



# THE THEOSOPHIC MESSENGER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

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All readers are cordially invited to send questions, answers and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to **The Editor, 4940 Washington Ave., Chicago, Ill.** Subscription price to non-members, 50 cents per annum.

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## Psychic Happenings.

When Theosophy was re-promulgated to the West in the last century, it seemed imperative that the existence of an occult world should be enforced upon the literary and scientific worlds by direct evidence of its forces and of the power of developed men to employ them. Hence the phenomena by Madame Blavatsky. But as later psychics of less degree would probably arise, and as future needs might justify the direct physical appearance of Masters, it was not unlikely that in the Theosophical Society or without it "messages" would be given forth and genuine "appearances" be claimed. In fact not a few of the former have been uttered, and at least two of the latter have been asserted in print. Those of us who possess no psychic endowments are without direct ability to judge truly of phenomena, and nowhere has been

vouchsafed any infallible test accessible to all F. T. S. Hence it might seem as if we were helpless before assertive claims, destitute of either a touchstone or an authority for reference.

Happily the case is not so serious. We are not wholly at the mercy of fraud or weakness or inexperience. Certainly all individuals have not equal capacity for judgment, yet the feeblest need not greatly err if fully using the tests at hand. There are three.

The first is most excellently set forth in *The Doctrine of the Heart*. There we are told that the words of the Masters "illumine and expand, never confound and harass the mind; they soothe, not disturb; they elevate not degrade. Never do They use methods which wither and paralyze reason and intuition alike." A message which is jarring or perplexing, depressing or disturbing, increasing mental darkness rather than dispelling it, may well

arouse fatal suspicion in a recipient.

The second concerns the circumstances of a message, the method of the output, the worth of its channel, the reliability of its witnesses—in short, its evidential force. If a psychic has an established character for truth and moral soundness, the presumption is that there is no purpose to deceive. If the spectators of a vision are experienced in knowledge of apparitions, their skilled judgment would have weight. If the asserted message came through doubtful hands or in improbable ways, it would be suspected. No one could be desired to concede validity to a message which was voiced by a soiled soul or in an incongruous environment, or to an apparition certified to by an enfeebled intellect, a person habitually credulous, or a witness without the training to discriminate. These conditions do not of necessity vitiate a message, but they certainly furnish ground for rejecting it.

The third test is whether the pronouncement conforms to reason and the moral sense. If it contravenes known facts, it is brushed aside at once. If it is opposed by rational thought, if it jars on one's perception of the fitness of things, if it revolts commonsense,—worst of all, if it affronts morality, it is no message from the Master. Here again *The Doctrine of the Heart* speaks most soundly: "The Master says nothing that the intellect of His audience cannot grasp, and against which their moral sense revolts. Master's words, however much they may be opposed to one's previous thoughts, never fail to bring the most absolute conviction, alike to the intellect and to the moral sense of the per-

son addressed. They come like a revelation, rectifying an error which becomes at once apparent; they stream down like a column of light dispelling the gloom; they make no claim on credulity or blind faith." If they do not accord with this description, much more if they are the reverse of it, they need no other condemnation.

Suppose that there should appear a book, clever, plausible, citing facts and historic illustrations, written to commend the training of boys in theft after the Spartan method, as educating quickness, versatility, ingenuity and endurance. We should instantly denounce it as immoral and pernicious. Suppose that an alleged message sustained the doctrine, or that a materialized figure personating a Master affirmed it as His own. Would this verify it? Would not every well-constituted mind insist that the message was spurious and the figure an illusion, since no such message or figure could possibly be from on high?

It is most improbable that any such moral enormity will ever have the effrontery to seek acceptance in the Theosophical Society. Yet are we safe from lesser efforts? I who write this was once a victim. Thirteen years ago I accepted a supposed message the authentication of which I believed adequate. It went right in the face of my knowledge of facts, of my moral intuitions, of my sense of right. Yet I bowed to it and acted upon it because I supposed that the Master knew better than I. Later the fraud was exposed, but—the evil had been done. I had helped a gross impostor, had damaged my beloved Theosophical Society, and in shame and sore humiliation suffered

from my wrong. Still, a lesson had been taught. I shall need no other. Never again will a message sustaining palpable error, glossing over fraud, or minimizing the evil of falsehood and imposture, commend itself to me as the words of a Mahatma.

No one with alert mind, moral intuitions, and keen sense of the fitness of things need ever go far wrong over psychic happenings. Such there will always be,—happily so, indeed, for there are times when they bring light and truth and strength. But only if they do this are they genuine. With *The Doctrine of the Heart* embedded in the heart, with strong commonsense and sound moral perception, any Theosophist can withstand the most alluring of illusions, for such darken and dissolve and disappear as they are touched with the spear of Ithuriel.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

### Communications from Adyar.

It is with profound regret that we find ourselves compelled to put in print the following communications received from Adyar. But they are a part of the history of the Theosophical Society and they cannot be ignored.

The first communication is of the nature of an official notice from the President-Founder to the members of the T. S., and reads as follows:

ADYAR, Jan. 7th, 1907.

To the Theosophical Society, Its Officers and Members:

Dear Brethren—In the beginning of this year 1907, which my several medical attendants in Italy, on board ship, at Colombo and here, at Adyar, have almost unanimously proclaimed to be the last year of my existence in this

physical body, it behooves me to put my house in order; also to place on record certain words of counsel given to me by the Masters, connected with the affairs of the office of President of the Theosophical Society. This Society, which is now operating in forty-five different countries of the world, through over six hundred Branch Societies, comprises a great number of persons of different races and religions, all united together on the platform of Universal Brotherhood, so it concerns me to appoint as my successor, one who will act with perfect impartiality, as regards morals, religions and politics, favoring no one but holding the scales between all with perfect justice, as I have always tried to do. There are many in our Society who surpass me in learning, and in various other qualities, which go to make up the capable ruler, but I leave it to posterity to say whether there is one among us who has worked more zealously than myself to realize the idea of Universal Brotherhood.

The responsibility resting upon me to appoint my successor was too great, so as in many various times during the course of official duties connected with this Society, I trusted to those behind the movement to give me Their advice in the matter.

Last evening, in the presence of witnesses, Mahatma M. and Mahatma K. H. appeared beside my sick-bed, visible to our physical eyes and speaking in voices audible to our physical ears. They told me to appoint Annie Besant as my successor. They said no matter whom I should appoint there would be some discontented ones, but that taking everything into consideration, They

most decidedly considered her the best fitted for the office.

