



THE THEOSOPHIC MESSENGER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

Issued by direction and under the authority of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, in convention assembled, for free distribution to all members.

The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statement contained herein unless officially set forth.

All readers are cordially invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to **The National Committee, Editor, Room 426, 26 Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill.** Subscription price to non-members, 50 cents per annum.

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Edited by the National Committee.

The Note of Universality.

"That which has been always and everywhere believed, that is the Truth." The pursuit, in even a very limited degree, of the second object of the Theosophical Society, gives to this familiar dictum a wider meaning than its originator dreamed of. No writer in our ranks has done so much for us in this direction as Mr. Mead, and his latest work, "Thrice Greatest Hermes," will, we believe, prove to be also his greatest. Those who have read the "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten" know what is Mr. Mead's attitude towards the Christ and Christianity. His reverence for and devotion to the Great Teacher of the Western world is not exceeded by that of the most devout Christian, but he recognizes what the orthodox Christian does not, that while "Christianity is the

Faith of the Western world—the Faith most suited to it in nature and in form, He who gave that Faith gave in fullest abundance through many sources."

It is in the study of the three great works of Mr. Mead, "Orpheus," "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten" and this, his latest contribution, "Thrice Greatest Hermes" that we shall develop something of a truly catholic spirit, a full recognition of the fact that all the great Teachers of our humanity are animated by one Holy Spirit, are Messengers from one Divine Father. All have given to our struggling humanity practically the same code of ethics, all have pointed out the Way to union with God, all give the same unfaltering testimony to the existence of Gnosis and the possibility of reaching it.

It is by such studies as these—it is by entering into the spirit of these teachings that we shall learn something of the true meaning of brotherhood—that word which has been so widely used and so extensively misunderstood.

News Notes.

The May number of Theosophy in Australasia contains an account of the Twelfth Annual Congress of the Australian Section. The report of the General Secretary shows an increase in membership of 133 though only one new Branch has been formed. The whole report shows a great deal of earnestness on the part of the members. A large increase in the sale of books is noted. A Post-Convention meeting was held in the evening at which the General Secretary made a very earnest plea for better machinery to keep in touch with those on the member's roll who were seldom, if ever, seen at the meetings. The substance of his remarks will be well for us to consider at some of our Post-Convention meetings.

At Post-Convention last year (1905) there was adopted by a rising vote, a Resolution urging upon the President-founder that he extend to the States the visit he contemplated to Europe during the present summer, and that he attend our Annual Convention, the Secretary of Convention being instructed to convey to him the Resolution. The Executive Committee have repeated to him the desire thus expressed and have voted the money for his expenses. Col. Olcott has accepted this double invitation and will preside at our Convention as in 1901.

In a private letter, Mrs. Courtright speaks thus, of the needs of the Olcott Panchama Free Schools:

"Someone is needed here, trained in kindergarten and primary work, and at the same time flexible enough of mind to be able to adapt what they

have learned in the past, to the very different conditions which they will find here in the east. . . . A great opportunity that I see now is to develop one of our schools into more or less of a training school for teachers, using the children as a sort of practicing department, so that we may train teachers for ourselves, and too, for other schools . . . It would have to be some person, whose only purpose lay in just this (the missionary spirit for education) for we working here get only board and keep and what clothes the climate requires . . . Another point which should not be forgotten is the simplicity and quietness of the life here. . . Many people brought up in America could not support the monotony of the life here,—to me, it was and is like Heaven, the quiet, tranquil beauty of it, with nothing to do but work and think."

Northern Federation and Tour of the President-Founder.

[From the *Vahan*]

The forty-ninth quarterly Conference of the Northern Federation was made the occasion of a tour among the Northern Lodges by the President-Founder, as outlined in advance in last month's *Vahan*.

On Monday, May 1st, Col. Olcott arrived in Birmingham from London.

