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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*To the 82nd International Convention of the Theosophical Society
Adyar, December 26, 1957*

BY N. SRI RAM, PRESIDENT

Sisters and Brothers:

It is with great happiness that I welcome you to Adyar and to this 82nd Convention of the Society. We are again meeting at Adyar for special reasons and not because of any policy of departure from the practice of holding our annual Conventions ordinarily in alternation at Adyar and Vārānasi. I pray that while you are here you may enjoy in an abundant measure that peace and upliftment which are ever to be found in this place, regarded as the Masters' Home by our late revered President, Dr. Annie Besant.

We come to a Convention such as this in a spirit of dedication to a cause which we might well regard as the highest one can conceive, a cause which, when it prevails, will bring manifold blessing to humanity. We come here not merely to transact the Society's annual business, to have talks and discussions on important subjects, but also to steep ourselves while we are here in the atmosphere of a Wisdom which represents the highest and fullest truth that the human intellect can compass, withal a Wisdom which has a vital bearing on every

aspect of our living. The purer the truth, the deeper it is, the more it penetrates, when one is open to it, into every recess of one's being. There is no single aspect of one's thought or action which it then does not modify and transform.

There are many ways of service needed and open in the conditions that obtain today, many matters with regard to which a change is urgently needed. All these undoubtedly call for our support, and when possible, our participation having regard to one's capacities, circumstances and special responsibilities. Yet above every change in external conditions, every activity of reform, whether political, social or any other, there is the need radically to change and reform oneself. For as is the individual, so is the world, and we do well and most effectively when we begin at that end which is ourselves. There are many Theosophists all over the world today, not to speak of those who have gone before, who can testify to the fact that because of Theosophy and its inspiration they are different from what they would have been otherwise. So completely does the Wisdom transform our

viewpoint and every relationship in life, if it be not mere words but an understanding which touches the depths of our being, that the change amounts to nothing less than a revolution. Revolution is a word which has left large trails in history. But what is needed is not a revolution in the ordinary sense, which is but a senseless play of violence, an eruption of blind elemental forces, based on the reaction of every suppressed element, but a revolution of renewal, restoration and beauty such as takes place in Nature when life that has been asleep begins to awake, and every tree, having put off its out-worn clothing, puts on a garb of fresh green leaves and blossom. The word "revolution" is not inapt to describe so complete a change, whether in Nature or in man, which is wrought by a process that seems to uncoil depths of different sorts till then latent and asleep.

In the face of the need that obviously exists for some central change from which all other desirable changes will ensue, should there not be one organization such as the Theosophical Society, including men and women of every religion, nationality and race, of every temperament, the simple as well as the learned, to stand, however inadequately, for this aim? But because the aim is a change in the individual, the organization as such, apart from its members, can play only an accessory part. Just as when we say Beauty, the call is to the individual to respond to that beauty, so does Wisdom, though it can be applied to corporate affairs, call first for an individual awakening. A change that involves one's whole being cannot be brought about by methods such as are used to acquire mere learning; it has to begin at a deeper level than that at which we make our mental dispositions. There has to be released in the individual a current that creating for itself an open field operates to bring about a

closer relation between him and all else that exists. We put what we know or feel to be the truth in such words as are available; but the words by themselves or any verbal understanding makes only one layer among many other layers that constitute those settled parts of ourselves from which we habitually act. What is needed to guide us to a living appreciation of Truth, which is a truth about ourselves and life in general, is an inward approach that keeps us open to everything about us, including our fellowmen, an openness to understand and sympathize, which is true Brotherhood. Theosophy is in its outer form a synthesis of all that is true in any philosophy, religion or science, whether of the past or the present. But it is a truth of which the living essence has to be discovered in oneself. The Society exists to propagate the truth that can be stated in various forms; but first there must be a reflection of the truth to be realized in our own lives. The success of our work as a Society will depend not merely on the amount of propaganda we put out, the number of meetings and lectures at which we thresh out problems, but upon there being members in every part of the world who are wells of understanding, who are nuclei for the spiritual expressions of the movement and eager to do what is required of them individually.

Mr. James S. Perkins writes in his Report on the activities of the American Section that our members in some places are "too diffuse in their search for Truth, wandering at random along too many trails". When that is the case, one has to ask oneself: what is it that one is seeking? Is it some satisfaction for self, sensation of some sort, or is it the Truth, which alone can fill our hearts, because of the deep connection between what we are down here and the Truth which is basic to our existence.

Many thoughtful people, quite outside the Society, feel that humanity today has reached a turning-point. But we must realize that the turn it takes will depend not only on the few at the top and the military and political factors they manipulate—though these have their immediate significance—but upon humanity developing a new attitude and a new understanding of itself, based on its own essential unity. All that the statesmen can give is a temporary peace, which has to be consolidated by the will of the peoples concerned, and then fructified by the seeds of a wisdom that will dawn upon the heart and mind when they are free from the agitations created by themselves.

In a long evolutionary view, the change that has to take place is a change from a blindly outrushing and re-active mind, caught in a whirlpool of self-interest, seeking sensation in every form, to a mind that has achieved a measure of freedom from this turmoil and permits itself to be moved from beyond by a higher, kindlier, more universal nature, present potentially in every man, and spoken of as *Buddhi* both in Indian philosophy and Theosophical literature. Even though we may not be ready to ascend that sublime peak which is like a pure peak of the Himalayas bathed in sunlight, lifted from the clouds, yet it is possible to gain a foothold and a standpoint from which there can be a clear vision of the fundamentals which enter our lives. There has to be on the part of humanity at large, or a leading section thereof, an orientation different from what obtains with regard to the matters which now engage its interest.

The new age that one hears so freely spoken of, designated by different terms, must at least be lighted by a ray that will alter in some measure the value we assign to man as an experiencing, unfolding subject, as against tech-

nology and all other material means for shaping outer conditions more in accord with his inner needs and development. For this we must realize that the mind cannot achieve by its own activity, however intense, that perspective wherein alone it can find its equilibrium, because of its being a mind conditioned by its own reactions, which constantly set up one set of interests against another. The more we progress in technology the worse becomes the imbalance. Technique and the mind that invents the technique are both tools at their respective levels. It depends on man, who is a superior being, more than any tool, whether he will use the means he has to destroy and degrade himself, or to serve that Divine nature in himself in which is the harmony he is intended to manifest.

As one reads the various Reports, one realizes that the problems of the Sections are like the colors of the spectrum, not the same everywhere; they vary from one to another, according to conditions. From Toronto in Canada, the General Secretary, Lt.-Colonel E. L. Thomson, writes that though "all in all the conditions are satisfactory," the very abundance of wealth that is being created in Canada, causing its present preoccupations, "obscures somewhat the spiritual aspect". It is to be expected that there will be difficulty in interesting people in things of importance, that to them are intangible, while the general mood is that of hurrying to carve their places economically under the sun. This, however, is not a disturbing problem, and is likely to pass with the present rush of the country's economic progress.