I therefore appoint Annie Besant to take the office of President of the Theosophical Society at my death, and I cannot but feel glad that Their decision confirms the view that I had myself already taken. I feel convinced that I can safely trust to her the administration of the duties of the office I have held for the last thirty-one years, the more so, because the Masters assured me last evening that They would overshadow her as they have me in the work.

They both approved my wish, that Adyar should be kept as the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, and the official residence of the Presidents, for the time of their office, inasmuch as the property has been bought by the Founders, under Their (the Masters') direct inspiration.

In case she does not find it possible to remain in the office the entire term, I beg her not to appoint a successor unless They approve of her choice.

(Signed)

H. S. OLCOTT, P. F. T. S

Immediately upon receipt of this document, the General Secretary of the American Section wrote to the President-Founder and to Mrs. Besant expressing in clear and unmistakable terms his absolute refusal to accept the 'instruction' cited as a genuine message from Those whose names are used to give it force, on the ground that to accept it would be to outrage his common sense and his conscience.

A few days later the following letter was received by our General Secretary:

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, BRITISH SECTION, 28 ALBEMARLE ST., LONDON, W.  
FEB. 5TH, 1907.

*The General Secretary,*

*American Section, T. S.*

DEAR SIR: I am instructed by the Ex. Com. to send you a copy of a resolution passed at its meeting on Feb 2nd with respect to a Presidential notice received, appointing a successor to the Presidency. The resolution is:

That the Executive Committee of the British Section T. S. cannot consider the Presidential notice of Jan 7th, 1907, as valid, on the ground:

(1) That it is illegal, as being in contravention of Rule 9 of the General Rules and Regulations of the T. S., which gives the President-Founder the right of only nominating and not of appointing his successor.

(2) That it imposes upon the Society a blind belief in and unquestioning acceptance of the genuineness and supreme authority of a personal, psychic phenomenon.

At the same time this executive committee declares its readiness to receive with becoming respect any nomination that their venerable President-Founder may make in accordance with the constitution and his own best judgment.

Carried unanimously.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

KATE SPINK,

Gen. Sec.

A copy of it was sent to each member of the Executive Committee of the American Section, and after due deliberation, the same resolution was adopted by that Committee and the proper notice of their action sent to the President-Founder.

But before any of these communications could reach him, the President-Founder had left this world, and the government of the T. S. passed into the hands of the Vice-President, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, who became the Acting President until a new president can be elected.

In the mean time, the following communication came to hand:

A CONVERSATION WITH THE MAHATMAS.

Probably on account of the possibility of my life closing at any time the two Mahatmas who are known to be behind the Theosophical movement, and the Personal Instructors of H. P. B. and myself, have visited me several times lately, (in the presence of witnesses, being plainly visible, audible and tangible to all), with the object of giving me some final instructions about things to which they wished me to attend while I am still in the physical body. It may be that I shall live some years yet, but the critical condition of my health makes it imperative that I arrange certain matters for the sake of the Society.

It is natural enough, since I have been working under the guidance of these Masters during the last thirty-one years, that They should have some words of counsel for me, as my Teachers, in reference to Theosophical matters, and that I as their humble servant, have questions to ask them concerning my endeavors to carry out Their Will. "For the night cometh, when no man can work." Fortunately this refers only to the physical body, for as regards work in the other bodies, there is no "night", but only the earnest endeavor that must be concentrated in

the work, no matter in what body we may be functioning at the time.

The interview which I am about to describe had for its object the course I should pursue in the present crisis, brought about by the cloud resting upon one who has been one of our most respected members, and indeed one who has given faithful service to the Society for many years, but who, it has been recently discovered, had been giving out teachings of which we did not approve.

Some members of the Society have formed themselves into two groups. The one, with an exaggerated moral sense, believes that the Teachers of mankind cannot employ agents that are not above the weaknesses of the physical body, contact with whom would be supposed morally to taint Them.

The other party (who, if we make a careful study of history, must be regarded as having some knowledge and common sense on their side) considers that these invisible Teachers, in order to reach the masses, and especially to penetrate to the very depths of human Society, are forced to employ agents or messengers who possess many of the failings of mankind; but that they must also possess a high standard of ideals and spirituality, at least enough to enable them to be useful instruments for conveying the lofty precepts and high teachings, which it is incumbent upon Them to give out in order to carry out the Will of Those who employ Them.

The principal members of the two parties were rather startled recently by the statement of Mrs. Annie Besant, (made privately, but now generally

known) that she thought she must have been under a glamour, in supposing that she had worked, with Mr. Leadbeater under the guidance, and in the presence of the Mahâtmâs while he was giving such harmful teachings.

I wished to make my own mind easy about the matter, so I asked the Mahâtmâs this question: "Is it then true that Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater *did work* together on the Higher Planes, under Your guidance and instruction?"

*Answer.* (Mahâtmâ M.) "Most emphatically, yes!"

*Question.* "Was she right in thinking that because Mr. Leadbeater had been giving out certain teachings that were objectionable, he was not fit to be Your instrument, or to be in Your presence?"

*Answer.* "No, where can you find us perfect instruments at this stage of Evolution? Shall we withhold knowledge that would benefit humanity, simply because we have no perfect instruments to convey it to the world?"

*Question.* "Then it is not true, that they were either of them mistaken or under a glamour?"

*Answer.* "Decidedly not; I wish you to state this publicly."

I can give no better examples than the Founders, to corroborate what the Mahâtmâ said, for in spite of our manifold shortcomings and physical weaknesses, They did not hesitate to employ us as Their instruments, because They saw in us the capacity of becoming loyal, true workers. As for myself, you know well what an imperfect instrument I have been, and so far as H. P. B. was concerned, you know that a Master once wrote through her hand and referred to her "unfortunate rotten old body." (See Old Diary Leaves Vol. II).

In the principal discourses which I recently gave at the International Congress at Paris and the London and Chicago Conventions, I discussed this matter freely, for the sense of it oppressed my mind, and I felt that it would be most unwise to allow the Society to take such a stand, as seemed to me to be an extreme one, concerning ideals that were impossible to realize at our present stage of development. In my Paris address I said: "Some years ago I wrote an article on 'Asceticism,' in which I told about the rebuke that was administered to me at Bombay, by a Master, when, upon being asked to name the one of all the then members of the Society in India whom I thought the brightest spiritually, I named one whose devotion to the Society was great, and whose personal conduct was irreproachable; but I was told that I should have selected a certain person who, although a drunkard, was spiritually advanced within. No sensible person would say that one addicted to drunkenness or sexual excesses is more likely to be an accurate teacher or wise counsellor than one who leads a decent life; quite the contrary, but it seems that now and again appears a person who, despite moral failings, can serve as a channel for high teachings. Yet the very fact of his moral taint would naturally put us on our guard, for fear that we might fall into the trap of our own credulity, and take the teachings without proper scrutiny.'