In the evening of that day he met the members of the Birmingham Lodge and on the following day had a chat with some of them at his hotel, prior to leaving the Midland city for Sheffield. The visit was the subject of friendly comment in one of the Birmingham daily papers, which published a lengthy sketch of the work accomplished by the President-Founder in the cause of Theosophy.

Sheffield next accorded him a hearty welcome, first at an assembly of the Lodge and afterwards at a meeting to which outsiders were admitted.

Arriving on Friday the 4th, in Manchester (where he was the guest of Mr. M. H. Larmuth, President of the Manchester City Lodge), Col. Olcott held a reception on the Saturday evening at the Deansgate Hotel, where there mustered nearly a hundred members from the Manchester City, the Didsbury and the South Manchester Lodges, with a contingent from the Liverpool Lodge and the recently-formed Moss Side (Manchester) Centre—to whom his address on the early days of the Theosophical Society proved highly interesting. On the Sunday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Larmuth kept "open house" for all the members in the district, who once again had the pleasure of an address from "the Colonel."

Departing for Edinburgh, Col. Olcott spent several days in the Scottish capital, where White Lotus Day was observed on Tuesday, the 8th. The Edinburgh members invited the attendance of members from Glasgow, and in every way the visit was a success.

Turning again southward, Col. Olcott arrived in Harrogate in time to hold a reception at the Harrogate Lodge on the afternoon of Friday, the 11th, and to address the members on the same evening. On the Saturday afternoon he presided over the Conference of the Northern Federation, and addressed the members again in the evening. During the interval for tea at the Winter Gardens, the visit was commemorated by the taking of a large group photograph, with the President-Founder as the central figure. On the Sunday evening Col. Olcott delivered the

usual public lecture, the subject being his work among the Buddhists of India, Ceylon and Japan.

On all these occasions the President-Founder made it his endeavor to greet personally each and every member, winning thereby the affection, as he had already won the esteem, of his large family of "children." Departing on the Tuesday morning from Harrogate *en route* for London and Paris, he had a hearty north-country send-off at the station.

EDW. E. MARSDEN.

CONCERNING H. P. B.

(From the *Theosophist*—Continued from July Messenger)

In order to give some support to this theory of conscious imposture and vulgar trickery on the part of one who, on the face of things, has, at great sacrifice, devoted her life to a philanthropic idea, Mr. Hodgson suggests, and the Committee of the S. P. R. accepts and endorses the long-exploded idea that H. P. B. may be a Russian political agent, working in India to encourage disloyalty to the British Government; and this notwithstanding the fact that the Government of India had itself, some years earlier, conceived the same idea, but, after thorough inquiry, had abandoned all suspicion of her motives. Moreover, as to the reliability and truthfulness of the Coulombs, the Committee itself says that where persons like the Coulombs have been concerned, their unsupported assertions cannot be taken as evidence (p. 204 of Report); thus, as Mr. Sinnett says, the members of this Committee "say such and such evidence must not be taken, and then they proceed to take it and to put it forward, and, as a

careful examination of the Report will show, to build conclusions upon it, and to use bricks made out of M. and Mdme. Coulomb's statements as the foundation for the fantastic edifice they rear above." For, if every reference to the Coulombs and their statements were eliminated from his Report, every one of Mr. Hodgson's elaborate theories and assumptions must of necessity fall to the ground; and yet even Mr. Hodgson only accepts their evidence when it suits him, for, finding the testimony of Damodar, an Indian Chèla, too much against his accepted theory, he declares him to be an accomplice in the alleged frauds (p. 210), and this in face of the statement of the Coulombs "that, in order to save Madame's (H. P. B.'s) reputation, I (Monsieur) did my best to the last; and it was only on the morning of the 16th of May, 1884, that I confessed to Mr. Damodar the existence of the trap-doors, as can be seen by his affidavit, and this confidentially, with the object of sparing Madame's honour, and at the moment when I saw there was no alternative before me" (p. 92 of Mdme. Coulomb's pamphlet). Again, in one of the letters previously referred to, and which Mr. Hodgson assures us are certainly genuine, Mdme. Coulomb is instructed to let Damodar receive a message in a "miraculous way" (p. 44 of above pamphlet), which, were he the accomplice we are asked to believe would be palpably ridiculous. Mr. Hodgson admits that the sole evidence for the existing of a side panel at the back of the shrine is the uncorroborated statement of the Coulombs (p. 222 of his Report), and yet proceeds to build a series of elaborate arguments upon the supposition that this statement is

