

THE THEOSOPHICAL CONVENTION
ADYAR 1912

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THE Convention met for business in the large Hall of the Headquarters at 12 noon on December 27th. The President said:

BRETHREN: Once more it is my happy privilege to bid you welcome here for our Anniversary Meeting, the Thirty-seventh of the present incarnation of the Theosophical Society. May its true Parents, the Guardians of Humanity, bless this Their Child, and guide it along the Path of Sacrifice, of Wisdom, and of Devotion.

In last year's Address I referred to the difficulties which had arisen in India, and had caused some retardation in the progress of our movement in this sacred land, the Motherland of the true Founders of the Society. Those difficulties have been accentuated during the past year, and as some members of the Society have taken part in the accentuation, we cannot expect here the joyous report of progress which comes from other lands. There has been a certain discouragement felt, which has been shown by the falling into dormancy of an exceptionally large number of members. Nor must we readily blame these weaker brethren. It is hard to stand firmly and quietly against continued defamation, especially when libels printed here are reprinted in America, and circulated in many languages over the whole of the civilised world. The tireless malignity which has its centre at Point Loma has been exceptionally active, and has deluged every country with articles so unclean and so mendacious that one stands amazed at the spectacle. As you know, I have uttered

no word against Mrs. Tingley, the head of Point Loma, during the seven years of her ceaseless attacks. Although the filthy literature written by her secretary, and circulated from her centre, was sent to every city in which I lectured in America, and was placed in the Reading Room of every hotel I stayed at, and though I was urged by the Press to answer, I never spoke a single word against her. European Consuls, Government officials, clergymen, teachers, in every part of Europe, have been circularised by her agents in many languages. Indian officials from the highest to the lowest have received her pamphlets. From European countries, from Java, Hongkong, Shanghai, from the cities of Australasia and New Zealand, reprints of foully worded articles without printers' names and with mendacious headings have been sent to me, all from the same source. Gross misrepresentations of my teaching, made by printing a part of a sentence and suppressing the context, have been circulated. Mrs. Tingley has been asked to finance a suit against me in England, so that the present opportunity may be seized to ruin me. Through all this I have kept silence, hoping that patience and forgiveness would conquer this most cruel and wicked persecution. My hope has not been realised. In her own country, her misrepresentations have over-reached themselves, and no one now pays any attention to her. But where she is less well known, the falsehoods gain credence. Why she is animated by this malignant hatred, I have often wondered; lately I have found that she is only a tool.

Since her emissary—a well-known supporter of the anarchistic movement connected with India House in New York, whence *Free Hindustan* was issued—came to Madras, the special Indian campaign has been started. This also I met with silence, the silence that I have lately been compelled to break. On what is passing in the law-courts my lips are at present sealed. I notice that at least three Indians desire that I should be left to fight out this battle

unassisted and alone, as a personal matter. I have naught to say against that policy, if it be the will of the Theosophical Society. I have never found in the past, when I won credit and wrought successfully in public work, that the T. S. was anxious to dissociate itself from that credit and success, and to proclaim that these were personal matters; and there is perhaps something a little less than generous in the wish to leave me alone when danger threatens. But I am the first to desire that any crown I win may be given to the Society, and that any stones flung at me may strike myself alone. So I thank the three Indian members who take this line. Moreover, I agree with them that Mr. Naraniah's suit against myself *is* a personal matter, although his counsel gave as a reason for the transfer of the suit from Chingleput to Madras High Court, that "the tenets of the 'T. S.'" would come into the suit. The T. S. has no tenets, and I shall take care that its absolute neutrality in all matters of opinion shall be scrupulously guarded. I am, however, most grateful for the love and sympathy expressed by officials of the T. S., by Lodges and Fellows, in this connection, for these are indeed, a real help, and a time of trial shows one's true friends. The T. S., with very few individual exceptions, shows itself to be such a friend.

While Mr. Naraniah's suit is a personal matter, the action taken by me in defence of the Headquarters and the T. S. concerns the Society itself. And wherever its honour and good name are attacked, I shall in future, as President, defend that honour and good name in the Press and in the law-courts, wherever the assailant is worth noticing; I will no longer silently permit mud to be thrown on the Society, but will use such honourable means of defence as are available, for to the level of the traducers I cannot stoop. I have hitherto followed, as President, the practice I followed as teacher, bearing silently all slander and insult. This I shall continue to do where these are directed only against myself personally. But I think it has been a mistake

to show this forbearance in the office of President, and where the T. S., which is placed in my charge, is concerned, I shall henceforth play the part of the warrior who protects. If the T. S. disapproves of this policy, it can very easily show its disapproval by instructing its General Council during the coming year not to propose my name for re-election as President in 1914.¹

In one Section, out of twenty-two, there is trouble—the German. I say in one Section only, because the trouble in India is not from the Section, but from a handful only of individuals. The German General Secretary, educated by the Jesuits, has not been able to shake himself sufficiently clear of that fatal influence to allow liberty of opinion within his Section. His repeated refusals to authorise admissions of individuals and of Lodges, on the definitely stated ground that they did not work in the method of the German Section, have been laid by me before the General Council. A telegram, demanding my resignation and couched in insulting language for the benefit of the public—as people of a certain type write insults on post cards—has been sent here by his Executive Council; three unsigned ones, purporting to be from six German Lodges in Switzerland, from some German Lodges in Austria, and from some Italian groups—whose action has been repudiated indignantly by the Italian Executive—have also come, but none of these can be regarded as official communications, since they were not sent through the General Secretary, the only channel recognised by the Constitution. They are merely negligible personal insults. The latest unconstitutional action of the German Executive is to expel from the National Society all members of the Order of the Star in the East. The expulsion is, of course, invalid, as no member can be expelled from a Section for his