The General Secretary for Mexico, Señor de la Peña Gil, says that in that Section they had to drop some Lodges for different reasons, one of them for having become "polluted and suffocated by spiritism". There are many places,

particularly in Central and South America, where there are organizations for so-called spiritual purposes, generally under some leader who makes high claims and takes on the role of a Guru. The influence of these bodies, the members of which sometimes come into the Theosophical Society, tends to confuse the minds of the public as to what Theosophy really is. The only way, so far as I can see, to keep the Society free from all influence alien to its character is to present the Wisdom in such purity that there is no room in it for any motive of self-interest, no encouragement for achieving self-importance, which are blinding in their effects. Our duty is to strike the pure note of Truth,

so far as we can manage it, leaving it to those concerned to respond to it or not in their freedom. This does not mean an attitude of unconcern with regard to them; nor does it exempt us from the trouble to present what we have to say in a form suited to their particular interest and needs. But it is where there is a danger of mixing up different types of appeal that one realizes how important it is for the Society to maintain itself as a pure channel of the Wisdom, free from every influence tending to degrade or deflect it from its proper purpose.

Another Section which in its Report adverts to peculiar conditions is the

(Continued on Page 18)

THE POETRY OF ROBERT NORWOOD

BY ELSIE POMEROY

Robert Norwood, the brilliant orator and distinguished rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City, was well known throughout the United States and to a somewhat less extent—alas!—in his native Canada. Robert Norwood, the greatly gifted poet, was but little known in either country. The one gift, associated with the living voice and personality, naturally overshadowed the equally great gift which unfortunately is usually related only to the printed page. Since his passing in 1932 the memory of his oratory is fading, even the memory of his striking personality is beginning to grow dim. Meanwhile, more serious attention may be diverted to the study of his poetry and its proper appraisal.

A few biographical notes may be here included which will reveal his Canadian birth and training. He was born at

New Ross, Nova Scotia, in 1874, the son of the Reverend Joseph Norwood, who, to use the words of the poet, "handed him the torch." He received his early education in the Province of Quebec but returned to Nova Scotia where he attended King's College at Windsor. There he came under the influence of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts who was Professor of English at that time. Soon Norwood's poetic gift brought him to the special attention of Roberts and on many a future occasion Norwood paid tribute to the guidance, the inspiration, and the comradeship of his former master.

Parish work in Nova Scotia was followed by work in Montreal and later in London. In 1919, he accepted a call to St. Paul's Church, Philadelphia. Six years later he became rector of St. Bartholomew's Church which was situated

in the centre of the wealthiest and most exclusive district of New York City. For seven years he preached Sunday after Sunday to the crowds who thronged the edifice attracted hither by the poet's message and personality.

With the exception of *Issa*, which was published the year before his death, the poet's eight volumes of poetry were written during the years he spent in London and Philadelphia. Undoubtedly the poetic gift, as well as his physical and mental energy, was going into the sermons at St. Bartholomew's Church. Nevertheless he left behind him a body of work entitled to a permanent place in Canadian literature.

His two poetic dramas, *The Witch of Endor* and *The Man of Kerioth*, may be considered first. As the titles indicate, the theme and *dramatis personae* of each are Biblical. Norwood was a lyrical poet, not a dramatist, and although these poems are dramatic in form, they are essentially lyrical narratives in spirit. Both are marked by the richness of philosophic thought for which the poet was justly noted, while there is a distinctive charm in the colour and music of the Scriptural names. The former is the story of Loruhamah's love for Saul. She was the Witch of Endor and, with a cry of anguish, says of Saul:

His body I may have, but not his
soul—
His soul that held me that first night
we met
In Askelon—the soul of Saul that
holds
Me steadfast to the dream that we
may meet
Somewhere beyond the boundaries of
earth,
When love has conquered the indif-
ference
Of all the gods! Destroy his soul and
keep

His body! Pour the wine out—keep
the jar!
Shatter the harp and keep the sound-
less strings!

* * * *

Now by the womanhood that you
despise,
I will not do this thing—not for the
gods,
Who shame their high estate with use
of you!
And though you lead Saul to the gates
of hell,
And hurl him to the lowest pit
thereof,
My love will follow after him; my
tears
Quench the last fire that burns to
torture him;
My cry assail the doors of heaven
until

The gods rise up and bid us enter in!
Hers was a love that endured in spite of
intrigue and persecution, that lived
beyond "the silence of the voiceless
years," and inspired Saul to exclaim in
his closing hours:

Now is the everlasting love of God
Revealed in faithfulness of human
hearts!

The Man of Kerioth has for its theme
the soul of Judas and presents the
theory that Judas betrayed the Master
in his eagerness to force him to assume
the rôle of King of Israel. Judas had
no conception, according to Norwood,
of a spiritual kingdom; there was no
treachery in his heart. Although lack-
ing the spontaneity and much of the
emotional intensity of *The Witch of
Endor* it contains many memorable
passages as indicated by the following.
Mary of Magdala:

The way to Christ must be as you
have said—
Past any need that holds one bound
by love

Of builded things and faith in ancient
law,
Customs and forms. A spirit must be
free
To tread the upper air of day with
him.

Bartimæus:

Ay, that is Christ, but men must
travel far
Before they find the freedom of his
feet.

Three volumes of collected verse are
entitled *His Lady of The Sonnets*, *The
Piper and the Reed*, and *Mother and
Son*. The first—and his first published
volume—derives its title from the se-
quence of thirty sonnets which comprise
a large section of the book. Although
faintly reminiscent of *Sonnets from the
Portuguese* the philosophic note is pre-
dominant. Two sonnets express the
poet's belief in reincarnation; one of
which only is quoted.

Two faces haunt the stillnesses of
sleep.
The first is of a woman I have known
Past years, in many lives, as on a
throne
Within my heart, for whom I daily
keep
Fast and high vigil while deep calls to
deep;
You also stir me, like wind-voices
blown
Through woodland hollows where I
walk alone
When twilight and its shadows slowly
creep;
And I am torn 'twixt love of you and
her—
My dear Dream-Lady of some long
ago—
Till past and present, pausing to
confer,
Determine what I hardly dare to
know:
The faces I have loved and love are
one—

How you have followed me from sun
to sun!

To those who knew the poet person-
ally—the companion who so enjoyed life
and found it a glorious adventure—the
following sonnet will make a special
appeal.

Companion of the highroad, hail! all
hail!

Day on his shoulder flame of sunset
bears,

As he goes marching where the
autumn flares

A banner to the sky; in russet mail
The trees are trooping hither to assail
Twilight with spears; a rank of
coward cares

Creep up, as though to take us un-
aware,

And find their stratagems of none
avail.

Accept the challenge of the royal hills,
And dare adventure as we always
dared!

Life with red wine his golden chalice
fills,

And bids us drink to all who forward
fared—

Those lost, white armies of the host
of dream;

Those dauntless, singing pilgrims of
the Gleam!

The Piper and The Reed is the most
uneven of all Norwood's books. The
majority of the poems have religious
themes but, unfortunately, many of
them are but sermons cast in poetic
form. Of others the extreme opposite
is true. In "Song of Bright Alde-
baran," is presented a poetic interpreta-
tion of creation, the fall of man, and the
gospel of redemption. Compact with
mysticism and profound thought, the
poem concludes as follows:

There shall no lost tall towers be,
No idle aim of art;
No useless joy of minstrelsy,

No ever-empty heart;
No utter silencing of song,
No comrade absent from the throng.

Through pain and trial of the tears,
Lead up the host, O Star!
Lead up, lead up, until the years
Have glorified the scar
That burns upon the brow of man
Aldebaran, Aldebaran!

“After The Order of Melchisedec” is a favourite to many readers of the poetry of Norwood. “Rahab” is another deeply significant poem. It reminds one of that line from “Rabbi Ben Ezra” —“Nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul.” To the reader particularly interested in poetry the title poem could never be forgotten.