demonstrably a true one, whilst, at the same time, assuring us that he has not "trusted to any unverified statements of the Coulombs" (p. 210). Now in regard to the numerous messages from the Masters, received, from time to time, by many different persons, all of which, with two exceptions, are declared by Mr. Hodgson to have been written by H. P. B.; when specimens were first submitted by him to two experts in handwriting, they were both convinced that the "H.K. writing" was *not* the work of H. P. B. (pp. 282-3 of Report), but Mr. Hodgson insisted that it was, and, having thus shown what conclusion he desired, he again submitted the original, and some additional specimens, with the result that the experts then agreed with his own conclusion. As to the value of this expert testimony, I need only say that Netherclift, the particular expert upon whose detailed examination of the documents Mr. Hodgson chiefly relies is the same one who was afterwards so wofully deceived and discredited by the notorious Pigott forgeries concerning the late C. S. Parnell and the *Times* and of whom the eminent Q. C., Mr. Montague Williams, speaks in "His Leaves from a Life" (p. 263), where he tells us that Netherclift and another expert swore positively to a writing as that of a certain man, though it was afterwards proved to be quite another one, adding that their evidence from handwriting is quite worthless. "In fact," he says, "in my opinion, they are utterly unreliable." Moreover, in attributing the K. H. letters to H. P. B., Mr. Hodgson ignores the fact that many of these were received quite independently of H. P. B., and even during her absence from India; in fact, he

goes so far as to deny the very existence of the Masters (pp. 209-10), although, as to this, there is overwhelming evidence, in the shape of the testimony of a large number of persons who have seen the Masters on many occasions, both in and out of the physical body. Now, of course, Mr. Hodgson recognizes that if Mr. Sinnett's record of occult phenomena, as detailed in the "Occult World," holds good, then his own general theory must fall to the ground, and therefore he devotes much time and effort to an attempt to discredit Mr. Sinnett's testimony.

In the above work, referring to a message received by him inside a closed note of his own, Mr. Sinnett says, "she' (H. P. B.) put it in her pocket, went into her own room, which opened out of the drawing room, and came out again *almost instantly*, certainly she had not been away thirty seconds;" whilst, in a statement made before two members of the Committee of the S. P. R., he is reported to have said "she was out of my sight but for an instant of time—I will undertake to say she was not out of my sight but for ten seconds." Thus, seizing hold of this slight difference in the mode of expressing a very brief period of time, which, obviously, was not accurately measured, but only roughly estimated at the time, Mr. Hodgson builds up a laboured argument to show that Mr. Sinnett's evidence is quite unreliable, and that he must therefore be regarded as an inaccurate and untrustworthy witness, as one in whom it is impossible to have confidence. And yet Mr. Hodgson, this very critical investigator, makes some wofully absurd mistakes himself. For instance in connection with another incident recorded in the "Occult World," Mr. Sinnett receives a tele-