The Mahâtmâ wishes us to state in reference to the disturbances that have arisen because we deemed it wise to accept Mr. Leadbeater's resignation from the Society, that it was right to call an Advisory Council to discuss the

matter; it was right to judge the teachings to which we objected as wrong, and it was right to accept his resignation; but it was not right that the matter should have been made so public, and that we should have done everything possible to prevent it from becoming so, for his sake as well as that of the Society.

He said it should be the sacred duty of every Theosophist, if he finds a brother guilty of a wrong, to try to prevent that brother from continuing in his wrong-doing, and to protect others from being contaminated by that wrong so far as it is possible; but it is also his duty as a Theosophist to shield his brother from being held up *unnecessarily* to general public condemnation and ridicule.

I shall now close this article with the first direct message from the Masters Themselves sent through me to the Society as a whole.

"Let those who believe in Our existence, and that We are behind the Theosophical Movement, also that We shall continue to employ it as an agency for uplifting of mankind, know, that we are sometimes forced to employ imperfect instruments (because of the lack of perfect ones) for Our work. Therefore, cease from such turmoil and strife and from causing such disturbances in the Unity of Brotherhood, and thus weakening its strength, but instead, work together in harmony, to fit yourselves to be useful instruments to aid Us, instead of impeding Our work. We, who are behind the Theosophical Movement, are powerless sometimes to prevent the checks and disturbances that must unavoidably arise, because of the Karma of individual members; but you can

aid us much by refusing to take part in such disturbances, and by living true to the highest possible ideals of Theosophy. Should any event bring forth seeming injustice, have faith in the Law, that never fails to adjust matters. Cease rushing headlong into strife, or taking part in dissensions; hold together in brotherly love! Since you are part of the Great Universal Self, are you not striving against yourselves? Are not your Brother's sins your own? Peace! Trust in Us.

(Signed)

H. S. OLCOTT.

The reference to "glamour" above is to a statement made by me in a private and confidential letter, which should have been held sacred. In view of the acceptance by Mr. Leadbeater of the charges made against him—though some of them have since proved to be exaggerated, I stated that I thought my experiences with him on the higher planes, must have been due to glamour, for, while still recognizing him as a disciple, I thought that the things charged would have temporarily shut him out from such work. It is true that this view caused me much pain, as it discredited certain things of which I had felt sure, and shook what I had believed to be solid ground under my feet. But better this, it seemed to me, than that the Holy Ones should be insulted by our imperfections. It is with a sense of deep gratitude and relief that I learn that those experiences were not deceptive, that they were as true as for years I had believed them to be, and that while I was right in condemning the teachings, and also in

Was this done?

believing that he was and is a disciple, I was wrong in thinking that the errors prevented Them from using him as one of Their instruments for good. How glad I am to have been wrong in this, and to have been set right, what words of mine may say.

And truly when one measures the depths of one's own imperfections, the shallowness of one's views, the narrowness of one's best wisdom, how can one think that another may not be a channel, though in him also imperfections mar the nature? Truly severity to one's own failings and charity to those of others, is our safety on the Path narrow as the edge of a razor. May this be the flower of wisdom gathered from the plant of pain and may we live in the spirit breathed in the Master's words.

(Signed)

ANNIE BESANT.

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Concerning this extraordinary document, the following comment is made by Mr. Mead in the March Review:

"It requires no apparitions from the invisible to persuade us that it is our plain duty to condemn unquestioned wrong doing and to safeguard the ignorant and innocent; it requires no voice but that of conscience to teach us to strive to be in charity with all, even with those utterly callous to the misery they have caused; it requires nothing but ordinary observation to discover that the instruments which have been used in the Theosophical Society for the inculcation of many a lofty truth are one and all very imperfect and fallible men and women. But it requires more than the pronounce-

ments of such apparitions to persuade us that true Masters are utterly indifferent to grave moral obliquity in their pupils, and that there has been, as he himself claims, unbroken conscious access to the presence of true Masters by one who self-confessedly has all the time been systematically teaching practices which are universally condemned, and which are now long after their detection condemned by these same apparitions. But why condemn them now only and not long ago and face to face, and so have saved some of the victims? Any why, again, if the communion of pupil and teachers be constant, do they allow the present condemnation to reach the ears of their unfortunate pupil by means so public, while in the same breath they condemn publicity?

The authority of psychism has for long been on trial in the Theosophical Society. Were its authority to be now accepted as supreme and unquestioned the Society would commit intellectual and moral suicide, and condemn itself publicly to the well-deserved reproach of fatuity; for psychic tyranny spells theosophic slavery.

Though I would not call into question the personal *bona fides* of our late venerable and stricken President, whose sick bed has been tended by two American ladies who are both remarkably psychic, and with whom he has on each occasion witnessed these recent phenomena, I, nevertheless, can recognize nothing in these pronouncements that is of the slightest authority for myself or that can be helpful to others; they are prejudicial to all concerned and involve everybody in quite needless turmoil."



We cordially endorse every word that Mr. Mead has said. There is nothing helpful, there is nothing illuminating, there is nothing *new* in what is here said by the apparitions. The criticisms made of the action of the President-Founder in making the resignation of C. W. L. *public* is very familiar to all of us in the American Section for it has been the pet grievance of the defenders of the late member, but no one has intimated how it could have been avoided, nor do the entities who appeared to Col. Olcott offer any suggestions on this point. These pretended Mahatmas declare that C. W. L. was their disciple, their chosen mouth-piece to the world and yet—that he is not fit to be a member of the Theosophical Society!

Again, Col. Olcott most unjustly places himself on the same level with C. W. L. as if there were no difference between the faults and failures of an honest, honorable gentlemen and the conduct of a man who transgresses the criminal law. Can any rational person for a moment suppose that if Col. Olcott had withdrawn from the service of the U. S. Government in disgrace, if he had been the accomplice of the criminals whose iniquities he was set to discover, he would have been chosen to be the leader of the T. S. or if he had, that a disgraced and discredited man could have done the work which he did? We say nothing of his dragging the name of H. P. B. down to such a level. If Col. Olcott had been in his right mind he never would have uttered such words.