God is the Piper—I, the reed
Down by the river for His need.

* * * *

My God had need
Of one more reed—
Had need of me
To make the perfect harmony.

* * * *

Welcome, O Wind!
All hail, O Pain!
One little reed—one little reed,
To fill the Piper’s far refrain,
Is broken till its body bleed;
Glad that the Minstrel Lord doth find
A tone of His eternal need.

Many of the poems in *Mother and Son* reflect the influence of the great sorrow which had come to his life at that time in the death of his only son. There is a strong personal note in “A Hymn To Youth.”

And then I saw them glorious with
light,
As stars grouped in great constella-
tions, spread
Through all the far infinitude of
space:
I saw the young, so eager for the race

Life sets before them—challenging—
and said,
“Brave, glad adventurers, who dare
the night
That we call day, all hail! There are
no dead.”

A monologue, “The Mother of Cain,” is one of the most striking poems in the collection—a poem by means of which the poet denounces the evils of the existing economic system and pleads for the time,

When women calls the word o’ peace
That brings to earth the brotherhood
O’man made one through motherhood.

One of the most striking poems in the book is “The Spinner,” concerning which* Sir Charles G. D. Roberts wrote: “If Robert Norwood had written no other line, his name would live by this one profound and haunting lyric.” As the following stanzas indicate, Norwood, the mystic, sang whimsically of life in an almost playful tune.

Grey wool shirt and stockings, too,
Little patched trousers faded blue,
Hobnailed boots with cowhide
strings—

You are such transcendent things!

Glorious robes of the martyred saints,
With haloes and harps that the artist
paints,

Mean no more to God up there
Than these little-boy things I wear;

For I know that all things blend
Into the dream, and, I contend,
Hobnailed boots and harps are spun
Out of the substance of the sun.

Bill Boram is a dramatic narrative poem of the same type as *Daffodil Fields* and *The Widow In The Bye Street*, those great narrative poems by John Masfield. It is the story of

* From an essay on Norwood’s poetry which was included as an Introduction to *Issa*.

Skipper Bill's conversion, not to any religious creed, but to a realization of God in nature and God in man. It might be called the psychological re-adjustment of a soul to life. It is marked also by descriptive passages of rare beauty, containing the real "tang of the sea" that bespeaks sea-faring ancestors.

The *light* that changed Saul, the persecutor, to Paul, the inspired preacher, shone with the same blinding brilliance from "the blue depths of George Conrad's misted eyes" as he lay helpless on the deck, the victim of Bill Boram's rage.

Bill

. . . shuddered, as a shroud
Plucked by the wind shudders; and
then he spoke:
"God damn the feet that steps upon
a flower,
The fingers that has even blossoms
broke!
God damn to torment o' hell's hottest
hour,
Me for a traitor! . . . Men, I has
betrayed
Beauty! . . . Look at his eyes!"

The converted skipper called:

Let's have the fiddle,
We mean to make o' music one more
beauty
Sent to the world. Most everythin's
a riddle.
An' it ain't easy for to do your duty,
Till you has learned the law o' God
from flowers,
An' sounds o' wind on waves or tree
tops singin'.

Issa — the word means Jesus — the poet called "his spiritual autobiography." This poem of almost two thousand lines is subjective and lyrical, the opposite of *Bill Boram* both in theme and spirit. Naturally it contains many stanzas which express the poet's religious convictions, and always does he emphasize his belief in a gospel, not

of condemnation or punishment, but of compassion, joy and life. Probably in no other single poem is this belief proclaimed with such a ringing challenge as in the stanzas addressed to the "evening bell."

Ring out, ring low, ring high,
Peace among men,
Ring to the darkening sky,
Again, again,
"Courage! He cometh as of old he
came
Compassionate. God sent him, not to
blame;

"But raise the dead and heal
The blind and dumb!"
Ring out, in changing peal,
"Our Lord is come
To meet the insolence of death and
hell!"
Ring out, ring low, ring high, you
evening bell.

Attention is directed to still another aspect, one that is most personal. For many years Norwood spent the summers in his Nova Scotian home at Hubbard's. He died in New York and, after a service in St. Bartholomew's Church, all that was mortal was taken back to Canada and laid to rest at Hubbard's within sight of blue St. Margaret's Bay.

Then let me have a home
Beside the sea,
And, when the time is come,
O let me be
Forgotten in a garden-plot until
My spirit rises with the daffodil.

The last volume to be considered is *The Modernists*, a collection of dramatic monologues, which many competent critics have claimed is Norwood's greatest achievement. In some respects they have been compared to the dramatic monologues of Browning but all are marked by a sympathetic humanitarian-

ism which is so characteristic of Norwood himself. The keen and illuminating sketches of such varied characters as Akenaton, Pharoh's Daughter, Darwin, Socrates, Dante, Joan of Arc, and many others are alike in their fundamental thought or purpose. Each character is presented as one striving to shake off the shackles of convention and creed, while ever struggling upward to some higher plane where the individual may realize Truth, Beauty, and Freedom in a much greater degree.

From "Socrates:"

Out of this cup I drink to all good friends:
Wayfarers of the world who bravely seek
After the truth: all minstrelsy of song,
And healers of the gentle touch, and those
Who dare untrodden roads for no reward
Save joy of finding out another path
For clodded feet that falter on old ways
Leading nowhither, and the gospelers
Who laugh tears out of tired eyes that weep
The ancient error and the fault that clings.

From "Paul to Timothy:"

Christ is not quickly learned, and gradual
Is the progression of a soul to Him.
Hard strove I through the barriers of thought,
And one by one dissolved the old ideas
That misted over mountains of desire;
Before I found that all things beautiful,
Like lilies of the open field, are spread

Beneath the benediction of His love.

From "Mary:"

Teach every woman how Maid Mary's Son
Is God's oath that no mother bears in vain;
That every pang of child-birth is the price
Paid for the coming of a starry Christ;
That all the angels fold their wings and kneel
When God is born again!

The last monologue, "Voice of the Twentieth Century," is Robert Norwood speaking for himself. No more appropriate conclusion to this study could be made than by quoting the prophetic lines of the last stanza:

Man's night is now behind him and the day
Leaps up in glory burgeoning the hills.
What lies behind us is the nursery
With babies' baubles scattered on the floor—
Toy soldiers, arks and pictured fairy books—
The Man smiles kindly at them as he goes
Forth to his labour! There is much to do:
The winding trails of ancient Ignorance
Must be made straight—a highway for the King;
The hills that threatened us must be brought low;
For there are songs of gladness in the wind,
There is a chord of music from the trees—
A noise of distant thunder that proclaims
The coming of the God whose name is Man!

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

From the latest Annual Report issued from Adyar, I cull the following information. The total number of members is now 33,904, an advance of more than a thousand over the previous year. The National Sections number forty-five with a total of 1366 lodges. It may be of interest to know that the numerical order of the six largest sections is as follows: India with a membership of 6802; United States, 4194; England, 3096; Netherlands, 1641; France, 1429; Argentine, 1397. Canada is fourteenth on the list with a membership of 394.