gram from one of the Masters, at a time when H. P. B. is many miles away from both the place of the receipt and that of the dispatch of the telegram, and, it having been suggested that H. P. B. may herself have been the author of the letters purporting to come from the Masters, Mr. Sinnett, through the courtesy of a telegraph official, is given an opportunity of comparing the original telegram with a letter received through H. P. B. from the same Master, and is thus able to satisfy himself as to the genuineness of the letter. Now Mr. Hodgson, on the strength of a slip of paper, given to him, as he believes, unintentionally enclosed in some other papers, and which, therefore, he has no moral right to use, endeavours to show how this evidence, as to the genuineness of the letter referred to, was in reality obtained by means of a number of confederates, but, unfortunately for Mr. Hodgson's reputation for accuracy he omits to notice that the words written on the slip of paper refer to a telegram from a different Master, the original of this latter telegram having been sent to Mr. Sinnett through a third party without reference to any occult phenomena whatever (pp. 33-7, O. W. P., and the S. P. R.). Then, again, with reference to an incident concerning the hearing of two voices, at one and the same time, by Mr. Mohini, Mr. Hodgson says (pp. 357-8 of Report): "I need only remind the reader of the hollow in the wall which was near the corner of Madame Blavatsky's room. The confederate may have been Babula, previously instructed in the reply and with a mango leaf in his mouth to disguise his voice;" to which Mr. Mohini replies: "In my turn, I need only remind the reader that this

incident did not take place at Madras, where Mr. Hodgson examined Madame Blavatsky's room, but at Darjiling in the Himâlayas, months before the house at Madras was bought or occupied. What light is thrown on Mr. Hodgson's conclusions by this inaccuracy, after all his patient and searching inquiry, in which great attention is always professed to have been paid to facts, I leave others to determine" see p. 47, O. W. P., and the S. P. R.).

In a similar manner, taking Mr. Sinnett's records of occult phenomena one by one, Mr. Hodgson proceeds to suggest all sorts of ways in which these tricks, as he calls them, may have been worked, and, whenever his suggested method appears difficult to reconcile with the facts as recorded, he returns to the affair of the ten and thirty seconds, reminding his readers how impossible it is to rely upon Mr. Sinnett's accuracy. But nothing, perhaps, tends more to show Mr. Hodgson's lack of capacity to judge the real value of the evidence placed before him, than the fact that he lays great stress upon the differences as to detail, in the accounts of the same phenomenon, given by different persons, such variations pointing, at least so he alleges, to the untruthfulness of many, if not of all, of the witnesses; whereas the most elementary experience in a judicial capacity would have shown that, on the contrary, these very differences bear the strongest testimony to their truthfulness. In fact it is a matter of common knowledge that, amongst people of average capacity, no two observers of any particular phenomena are ever fully agreed as to its every detail, and for this reason, in a Court of Law, too close an agreement upon matters of detail is invari-

ably regarded as affording strong presumptive evidence of collusion on the part of the witnesses. As further showing the very slight value of Mr. (now Dr.) Hodgson's criticism, I would remind you that when, in I think 1895, this same gentleman similarly criticised certain experiments made by a number of scientists with the medium Eusapia Paladino, offering somewhat similar suggestions as to how each particular incident might have been brought about, Professor Oliver Lodge, the well-known electrician, one of the investigators and one of the leading scientists of today, said in reply (see *Borderland*, vol. ii., p. 101): "I really do not see how Dr. Hodgson can get over these statements, on any of his hypotheses, without attributing to us definite and deliberate falsehood;" these words I would add, being equally applicable to his criticism of Mr. Sinnett's work. Finally, it is worthy of note that some years later, after having himself witnessed a number of phenomena under the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, Dr. Hodgson publicly announces his belief in their genuineness with a great blowing of trumpets, as it were, as though to say, "Now that I, one of the greatest and most exacting of critics, am at last satisfied, no one else can possibly fail to be convinced,"—and this notwithstanding his own previous derision and rejection of the testimony of all other investigators. And now let us consider the other side of the question, let us look to the testimony of those who knew H. P. B. from personal experience, from having lived in the same house for months, nay, in some cases for years together, and we all know how truly we learn one another's real character when coming in-