¹ I took the approval of the Executive Committee on the actions taken against Dr. Nair and Dr. Rama Rao by myself, and against the *Hindu* by Mr. Schwarz. The plaint in the civil libel suit is ready but has not yet been filed against the *Hindu* and Dr. Nanjunda Rao, and the General Council has warmly approved my proceedings.—A. B.

opinions, but the action shows that liberty of thought is not permitted in the German Section. There are, in Germany, 540 members of the Order, but I do not know how many of these are also members of the T. S. Whether they be many or few, they have the same right to their membership in the German Section as any Lutheran or Roman Catholic. The only thing left for me to do, as President, in face of this unprecedented outrage on liberty of opinion within the T. S., is to cancel the Charter of the National Society in Germany, and then to revive it in favour of the seventeen Lodges willing to work within the Constitution of the T. S.¹

We must not think of this tyrannical and unconstitutional action of Dr. Steiner's followers as German, for it is totally alien from the free German spirit, and has raised revolt in Germany. Germany has been, and is a leader in independence of thought, and can never deny herself. May the new National Society follow the old German path.

Apart from the passing troubles in India—where the overwhelming majority of the Lodges and members are heart and soul with their President—and the serious breach of our Constitution in Germany, everything is very well with the work all the world over. I have put the two unpleasant features first, and there are none others of that nature. All else is marvellously prosperous.

NEW NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Three National Societies have been added to our roll during the year: Dutch-India, Burma and Austria. These raise the number to twenty-two, and we give them hearty welcome. Poland has separated itself from Russia, but has not organised itself nor sent any report, so that we lose temporarily from our records the members transferred to it by Russia.

¹ The General Council has requested me to take this course, since the above was written. A. B.

GROWTH OF THE SOCIETY
REVISED LIST OF CHARTERS ISSUED TO THE CLOSE OF 1911

1878	1	1890	234	1902	704
1879	2	1891	271	1903	750
1880	11	1892	298	1904	800
1881	19	1893	344	1905	860
1882	42	1894	362	1906	900
1883	88	1895	401	1907	958
1884	99	1896	425	1908	1032
1885	117	1897	487	1909	1125
1886	128	1898	526	1910	1223
1887	156	1899	558	1911	1329
1888	169	1900	595	1912	1405
1889	199	1901	647		

As the National Societies do not make up their registers at the same time, the following list is, as usual, not up-to-date, but shows the general progress.

No.	Name of the Society	No. of Lodges	No. of Active Members	No. of New Members admitted during the year
1	T.S. in America ...	129	3,368	684
2	" England and Wales ...	67	2,023	506
3	" India ...	338	5,170 ¹	416
		plus 95 dormant }		
4	" Australasia ...	20	1,135	176
5	" Scandinavia ...	36	1,101	196
6	" New Zealand ...	19	801	157
7	" Netherlands ...	16	1,198	200
8	" France ...	37	1,232	204
		plus 2 dormant }		
9	" Italy ...	23	354	46
10	" Germany ...	55 ²	2,447 ²	293 ²
11	" Cuba ...	41	722	140
12	" Hungary ...	10	133	54
13	" Finland ...	23	556	91
14	" Russia ...	11	225	30
15	" Bohemia ...	7	152	31
16	" South Africa ...	8	214	51
17	" Scotland ...	14	406	119
18	" Switzerland ...	10	162	52
19	" Belgium ...	11	203	26
20	" Netherlands Indies ...	10	516	89
21	" Burma ...	8	126	33
22	" Austria ...	7	77	62
	Non-Sectionalised ...	50	839	193
	Grand Total ...	950 plus 97 dormant }	23,140	3,525

¹ India has also a 'dormant list' of 5,079 members, i.e., of members two years in arrear with their dues.

² These numbers are given under reserve, until the General Council decides on the position of the Non-German Lodges.

Eighty-three Lodges have been added to our strength, and 9 more are awaiting their Charters, which will bring our total of new Lodges to 92 for the year. England heads the list with 16; India treads closely on her heels with 14; then comes Germany with 10; Austria starts on her way with 7. America has added most new members—684; England has done well with 506, and the sister Section of Scotland adds 119, making 625 within the little island home. India has admitted 416; Germany with its outlying Lodges 293. Eight National Societies run into four figures, India being still easily first with its 5,170; but the non-paying members make an additional 5,079, so that a little effort would raise its roll to 10,249. Cannot that effort be made during the coming year to turn the passive members into active ones?

In America, the long-hoped-for Krotona has been started, and the Sectional Headquarters have been fixed there. Hearty congratulations are due to Mr. Warrington, the new General Secretary, who took Dr. Weller Van Hook's place—when the latter was compelled to take up again his profession in consequence of seriously straitened resources—and who was re-elected unanimously at the September Convention. Mr. Warrington's report shows the splendid work which is in progress in America. Especially noticeable is the admirable organisation of the whole work. My dear friend, Mrs. Russak, has carried thither her power of work and her inspiring enthusiasm, after unremitting toil in Europe, where she has won many hearts; the promise of 1906 is being amply fulfilled.

The T. S. in England and Wales, under the leadership of Mr. Wedgwood, is making wonderful progress. Mr. Sinnett, the Vice-President of the T. S., is a constant spring of help, and his thoroughly independent views are a stimulus to individual thought. I feel most grateful to the Master K. H. for the expression of the wish that restored the veteran Theosophist to his place among us. Among the many helpers, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Whyte, Lady Emily Lutyens and Dr. Guest stand out very prominently. The

At Homes at Headquarters given by the Viscountess Churchill and Mrs. Kerr were most pleasant functions. The Annual Convention was held in Portland Rooms, and a delightful tea-party, held on the site of the Headquarters, amid yawning foundation-ditches, brought about another purchase of land on each side of the original plot, so making the place perfect by providing for a surrounding garden. Mr. Lutyens has made a splendid plan, and money has come in well. Bath has just secured a fine house in an admirable situation for its Lodge.