* * * *

In October 1956 this Section formulated an Animal Welfare Committee which has been working assiduously ever since with excellent results. I circularized the Lodges on its behalf and had a good response although a few considered that such activity was outside the work of the Society. However, the response on the part of individual members has been wonderful and I want to let them know how much their attitude has helped along the good work. The few really active members here in Toronto, in conjunction with some ardent workers in Vancouver have distributed picture-pamphlets and other literature, and to quote from their report, "The result of telling the truth about slaughter-house procedure has been spectacular." From being a subject which was practically barred from ordinary conversation and certainly ignored by most Animal Welfare Societies, the topic has been widely discussed. The pictures helped the story of the unfortunate animals and became graven on the hearts of animal lovers all over the country. A giant petition was forwarded to the Prime Minister and at last action has been taken. In December the Government brought in

legislation for the complete protection of slaughter-house animals. The Bill is Number 241 and is an Amendment to the Criminal Code and now awaits its Second Reading. If this is carried and becomes law, we hope it will be a stepping stone to our ultimate aim, "A Bill of Animal Rights".

* * * *

Our magazine continues to make headway. Here are a few items of interest. The Organizing Secretary of the T.S. in West Africa, including the recently independent State of Ghana, writes for authority to use the article "The Theosophical Movement" which we published in 1955. The reason, he states, is "this succinct subject sums up the matter in a very few words and would be of great use for purposes of propaganda and information to enquirers". This article, by the way, appeared in *News and Notes* of the English Section. In *The Golden Lotus* we read, "among Theosophical magazines *The Canadian Theosophist* has always occupied a place of distinction because of the calibre of its editors and membership of the Canadian Section of the T.S." And from a letter from a member of another organization ". . . we are interested in a liberal approach to the suppressed matters of T.S. policy, and particularly appreciative of your excellent review of *Candles in the Sun*. It is the only review coming from the T.S. which shows any fairness to Lady Emily and treats the issues involved with the necessary frankness and intelligent evaluation. Congratulations!"

* * * *

As stated in a previous issue I am now in Toronto and am able to be more active than heretofore. I recently delivered lectures at the Toronto Lodge and Phoenix Lodge, Hamilton. My trip to Montreal was postponed owing to climatic conditions but I hope to go there when the weather moderates. I

will visit the other lodge in Hamilton next week and in March hope to go to Kitchener.

* * * *

I regret to announce the deaths of the following members and friends. Mrs. Sarah G. Fowler of the Toronto Lodge passed away this February. She was a new member having joined only in April of last year. Mrs. Edith Force who died in January was not a member but a long-standing subscriber to our magazine. Mrs. Nan Horn "was a Theosophist for over forty years and was for some twenty years a member of the United Lodge of Theosophists in New York City. She died in Toronto early in February. During the time she was in the city she helped in the work of the Lodge and was noted for her readiness to work and for her faculty of selecting just what most needed doing. Her gentle sweetness of character endeared her to all." Our deepest sympathy is extended to all relatives and friends.

* * * *

I welcome the following new members into the Society: Mr. Richard G. Hawkins of Montreal Lodge, demitted from the English Section; Mrs. Annie Dorman and Mrs. Pamela M. Saul of the Hamilton Lodge; Mr. Stephen Sitoski, Mr. Alec Pedersen and Mrs. E. Loraine Scott of The Toronto Lodge; Mrs. Edith E. Dearden, Mrs. Sarah Campbell, Mr. Stanley Gainham, Mrs. Stanley Gainham, Mrs. Isabelle Brewerton and Miss Mavis I. Taylor of the Phoenix Lodge; Mr. Claude Poissant and Mrs. Monique Poissant as Members-at-Large.

* * * *

Convention at Wheaton. Canadian Theosophists always have a very warm welcome at this Convention. I can think of no better way of having a really enjoyable and instructive week

than by attending—mixing with the enthusiastic throng, getting new ideas, hearing fine speakers and being in the very throes of theosophical endeavour. I for one will certainly be there, and am wondering if we could get enough to charter a bus, which would be economical, or failing that, I know of at least three who are going from Hamilton and Kitchener in their own cars and are willing to take passengers. How about it? If you are interested get in touch with me by mail or by telephone (WA. 1-9836) and let us arrange something. Reservations for accommodation begin March 1. I have the rates. The Convention begins July 12 and lasts till the 16th. The President, Mr. Sri Ram, will be there. Quite a few of our members have suggested a convention of our own, but as that is not practical, let us do the next best thing and go and visit our cousins south of the Line. We will get ideas, I am certain of that.

E. L. T.

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The following items from the Minutes of the meeting of the General Council held at Adyar on Dec. 25 and 28 1957 will doubtless be of interest to our readers.

The dissident members who left the French Section some eight years ago formed themselves into an independent association named Centre d'Etude Theosophiques. They asked to be affiliated with Adyar under Rule 35 (b) and if group affiliation were not possible under this Rule, then for individual affiliation for so many of its members who might desire it. The Council decided that Rule 35 (b) was not applicable in this case and also that it would not be desirable to permit individual affiliation of the members of so large a group. The dissidents were advised to forget past controversies and to rejoin

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All Letters to the Editor, Articles and Reports for Publication should be sent to The Editor,

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the French Section. However, the new group had asked for a solution "that would respect our autonomy and in no way connect us with the French Section".

The amendment to Rule 10 was passed on a vote of 37 to 1. The amended Rule provides that the names of not more than three nominees for the office of President shall be submitted to the voting members. "In the event of the death or withdrawal of any one of the three receiving the highest number of nominations the name of the next on the list receiving the highest number of nominations shall be substituted". This amendment will prevent a recurrence of the situation which was created in the last election when Mr. Sidney Cook

withdrew after accepting nomination. Further amendments to Rule 10 are being considered and will be put forward for voting in August 1958.

The age limit for obtaining the consent of the parent or guardian before joining the Society was lowered. Rule 28 now reads, "Every person of ten full years of age, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour, shall be eligible for membership in the Society, but those under the age of eighteen shall be admitted to membership only with the written consent of parent or guardian."

The suggestion put forward by the Canadian Section that the voting for the office of President be on a preferential basis was considered and rejected. "Members were unanimously of the opinion that this system of voting was too complicated in a Society of our nature including Sections all over the World." The word 'unanimously' doubtless refers to the members actually present at the December meeting; we have no recollection of this motion having been submitted to the General Secretaries.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Mr. Barr:

The juxtaposition of your excellent review of *Candles in the Sun*, and Mr. Spinks' address in the Nov.-Dec. issue is particularly felicitous as illustrating the precise reasons why the organizational unity for which Mr. Spinks longs cannot take place—in addition to other obstacles of more personal nature in various instances.

It is just this disgraceful period, of part of which the undersigned was eye-witness as a member of the T.S., and whose heritage and practices are still unexpended, that keeps so many of us

from any formal association with the body in which it occurred and in which so many of its ideas are still pursued. To carry the name of such an organization is to tacitly sponsor and encourage with one's own influence those things which it fosters. Merely admitting to the classification of "Theosophist," and quite outside the T.S., is sufficient of a personal burden and discredit—as many of us have found in the hard way—without compounding it by actual membership in the guilty organization.

The situation of course is not as bad for members of such a group as the Canadian Section, who have rather well managed to get themselves known and distinguished for loyalty to the original purpose and teachings of Madame Blavatsky, and hence have avoided the tar-brush to a degree through merited karma.