to daily contact under the same roof. The Countess Wachtmeister, writing in 1886 ("Incidents," pp. 317-18,) says: "I had been told a great deal against her, and I can honestly say that I was prejudiced in her disfavour" . . . but "I have now spent a few months with Madame Blavatsky. I have shared her room, and been with her morning, noon and night" . . . "and I now openly and honestly declare that I am ashamed of myself for having ever suspected her, for I believe her to be an honest and true woman, faithful to death to her Masters and to the cause for which she has sacrificed position, fortune and health." Why! even a newspaper writer, in an article published shortly after her death (*Birmingham Gazette* of May 12th, 1891), testifies that "in Madame Blavatsky's life there is no black spot to be detected by the microscope of the critic. She did good deeds; she preached purity and self-denial; she taught that virtue was excellent for virtue's sake. Her philanthropy was well known." . . . "So far as personal example could testify, she was a woman worthy of admiration" ("In Memoriam," pp. 88-9). Then Mrs. Cooper-Oakley ("In Memoriam," p. 17) says of her: "In all the years I have known our teacher and friend, I have never known her utter one ungenerous word of her greatest enemy; she was the practical personification of charity and forgiveness, and was always ready to give another chance of doing better to anyone who had failed her." . . . "It is a striking fact that the more closely and intimately we were united to H. P. B. in everyday life, the more did we learn to respect, nay, to reverence her." Whilst Herbert Burrows (p. 37) says: "Quickly I learned

that the so-called charlatan and trickster was a noble soul, whose every day was spent in unselfish work, whose whole life was pure and simple as a child's, who counted never the cost of pain or toil, if these could advance the great cause to which her every energy was consecrated." Again, Bertram Keightley, now General Secretary of the British Section T. S. (p. 90), says: "From the time when I first looked into her eyes, there sprang up within me a feeling of perfect trust and confidence, as in an old and long-tried friend, which never changed or weakened, but rather grew stronger, more vivid and more imperious, as close association taught me to know the outer H. P. Blavatsky better." . . . "However puzzled," at times, to understand her motives and actions, 'I could never look into her eyes without feeling sure that 'it was all right somehow,' and again and again the feeling was justified—often, months, or even years, afterwards." Then in 1891 speaking in the Hall of Science, London ("Fragments of Autobiography—1875 to 1891"), Mrs. Besant said: "I know that in this hall there will not be many who will share the view that I take of Madame Blavatsky; I knew her, you did not—and in that may lie the difference of our opinion. You talk of her as 'fraud,' and fling about the word as carelessly, of one with whom you disagree, as Christians and others threw against me the epithet of 'harlot,' in the days gone by and with as much truth. I read the evidence that was said to be against her. I read the great proofs of the 'fraud.'" . . . "I read most carefully the evidence against her, because I had so much to lose. I read it; I judged it false on the reading; I *knew* it to be false when I

came to know her." And again in her "Autobiography" (pp. 343-4, Library Edition), Mrs. Besant tells us that when inquiring about the Theosophical Society, H. P. B. asked whether she had read the report of the S. P. R., and that on replying in the negative, she was told to go and read it and if after reading it you come back—well," and nothing more would H. P. B. say on the subject. Mrs. Besant goes on: "I borrowed a copy of the Report, read it and re-read it. Quickly I saw how slender was the foundation on which the imposing structure was built. The continued assumptions on which conclusions were based; the incredible character of the allegation; and—most damning fact of all—the foul source from which the evidence was derived. Everything turned on the veracity of the Coulombs, and they were self-stamped as partners in the alleged frauds. Could I put such against the frank, fearless nature that I had caught a glimpse of against the proud, fiery truthfulness that shone at me from the clear, blue eyes, honest and fearless as those of a noble child? Was the writer of the 'Secret Doctrine' this miserable impostor, this accomplice of tricksters, this foul and loathsome deceiver, this conjuror with trap-doors and sliding panels? I laughed aloud at the absurdity and flung the Report aside with the righteous scorn of an honest nature that knew its own kin when it met them and shrank from the foulness and the baseness of a lie." . . . "My faith in her has never wavered, my trust in her has never been shaken. I gave her my faith on an imperious intuition, I proved her true day after day in closest intimacy, living by her side; and I speak of her with the reverence

due from a pupil to a teacher who never failed her."

