

Meher-Asharam Opening-Day.

Sunday

1st. May '1927.

A red letter day in the history of Meherabad! So soon following the great "sweep out" of the various establishments at the end of the "Meherabad Stay", once again the colony seems to be blessed with an Institution which if developed to the extent under contemplation, will certainly eclipse the last activities witnessed here. After all the discussions, programmes and plans, so often changed, altered and even cancelled out altogether during the last few ~~days~~ months, the scheme of an ideal institution of both spiritual and secular education, at last came into being today. From the view point of the world at large, it ~~is~~<sup>was</sup> not a very remarkable affair. The opening ceremony lacked the usual display of glittering carriages and cars, a throng of fashionably dressed visitors, samples of high sounding oratory, the bustle of camera-laden reporters and so on. ~~As the ceremony~~ Instead it ~~was~~<sup>was</sup> a typically country-side scene of an Indian village ceremony. Following a great hustle bustle in adjusting the details of the day's programme, which was all carried out under the personal guidance and supervision of Shri Baba Himself, He and all the mandali members and boys started in a procession towards the small bungalow at the outskirts of the Arunpuri village, where for the present the new 'Ashram' has been arranged to be established.

The various village music bands played all its typical tunes at the head of the procession

with enthusiastic cheerings from the mandali voiced out at intervals, as if to goad the bulging village musicians to more frenzied attempts at their respective instruments. At about three thirty in the afternoon, within half an hour that the procession started from the zhopdi, all reached the bungalow.

A special Arti was recited by all. Then all were served with sweets and milk tea, and amidst a thundering cheer from the mandali and all those present the Institution was formally declared ~~to be~~ opened. Lastly a group-photo of all those present on the occasion of the new Ashramites was taken with Baba sitting in the midst of them all. It was nearly five in the evening when the gay function terminated.

The boys selected for admission into the new Ashram were allotted respective sites for their stay in the new premises with orders to begin to act according to the newly laid rules and regulations.

These are -

Baban Shahne, Dattoo, Bhiva, Chhubboo Baboo, Mahdeo Shinday, and Bansi.

Three more boys namely Hari, Bhalchander and Gaurkidhar Kalay have also been registered as Ashramites but have not yet arrived from their respective places. Out of these first ten Ashramites four are Brahmins, three Mahars and three Marathas. They have been given plain black round caps and Khaki shirts and knickers to wear, the uniform dress already settled for the Ashramites. Each boy is also to be provided with a cotton tweed coat which are not ready yet. Besides, each of these boys have

been provided with the following, and which is to be given to all those who will be admitted here after irrespective of any caste creed or position -:

- 1 Steel trunk, to keep their clothes and things.
- 1 Towel. Handkerchieves and Langotes.
- 1 Ghongdi, 2 Pasadis, 1 Bed-spread & 1 Pillow.

Today, both the times, the new Ashramites dined with the rest of the Mandali at Meherabad, but from tomorrow separate cooking arrangements have been made, and accordingly, Chhagan who is appointed as the Ashram cook, will begin to prepare the special food in the Ashram premises in the room set aside for this purpose.

The Ashram staff already appointed on the 8th of April (vide page 202) has also removed in these new premises under the supervision of Bua-Sahab (Behramji). As Maslam was so long looked after by Sidhor, he too ~~was~~ is removed into the Ashram along with his guardian.

All the necessary changes in the school have also been effected, bringing the concern to the level of a High-school. New classes required at present viz 3rd 4th and 5th English have also been duly arranged in the other hall of the school - premises which was so long used by the Mandali as their Tuckan. The Principal's Office, various time tables etc have all been set ready to start the school under these new

arrangements from tomorrow, Monday, the first day of the first week of the month.

The Hazrat Babajan Girls' school, as long conducted in the village, is also transferred today in the "Post-Office" premises.

Another notable change brought about was about Gustadji. At first Shri had arranged for Gustadji to go and stay over the Dawk-Hill from today, but for some reasons, this was cancelled, and instead of that he has been made to remove over the ghosdi verandah and hereafter to remain aloof from the mandali at this place. Gustadji has also been asked to keep himself strictly in the ghosdi compound save for the purpose of "necessities".

Ramji joined the mandali this morning for his twenty day's stay with them as per the plan already fixed on 10th April vide page 208. Besides him a number of Baba's devotees in the city and surrounding villages had also come to participate in the Ashram-opening ceremony this afternoon. On the whole it was a very busy day today.