There has been much building in India; Gayā Lodge has erected the finest public building in the town. Cocanada has built and opened its Lodge. Bellary, Bangalore City and Trichinopoly, mentioned last year, are ready. Mysore has obtained a building plot. Chittoor has laid its Lodge foundation. Bowringpet is ready for opening. Tirupur is just beginning its building. Calcutta has opened a fine Hall on College Green, and is building over it a second storey. Shri Kṛṣṇa Lodge, Bombay, is enlarging its building, and Mr. Justice Sadashiva Iyer lately opened a Lodge building at Chicacole. There may be more of which no report has reached me.

Scotland is building a good Hall at the back of its Headquarters, all the necessary money being given. Belgium has taken fine rooms. The plans for the French Headquarters have been completed, and show a handsome building. Costa Rica has finished its Lodge, and in Cuba two buildings are being erected for Lodges.

A noticeable movement in Java is the Wiḍya Poestaka, a League of the Order of Service, which collects, translates and publishes old MSS., palm-leaf, tree-bark, etc., and which received a gold medal for its exhibits at the Brussels Exhibition of 1910.

Summer Schools have become increasingly popular, Krotona easily leading the way with its immense programme of 144 lectures. Three Summer Schools were successfully carried on in England. Finland was so successful in its

first attempt that it proposes to hold a Summer School every year. These gatherings give a good opportunity for making new friendships and cementing old ones. Mr. D. N. Dunlop was the pioneer in this work, and must be pleased to find others treading in his steps.

Hungary has now its Theosophical Magazine, and the Swiss Section has begun the issue of a monthly *Bulletin. Le Théosophe*, admirably edited by M. Gaston Revel, has a child, *Le jeune Théosophe*.

The T. S. in Bohemia is working very hard and well, and stands firmly for liberty of thought. Australasia and New Zealand go steadily on, the rate of their progress increasing year by year. The Netherlands has sent off a daughter Section, that in the Dutch Indies. Italy is marked by its vigorous literary propaganda. Russia had the happiness of seeing the full acquittal of its noble General Secretary on a charge of blasphemy, brought because a writer in her review had remarked that Constantine was not morally a success. South Africa is ploughing a not very fertile soil with much devotion and steady industry. Switzerland has a very difficult field of work, but is hopeful for the future. Our young Burmese Society is making a great success, and is winning several Bhikkhus into Theosophical work. It is sending to the Adyar Library the Burmese version of the Pāli Piṭakas, a very welcome gift, and its representatives have brought with them a beautiful brass Buddha as a gift to Adyar.

UNSECTIONALISED COUNTRIES, AND LODGES ATTACHED TO ADYAR

In South America Bro. Adrian A. Madril has fully justified his selection as Presidential Agent, while his predecessor continues his valuable literary work.

We have not heard from Spain, up to the time of writing, but know that all is going on well there. Our earnest Fellow, Bro. Nikoff, wrote saying that he was going to the front with the troops in the Balkan War, and we

have had no further news of him, nor, naturally, of his Lodge. Some sixteen Lodges in Germany have been chartered or are awaiting Charters from Adyar, leagued together in defence of freedom of opinion, and some are in the Undogmatic Federation, so wisely started by our learned brother Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden.

LECTURERS AND WORKERS

We have already mentioned Mrs. Russak's fine work, and the names of others occur above. I must further make special mention of Mrs. Cooper-Oakley's work in Hungary, her indomitable spirit and deep devotion driving to successful toil a suffering body; she has worked in Budapest, and has visited various castles and important country-houses. Mrs. Sidney Ransom made a long and most important tour in Australia, gathering golden opinions. Madame de Manziarly has worked admirably in Germany, Austria and France. Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden, despite his age, has laboured nobly under most difficult circumstances. Herr John Cordes, after working under Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden for the Order of the Star in the East, threw himself energetically into propagand work, and has succeeded in creating an Austrian National Society, for which he has gained the authorisation of the Austrian Government, thanks to the powerful influences which he was able to enlist. In India, our veteran worker Mr. T. Ramachandra Rao has toiled unceasingly, and Mr. Wadia—despite his incessant labours in the publishing department—has proved himself a splendid propagandist, speaking with an eloquence and fire which have fairly astonished his hearers. The venerable Joint General Secretary has been incapacitated for part of the year by illness, but has, as ever, worked hard during the remainder. Miss Codd has proved an acceptable lecturer, and Messrs Hawthorne and Prime have made some tours. Mr. Ernest Wood was on a long lecturing tour when he was laid up by a most serious illness, and for some months

to come he should be careful of his health. Mr. Panday has replaced Miss Browning at Lahore, when she was compelled to leave India by ill-health; he is doing fine work in a difficult place. Many others are working hard and well, and to all these faithful servants the T. S. is debtor.

FINANCE

The Treasurer's Report is, once more, very satisfactory, and Mr. Schwarz is, as ever, a tower of strength, consecrating his fine business ability to the service of the Masters.

The purchase of Shānti Kuñja and Gñāna Geha, spoken of last year, was made, thanks to generous donors, at a cost of Rs. 50,000. Another Rs. 4,000 odd have been spent in laying on water, repairs, etc. The whole has been handed over to the Indian Section, which will receive Rs. 250 a month in rent.