And here I cannot do better than conclude by quoting from *Lucifer* of May, 1895 (vol. 16, pp. 180-1); in which Mrs. Besant says: "Brothers mine in all lands, who have learned from H. P. B. profound truths which have made the spiritual life a reality; let us stand steadily in her defense, not claiming for her infallibility, not demanding acceptance of her as an 'authority'—any further than the inner consciousness of each sees the truth of what she says—but maintaining the reality of her knowledge, the fact of her connection with the Masters, the splendid self-sacrifice of her life, the inestimable service that she did to the cause of spirituality in the World. When all these attacks are forgotten, these deathless titles to the gratitude of posterity will remain."

Esoteric Christianity Class

ITS OBJECTS

First—To attain a clear conception of the Christian religion as founded by the Master Christ.

Second—To aid in every way possible the bringing into present day Christianity its original teaching.

Third—To fit ourselves to converse intelligently on the views we hold.

LESSON 29

Pages 240 to 245, inclusive, "Esoteric Christianity."

QUESTIONS

- 1 (a) Has Christianity ever and does it now recognize the three worlds?
- (b) What does it teach in regard to what we call the "Astral world?"
- 2 What is the difference between the

Heaven recognized by Christianity and Heaven as we understand it?

- 3 How may we explain Re-incarnation while the Bible teaches Heaven as our eternal home? See II Corinthians, 5: 1.
- 4 (a) The Self constantly is evolving, does this apply also to the bodies he uses?
- (b) What is the process of evolution for each body, the physical, astral and the mental?
- 5 Are any on the physical plane normally conscious of the Heaven world? If so, how is this possible?

LESSON 30

Pages 246 to 250, inclusive, "Esoteric Christianity."

QUESTIONS

- 1 Are there other bodies than the physical astral and mental? Name them and describe the method of their development.
- 2 Describe the outer symbols used in the Christian Mysteries incident to the Initiation.
- 3 What means the "Ascension of Christ" and what will mark the "Ascension of Humanity?"
- 4 What means the quotation that "Christ was the first fruits of them that slept?"
- 5 When shall the Mysteries again be taught in the Christian Church? What may we do to hasten the day?

LESSON 31

Pages 251 to 258, inclusive, "Esoteric Christianity."

QUESTIONS

- 1 (a) Give the names of the three Persons of the Trinity as taught by the Christian religion.
- (b) Name any other religions which recognize the Trinity.
- 2 What lessons do we learn from the fact that practically all religions recognize the teaching of God as a Trinity?
- 3 The Church teaches a personal God, a personal Son and a personal Holy Ghost,

are we to understand that these great Beings have forms like men? It is said that God made man in his own image. Genesis, ch. I, verse 27.

- 4 Does God (our Logos) deal directly with men? Are there intermediate Gods?
- 5 It is said that God knows everything, that He is all conscious, does this mean that if all the people on the earth should pray to Him at the same time that He would hear *each* prayer?

LESSON 32

Pages 259 to 266, inclusive, "Esoteric Christianity."

QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain the process of the unfolding of the Trinity in its three aspects.
- 2 Name the fourth factor in the working of Divine Manifestation, in some religions equivalent to a Second Trinity.
- 3 Describe Inertia, Motion, Rythm, as related to the universe.
- 4 In what manner or connection are the Three Persons of the Trinity involved in a human being?
- 5 With our slight knowledge of the workings of the Trinity is our responsibility to Humanity enlarged and in what manner?

