

ADOPTED CITIZEN AIDS INDIA'S ILL

Former Quaker Is Founder of Occupational Therapy Institution in Bombay

By EMMA HARRISON

An Indian woman from Bucks County, Pa., wearing a silken sari but clinging to a mainline accent, arrived here from Bombay last week to discuss her favorite subject: What she owes India as an adopted citizen.

Mrs. Kamala V. Nimbkar, who was Elizabeth Lundy of a Bucks County Quaker family when she met and married Vishnu R. Nimbkar, has been contributing to her new country since she went there in 1930. First she founded a school and then began the only occupational therapy institution in southeast Asia. She is here attending meetings of the American Occupational Therapy Association.

"I believe that a woman should adopt her husband's country, or there is a split," Mrs. Nimbkar said, dismissing quickly her reason for being in India. "And I also believe that, as an American, I owed something to India when I went there."

Went to England to Study

For that reason and also because she was dissatisfied with the type of schooling available for her son, Mrs. Nimbkar went to England for awhile and studied education. She then returned to Bombay and, with her husband, a mechanical and mining engineer, founded a private school. At the end of four years, she had 450 students of all castes. She stood for no segregation and had none during all that time.

After things were going well, the Nimbkars "gave away" the school, but Mrs. Nimbkar was still not satisfied that she had done all she could for India. She looked for a need and singled out occupational therapy. Away she went for some more education. This time, she returned to the United States and studied at the Philadelphia School of Occupational Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania. She also is a graduate of Barnard, Class of 1926.

By 1950, Mrs. Nimbkar had a new degree and a new title. She was director of the Occupational Therapy Training School at King Edward VII Memorial Hospital in Bombay and was a qualified occupational therapist.

The school has now graduated thirty-eight trained therapists and will have graduated forty more within two years. Applications come from all over India and Asia, and students have a "99 per cent chance of employment."

Upholds American Heritage

Mrs. Nimbkar, for all her love of India, has not renounced her American heritage. She and her husband live in a house they call Amer-In and they "keep a balance" of things Indian and American in their lives.

For instance, Mrs. Nimbkar says she thinks her American ingenuity has helped her to adapt a lot of occupational therapy principles to use in India. For one thing, it is necessary to improvise with materials, and she has done that right down to the use of banana leaves for handicraft fibers.

Then, too, Mrs. Nimbkar reports, it is not enough to suggest to a patient in India that he "make something for his wife." She says that the idea of making presents for one another does not occur to Indian husbands and wives. She told of a ruffo walla (a mender and weaver who shouts and sells his skills on the streets) who refused to take up embroidery as a therapy during an illness. He said it was women's work.

"Well, he ended up by making a stuffed rabbit with embroidered eyes," she said.

And why? Because Mrs. Nimbkar knew that he would not object to making a present for his child.