While it is impossible not to feel deep grief that the life of our President-Founder should have closed amidst these clouds and vapors, the unshaken conviction remains that the Theosophical Society will come out of this bitter trial purified and strengthened.

### The (Unreal) Basis of the Theosophical Society.

Mrs. Besant's article, "The Basis of the Theosophical Society," in February *Theosophist* and March *Review* unquestionably, as she predicts, does impress many good people as containing a most dangerous doctrine, the more dangerous because founded on a number of propositions undeniably true. Assuredly it is the case that no Theosophist can be disciplined for doctrinal opinions; that the T. S. possesses no moral code; that the moral code of an age or a locality cannot be enforced, it being transient, not eternal; that public opinion has neither accuracy nor sanctity; that the T. S. must be vigorously guarded against becoming a sect; that the only belief exacted of members is in the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, and the only needed qualification that an applicant shall be a "fit and proper person to become a member." Mrs. Besant holds that the fitness and propriety necessary are a recognition of the Truth of Brotherhood and the effort to further it.

But suppose that a member violates the obligations of Universal Brotherhood by outraging the rights of his brothers or by practicing upon them immoralities disastrous to their highest nature; is he therefore to be expelled? The cases cited are murder, theft, adultery, and seduction, and it is intimated that they constitute no ground for expulsion. If we add to these the debauchment of small boys, the area of moral liberty in the T. S. would seem to be practically unlimited. If it is objected that acts against Universal Brotherhood mean more than mere vocal assertions of it, and that profession of a

creed has less potency than conduct in denial of it, we are told that it is then cogent to inquire whether the culprit *has* ever helped any to realize Brotherhood, testimony to which fact closes the case. It would seem, then, that a temporary effort to induce the feeling of Brotherhood in another gives *carte blanche* to future deeds of opposite character, and that no evil-doer who has ever done any good can be justifiably expelled.

The difficulties in the practical execution of the doctrine would indeed appear many. But let us turn rather to a member who is guilty of flagitious conduct but who has no prior missionary record. What is to become of *him*? Is he to be expelled? Not at all; for this would be to violate the all-inclusive quality of the T. S., and—worse yet—to *ēnfōrcē* *ōūr* *prīvāte* *mōrālītēs* *ōn* a Brother. Nothing can justify the expulsion of a member save that formal, deliberate denial of the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood which would have barred his entrance at the beginning.

Here again difficulties arise. One of them is that all civic communities protect themselves from internal ravage by expatriating the criminal or by his immurement in jail. All voluntary associations reserve the right to drive out any member who violates the terms of membership. Why not then the Theosophical Society? Other organizations are not, indeed, avowedly based on the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, but the erection of a loftier platform implies a greater rather than a less exaction of duty.

Another difficulty arises from the source wherefrom T. S. memberships

come,—the surrounding community. If it is proclaimed that the T. S. is an organization—the only organization—wherein evil-doers of every kind are safe, will not right-moraled citizens take alarm at the proclamation and shun the Society as the home of the criminal classes? The more right-moraled, and therefore the more desirable, the possible applicants, the more their repugnance to a Society repudiating moral obligations. Are we to receive and retain only people who defy Universal Brotherhood? Popular odium would soon end such a Society as a nuisance.

Mrs. Besant is correct in stating the difficulty of drawing the line between evils in the T. S. which are permissible and those which are not. Yet this is only the difficulty which inheres in human action of every kind. No individual, and therefore no aggregation of individuals, possesses either mental or moral infallibility. Judgment is never beyond the possibility of error. Yet we do not for that reason vacate our intelligence and our moral sense, saying that as we cannot be inerrant we will do nothing. We use the highest thought we can grasp, the healthiest moral principle we can attain to, knowing both that this is all our possible and that reason and the moral sense strengthen as they are exercised, not as they are laid aside.

The thousands who revere Mrs. Besant for her priceless services to Theosophy and the T. S. rejoice that the doctrine of immunity to iniquitous F. T. S. has not heretofore guided her course. Quite the contrary. In 1894, when the then General Secretary of the American Section was shown guilty of forging Mahatmic names and messages,

she came nobly forward at the sacrifice of much personal feeling and presented the offender for trial; avowing that the Master had Himself directed her to purge the Society from the scandal. As late as last year, 1906, she finally convinced that an eminent F. T. S. had emitted teaching which she described as "earthly, sensual, devilish," she again came forward in sorrow of soul and emphatically asserted that no such things could be tolerated in the T. S., that the evil-doer had been justly extruded from the Society, and that he could no longer work with her. And if hereafter any moral enormity should upraise itself in the Society, we may rightfully expect that eloquent voice to be again heard in condemnation of wrong and in vigorous assertion of the fact that the Temple is open only to the pure in heart.

Others also have a duty. We may be very feeble F. T. S., we make no pretention to saintship or even to elevation above human frailty, we disclaim infallibility for our judgments mental or moral, and we make no demand for impossible virtues or ideal conditions, but this we may do,—we may insist that if some gross iniquity manifests itself in the T. S. it shall be put out. This need not be accomplished in self-righteousness or contempt, but with firm purpose and unvacillating resolution we may see to it that the Theosophical Society shall not be the home of him who would prey upon the spiritual instincts of adults, or of him who would desecrate the minds and the bodies of children.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

### Coming Election to the Presidency.

My Dear Colleagues.—It is with deep sorrow that I pen the following lines. Recent events, however, compel the public utterance of what is in the minds of many,—all old friends and sincere well wishers both of our late President and of Mrs. Besant.

The ratification of the present "appointment" under psychic "orders" promulgated by Colonel Olcott, in the last days of his fatal illness, even when regularized into the form of a constitutional nomination by the Acting President, will be resisted by many of us (we hope by the vast majority of the Society) on the following grounds.

This election can under no circumstances be held to be a fair ratification or free choice. It will always labor under the just accusation of being illegitimately forced and of being achieved (if it be achieved) by improper pressure,

This irregular "nomination" by the late President is not according to his own normal best judgment. When last in Europe he informed myself and others categorically that he did not consider Mrs. Besant as suited by temperament for carrying out the duties of a constitutional President, and that he would not nominate her

Mrs. Besant herself, by her unqualified endorsement of the present attempt to override constitutional procedure by the authority of psychic pronouncements, warns us that we have no guarantee, with her as President, that she will not at any moment force other similar pronouncements upon us and hold them *in terrorem* over the heads of the unknowing and timorous.

