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REMINISCENCES OF
COLONEL. H. S. OLCOTT

VARIOUS WRITERS

COMPILED

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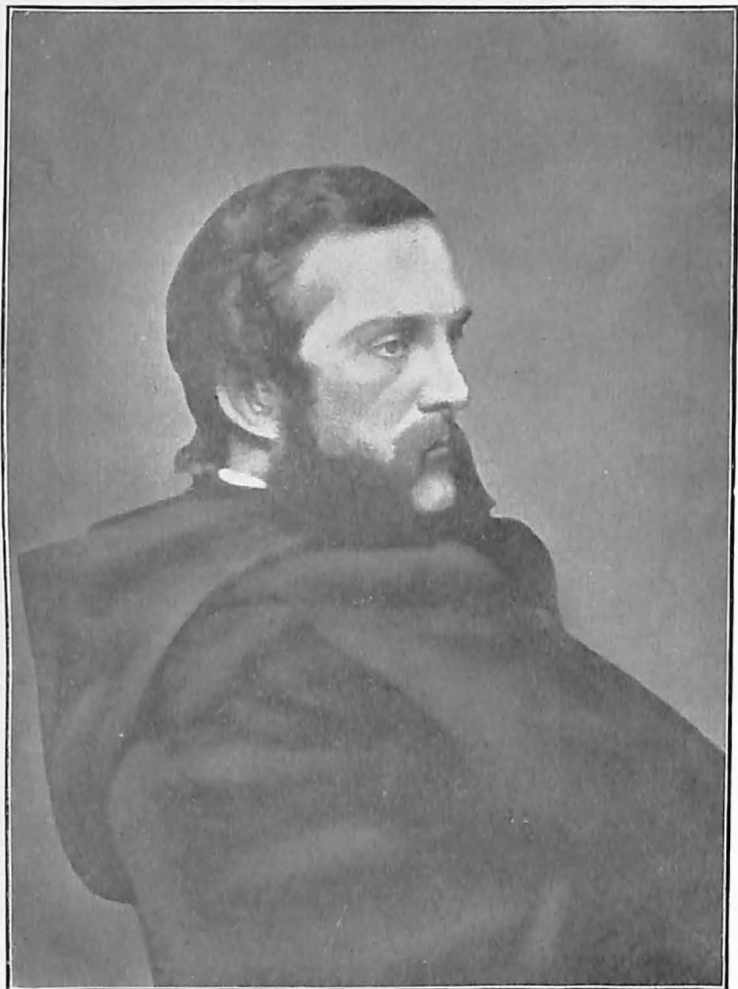
HRIDAYA NARAIN AGARWAL, M.A., LL.B.

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ADYAR



REMINISCENCES OF
COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT



H. S. OLCOTT

as an officer in the Federal Army, in the early part of the
Civil War in U. S. A. 1861—1865.

REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT

BY
VARIOUS WRITERS

COMPILED BY
HRIDAYA NARAIN AGARWAL, M.A., LL.B.

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE
ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA
1932

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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THEORITICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

AGAR, MADRAS, INDIA

1963

PREFACE

TO many the name of Colonel H. S. Olcott merely recalls the fact that he was President of the Theosophical Society, but the intrinsic value of his work is not adequately recognised. Truly, Madame H. P. Blavatsky was the teacher and the originator of Theosophy, but the credit for the propagation of the Theosophical truths goes largely to Colonel Olcott. Undoubtedly, without him the mere existence of those truths was certain, but the splendid Organisation—The Theosophical Society—is chiefly due to his great zeal and earnest endeavours.

To remind us, therefore, of the great part played by him in the organisation of the Theosophical Society, I have ventured to compile this little book as a loving tribute to his memory, on the occasion of the Founders' Convention of the Society held at Adyar in December, 1931. Madame H. P. Blavatsky was born on August 11, 1831, and Colonel Olcott

on August 2, 1832. There is already a compilation giving the tributes of those who knew Madame Blavatsky well. This work, which records the tributes of those who knew Colonel Olcott, is published to give an insight into his manifold activities for human welfare.

The first two letters record the judgment passed on Colonel Olcott by his Master, the Master M., and by the Master K. H. who along with the Master M. inspired Madame Blavatsky to found the Society to check the overwhelming tide of materialism.

H. N. AGARWAL

Adyar, December, 1931.

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REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT

I

AT Upasika's prayer, I hereby state the following facts: No letter blaming Henry Olcott, accusing him of incompetency, or entrusting the management of the T. S.'s affairs to Mr. S. G. L. Fox, has ever been sent by me, or received by him, whether in London or elsewhere.