Mr. Spinks has specifically made it known in the past that what he wishes is to have everybody join the T.S. as the solution to the problem of disunity—and never mind what is taught or practised there. Just to all belong to one single organization—that is all that is needed. On the same basis a general union with the Catholic Church would serve the purpose equally as well. For us black sheep who refuse union, that would indeed be preferable; because the Church at least lets one know in a very reliable manner exactly what he is getting into upon joining. Not so with the T.S. If you join it, you can expect to become identified with just about *anything*; anything, that is, except the Theosophy of H.P.B. and the Masters.

A great deal of diversity of opinion within the Society was expected and welcomed by those Personages; but sane diversity of opinion is one thing, and sheer psychosis is another.

Any real study of the works of H. P. B. and of the *Mahatma Letters* should give an idea of where legitimate

diversity left off and insanity began, from their point of view. But in the T.S. at large those are sadly neglected studies.

Even if anything of the sort would be welcomed in the T.S., no formula can be given to distinguish legitimate Theosophy from the various pseudos and psychisms. Any such formula would be a creed and a crystallization and would freeze everything into a mold which might well be technically correct Theosophy, but from which the life of individual enterprise, study, and exploration has departed—as is the case in some places now.

It is the spirit and the general level of intelligence and education of an organization, not any formal declaration or constitution, that determines such an issue. An occultly generated body has a life of its own that will take care of such matters up to the point where that body disintegrates or becomes corrupt. When that happens, you can no more get it back on the path than you can resurrect a dead body by chanting the formula of a tonic over it. You have to let it go and try something else. The parallel is not quite complete, because the T.S. has had the peculiar ability to be deceased as to the main organization while some component parts are quite lively, your own being one of them. But to some of us on the side-lines, it is a question whether the immobilization of the live limbs entrained by the attachment is worth while.

Mr. Spinks claims that the original split was over personalities and that doctrinal differences were not involved. To be qualified for speaking as authoritatively as he does, he should know more about the facts. At least two very violent doctrinal differences were involved; the "Mars-Mercury-Earth" wrangle and the authenticity of the Prayag Message. Personal frictions were entangled with them, and person-

ality-minded persons fix their minds on these correspondingly. Even more importantly, a basic difference in attitudes was involved. H. P. Blavatsky held that the chief and only purpose of the T.S. was to bring about universal brotherhood by the teaching of *Theosophy*; and to her, no substitutes would do. (Her view on this is fully borne out by the present condition of the world.)

H. S. Olcott had much the same view that Mr. Spinks has; never mind the mere question of truth, or the health or unhealth of psychic practices; just have an organizationally united body, and all will be well.

That split existed in violent form, as *Theosophical Notes* has been showing, long before the "Judge Case" and the official split; H.P.B. and the Masters could not prevent or heal it. I do not think Mr. Spinks can.

Sincerely,

Victor Endersby.

"CANDLES IN THE SUN"

[The following comments on *Candles in the Sun* were extracted from an informal letter (not intended for publication) received by a subscriber to the magazine from a friend who has been a member of both the Point Loma and the Adyar Societies and whose years of work for Theosophy are indicative of his deep and heart-felt interest in the Theosophical Movement.]

This book is a peep-in to three distinct yet not unrelated things: the inner life of Emily Lutyens, the story of Krishnamurti, and the history of the Adyar T.S. and its relationship to Krishnamurti. A peep-in, because though it gives a very definite whiff of atmosphere, it does not by any means convey a full picture and is so sparsely documented that no serious historian can take it as of much weight or significance from that standpoint. Nevertheless, it is important in its way because

the atmosphere thus preserved and transferred to the reader is authentic as far as the experiences of the author—and they cannot be questioned—are concerned. As far as being anything of a picture of Theosophy itself as a philosophy, it tells nothing, for it no more reveals Blavatsky theosophy than a book on the art of window decorating and display teaches philology—the two are disparate. And it is important to note that it is the very lack of Theosophy that makes the incidents of this book at all possible. With a true firm basis of Theosophy they could never have happened. Therefore the reviewer in the recent C.F.L. Bulletin is absolutely right in summing it up as a book that is worth reading in order to know what Theosophy is NOT because there is no Theosophy in it.

For this reason one cannot but have much sympathy for all that Lady Lutyens went through and from which certainly her emotional nature would have been saved if she had been instructed in the basic tenets of the trans-Himalayan philosophy. There are parts also of the book which are just slightly reminiscent of some Point Loma experiences, not in actuality, but in the atmosphere invoked. Point Loma was far, far sounder in its ways and methods, with its solid core of old Blavatsky students, and yet, especially in the early days, there was that bit of mystery connected with the Masters and Chelas and all that goes with the mystic life that would make any Point Loma reader sympathetic to a degree with the *aspirations* of Lady Lutyens. At the same time Point Loma training was intensely practical in the doing of everyday things, in its education, and even in the learning of some trades, such as printing (because of our printing and publications establishment). Point Loma also was intensely anti-psychic, and suffered the effects of labouring

under the paradox of belief in the Masters, yet discouraging the faintest show that such a thing was reflected in the life of the student to the extent of being "in contact".

One can also feel something more than sympathy for the plight that Krishnamurti found himself in, and to have repudiated the mass homage that could easily have been his lot (and was for a considerable period) required an honesty and strength and steadfastness that could point to his having experienced an inner illumination that did transform his life. But for him to still hold to the fact that he is the World Teacher, the channel for the Buddha Himself to work through, that he was and is in fact no longer Krishnamurti but that Great Being himself, shows either that he is very ignorant in some ways or that he really never has recovered from the warping his psychological nature received during those years under Leadbeater and Besant when he was being "tutored" as the Vehicle for the August Presence. In all the book, however, after Lady Lutyens' husband, who emerges as a quite remarkable man of sound sense and kindly judgment, Krishnamurti appears in the best light. When he says he wants no followers, that what he does want is to bring to every man and woman freedom, to show that each is the Way himself, he is pointing to the path taken by all mystics, and Lady Lutyens herself admits that she is uncertain whether this is something unique attained by Krishnamurti, or something relatively common to any cloistered monk or nun or mystic of any faith or Church. Her *personal* love for him, controlled on her part and not abused on his, lifts these pages to the plane of a Confession eloquent in its way among contributions to mystic literature.

But where the greatest folly is shown, revolting because inexcusable in follow-

ers of H. P. Blavatsky and students of *The Secret Doctrine*, is the course taken by the Adyar T.S. in foisting on its credulous members the myth of the World Teacher, with all the ceremonial, hocus-pocus, advertising, campaigning, spiritual snobbery, intrigue that went with it. Mrs. Besant stands arraigned through it as one of the greatest failures in history. As the spiritual leader of thousands she failed in the qualities of real leadership; she failed to point the way, she was vacillating in intellectual and spiritual matters; she was weak in her judgment of her associates, and because of spiritual pride that made her wish to appear as on terms of close association with high Spiritual Beings, she permitted the whole organization to be attacked by the germ of psychism, resulting in a disease that has proved well nigh mortal to that body. And all this despite certain other lovable and indeed, great qualities. But as I see it, she lacked the greatest quality of all, honesty to herself, and lacking that she had no discrimination, and with lack of discrimination as the Gita says, comes loss of all. . . . One could wax wroth and eloquent in diatribe over a situation such as this which has brought upon the name of Theosophy a complete misunderstanding from decent normal intellectual people, scorn from others, and ridicule from the majority. Whether as a result of Mrs. Besant's and Leadbeater's acts this can ever be "lived down", cleared and a new start made is something that time alone can tell. The odds are heavily against it. From this point alone, the book points to an appalling failure on the part of one of the main bodies of the Theosophical Movement. I think nothing worse can be said—as of 1932 when the story outlined in the book ends. Adyar today maybe—does indeed show signs of—changing. It will depend on how thorough such a change becomes. A total catharsis is needed.