We have also to thank Mr. Charles R. Harvey for his generous gift of Rs. 15,000 towards the purchase of Besant Gardens, thus increasing his already large benefactions.

THE HEADQUARTERS

The students living on the estate have become very numerous, and every room in Leadbeater Chambers and all the bungalows is filled. The electrical installation, under the care of Mr. Ransom, now ably seconded by Mr. Brown, is working admirably and is a source of great comfort. Mr. Best most kindly took charge during Mr. Ransom's well-earned holiday in the hills. The grounds are very much improved, thanks to Mr. Huidekoper's skilful care, and are both beautiful now, and promising for the future.

Our buildings have been increased during the year without any cost—even with a little gain by ground-rent—to the Society. Quarters for Vaishyas have been built by a legacy of Rs. 2,000 from Mr. K. Subbarayadu and Rs. 1,000 from

a widow lady. Justices Sadashiva Iyer of the Madras High Court, and Chandrashekhara Iyer of the Mysore High Court, have nobly come forward at this time of attack on Adyar, and have built themselves houses here. Several additional houses have been built, or are building, by members. All these go to the Society on the death of their present owners.

For the work done in the Vasantā Press by Mr. A. K. Sitarama Shastri no words of praise can be too high; his bindery—built by himself—is a model, and the healthy happy faces of his men and boys show that printing, properly conducted, is a trade that none need dislike. The Publishing House, again, is all that it should be, and the extension, built by our chief architect, Mr. Ranga Reddy, gives room for both display and the despatch of business. Mr. B. P. Wadia is my right hand in all editing and publishing work, and the success of the business is wholly due to his management. His most efficient voluntary helpers—Mrs. Gagarin, Miss de Leeuw, Mrs. Adair, Mr. Dandekar, Mr. Hawthorne, Mr. Beer and Mr. Mehta—are as steady and industrious as if their livelihood depended on their work; Mr. Mettam has lifted from his shoulders the burden of book-keeping. The clerks do their part of the work satisfactorily. Miss Dixon has put in another year's good and useful work at the Chambers, and Mr. Shrinivasarao manages most admirably the Quadrangle and Bhojanashāla. Countesses Olga and Hertha Schack have taken care of us at Headquarters, and have seen to the Guest House; we shall miss them badly when they return to labour in Germany. Mr. Ranga Reddy has shown a genius for economical building, and Mr. Shah has set him free for this by taking over the dairy. Mrs. Van Hook has discovered and looks after a first-class baker, who makes the first good bread I have tasted in India. Mr. Aria keeps all in order in the increasing work of the Recording Secretary, and my good friend, Mr. Soobbiah Chetty finds time, in the midst of his heavy official work, to

smooth my path in countless little ways. Of my honoured colleague, Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, what can I say, save that we are all deeply grateful to him for the invaluable help he gives, and that our reverence for his serene and joyous patience under intolerable wrong increases with the years. Mr. Cooper and Mr. Cordes have left us for work in their respective countries, but Don Fabrizio Ruspoli continues ever to render help to Mr. Leadbeater and to Italy, while Dr. Rocke, Mr. Hubert Van Hook, Mr. Wood and others supply the empty places.

But there are two empty places that none may fill—those of our beloved Alcyone and Mizar. Alcyone's gracious presence and gentle saintliness are sorely missed, but we all rejoice that he is away from the present evil, and that round him and his brother all is bright and pure. May the Lords of Compassion guard the lads, and pardon those who know not what they do.

THE ADYAR LIBRARY

Our learned Librarian was away most of the year, and most efficiently represented the Society at the Oriental Congress in Athens. He has finished the first volume of his standard text of the Minor Upaniṣhaṭs, a work which will bring him fame and reflect credit on the Theosophical Society. We offer him, as our little tribute, the Subba Rao gold medal. The Assistant Director is invaluable, the roundest of men in the roundest of holes. Mr. Ostermann has continued his generous help.

OUR LITERATURE

Mr. Leadbeater has given us this year two volumes on *The Hidden Side of Things*, and he and I together have published an account of our investigations during the summer of 1910, under the title of *Man: Whence, How and Whither*. We hope the book may be as useful as it

is bulky. My own further contributions are the Queen's Hall lectures, a little book, *Theosophy*, in Jack's People's books, and other small works. Mr. Jinarajadasa has published another exquisite little book, *In His Name*. Alcyone has written an admirable booklet on *Education as Service*, which is being translated into various languages; his first book, *At the Feet of the Master*, has just appeared in Esperanto, as well as in Sinhalese and Burmese, among others, and is being put into Braille for the helping of the blind. Mr. Cooper has added two more to his *Manuals of Occultism*. The great work of summarising the *Pranava-Vāda* has been completed by Mr. Bhagavan Das, and the third volume will be on sale in a few weeks. A new Magazine, *The Young Citizen*, begins its career on January 7, 1913.

GONE TO PEACE

India has lost for the time two very notable Theosophists—the Hon. Mr. Krshnasvami Iyer and Mr. Dharamsey Morarji Goculdas. Public life in Bombay and Madras is the poorer for their passing. We have lost the physical help of Mr. Dubrai M. Oza by the bursting of an oil-stove; his body was burned to death. He was an exceptionally useful worker. Dr. Appel has also left a much-suffering body; her last work was given to the School at Madanapalle, and she will be much missed in England, where she led a brave medical crusade against vaccination, vivisection and kindred evils. Peace be to them in their temporary rest.