Moreover Mrs. Besant herself is in this acting contrary to her own declared

normal better judgment; for in a letter to myself from Benares, dated Dec. 6, 1906, referring to this question, she wrote:

"All the circumstances point to —, and that being so, he should be put in. So I shall do my best to persuade Colonel to nominate him."

In a letter of the same date from Benares to Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Besant further wrote:

"I shall do my best to support —, and to win support for him. His attitude to myself does not count in this matter; it is the interests of the Society alone that must be considered, and if — is to be President, he must be supported loyally. My influence will be at his service."

On reaching Adyar, however, Mrs. Besant forgot her intention, and after several consultations with Colonel Olcott, the pronouncements of the apparitions finally won the day. Colonel Olcott consulted none of his old colleagues but herself in making this "appointment."

Mrs. Besant is President of the Central Hindu College, Grand Inspector General for Great Britain and the Colonies of Universal Co-Masonry and Outer Head of the E. S.; she is moreover Editor of *The Central Hindu College Magazine* and Co-Editor of *The Theosophical Review*. In addition to these duties, not to speak of her lecturing, literary work and enormous correspondence, Mrs. Besant now proposes to undertake the Presidency of the Theosophical Society, and presumably also the editorship of *The Theosophist*.

Either of the first two responsible positions would occupy the full time of most of us, while the Outer Headship of the E. S. requires the undivided at-

tention of even a most highly endowed holder of that most important and intimate office.

Mrs. Besant is then already overburdened with grave responsibilities; whereas we require for the Presidency of the Theosophical Society some one who can give his entire services to discharging the onerous duties of that high post.

Again Mrs. Besant is the absolute autocrat of the E. S., and it is highly inadvisable that this autocracy and the constitutional office of President of the Theosophical Society should be in the hands of one and the same person.

The rules of the Society with regard to the successorship to the life-presidency of Colonel Olcott are unfortunately absurdly drawn. The late President-Founder alone is given the right of nominating his successor. There is no provision for the nomination of other candidates by the General Council—as is the case when the seven years' Presidency comes into force.

The ratification or otherwise of the nomination now before us must thus be first decided. Those who desire another nomination or other nominations can make this possible only by voting against the ratification of the present one. The Acting President can then direct the General Council to put forward other nominations.

I shall, therefore, vote against the ratification of this "appointment"—"nomination," and I hope the vast majority of members will do likewise; for the ratification of it by a two-thirds majority vote means the death of our constitution and the handing over of the Society to the mercy of an irresponsible psychic tyranny.

In repudiating the pronouncements

of these apparitions in general, I reject in particular their appointment of myself (as I am informed by Mrs. Russak) to the office of Vice-President.

I believe, with many others, that the truest friendship for Mrs. Besant can best be shown by safeguarding the freedom and sanity of the Theosophical Society, and it is in this spirit that I have written what I have no choice but to write.

I am, my dear colleagues,

Yours truly,

G. R. S. MEAD,

Cheyne Court, Chelsea. March 1, 1907.

### **"The Basis of the Theosophical Society."**

A recent article with the above title, by Mrs. Besant states, "I do not consider that the T. S. has any moral code binding on its members," and she also raises the question, "What constitutes fitness for membership in the T. S.?" These are vital points which the Society would do well to consider. While the Constitution gives no explicit requirement of moral character for membership, a standard is taken for granted in its rules and regulations. It is implied in Rule 30, which says that "application for membership must be made on an authorized form, and must be endorsed by two members of the Society." What, we ask, is the basis of fitness for such endorsement?

But the implied standard has become an explicit one by repeated rulings made by the late President-Founder in his thirty years of rule, because as he said, the "Rules are silent on the subject of expulsions." In a recent case in New Zealand, he gave the following ruling, on August 17th, 1905:

"No member of the Society having an inalienable right to perpetual membership, it is clear that if by his behavior he has made himself appear to his associates an undesirable colleague, they have the perfect right to so notify him and call for his resignation; they have also, where he is an enrolled member of a Branch or Section, the right of expulsion.

Does this not take for granted a moral code binding on members?

Again Col. Olcott decided in another case, April 27th, 1902:

"Nothing can be clearer than that a person who retains membership in the Society which works under a title and seal stolen from us, and which declares our Society can have no legal existence; cannot be admitted to our membership until he has severed his connection with the seceding body and sent back its diploma. He must choose between the two."

Here simple dishonesty ruled a member out.

In "Theosophy, Religion and Occult Science," pp. 56-57, Col. Olcott says:

"We would not admit man or woman who was in rebellion against the existing laws or government of his or her country, or engaged in plots and conspiracies against the public peace and safety. In New York we expelled one of our most active charter officers, an Englishman—one of the founders of the Society in fact—because he allowed himself to be mixed up with a gang of French Communist refugees in their wicked conspiracies."

Again on the same page Col. Olcott continues:

"Nor would we admit into our fellowship one who taught irreverence to parents or immorality to husbands and wives. Nor have we any room for the drunkard or debauchee. If Theosophy did not make men better, purer, wiser, more useful to themselves and to Society, then this organization of ours had better never been born."

There have been many other cases of expulsion from the T. S. on grounds of fraud and humbuggery and we have indubitable evidence from many sources that a most rigid code of ethics for

members resided in the minds of the Founders of the T. S. See "Theosophic Messenger" for February for the words of H. P. B. on this point. It is a great pity that the Constitution is not as explicit as were the Founders, and we ask, why not make it so?

Mrs. Besant argues that the only fitness required is the recognition of the truth of Universal Brotherhood "evidenced by work which does help others towards the realization of brotherhood." This seems a good beginning at least, for a moral standard. May it not even be effectively inclusive. Mrs. Besant remarks on this:

"I fully recognize and frankly confess that the acceptance of this view would occasionally keep among us, members who would discredit the Society, etc."

Why so, we ask, unless it is meant that fraud, dishonesty, murder, theft, adultery and sexual irregularities do help others towards the realization of brotherhood? As it is obvious that such conduct is separative and destructive of the unity of brotherhood, it is impossible for us to see in the phrase "help others towards a realization of brotherhood" any rational justification for including tricksters, forgers, thieves, murderers or sex perverts in the T. S. on any pretext whatever.