UNITY, REAL AND SUPERFICIAL

I have read Mr. Spinks' article *Theosophical Unity* in the November-December *Canadian Theosophist* with interest and some amazement: with interest because of his patent earnestness and belief in what he advocates, with amazement because of his naïvete and Quixotism,—for single-handed apparently, he challenges the Powers of Darkness which reside in all men, and especially, it would seem, in Theosophists, and waltzes gaily in where angels (meaning those many students who have long struggled with the problem of Theosophical dis-unity) tread warily. All this has its value. Anything which stirs us up to think and re-examine this important matter, which weighs heavily upon all students, is all to the good.

I have only two contributions to make with regard to Mr. Spinks' article, both critical in nature. Mr. Spinks gives the impression, whether intentionally or not I am not sure, that in his view the purpose of the Theosophical Society was and is, to get individuals professing widely different religious faiths together in one Society and on one platform. I do not know of anything in the *early* literature to support this view but there is much that strongly contradicts it. If he had added—professors of different faiths united in a fearless search for truth to help humanity, it would have given an entirely different significance to his remarks. For surely it is the united aspiration and endeavour to help humanity which makes a Theosophical Society a Universal Brotherhood. Gathering together people of diverse creeds, races, castes, colour and all the rest, without a definite purpose, would be senseless. *The American Theosophist* for November quotes H.P.B. as follows:—"In the Theosophical Society men meet in the common search for

truth, on a plattform from which all dogmatism is excluded". Theosophists, of course, believe that this help for humanity can best be given by making the Esoteric Philosophy of the Brotherhood available for study and investigation throughout the world, and this demands a Fraternity united in the search for truth.

My other criticism goes to the very root of Mr. Spinks' position and is much more serious. Briefly it is that in proposing "that all groups shall re-unite first, and then make the Theosophical home fit for all the estranged members of the family" he is advocating a gigantic sham, a pretense of Brotherhood and Unity—a name and appearance without substance. This state of affairs, viz. a Society calling itself a Universal Brotherhood when it was so only in name and was inwardly fraught with division and animosity, was the reason given by H.P.B. for the formation of the Esoteric Section and to save this situation and to get one body of students at least united in the cause of humanity and Theosophy, even if only a small body of volunteers. I quote from the Preliminary Memorandum page 65. "Thus, as a 'Universal Brotherhood' or even as a fraternity, one amongst many, it has descended to the level of all those Societies whose pretensions are great, but whose names are simply masks,—nay, even shams". She goes on to give the only answer which carries conviction to the problem under discussion; she says, "It is only by a select group of brave souls, a handful of determined men and women hungry for genuine spiritual development and the acquirement of soul-wisdom, that the T.S. at large can be brought back to its original lines". Is it not apparent that Unity must be

based primarily upon a common mind and will focussed by a common aim and purpose. If we create the 'Life' the 'Form' will arise of itself, inevitably as night follows day.

The mere foregathering of theosophical students in one organization, or building, or convention, is *worse* than useless because it makes a deceptive appearance of unity by an emotional friendliness made possible by a tacit agreement to avoid all contentious matters and pretend they are not there. This is why fraternization meetings of students from different societies have always been largely a failure. They do not meet to thrash out their differences and so come to a working agreement, but to avoid them instead and leave by the same door as they came in. Of what value is an emotional harmony produced at the expense of truth? What strain will it stand under pressure?

From the theosophical literature it is clear there is an occult law that any group large or small that works for success in its occult undertakings must be strongly united so that the welfare of one is important to all and of all to each one, and that the ideal pursued together must be held high and come before the personal consideration of any member. Working together in this fashion a bond of union is established which will stand strain. Surely it is better to have a number of societies and groups united by nothing more than the consciousness that they all are part of the Theosophical Movement but working each in their different and perhaps conflicting ways, and each more or less firmly united in its own centre, than to seek to artificially amalgamate all these into an organization divided against itself because of differences as to the main purpose of teaching, and differences of strong conflicting loyalties?

Certainly it would be ideal and of great practical value to have all these groups united in one body with one common aspiration, and one mind and will, but before this can be approached the Theosophical Societies must all go back to the original lines whereby any sincere opinion or belief or suggestion will find expression on any platform or in any magazine. Free and fearless investigation and discussion to arrive at the truth, must be the root idea in any theosophical society which aims to exemplify Universal Brotherhood. ("The root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation" H.P.B., *What are the Theosophists.*)

Mr. Spinks says disunity is not a matter of belief. He is wrong. Most of us in the Canadian Theosophical Society desire that the Adyar T.S. should throw overboard the pseudo-theosophy it has embraced, and get back to the original teaching. Why? Because we hate to see such numbers of our Adyar fellow students wasting their time and energy on an imitation when the real thing is available at the cost of a little effort, courage, and determination; and we hate to see the public put off with a poor substitution when they come enquiring concerning Theosophy. And we hate too, to think of the Karma of the Theosophical Society (in which we shall, everyone of us, find our karmas according to H.P.B.—*Original Programme of the T.S.*, page 36) which will result from the neglect of its responsibility as custodian of the Brothers' teaching left in its hands.

Unity of the Canadian Theosophical Society with the main body of the Adyar T.S. in heart, will, and mind, never can be possible until that day when we can all unite in studying, and standing behind, the teaching of the Mahatmas; although we are, and always have been, members of the Adyar T.S. Yet this superficial unity,

of mere membership, is the very condition which Mr. Spinks wants to bring about where all other groups are concerned, having convinced himself that real unity will follow.

For those who want to get back to that degree of unity which existed in the T.S. when it alone represented Theosophy (unsatisfactory in degree though it was to the unseen founders of the movement) one very direct and practical method of procedure is to insist, year in and year out, that all theosophical magazines, platforms, and meetings be open to free and fearless exchange of ideas which aim to arrive at truth. This means willingness to put up with hurt feelings when we find ourselves on the receiving end of criticism. There are a few groups and magazines in the Theosophical field which hold this attitude now. This journal, *The Canadian Theosophist*, is, and always has been an outstanding example of this open-minded attitude. It is one of the most vital and important theosophical journals in the movement, because it is not limited to any orthodox view, but prints any sincere contribution which in its turn has to run the gauntlet of criticism.

At the present time the various theosophical bodies live in boxes, protected from one another. Each magazine deals but with its own line of thought. Never are its prejudices, beliefs, or loyalties permitted to be aired in the light of sincere criticism, from without or from within. Consequently, they have little in common with one another and each becomes with each year less vital. To an extent not quite so closed to free expression, the lodges admit to their platforms speakers, and to their lodge discussions, visitors, those only who conform with their line of teaching, etc. This isolation of thought in any theosophical society is a denial of its very

reason for existence, for if a theosophical society does not exist to investigate and seek for truth wherever it may be found in the spirit of universal brotherhood, what is it for?

It only requires the cold air of truth to disperse the barriers which separate theosophical groups and societies. We have eighteen years to go to the end of the cycle. Much can be accomplished in that time if we all pull together, and it looks as if things are moving. Let's go!