SUBSIDIARY ACTIVITIES

The Order of Service has grown considerably during the year, and the Round Table, the Golden Chain, and the Lotus Circles all seem to be increasing. The Order of the Star in the East has now about 11,000 members, scattered

over twenty-three countries; it shows extraordinary activity and ever-growing enthusiasm.

The Sons and Daughters of India work steadily and usefully, and the idea of Service to the Empire through the Motherland promises to spread by similar organisations in the West.

The educational work fostered by the Society in India, Ceylon and Burma goes forward. The Central Hindū College and Girls' School flourish exceedingly, and future workers are growing up in both; Mr. Arundale's services have been priceless, and those of Miss Arundale to the education of Indian girls have made an ineffaceable mark. The Delhi Girls' School does well under self-sacrificing Misses Gmeiner and Priest, and the Madura and Vayalpad Schools are progressing. The Madanapalle School still needs outside help in funds, but has grown much in buildings. Mrs. Higgins' School for Buddhist Girls maintains its high level, and repays her years of strenuous toil. But the Buddhist work among boys and in village schools needs more help and thorough re-organisation. Mr. Woodward is successful in Galle, and Mr. Bilimoria in Kandy, but Mr. Moore's work is far too exacting for a single person, and there is imperative need for another European to assist him.

The Olcott Pañchama Schools remain models under the guidance of Miss Kofel, and it is impossible to measure the far-reaching value of these admirably organised institutions, and of the example of self-sacrifice set ever before their eyes in their Superintendent, who has relinquished even her small salary.

The foundation in London of the Temple of the Rosy Cross has begun a movement which is likely to go far. It has been enthusiastically taken up in England and Scotland, and a Temple has been founded in India. The Order is open only to members of the T. S. and is devoted to preparation for the coming of the Supreme Teacher.

THEOSOPHICAL SANNYĀSĪS

A new step has been taken, which has been under contemplation for a considerable time. Some of our Indian members who have passed through the household life, and are free from its obligations, desired to consecrate themselves wholly to the service of the T. S. and of India, renouncing all caste distinctions, property and family life. Seven persons, including a man and his wife, who had fulfilled all their worldly duties, were permitted to take the vows and the robe on December 25th, in the Shrine Room at Headquarters. They will be supported by voluntary hospitality and by the Sannyāsa Fund, of which Mr. B. P. Wadia is Secretary and Treasurer. Those of the above who had property have thrown it into the Fund, after providing for their families. Any who wish to help the movement may contribute to this Fund. Some extensions may later be made for the training of young celibate Theosophical workers under these elders, such Brahmachārīs being free to leave the Order and return to the worldly life; 'lay brethren' may also be attached, who are living in the world. May this effort to serve be blessed.

CONCLUSION

Brethren: You are given a great opportunity, which, rightly utilised, may carry you far. Learn through the present turmoil in India to distinguish the Real from the unreal, the underlying Truth from the veil of passing phenomena. The spiritual life is not disturbed by combat, if the combatant be free from hatred and anger, indifferent to success and failure, peaceful in the midst of strife, calm though surrounded by tumult, fighting for the Right, which is already conqueror in the higher world. Was not the great Scripture of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* given "in the midst between two armies"? Was it not given by the yellow-robed Yogī to His disciple,

and was He not in a high state of consciousness during the giving, while His strong hand was on the reins of the eager white war-horses, ready to plunge into the fray? Did He not utter as the refrain of His matchless discourse: "Therefore fight, O Arjuna"? Will any dare to call the Lord of Yoga unspiritual, because He bade His beloved disciple engage in the strife which had been forced upon him? Therefore stand up, O children of Manu, followers of our great Warrior Master, the Rājput Chief of the Morya clan, resolute to defend our righteous cause. "Taking as equal pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, gird yourselves for the battle; thus shall ye not incur sin." Ours in India is the glorious privilege of standing by our Masters, our true Leaders, in the day of reproach and imputed dishonour. I congratulate you, I congratulate myself, that we are found worthy to defend Their cause.

THE POLICY OF THE T. S.

A discussion on the above subject was held in the large Hall of the Headquarters on December 30, 1912, and proved to be very interesting. It was opened by two speakers who had very harshly criticised the President in the newspapers, and who very properly came forward to put their objections face to face with her. They were listened to respectfully by all, but the rest of the many speakers were all friendly. The points raised were: objection to the association of the E. S. with the T. S.; objection to the headship of the E. S. being held by the President of the T. S.; and the suggestion that she should hand over the first-named post to Mr. Leadbeater; objection to any legal actions connected with the E. S.; objection to bringing the T. S. into a personal suit against Mrs. Besant; objection to the Order of the Star in the East. The President said:—

I think you will agree with me that we have had a very interesting and, I hope, fruitful discussion. The first two speakers put what I might call—if I may be pardoned for saying so—the case against the line of work which I have followed. The remaining speakers have added one or two interesting points in the nature of questions rather than in the nature of opposition.

The first speaker objects to the union between the E. S. and the T. S. Now I would ask you to go back to the early days of the Society, and you will find that the constitution was quite different from the constitution of to-day. At that time the Society was made up of three Sections—the Third Section, the general membership; the Second Section, the pupils of H. P. B. and the pupils of the Masters; the First Section, the Masters Themselves. That is our original constitution. The Society was not ready

for that as it grew in size, and the result was that the Masters withdrew, the First Section was abolished, and the Society remained then with only the ordinary membership and the group of pupils of H. P. B., with one or two disciples of the Masters Themselves. Then, after a time, it was found that the Society was not flourishing, as it was severed from its real Founders.