As to the "enforcement of a common level of conduct, above which members may rise but below which they may not sink," this seems a most sensible suggestion, and in exact accord with Mrs. Besant's words written in 1895, and reprinted in Theosophic Messenger of February, 1907:

Regarding the matter from the standpoint of brotherhood, what is the duty of Theosophical Society to the world? The movement is meant for human service, for the work in the outer world, and its general reputation is therefore a matter of importance. Its mem-

bers should feel themselves bound not to bring discredit by conduct that in any relation of life outrages the moral sense of any community in which the Society may be at work. They may rightly guide their conduct by a higher rule of morality than that which surrounds them, but they should not sink below it; *and if to any one of them that is right which is absolutely immoral in the view of the surrounding community, such a one should surrender his membership, that he may not for his own private view, imperil the position of the whole movement in the eyes of those the movement is meant to help.*

But if the "T. S. has no moral code binding on its members" except by implication or as an unwritten law or in the words of its leaders, it seems to many of us it is high time that it should get one by an amendment to the Constitution, made so clear and explicit that he who runs may read. A level of conduct at least as high as that of good citizenship in the various Sections, according to the civil code of the country of each Section seems all sufficient. Then any offense against the legal code of citizenship in any Section could be tried and judged according to that code, English members to be tried by the English code, the Indian by the Indian, etc. It is safe to presume that a common basis will be found to obtain in most civilized countries and that fraud, forgery, treachery, imposture theft, murder and sex perversions can be blackballed in all.

Who fought more bravely or stood more firmly for a noble code of ethics than Mrs. Besant herself in the crisis of 1895?

She then stated that the ideal of brotherhood may be perverted to serve as "the slogan of the devil." She then called those "forces which undermine all union by destroying trust" not tolerance and charity, but by the right name "sentimentality—the burlesque of feeling."

In connection with the Judge case she says:

"On my return to England in April I propose—if no official action shall have been taken—to personally address every European lodge, asking each to take action as Lodge if action as Section be refused, so that we may clearly know where we are in this matter, and may have the moral support of such Lodges as consider that a spiritual movement should not sanction measures falling below even 'mere worldly morality.'"

"For myself, I have tried by patience and slowness in action to save the T. S. from disruption, if disruption could be avoided without loss of honor. But the time has come now to say, 'Better disruption than betrayal of truth.' A society that loses many members may continue to live and grow, but a society that shuts its eyes to wrong for the sake of outer peace is doomed."

See page 88 in *Theosophic Messenger* for March. It seems most strange that she who wrote these lines is now censuring officials who acted in accordance with them in a case of crime far more serious than fraud or forgery. Stranger yet is it that whereas in 1895 she signed a joint letter with Mr. Mead, (published in *Lucifer* Vol. XIV,) proposing a resolution demanding the expulsion from the T. S. of one guilty only of dishonesty and trickery, she now writes this article on "The Basis of the Theosophical Society," the entire purport of which is that one guilty of a crime unmentionable in decent Society, need not have been dismissed, according to her interpretation of the phrase that "helps others toward the realization of Brotherhood," and whose reinstatement can be promptly effected under the same interpretation if the Society ratifies it by electing her to the office of president.

Indeed the entire correspondence in the Judge case is most interesting reading at this time. The same arguments

then used to support and condone Mr. Judge's offense are now being used to condone a crime infinitely worse. The great difference between then and now is that she who so valiantly and successfully demolished those very arguments is now using them in defense of her own position in similar though worse circumstances. To our deep sorrow, we, who would uphold a moral standard for practice as well as theory for the T. S., higher and not lower than "mere worldly morality," find ourselves ranged against one to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude, and who once carried this banner to victory and now spurns it. Was she right then or is she right now? We have no hesitation in saying that while we cannot fly her banner of 1907 we shall carry hers of 1895, and that we want no better code of ethics than she and Mr. Mead then gave to us.

It is true that H. P. B. warned against the danger of the T. S. becoming a sect. She also warned of moral dangers. Writing to the Chicago Convention of 1889, speaking of our growth being checked by psychic phenomena, she says:

"There may yet come a time when the moral and ethical foundations of the Society may be wrecked in a similar way."

We face this crisis now, for the issue of today, as in 1895, is grievously involved with psychic phenomena and names of Holy Ones are being used as in the Judge case, to support personal views in the administration of T. S. affairs. Even though such meddling in T. S. politics is utterly foreign to Their function and though the moral tone of the messages is utterly beneath their wisdom, purity and compassion, still it is most mischievous that Their names

should have been brought down to such a level. But fortunately the issue today is far more simple and easy of decision than that of twelve years ago. Then much hinged on the quality of rice paper of which members had no means of judging, while today it is one of choice between subscribing to clean morals or winking at crime.

While we do not for one instant question the good faith of those concerned with these psychic happenings at Adyar, or that the manifestations took place as described, we do refuse to believe that genuine Adepts, capable of inspiring the Secret Doctrine, had anything whatever to do with them. Those who on the other side are able to materialize themselves and speak audibly to physical ears, could as easily appear astrally or impress the desired message upon the mind of any one in meditation. But this would prove nothing as to the source of those messages. Col. Olcott says in O. D. L. 1st. Series, p. 261:

"I never attached the least importance to any psychical teaching on account of its reputed authorship, its only value being its subject matter. I strongly advise all my readers to follow the same rule, if they would be on the safe side, better far an enlightened skepticism than the most lauded credulity."

The pronouncements of not one or many members, great or small, can change the moral tone of the present messages, or make them anything but the specious sophistry of lax morals, from who can say what sources.

Again Col Olcott writes in O. D. L., 1st. Series, p. 77.

"People often wonder why the various scandals, such as Coulombs and lesser ones that we have had to suffer from, were not foreseen and prevented by the Masters; why H. P. B. was not forewarned of what traitors would do; and why, in the seemingly most serious crisis, no help came, no spiritual guide appeared. Of course such questions imply the absurdity that

Mahatmas, who implicitly believe in and govern their own actions by the strict rules of Karma, would take us, like so many puppets on wires, or so many poodles being taught tricks, and put us through set notions, to the meddling with our Karma, and the consequent interference with our rights."

Surely it is most pernicious that the authority of invisible entities is invoked to influence the votes of members but many will repudiate the messages not only because they meddle with Karma, and claim false authority, but because they lack merit and contain nothing that is either sane or righteous. We believe that there is no reason for despair over the situation, and serious though it is, it is a needed lesson. Indeed how better can the T. S. learn what it aims to teach or the dangers of occultism, than by this chance to discriminate between the true and exalted, and the false and ignoble; between the spiritual gifts of discernment and their lower counterpart—psychic powers of astralism. It is not improbable that we are developing far more strength of character in this sorrowful time of choosing than in times of peaceful and congenial study, and if every member bears his responsibility of voting (surely no true F. T. S. would shirk it) we believe that the Society will vindicate the cause of reason and sane morals as against that of psychism and sophistry. We realize that the honor of the Society is at stake and in the words of Mr. Mead in the Judge crisis:

"The honor of the society is more precious than the honor of any individual, and it will be a sorry day for both of us if by any chance we should abandon our collective honor for one individual. The objects and platform of the Theosophical Society would then have to be altered, and we should have a sect and a pope and have failed."