W. E. Wilks.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

(Continued from Page 4)

Philippines. I referred to the difficulties there in my address of 1955. Apparently they continue. Señor Domingo Argente, who has succeeded Dr. Benito Reyes as General Secretary, points out that though the culture of the country has a background of Oriental influences derived from the religions of the East, the population is at present predominantly Catholic, and there are lay bodies working to extend the domination of the Church, not only in the religious and educational spheres, but even the political field. As in some other countries, this is being counteracted in some measure by "the firm if silent opposition of the Masonic bodies, the Federation of Christian Churches, and hosts of liberal-minded citizens from all walks of life". The Society has to make its way among these conflicting currents, but it is hoped that by the life of the members and the doctrine they propagate, "the idea of universal brotherhood will characterize the growth of the young republic and the life of the people".

From Viet Nam, where there have been misunderstandings among the principal workers for several years,

comes a detailed Report giving the cheerful news that the work of the Section as well as the Lodges is being reorganized by a Committee including all those workers, and there is now every hope of carrying it on with vigour. Madame Hai, the Assistant General Secretary, who has written the Report, mentions three aims they have placed before themselves, namely, fraternal ties between the members, the gaining of the necessary Theosophical knowledge by them, and its efficient propagation on a big scale. Not the least important of these is the first-mentioned one, which implies the friendly co-operation of members, the lack of which in Lodge or Section is often the reason why its work comes practically to a standstill. Generally, it matters far less who occupies which office, provided the requirements of the work are reasonably met, than that there should be a spirit of friendliness and co-operation among all concerned. As Brother Jinarājādāsa used to say, it is far better for the Theosophical work, in any of its bodies, that the work should be carried on with the good-will of all, even though it is only sixty per cent good, than that it should be carried through with an apparently hundred per cent success by a majority regardless of the others.

One of the Sections where till recently conditions were heavily restricting is Colombia in South America. When I was there last year they could not hold meetings freely open to the public; yet the General Secretary Sra. Corina Martinez and her co-workers, among whom I might perhaps mention Señor Walter Ballesteros, have been spreading Theosophy by regularly bringing out pamphlets, mostly translations into Spanish from English, and distributing them practically free, about a thousand at a time. "Great interest has been taken in our Lodges," says the General Secre-

tary, "to stress the Theosophical life and improve the quality of the membership, even if the quantity remains stationary." There is no better way to propagate Theosophy.

In the Report on the work of the American Section, Mr. Perkins refers to a new feature which is the opportunities now occurring for talks over television. On one occasion more than an hour was given to questions and discussion of Theosophy. Also the use of the radio for presenting Theosophy has increased to no less than thirty stations. The department that handles this branch of the work has supplied radio scripts also to the Puerto Rican Section, whose General Secretary, Mrs. Esperanza Hopgood, has used them for translation into Spanish and printing them as booklets. The Spanish translations have been used as radio material both in Puerto Rico and Cuba. It is not unlikely that very soon other Sections in South and Central America might ask for these translations. It is well that in our Society each Section should have contact with others and help them in whatever way possible. An important aspect of the work to which much attention is paid in the United States is the collection and distribution of material that can be used for presenting Theosophy in relation to modern knowledge. The American Section has an Education Department which collects such material. This work also can be extended to help other Sections where such material would be welcome.

The English General Secretary, Mrs. A. L. Berry reports a decline in numbers though the meetings are well attended. She points out that when a special effort has been made to organize and advertise, they generally get a good response from the public. The reason why the number is declining cannot lie wholly in lack of proper organization or advertising. Perhaps we must find out

what is the note to be sounded that will awaken those who are at all sensitive in such directions, to the form of Truth most needed at present. Many Lodges in England have been taking part in a campaign to make both members and the public realize the nature and power of thought.

In India the number of members has increased to 7,051. Mr. Rohit Mehta, the General Secretary, thinks the upward trend will be maintained. The Indian Section is divided into Federations, as are also the American and English Sections. Mr. Rohit Mehta points out that four of these Federations have each a membership exceeding 700.

In Malaya, which is now a Federation, the Organizing Secretary, Dr. C. H. Yeang, writes that the influence of Theosophy is just beginning to spread. Malaya is a State where a number of races live together now with the responsibilities of freedom. Dr. Yeang thinks that there is much scope, in the country's present growth, for the spread of Theosophical ideals, particularly universal Brotherhood.

Mr. J. E. van Dissel, the General Secretary of the European Federation, writes of the increasing value of the Regional meetings, which in 1957 were held in Basle, Switzerland, for the German-speaking areas, in Brussels, Belgium, for the French-speaking, and in Camberley, England, for the English-speaking. These are gradually developing, he says, "into small international gatherings and becoming a source of inspiration for the work in the Sections". Summer Schools were held during the year in Switzerland, Finland, Denmark, England, The Netherlands and Germany. The General Secretary for Sweden, Mr. Gösta Lindström, says with regard to the Summer School in his Section: "The annual Summer School in Sweden is an important event of the year, giving the best opportunity

for members from all over the country to come together, take part in study groups, listen to good lectures and exchange ideas." This is true also of the Schools in other Sections. As usual, the annual Sessions at "Olcott," the headquarters of the American Section, included a Summer School there, a feature of which this year was an exposition of the material collected by Mr. Fritz Kunz for the integration of Theosophy with modern knowledge. There have been Summer Schools also in Melbourne in Australia, and in New Zealand, following their annual Conventions. There have been gatherings of the same sort in different places in India, but called Camps, some for local areas, and two "Regional," for the North and South of India, respectively.

The New Zealand Section celebrated its Diamond Jubilee at its annual Convention last December. Another Diamond Jubilee was that of the Netherlands Section, which was celebrated in May this year at The Hague. Finland had its Golden Jubilee on November 17th, this year. Since the Society is now in its 83rd year, each year there are Lodges in different parts of the world which complete fifty or sixty years of work, and mark these milestones in an appropriate manner.

As I do not have the figures from all the Sections, I cannot give the exact number of members throughout the world, but it is likely to be more or less the same as last year.

There is mention of the work of the Young Theosophists in several Section Reports. Herr Boyken, General Secretary for Germany, states that a number of them have been elected to the committee of that Section. The Young Theosophist periodical *Enthousiasme*, to which I referred in a previous Report, is now subsidized by the European Federation, and apparently makes a good impression on all. In Australia

the Young Theosophists issue a bulletin named *Fraternity*, containing varied and lively matter. A new Theosophical journal entitled *Estudios Teosoficos* is being issued from Argentina by a group of enthusiastic Young Theosophists in that country.

I referred last year to the project of co-ordinating the work of translation into Spanish that has been going on in a number of Sections, but without much reference to one another. Señor Rimini in Argentina who is interested in this work—he has been elected General Secretary of the Section this year—hopes to place this work on a systematic basis, saving unnecessary duplication.

In this connection it might be mentioned that a group of workers in the Cuban Section, under the lead of Señor Alfredo Puig, are issuing a translation of the Watch-Tower notes in THE THEOSOPHIST in the form of pamphlets which are distributed free to members and sympathizers not only in Cuba, but throughout all Spanish-speaking countries in South and Central America.

Among those engaged in translating Theosophical works from English into other languages, I would like to mention Srimati Uma Devi (Wanda Dynowska) who has translated into Polish and published this year *First Principles of Theosophy* by C. Jinarājadāsa and a work entitled *The Evolution of Symbolism* (from *The Secret Doctrine*), along with other philosophic and religious works, such as *The Bhagavad Gita*. These books are read with avidity, I understand, both by Theosophists and non-Theosophists in Poland.