You must remember that H. P. B. was sent to found the Society by her Master Morya. The head of the outer Society was H. S. Olcott, another disciple of that same Master, and it was by the Masters, through these two disciples, that the Society came to birth and the Colonel was appointed by Them President for life. When the Society, doubting the existence of the Masters, caused the destruction of the First Section of the Society and the withdrawal of the Masters, then H. P. B. and H. S. Olcott endeavoured to remedy the mischief which had been done and to rescue the Society from perishing.

In order to do that, in 1888, Colonel Olcott made the E. S. a definite part of the Society by an Executive Order, and recognised H. P. B. as its Head; she published the statement that the E. S. was intended for the salvation of the Theosophical Society, and to carry out the purpose for which the Theosophical Society was originally formed.

So far, then, as that is concerned, clearly this E. S. conception is older than the more democratic arrangement that we now have; and if there is to be any separation, it is rather the outer membership that should leave the name to the inner, than the inner that should go away and leave the Society to the outer.

But it was suggested by the second speaker: "Why should not Mrs. Besant resign in favour of Mr. Leadbeater?" Because Mrs. Besant was put at the head of the E. S. by H. P. B., its Founder under the Master, and by the Master Himself, who is its Head; and, while life remains to me, I will not resign that position, unless He who

gave it me bids me resign it, and then I will at once lay it down.

As regards the Theosophical Society, it has power in its own hands. I had been the Head of the E. S. since 1891 up to 1907, when the late President, on the order of his Master, nominated me, and the Society elected me. If the Society objected, it was quite easy not to elect me. It might have refused to give me a second office that I was by no means desirous to possess. Next year again the choice will be placed in its hands, and if the Society agrees with Professor Narasimha it has only to refuse to elect Mrs. Besant, and she will cease to be the President of the Theosophical Society. You have not, then, to be patient very long before you can get rid of the double headship if you please.

Then we come to another point, and I suppose I must allude to this in passing—the question of my defending a suit. As a dry matter of fact, the Society has nothing to do with the suit which I am defending. It is not my fault that the Counsel of the plaintiff declared that the question of the tenets of the Theosophical Society—the Theosophical Society having *no* tenets—being involved was a reason for removing the suit from Chingleput to the High Court of Madras. I could not help the plaintiff's Counsel making that statement, and, as I was not in Court, I could not prevent my own Counsel from very naturally accepting that as a reason for the change. The Society has absolutely nothing to do with that suit. I defend it, and I ask for no help. The very suggestion that I would try to take the money of the Society to defend the suit was a suggestion—well, that should never have been made.

Then we come to other actions, which do concern the Society, in which I am the plaintiff, which I am going to bring, or have brought, for the honour of the Society, to defend its Headquarters. On these, the General Council of the Society has approved of my action, and has endorsed what I have done.

Then we come to the suggestion that all who believe certain doctrines should be dissociated from the T. S. How far is that to go? Is every Hindū to leave it, because he holds doctrines the Theosophical Society does not hold? Every Christian, every Mussalmān, every Buddhist? Who is going to be left?

There are only two bases on which such a Society as ours can exist. One, utter liberty of opinion—and that includes everybody; or, a dogmatic basis—so that only those will be admitted who hold those particular views. But you cannot exclude only E. S. members, nor can you exclude only the members of the Order of the Star in the East. They have tried to exclude them in Germany by expelling them from the German Section; and the answer of our General Council to that outrageous proceeding is to request me to cancel the Charter of the German Section on the ground that it is going against the Constitution of the Society.

Then it is said we must not associate the Society with the E. S. or the O. S. E. Why not? Why not as much as you associate Hindūism or any other faith? There is no real association, but there is a common membership—a large common membership. But that exists with regard to every faith. Now the O. S. E. is not as yet a religion. Fifty or sixty years hence I think it may possibly grow into one; but that is only a guess of my own, and binds nobody else. Why then should we take any special action with regard to this single body, when every other religious body is welcomed within our ranks? The late Indian General Secretary, who objected to anything being said in favour of the O. S. E. within the Society, has himself chartered a Lodge of the Ārya Samāj. Surely that ought to be treated in the same way! If you may have Ārya Samāj Lodges, why not Lodges of the O. S. E.?—although we have never asked that such a Lodge should be formed. But, following out the policy of Mr. Bhagavan Das, you are bound to give Charters if any groups of the O. S. E.

should ask for them, for you have already given one to the Ārya Samāj, which is most distinctly a sectarian body.

The fact is, you cannot go against one opinion you dislike, without forcing yourself into going against all opinions. It was said quite truly that animosities arise from differences. I grant it. But I thought the Theosophical Society had partly as its work to teach people to discuss differences of opinion without showing the animosities that arise in the outer world. It seemed to me *that* was one of its aims—that as we saw the world torn by religious animosities, we came forward and said: “Belonging to many faiths, we join together to discuss our differences as brothers, instead of quarrelling over them as enemies.” Are we to give up that noble work, and bind ourselves down to a particular set of views?

But then we are told: “Oh, your O. S. E. is a personal cult.” What if it is? As a matter of fact, it is nothing of the kind. We have members in the Order who worship Shri Kṛṣṇa; we have others who worship Jesus; we have others who worship the Christ; we have others who simply think of a great Teacher, and do not give any special name to the Teacher. The O. S. E. does not say a particular Teacher is coming, but *a* Teacher, the coming World-Teacher; and people name Him according to their religious beliefs, and according to their personal prepossessions.

There is no one personal cult within the O. S. E., but, if there were, it would be within its right; for other members have personal cults. Why, I know quite well among you those who worship Viṣṇu, worship Shri Kṛṣṇa, worship Mahādev, worship Lakṣhmi, worship Sarasvatī. Are we to say that none who worship These are to belong to the Theosophical Society? Are we to say to the worshippers of Shri Kṛṣṇa: “You shall not speak about the divine Object in whom you believe, and against you the platform of the Theosophical Society is to be closed”?