[From the Vahan]

Science and Spiritualism.—Profoundly interesting are the experiments of Professor Charles Richet, the Eminent French scientist, as detailed in the October and November numbers of the *Annals of Psychical Science*, especially as they are accompanied by photographs. "Concerning the Phenomenon called Materialisation" he styles his article, and it is an account of séances which took place in a kiosque in a garden in Algiers during a whole month from August 10th to September 10th, 1905. Friends of the scientist were present and every possible precaution was

taken to ensure perfect immunity from the slightest possibility of fraud. Then photographs were obtained of the entity who appeared by the light of sudden flashes of magnesium and chlorate of potash. These were taken by a kodak, a stereoscopic camera and a Richard stereoscope-verascope, so that five simultaneous impressions were thus got. The negatives were developed by a photographic firm in Algiers who were entirely ignorant of their nature.

The appearance spoke, giving his name as Bien Boa, moved about, exerted a certain amount of muscular activity, breathed out carbonic acid gas like an ordinary mortal and responded to Professor Richet's touch, who ascertained that his hand was normal and anatomically correct in its structure. The photographs show a draped figure a face with black beard and moustache, the head surmounted by a turban, and on another occasion by an old-fashioned metal casque.

Professor Richet, having used every known scientific test, is quite satisfied that a materialization presented itself both to the sitters and their cameras; but he does not in consequence take his stand amongst the spiritualists. All the length, and it is a good way, he will go is summed up in his concluding paragraph, in which he says:—

"Certainly I cannot say in what materialization consists; I am only ready to maintain that there is something profoundly mysterious in it, which will change from top to bottom our ideas on nature and on life." M. C.

NOTICE

GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
7 West 8th Street.

New York, July, 1906.

The Executive Committee have accepted the offer of Chicago T. S. of the use of its Headquarters for the approaching Convention, and have fixed upon the usual time, the third Sunday in September for the meeting. Notice is therefore hereby given that the Twentieth Convention of the American Section T. S. will assemble in the rooms of the Chicago T. S. 26 Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill., on Sunday, September 16, 1906, at 10 a. m.

The usual circular, accompanied with blank for delegates or proxy, will be sent out in ample time.

Colonel Henry S. Olcott, President-Founder T. S. will be present and preside over Convention.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON,
Gen. Sec.

BRANCH REPORTS

Superior T. S. The splendid activity in this Branch continues. On account of the favorable climatic conditions we will continue our meetings throughout the summer months with frequent open meetings for the benefit of the members of outside study classes.

The long deferred hope of having a society in Duluth, Minn., is soon to be realized. Two study classes have been started and much enthusiasm manifested.

Five new members have been admitted to the Superior Branch in the last six months.

Mr. Hotchner will find a better field than ever, when he returns this fall.

Loyally yours,
ALLIE L. BOOTH, Sec.

Seattle T. S. Since moving into the new quarters at 1420 Second Ave., there has been a most gratifying increase in the attendance at the Sunday evening lectures, doubtless owing to the location being so central.

While there were several names dropped from the roll at the beginning of the year, it is pleasant to note that almost an equal number of new ones have been added, with more to come in the near future.

Considerable Class work has been done, the Wednesday evening class for enquirers, conducted by Mr. M. Wardall, averaging an attendance of about twenty-five. In addition to this, a class in Mrs. Besant's "A Study in Consciousness" holds forth on Tuesday afternoon and a ladies' study class meeting Thursday afternoon, has finished "The Ancient Wisdom," and commenced "An Outline of Theosophy." The Friday night members' class has just begun "A Study in Consciousness."

The Branch is looking forward to a visit from Messrs. Rogers and Talbot some time during August, from which is expected pleasant and profitable results.

The social side of Branch work has been represented by several most enjoyable socials, and a picnic held at the country residence of a member.

White Lotus Day was observed by an appropriate program of music, reading and an address bearing upon the occasion of the gathering.

The usual activities of the Branch will continue throughout the summer months, with the exception of the Enquirers class, which will suspend for a short vacation.

