its additional member, now journeyed to Amsterdam, remaining in that historic city for three days, during

<sup>11</sup> *Life*: Vol. III, pp. 45-6

which time they visited the art galleries, the museums, and other places of interest. The Swami was specially delighted with the strange appearance of the cities of Holland with their canals for streets.<sup>12</sup>

There are some discrepancies here. In *Mein Leben*, Deussen says that he met Swamiji and the Seviere at Bremen on 12 September and that on that day they went together to Amsterdam. If this is so, and if, as the biography says, the group spent three days in Amsterdam, then the stops in Hamburg and Bremen must have been limited to one day each. Deussen says clearly that Swamiji and the Seviere spent one day in Hamburg.

Kiel to Hamburg is sixty-six miles, Hamburg to Bremen sixty-three miles, and Bremen to Amsterdam something over two hundred miles.

Hamburg had more than half a million inhabitants in 1896, and next to London, Liverpool, and Glasgow was the most important commercial city in Europe. It was and is a great port. As to the zoological garden, Baedeker describes it as one of the most extensive and best organized in Germany, the most interesting points being the elephant house, the dens of the beasts of prey, the cascade grotto, the aquarium, and the terrarium.

Amsterdam is still the same delightful city Swamiji saw, with its tall old houses looking down on tree-shaded canals. The Central Station, completed in 1889, where the party would surely have alighted from the train from Bremen, is still in use. The director of the Amsterdam city archives feels sure that the 'big hotel across from the railroad station' where the travellers stayed is the Victoria, opened in 1883. It is still in operation, although considerably modernized. It was not damaged during the War, but as the manager told me, all

the old guest registers were destroyed. (The Dutch destroyed many records during the War to prevent the occupying force from tracing wanted people.)

As for the art galleries and museums, the outstanding one is the Ryks, or Royal, Museum, home of the Rembrandts and Vermeers, one of the great art collections of the world. In his travel guide on Belgium and Holland, Baedeker devotes twenty-five pages to the description of the contents of this museum. We may be sure that Swamiji gazed upon Rembrandt's famous 'Night Watch', as in 1896 it hung prominently at the end of the central hall.

Now the Continental trip was almost over. Probably on the evening of Wednesday, 16 September, the four friends embarked for England on the night boat. Professor Deussen said that they left from the Hook of Holland. From there steamers crossed the North Sea every night to Harwich on the east coast of England. It was, according to the biography, 'a most unpleasant voyage which fortunately was soon over'. A timetable of the period shows the train leaving Amsterdam at 8:37 in the evening and arriving at the Hook an hour and a half later. The boat sailed at 10:30 p.m. Arriving at Harwich early in the morning, travellers shifted to the train, which got them into the Liverpool Street Station in London at 8:45 a.m. On Thursday, 17 September, Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale, 'Today I reached London.' Although his letter bears the heading, Wimbledon, he was probably at the Seviere's home in Hampstead.

It had been a long, complex, and costly journey. They had covered at least two thousand miles; and translated into present-day currency values, the total outlay for the three could not have been less than four or five thousand dollars. But as the biography says, 'His devoted hosts relieved

(Contd. on p. 109)

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 46-7