What kind of bigotry is this, coming up in the thirty-eighth year of our life? We have been free until now, and some of us intend to remain free until the end. Tolerance does not mean tolerating the opinions you agree with: it means tolerating the opinions with which you disagree; and that is the point that one or two of our speakers and writers seem entirely to forget.

The brother who addressed us does not agree with certain views; but I don't want to compel him. I don't ask him to agree with me. I do not say *he* ought to go out of the Society because he holds those views, but he tells me that *I* ought because I hold mine. Why? Why should I leave the Society any more than he?

I can tell you, as a dry matter of fact, that if you thought of excluding from office all the members of the E. S., as Mr. Bhagavan Das demands, there would be little left of the Theosophical Society after you had done it. Such a proposition has been placed before the General Council—that no member of any such body should be allowed to take office in the Society, and that if any such member holds office, he should resign. The General Council has met that with a declaration that it would be an intolerable outrage upon individual liberty, that it would prevent the acceptance of office by any self-respecting man or woman. And certainly I believe that to be true.

Professor Narasimha says it is a hardship to the members of the Society to have the E. S. in it. Why? You need not come into it. No one is ever invited to enter it. It is a pure act of individual choice and inclination; and what right have people outside to dictate what we should believe, and what we should do, in matters of the spiritual life? We do not want to dictate to any other what God he shall worship, what Teacher he shall bow before, but we claim that in the inner sanctuary of our own experience we shall be allowed freedom without being insulted, as all others are allowed it within the limits of the Theosophical Society.

But it is said we are "students and not teachers". Then we ought not to issue any books; we ought not to give any lectures; we ought to do nothing but meet together to study, if this distinction is to be kept up. But where does the limit begin? May students become teachers who know very little, while those who know a great deal are forbidden to utter their teachings? That seems to be the only logical conclusion to which we can come; and you would have to draw your line very low, for a Master once said: "There is not one member of the Theosophical Society who cannot find someone more ignorant than himself, from whom he is able to remove part of that ignorance." But to do that is to be a teacher. Does it mean, then, that the moment a speaker gets beyond our own individual knowledge, that moment he must not be allowed to teach, or to lecture, or to write a book? If so, our progress will not be very rapid in the days to come, and we shall be tied down to what we already have.

Then comes up the question of Leagues. I am responsible for those, and I will tell you why I founded them. I had heard a great deal said during the life-time of Colonel Olcott about the Theosophical Society being a Buddhist organisation. He was himself a Buddhist; he had founded many Buddhist schools, and done much noble work in the Buddhist community. So the people said: "The Society is Buddhist." As Miss Severs mentioned, a large number of people come into the Society wanting to do some useful work. I could not at first see how these people could be prevented from dragging the Society with them into their various ideas and views, and so I finally said: "Let those who agree come together and work together on their special line, but without committing the Society, and without committing a Lodge, to any particular line of work." And that is what we have done.

We had a League against vivisection. Mrs. Charles was very angry. "You are spoiling the neutrality of the

Society," she said; "will you give me a League for vivisection?" (The other was *anti-vivisection*.) I wrote back in effect: "If you will send me an application saying that you regard vivisection as coming under the idea of Universal Brotherhood, I shall be ready to authorise the formation of your League." But we never got any further. I never had the application, and I imagine the request was only written in order that I might say "No," and that she might then say that I was against neutrality and favoured one view rather than another. As I said "Yes," nothing else happened.

Now, for the greatest part, the Leagues are composed of people who want to work. They used to come to us and say: "What shall I do?" Now when they come I say: "Go and work in one of the Leagues; find one of them that you agree with, and if you cannot find one make a new one and then we will authorise it." So no one is refused a good line of work along which he wishes to go. It seems to me that is far the better plan. We are not committed to any one of these Leagues. But, on the other hand, those of you who agree work together in them, and they very often draw non-Theosophists into their body and so gradually popularise Theosophy.

Now, deep as is my own belief in the existence of Masters, and utterly sure as I am that if that belief passes away from the hearts of the majority this Society will perish, I am the first to defend the right of any member not to believe, as I am the first to defend the right of other members to believe.

But what I stand against, and what makes a few people very angry with me, is that I claim the same liberty for the believer as for the non-believer; that while I defend the right of the sceptic to proclaim his scepticism, I also defend the right of the believer in the great Teachers to declare the fact of his belief. Is it not better so? If he is wrong, you will be able perhaps to convert him from his belief; while if he is right, he

may bring into your life a light that was never lighted in it before.

I am in favour of free speech, free opinion, free thought. I believe it is the condition of all growth in truth. But I am against the limiting of some people in order to suit a few other people in the Society who do not even agree among themselves as to how far the scepticism should go.

Mr. Bhagavan Das desires the teaching of the Impersonal; but the atheist would object even to that, and the atheist has as good a right in the Theosophical Society as I have. Where will you stop, if you begin to lay down belief and non-belief, worship or non-worship, as the condition of holding office?

Then it is suggested that it would be better, in order to avoid certain difficulties, that I should not sign as President. Well, I do not mind. I can do a great deal without adding P. T. S. to the bottom of any letter. But the way it arose was that I offered, in order to keep the Society more in touch with Headquarters, to write a quarterly letter. Well then, that was labelled the 'Presidential letter', not by me, but by the General Secretaries who received it. Frankly, I did not think that people were so fault-finding in petty matters. If members are to complain about my signing "Annie Besant, P. T. S." I am as willing to drop the letters as the office, the moment I am not wanted in it. So for the future I will write the letter without putting the initials P. T. S. after it. What does it matter, dear friends? You all know I am the President.