M. PATTERSON, Sec.

Spokane T. S. Spokane Branch has held three meetings each week during the winter, the regular Branch meeting for members on Friday night, a public study class on Tuesday night and a public meeting on Sunday afternoon. Considerable interest has been shown by visitors and the Branch feels that some seed at least has been sown that will in due time produce good results. Attendance at members' meetings has been most satisfactory. With the coming of the Summer months the Sunday afternoon meetings have been discontinued and the regular study class re-organized into an H. P. B. training class.

Seven new names have been added to the membership roll since work was begun last autumn. By removal from the city, two faithful workers have been lost to us, but another Branch gains added strength and usefulness thereby.

Spokane has not been visited by any of the propaganda workers during the past year, and perhaps the most effective work of the Branch in this line has been done through the circulating library. The Branch room is open each afternoon and the library, consisting of about seventy volumes, is well patronized by the public. The city library also contains an excellent list of Theosophical books, and the extent to which they are used proves that there exists not a little interest in the truths Theosophy offers to the world.

Spokane Branch sends greetings to all fellow students and co-workers.

ADAH M. ROSENZWEIG, Sec.

Songs for Lotus Circles

There are now between twenty and thirty Lotus Circles in the Theosophical Society, and the need for printed copies of the Lotus Songs—which are important features of the work amongst children—has become pressing.

A manuscript of Words and Music has been compiled which is in the hands of the Editors of the *Lotus Journal* for publication. The cost of printing a selection of some seventy of these songs would be about £100, as printing music is very expensive. Thanks to the generosity of two friends £70 has already been promised for this purpose.

A Lotus Song book can hardly expect to be a financial success, at any rate for some time to come, but as its publication will be a great and permanent benefit to Lotus work, the Editors of the *Lotus Journal* venture to appeal for help to sympathisers in the different Sections of the Society. The amount still required is about £30. Contributions would be gratefully received if sent to the Editors *Lotus Journal*, 8, Inverness Place, Bayswater, London. W.

Notice.

Branch members who wish to help in the "Correspondence Scheme," will kindly send their names and addresses to T. P. C. Barnard, No. Tonawanda, N. Y. Several members-at-large are waiting to be assigned, but on account of a lack of Branch members have had to wait.

Yours,
BARNARD.

Questions and Answers from the Vahan

QUESTION 303

E. E. L.—With regard to suffering in Kama-loka, is not Mrs. Besant's theory one generally accepted by Theosophists, that a person who has lived an evil life suffers in Kama-loka to the extent of the evil he wrought whilst in physical incarnation, and as the result of such suffering gains knowledge which in his next incarnation enables him to make a better fight against similar evil? That a drunkard here would there experience a maddening desire for alcoholic liquors, and being unable to obtain them, would suffer accordingly? It is stated by some intelligent observers of astral plane doings that entities there craving for sensual gratification do actually obtain it. Is this interpretation of a difficult subject a correct one, and if so can it be made to coincide with Mrs. Besant's teaching on the matter?

P. H.—Any fancied discrepancy between the teachings referred to will, I think, be resolved if E. E. L. will keep clear in his mind the distinction between astral gratifications (feelings) and physical gratifications (sensations) i.e., those which proceed from the physical plane.

With the casting aside of his physical body, the drunkard also casts aside the means for the gratification of his desires; but he does not cast aside those desires. These, ingrained in his astral nature, are as poignant as, perhaps far more poignant than ever. The only possibility he has of gratifying them is by taking possession of some weak physical entity—that is, coming back again to the physical plane. This, doubtless, may occur; but we may take it, I think, that it is a rare occurrence.

These remarks apply to all gratifications ordinarily called "sensual," i.e., those that have their rise on the physical plane. There are, however, other gratifications, often allied to these, but which may arise in the astral world, and exist entirely independent of the physical plane. These we generally discriminate from the "sensual" by calling them "sensuous"—and these, doubtless, since they are in themselves astral looked at objectively, may be enjoyed to the full in the astral world—indeed, can only be enjoyed to the full in the astral world. It is, perhaps, these sensuous gratifications that are referred to by the intelligent observers of the astral plane mentioned by E. E. L.

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