Yours fraternally,

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

Owing to the amount of valuable matter bearing on the vital question now before the Society which came into the hands of the editor, branch reports have been omitted and all the standing matter left out for this issue.



### The Death of Col. Olcott.

(Condensed from a Hindu paper.)

Colonel Olcott died peacefully at Adyar at 7 o'clock Sunday morning, Feb. 17th, 1907. He was laid on his bier at 12:30 and it was lowered over the parapet into the garden and carried into the large hall where a flower-fringed space had been prepared for its reception. The body with the head uncovered, draped with his own national flag, lay in the hall, while hundreds of people filed past it, each casting on it a few flowers. At 3:30 the representatives of Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity came within the enclosure and grouped themselves around Mrs. Annie Besant on the platform.

The ceremonies of the day began with a speech from the Buddhist representative, who as representing the faith which the late colonel believed in, paid his last tribute of respect to the departed. Sir S. S. Iyer next advanced and in a few touching words referred to the great and noble work done by the late colonel. He said that in voicing the feelings of gratitude which the Hindu community have always cherished toward Colonel Olcott, he would recall the fact that the colonel had done not a little in reviving the nearly dying religions of the various world faiths. The literature of the society which had grown under his fostering care and devotion had assumed dimensions of a really vast and extensive character. It will be for future historians and posterity, he said, to estimate the real worth and value of the great work the departed president had done, and he would not attempt such an impossible task. He concluded his speech with a feeling and pathetic prayer for the peace of the great soul of the departed.

Lieutenant Urquart made a truly impressive speech. "As a Christian member of the Theosophical Society," he said, "I deem it a great privilege to be present here to bid farewell to the mortal remains of this faithful servant of all religions, who saw in each world faith a branch of the one Tree of Wisdom; who looked on his Eastern Master, Gautama Buddha, and his Western Master, Jesus Christ, as brothers in the service of humanity. To him, after his long life of untiring energy and zeal, it must have been a source of extreme satisfaction to see the fruits of his labors in the great strides that have taken place within

recent years towards the realization of his ideals. He has now gone to those whom he served so well, and while our loving thoughts and blessings follow him, may his noble record of unselfish service in the cause of humanity be an example to each of us, and may he enter into the peace eternal and may perpetual light shine upon him."

The exercises were closed with an address by Mrs. Besant.

The funeral pyre was arranged after the usual manner of the Hindus and was made up for the most part of sandal wood. Incense of various kinds was burnt as the mortal remains of the departed spirit were carried to the pyre and placed upon it where soon the flashing flames enveloped them.

The next morning the ashes were collected and a part was carried out to sea and scattered over the blue waters, while another part was placed in an urn to be deposited later in the bed of the Holy Ganges.

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### Letters to the Branches.

(Reprinted from Feb. "Theosophy in India.")

In acceding to Mrs. Besant's request to insert the following letter, it behooves me to point out to our readers that, if I am not mistaken, this is the first time since the organization of the T. S. that our revered President-Founder has issued any official edict in the name of the Masters. As he is hovering between life and death, it would be uncharitable to hold him responsible for this singular departure from that well established and wisely regulated practice, but one cannot help being struck with this unfortunate feature in it, that it practically tends to compel the votes of members and thus to defeat the purpose of the constitution. What is still more objectionable is, that it also commits the T. S. to a dogma, or, in the alternative, brands with infidelity the members who refuse to endorse it.

But as neither the Colonel nor Mrs. Besant has ever claimed infallibility, members will do wisely to give their votes independently of what either of them has said, giving of course due weight to their statements, but considering also the other circumstances of the case.

UPENDRANATH BASU.

TO THE BRANCHES OF THE T. S.  
Theosophical Society,  
ADYAR, Madras, February, 1907.

Dear Brothers:

I had not meant to say aught regarding my nomination to be the Head of the T. S., as the successor of our President-Founder until your votes were given, confirming or rejecting that nomination. But it has come to my knowledge that statements are being made, throwing discredit on the manifestations of the Masters at Adyar to the President-Founder, and suggesting hallucination, fraud, and even worse things.

Under these circumstances it would be cowardice and treachery on my part to remain silent without bearing testimony to the truth I know. When I was sitting with the President—the evening before the visible appearance of the Blessed Masters to their dying servant, to bid him to name me as his successor—and we were asking Them to express Their will in the matter, the two Masters appeared astrally, and tried to impress his mind; to me my own Master said: "You must take up this burden and carry it." The Colonel said: "I have my message, have you anything?" "Yes," I said. "What is it?" "I will tell you when you have announced yours." Then he said he would wait till the morning, and see if he received anything further. I then wrote down what had been said to me, sealed it, and locked it away. (Two days before the Master had told me that He would tell Colonel Olcott whom to nominate.) In the morning, the Colonel was clear that he was ordered to nominate me, but he was confused about subsidiary details. I advised him to wait till all was clear, as some of the details seemed to me to be impracticable. On the evening of that day he asked me to sit with him again, and ask Them to speak. I refused, as I had had my answer, and I could not properly ask again, and I went down stairs. Then took place the manifestation, borne witness to by the Colonel and his two friends, as already related by him in the *Theosophist* for February. He sent for me and told me what had occurred, while his friends were writing it down in another room. I then informed him of what I myself had been told. The written account exactly corroborated his spoken account, and the Master Himself confirmed it to me that same night as I sat in meditation.

When friends had mooted the question of my becoming President previously, I had said that only my own Master's command, addressed to me personally, would induce me to accept it. I told Colonel Olcott this, when he wished to nominate me before They had spoken. Now, my only duty is to obey.

It hurts me to bring Their Names into what has been made a controversy, but if I remained silent, and allowed the T. S. to be swung on to a wrong line I should be false to my duty.

Let, then, every member record his vote with a full sense of his responsibility. I pledge my word of honor to the truth of what I have written, and to the fact that my old physical plane Guru, H. P. B., is here with her dying colleague, and has repeatedly spoken to me. I believe that the members, in their vote, will decide the future fate of the Society, whether it shall continue to be the Servant of its true Founders, who stood behind H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, or shall reject Them as its Masters and Guides. As Their nominee, I accept an office I never coveted; let each member approve or reject, as he will.