But I will tell you one thing that showed to me a great change in public opinion. In the West I hold a certain public position, and when I joined the Society they said the Society had made a great gain in converting Mrs. Besant. When I was elected as President of the Theosophical Society, the London newspapers remarked that Mrs. Besant had been honoured by being made

President of the Theosophical Society. That is to say, the position was reversed. Before, the Society gained by converting me; now, to be made President of the Society is regarded as an honour to myself. And so I hold. But it shows how much the Society has risen in public opinion; how it is now thought that it is an honour, in the face of the world, to be placed in the seat of the President.

And now there is one question I should like you to consider: are all 'subsidiary activities' to be rejected, as one speaker said? I feel rather responsible for these. The Colonel used to put all the things together in the *Annual Report*, so that the Buddhist Schools and the Central Hindū College, and a number of other things, all came in as part of the report of the Society, and I said to him one day: "Colonel, wouldn't it be better to put those in as 'subsidiary activities', because some of our members do not agree with them?" He thought it over, and adopted the idea; and under that name the whole of these movements now appear. I am not inclined, unless there is a strong expression of opinion, to cancel this. The Society has gained much credit from its Buddhist Schools, from the Central Hindū College at Benares, from its Pañchama Schools, and from many others of these activities. It gains from them, and unless I have a request from a majority of the Society, I shall keep those exactly as Colonel Olcott left them, and as they are; adding under that neutral title everything that is not purely Theosophical, so that the Society, as such, may not be held responsible for anything outside its own work.

There is another point that I think it might perhaps be well for you to consider, as the election of a President will soon be before you. The General Council next February twelve-month will have to nominate my successor. I go out in July, 1914. Make up your minds whether you want as President a nonentity, or a person of ability and weight in the world. There are plenty of nonentities

among you, whom you can choose. The only difficulty will be that you want a two-thirds' vote of the Society in order to elect a President, and a nonentity in one country is not likely to be known over the other countries; so that there is a certain practical difficulty in the way of carrying out that plan. But still I think that is what a few of you want; you want a President who will do nothing, and then he won't offend anybody. If you want a person who is known, who is of weight, who has formed opinions, then you must not try to gag that person's mouth and bind that person's limbs.

No one more than myself has declared the absolute liberty of thought within the Society. I have been defending within the last year or two the liberty of Dr. Steiner, the General Secretary of Germany, to the full statement of his own opinions, his right of publishing them, of declaring them, of sending about into other countries speakers who preach them. It is his right to do it. We print his views: we sell his books. But I am against him when he tries to make his opinions binding upon everyone who comes within the German Section of the Theosophical Society. That is where the difficulty arose. Freedom for each, compulsion for none—that is my platform, and so long as I am President, for that I stand.

And I will ask you, finally, not to make a mistake. There is no crisis in the Theosophical Society at the present time. The Society is not in the very slightest danger. We have twenty-two Sections. There is not a breath of trouble in twenty of these. The trouble here in India, in the twenty-first, is a very small one, made by two or three newspapers and by a number of people whom I could count on my two hands. The Society has more than 5,000 members in India. Less than a score of members cannot make a crisis in a great Society like ours. Why, there is not even a crisis in the Indian Section, let alone a crisis in the Theosophical Society! Nothing of the sort is known. You can see it from the election of your

General Council by the Indian Section; you can see it in the election of the new General Secretary, Pandit Iqbal Narain Gurtu; you can see it in this Convention. The vast majority of members of this Convention are members of the Indian Section. A thousand Indians are here, and where is the crisis? I have given this opportunity that criticism might be directed against me. I have thrown open this conference, in order that everything that could be said should be said, and you, who fill the hall, have listened with perfect patience and courtesy to *two* members who have expressed their adverse opinions! And less than that is the proportion of those who are discontented in the Indian Section.

If you want to break the Society, follow the advice given you in this by Mr. Bhagavan Das. He is very dear to me —although he loves me not. I honour him for his learning; I respect him for the purity of his life; I believe that in the whole of this his motive is pure and right and good; although I think that his eyes for the time are blinded by anger, and that his views are distorted by personal dislike, through which nothing can be clearly seen. And so I repeat to you what I said in closing your Sectional business yesterday. Do not let love for me be shown by animosity against those who oppose me. Let no angry word be spoken against him, or against those who think with him. They are only a handful, friends, but that gives them a right to the fuller freedom of speech; it is not well that a vast majority should do anything to hinder the liberty of a small minority who take other views. If they write against me in the papers, let them write; if they ascribe to me bad motives, leave it to my life to answer them, and not to the pens of my friends.

If the Society is attacked, defend it; if the Society is slandered, speak up for it. The Society is our spiritual Mother who has brought us into the world, into the spiritual life; so we must defend her and prevent insult

to her, for the Mother must not be insulted while the son has tongue with which he can speak in her defence.

But leave me to defend myself. I am strong enough to do it—so few the opponents, so many the lovers. Thousands in every land give me love and trust; shall I complain that some few look on me with dislike, with mistrust, with apprehension? It is said that you destroy an enemy only when you win him to be a friend. Leave me to try to win the friendship of these few good and earnest men, who only dislike me because they do not understand me; because, not really knowing me personally, they fancy that I have some terrible motives, which I know not why they should ascribe to me. If you speak against them, they will be driven further and further away. If you are unkind, there is less chance of winning them; and I do not despair of seeing these good brothers of ours, in a year or two, among my most affectionate friends, and that is the object I place before myself as the result of our discussion on the policy of the President.

Supplement to this Issue

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