

## THE ADYAR LIBRARY

At the Convention of 1885, Colonel Olcott mooted an idea which was very dear to his heart. It was the starting of an Oriental Library, to house the Indian manuscripts which would soon either be taken away from India or disappear for want of care. The Convention approved of the idea, and the first sod of the Adyar Library Building was turned in January, 1886. At the Convention in December, 1886, the Library was formally inaugurated with religious ceremonies. Representatives of Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Muhammadanism recited mantrams and prayers, and invoked the blessings of the visible and the invisible worlds upon the great undertaking. An invitation was sent to a Christian clergyman in Madras to be present to bless the work, but it was not accepted. This is the reason that in the photograph taken of the representatives of the religions who came to bless the Adyar Library, the representative of Christianity is absent. The Muhammadan Maulvi was present at the dedication, though he does not appear in the photograph. The report of the inaugural ceremony reads:

“In opening the proceedings, Colonel Olcott, President-Founder, said that the programme of the ceremony of the opening of the Oriental Library was intended to be of an eclectic character, and to show that the Theosophical Society was not formed in the interests of any one sect or any one race. A Pandit from Mysore next invoked *Ganapati*, the god of occult learning, and *Saraswati*, the goddess of knowledge, after which a few boys of the Triplicane Sanskrit School

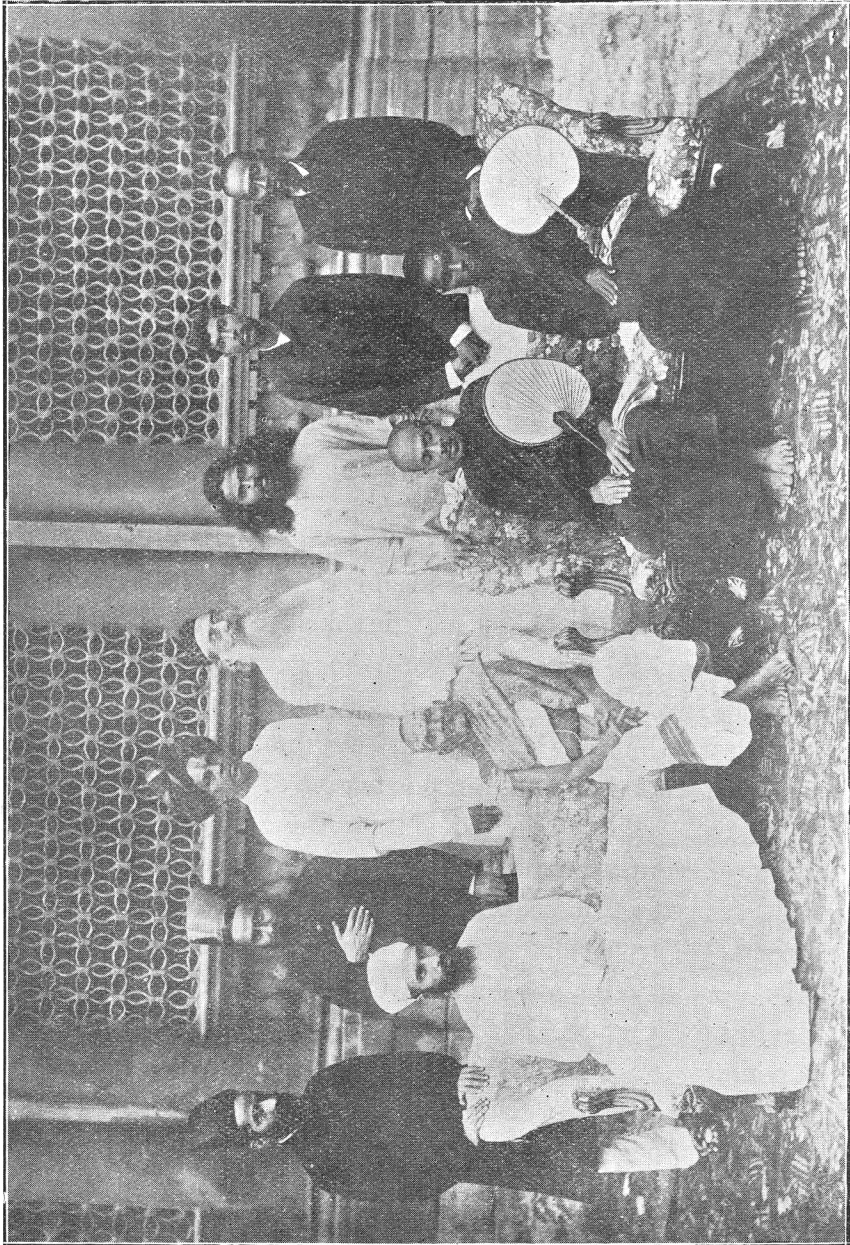


FIG. 111  
OPENING OF ADYAR LIBRARY

sang some verses in Sanskrit. Two Parsee priests then offered a prayer; and this was followed by the recital of verses in the *Pali* language by two Buddhist priests, who had come from Ceylon to take part in the ceremony. A Muhammadan *Maulvi* from Hyderabad recited a prayer from the *Koran*, and prayed for the long life and prosperity of Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen-Empress. A recitation of Sanskrit Slokas by Hindu boys was next given, and Sanskrit poems were read, specially composed for the occasion by pandits of different parts of India."

From its inception, the Library has become a striking institution of the Society. It has given a great impetus to the preservation and publication of the sacred manuscripts of the religions of India. The Library is now in two divisions. The Eastern Library has a staff of Sanskrit Pandits collating and revising manuscripts and, when funds permit, going on tour to purchase any rare manuscripts which can be found. The Western Library contains a large number of works published in European languages on the subjects of religion, philosophy, science and art. The Library has a small endowment quite inadequate for its needs. It has so outgrown its original building, even after being once enlarged by Colonel Olcott, that a very urgent need is the erection of a new building.