I myself was in Europe this year from about the middle of July to the third week of September. Though I had gone for personal reasons, I had the opportunity of meeting a number of important workers in Switzerland, France, England and The Netherlands, and discussing with them various

aspects of our work. Among those I met, I might mention Mr. Francis Brunel, General Secretary for France, Mrs. Alice L. Berry, General Secretary for England, and Mr. J. E. van Dissel, General Secretary of the European Federation. In November I was in Karachi, Pakistan, for a few days, to open the new building for the Society there, named Jamshed Memorial Building.

Miss Clara Codd was this year the guest lecturer at the English Section Convention, and has lectured in different places in England, Scotland and Wales arousing much enthusiasm. Mrs. Mary Patterson made a very successful lecture tour in Southern Africa, Rhodesia and East Africa, devoting some six months to that work. Mrs. Marion Lavender has visited during the year Lodges in New Zealand, Australia, Ceylon and Pakistan, conducting study classes and giving talks to members and the public. Mr. Geoffrey Hodson was to have made a tour in Australia, but unfortunately on arrival in Sydney he fell ill and had to return to his home in New Zealand, where his health has since improved considerably. Miss Helen Zahara also made a tour for three months in New Zealand, before she assumed the office of General Secretary in Australia last Easter. Other good workers who have helped by visiting various Sections in Europe are Mr. John Coats, who has been to a number of Sections as far apart as Iceland and Austria, and Mrs. Josephine Ransom, who was present at the Summer Schools in Switzerland, Finland and Denmark. Although I do not mention in my Reports the tours of the General Secretaries and their national lecturers, yet what is accomplished by them is of no less importance and cannot be overlooked when reference is made to so-called international lecturing.

The School of the Wisdom commenced its sessions this year on October

2nd, as usual, with sixteen students from nine different countries namely: Australia, England, India, Malaya, New Zealand, Pakistan, Rhodesia, Turkey and the United States. The main responsibility for the work this year has been on Miss Emma Hunt, as Director of Studies.

As in other years, I am happy to place on record my gratitude to Miss Emma Hunt, Recording Secretary; Miss Ann Kerr, Assistant Recording Secretary; Mr. Edwin N. Lord, Honorary Treasurer; and to all departmental heads and assistants who have helped me in endeavouring to carry on the work at Adyar. There have been some changes in staff in a few departments, one being that Miss Ann Kerr, Assistant Recording Secretary, had to take on the major work of that office, in order to relieve Miss Emma Hunt for the work of the School of the Wisdom. Miss Shirley Macpherson worked in the Library for some months and is Superintendent of Leadbeater Chambers for the time being, succeeding Miss Florence Pulsford who returned to Australia to assist the Section as field worker and lecturer. I appointed Mr. M. Subramaniam last April as Manager of the Vasanta Press, relieving Mr. K. S. Krishnamurti and Mr. K. Ramanathan of the office of Joint Directors of the Press. Mr. D. V. Syamala Rau assists Mr. M. Subramaniam. Because of a long and trying illness, our highly esteemed Brother Dr. G. Srinivasamurti, who has been at different times Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Director of the Adyar Library and Chief Medical Officer, has been obliged to give up all his work. I want to say here how much we miss him and send him our sincerest good wishes.

The Adyar Library staff now includes Mrs. Seetha Neelakantan, whom I recently appointed as Librarian, Dr. Sree Krishna Sarma, a gentleman with scholarly qualifications exactly fitted

for research in the Library, Mr. P. M. Advani, a member of long standing from Karachi, and Mr. Charles Hunter from Belfast, who gives his work honorarily. The Library is indebted also to Mrs. Radha S. Burnier, who as Secretary of the Library Council and in other informal ways, has been of invaluable service especially on the Oriental side. An event in the work of the Library that calls for special mention is the bringing out of a Buddha Jayanti number of *Brahmavidya*, the Library Bulletin, containing scholarly articles which have been widely appreciated.

The work of the Theosophical Order of Service and activities of the same nature by groups of Theosophists are reported from a number of countries: The United States, England, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Burma, Iceland, Wales, the Philippines and Venezuela. There are many different lines being followed. Prominent among them are animal protection and welfare, the preparation of Theosophical literature for the blind, work for world peace by stressing the importance of the United Nations as well as by group meditations on peace, Theosophical Education and attempts to help and heal the sick.

Among those who have passed on during the year I must make mention of Miss Esther Bright who was so close a friend and co-worker of Dr. Annie Besant; Miss Cecile Bayer, who was for many years a pillar of the work in France; Mr. Milton Thornton of New Zealand, who has left a gap in the work there that is found difficult to fill; Mr. John Clarke of Brisbane, Australia, ever a most dependable and enthusiastic worker for every purpose connected with the movement; and Mr. Karl Riedel of Vienna, Austria, known to members on the continent of Europe as a devoted and scholarly worker. To these and all other good workers who

have passed on, let us send our thoughts of affection and gratitude.

In my Presidential Address of December 1953 I gave details of the agreement that I had come to with Srimati Rukmini Devi for the accommodation of the Besant Centenary Trust institutions, namely, Kalakshetra, the Besant Theosophical School, and the Arundale Teachers' Training Centre. I stated then that already a site had been acquired not far from the Theosophical Society's estate, for settling these institutions permanently in suitable buildings of their own. The site now comprises about 86 acres. On June 4th this year the Foundation Stone was laid by Rukmini Devi for the first building to be erected there. This was followed at the end of August by an inauguration of the work of building, by His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore.

I must again draw the attention of Members all over the world to the fact that the Adyar Besant Commemorative Fund, started in February 1947, is still far from the target fixed at that time. Since everything in India has gone up considerably in cost during the last ten years, the income that we will realize from this Fund, even when it reaches the full figure, would not be sufficient to meet our annual deficit. Another Fund, which had a good start in 1953 but needs replenishment, is the Raja Commemorative Fund. It was inaugurated with a view to assist lecturers to travel from one country to another, when that is wanted for the work. Also, as I have pointed out in other years, we need money for a new building for the Adyar Library. Although I do not believe in urging anyone to contribute beyond what he himself feels moved to do when he understands the needs, I must do my duty of indicating the needs.

Before we close this meeting, let us think of our members all over the world, and send them our affection and goodwill. I am sure they are thinking of us at this time. And let us lift our thoughts in all reverence to those Masters of the Wisdom whom we call the Elder Brethren:

May Those who are the embodiments of Love immortal bless with Their continued help and guidance the Society founded to help Their purpose; and may we in every possible way make ourselves and the Society worthy to serve Them in Their plans to lead the world from darkness into Light.

I declare this Convention open.

N. SRI RAM.

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Crimes committed in Avidya, or ignorance, involve physical but not moral responsibilities or Karma. Take, for example, the case of idiots, children, savages, and people who know no better. But the case of each who is pledged to the Higher Self is quite another matter. *You cannot invoke this Divine Witness with impunity*, and once that you have put yourselves under its tutelage, you have asked the Radiant Light to shine and search through all the dark corners of your being; consciously you have invoked the Divine Justice of Karma to take note of your motive, to scrutinize your actions, and to enter up all in your account. The step is irrevocable as that of the infant taking birth. Never again can you force yourselves back into the matrix of Avidya and irresponsibility.

S.D. III, 529.

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