Your faithful servant,

ANNIE BESANT.

\* With all due deference to Mrs. Besant's opinion, I do not find it easy to imagine that if members of the T. S. give their votes from honest conviction, and with an eye solely to the well-being of the sacred Movement, the great Lovers of Truth and Humanity will desert them, whichever way they may vote.

I am strongly of opinion that neither the "conversation" nor the circular letter of Mrs. Besant is a proper thing for publication or comment through the Press. If, notwithstanding this, the columns of *Theosophy in India* have been reluctantly opened to them, it is not merely because of Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant's wish in the matter, but because they have already been printed elsewhere, and it appeared to me that it might upset the minds of many, unless some light were thrown upon them.

U. BASU,

Gen. Sec. Indian Section

[Here follows the "Conversation with the Mahatmas," given elsewhere in this issue.]

As the conversation reported above involves serious issues, and vitally concerns the future

interests of the T. S., I feel it my bounden duty as a responsible officer thereof, much against the grain, to draw the attention of our good brethren to a few important points about it, as also succinctly to express my own view of the matter.

First, then, let there be no mist over the fact that membership in the T. S. does not either imply or call for any belief in the existence of the Masters, and that perfect liberty is enjoyed by every fellow of the T. S., with regard to all articles of faith.

Secondly, there appears to be a tacit though vague assumption that rejection of the above "Conversation" as genuine means absence of faith in the Masters, and their connection with the T. S. This assumption is entirely baseless, for not only does such faith rest upon totally different grounds and independent judgment, but to hold that the verdict of any member of the Society, however highly respected and revered, as to the credibility or otherwise of any particular phenomenon, is binding upon all other good and earnest members, would be to establish a sort of Popedom, destroying altogether the eclectic foundation of the Society.

Thirdly, the value and loyalty of a member of the T. S. is not estimated by his endorsement of any dogma or of any so-called message from the Master, but by his fidelity and devotion to the motto, as much as to the primary object of the Society; and we should never forget that our motto is, "There is no Religion higher than Truth," and that the essential object of the T. S. is, "To establish a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Man without distinction of race, creed, sect, colour, or sex." An exemplary Theosophist then is one whose life is marked by ardent pursuit of Truth, and selfless love and good-will for his fellow-beings.

Fourthly, does not our experience of so many years of active membership in the T. S., and of the various storms and trepidations through which it has passed, teach us that the "still small voice of the soul" conveys the message of the Master far more accurately than any phenomenal sound or appearance on the objective plane, where illusion is so rampant and indiscriminate reliance on which has been in the past the cause of so much suffering to our sacred Cause?

Fifthly, it is also a relevant fact that the Colo-

nel was in an exceedingly low and depressed state of heart and nerve at the time the "Conversation" is said to have taken place, and this considerably affects the weight of his authority.

Sixthly, it appears to me that the Great Founders of a movement like the Theosophical Society, where honest enquiry is everywhere stimulated, and strenuous effort is made to keep the platform broad and as nearly all-embracing as is compatible with truth and purity, are not likely to stifle thought and foster credulity by seeking to impose upon its members any belief which appeals neither to their reason nor to their moral sense.

Lastly, let me declare—that I cannot see my way to the acceptance of the message contained in the above "conversation," as coming from the Lords of Wisdom and Compassion, *though I believe in Their existence and connection with the T. S., as firmly as in mine own; and that this conclusion of mine would remain unaltered even if I were personally present at the "conversation"*: for this simple reason—that the answers attributed to the Great Ones do not touch the point at issue, but are quite wide of the mark, and so far from being illuminative, they lack even the balance and solemnity of the utterances of an advanced disciple, and have the flavour of spiritualistic communication. Who, for instance, ever doubted the impracticability of finding perfect instruments on these planes, that a miraculous manifestation and oracular dictum should be necessary to set the misgivings at rest? The real question is as to the need for or propriety of employing, for purposes of spiritual teaching, a man who has not merely trampled alike on the motto and prime object of the T. S., but has also outraged the moral susceptibilities of all decent men and women, and even perpetrated what constitutes under the Law of all civilized countries a heinous offense. Is any light thrown on this question? And does Theosophy teach that the path of discipleship may be laid on and trodden with persistent crime and systematic deception?

UPENDRANATH BASU,

*Gen. Sec. Indian Section T. S.*

**Instructions from the Acting President.**

*(Reprinted from The Vahan for the  
information of our members.)*

February 21st, 1907.

*To the General Secretary, British Section.*

DEAR MADAM:

In accordance with Rule 27 of the Rules and Regulations for the management of the Theosophical Society, I have accepted the responsibilities falling upon me by the death of our late lamented President, Colonel Olcott. I shall, in accordance with that rule "perform the duties of President until a successor takes office," and under the circumstances it may be inevitable that some delay will arise before the succession can be determined. If Colonel Olcott's nomination of Mrs. Besant had simply been made on his own responsibility, without any explanation of the motives by which it was dictated the Sections could have proceeded without much waste of time to vote on the question thus submitted to them. But, far and wide, documents have been published describing the conditions under which Colonel Olcott believed himself to have been visited by the great Masters of Wisdom; who, in accordance with a belief which many of us reverentially entertain, are especially interested in the welfare of the Theosophical Society, and prompted by them to make the nomination in question.

As you will be well aware, the character of this manifestation is the subject of widely conflicting criticism. The

publication of the narratives Colonel Olcott issued for the purpose, is naturally giving rise to expressions of opinion from those who believe the manifestations to have been determined by an occult influence very different indeed from that of the great Masters above referred to.

Under the circumstances it has seemed to me highly undesirable that members of the Theosophical Society all over the world should be called upon to give their votes on the basis of a representation which might lead them to believe that the intervention of the Masters had been generally recognized as authentic. Inasmuch, therefore, as no rule determines the period at which the Society at large shall be asked whether it will ratify the nomination of a new President, I have held myself entitled under Rule 20, which invests me in my acting capacity with "discretionary powers in all matters not specifically provided for in these Rules," to appoint a date for holding the election which shall give time for the general circulation of all papers relating to the recent occurrences at Madras, and I have fixed the month of May as that in which the various Sections shall carry out the election. No election before the 1st of May will be recognized by me as valid, nor will the results of any elections held later than May be taken into account when it becomes my duty to investigate the results of the vote.

As it seems desirable that votes all over the world in this matter should be taken on similar forms, I will at a very early date forward you the form I consider it desirable to use.

Yours very truly,

*(Signed)* A. P. SINNETT.