The last page of a long business letter written in October 1884 and addressed by me to Upasika—a woman who served me faithfully—contained a para (2-3rd of a page) concerning Mr. L. Fox ; and agreeably with her instructions, she sent it to the latter asking for it back and burning it. The rest of my letter was not

shown nor has he been allowed to either see or touch it. Therefore he knows nothing of it. In the aforesaid para he was told of the advisability to return forthwith to India for purposes of influencing in the right direction the disturbed minds of the Anglo-Indian *bara-sahabs*¹ and thereby helping his own (L. Fox's) karma. It is for this purpose—no other—that he was asked to go. Any other construction made upon what was written (by Mr. L. Fox or anyone else) is false.

It is my desire that anyone, who heard Mr. L. Fox blame the "Founder" Olcott, those who have listened to the cruel words of censure directed again at Henry Olcott by Mr. L. Fox, should now hear too what I have to say of him.

If Henry has erred, it is because he is human, and being human, often believed in false and foolish advisers more "incompetent" than he whom they so blamed.

If he is "ignorant" of many things, so are his accusers, and because he remains still *uninitiated* the reason for which is very plain: to this day he has *preferred* the *good* of the many to *his own personal benefit*. Having

¹ Hindustani for "big folk".

given up the advantages derived from steady, serious chelaship by those who devote themselves to it, for his work for other people—*these are those who now turn against him.*

Let Mr. S. G. L. Fox know what I now say : whatever Henry Olcott's shortcomings we are well pleased with, and *thank* him. Let it be known to *all* what I think, and now state (under) my own signature. Henry Olcott has served and followed his Master "to the last gasp with truth and loyalty". As another great but as erratic English genius truly puts it, "Fools are they who believe in every lying report and have not the energy to admit it; fools they who *disbelieve* in such and have not the courage to proclaim it. Shy and cowardly, vicious and hypocritical those whom calumny can alarm or who will lend a willing ear to it. 'Looks like truth'—they say; does it? Do they forget that 'a lie is never more successful than when she baits her hook with truth'?" Fools, fools! who do not see that all Asura-dugpas are at work for the destruction of the Society,¹ their only, their last enemy of

¹ The attack of the Christian Missionaries using the Coulombs, with the subsequent denunciation of H. P. B. as a fraud by the Society for Psychical Research.

Salvation on the present troubled waters of Kali-yug ! Blind are they who see and perceive not. Their karma is spun ; but what Masters can or *shall* help those who refuse to help themselves.

M.:

II

HIM we can trust under *all* circumstances, and his faithful service is pledged to us come well—come ill . . . Where can we find an equal devotion? He is one who never questions, but obeys; who may make innumerable mistakes out of excessive zeal, but never is unwilling to repair his fault even at the cost of the greatest self-humiliation; who esteems the sacrifice of comfort and even life something to be cheerfully risked whenever necessary; who will eat any food, or even go without; sleep on any bed, work in any place, fraternise with any outcast, endure any privation for the cause.

K. H.

III

BY H. P. BLAVATSKY

“TRUTH does not depend on show of hands”; but in the case of the much abused President-Founder, Colonel H. S. Olcott, it must depend on the show of *facts*. Thorny and full of pitfalls was the steep path he had to climb up, alone and unaided, for the first years. Terrible was the opposition outside the Society he had to build; sickening and disheartening the treachery he often encountered within the Headquarters; enemies gnashing their teeth in his face around; those whom he regarded as his staunchest friends and co-workers betraying him and the Cause on the slightest provocation. Still, where hundreds in his place would have collapsed and given up the whole undertaking in despair, he, unmoved and unmovable, went on climbing up and toiling as before, unrelenting and

undismayed, supported by that one thought and conviction that he was doing his duty. What other inducement has the Founder ever had but his Theosophical pledge and the sense of his duty towards THOSE he had promised to serve to the end of his life? There was but one beacon for him—the hand that had first pointed to him his way up: the hand of the MASTER he loves and reveres so well, and serves so devotedly, though occasionally, perhaps, unwisely.

President, elected for life, he has nevertheless offered more than once to resign in favour of anyone found worthier than him, but was never permitted to do so by the majority—not of “show of hands” but *show of hearts*, literally—as few are more beloved than he is, even by most of those who may criticise occasionally his actions. And this is only natural: for cleverer in administrative capacities, more learned in philosophy, subtler in casuistry, in metaphysics or daily life policy, there may be many around him; but the whole globe may be searched through and through and no one found stauncher to his friends, truer to his word, or more devoted

to real, practical Theosophy—than the President-Founder; and these are the chief requisites in a leader of such a movement—one that aims to become a Brotherhood of men. The Society needs no Loyolas; it has to shun anything approaching casuistry; nor ought we to tolerate too subtle casuists. There, where every individual has to work out his own Karma, the judgment of a casuist who takes upon himself the duty of pronouncing upon the state of a brother's soul, or guide his conscience, is of no use, and may become positively injurious. The Founder claims no more rights than every one else in the Society: the *right of private judgment*, which, whenever it is found to disagree with Branches or individuals, is quietly set aside and *ignored—as shown by the complainants themselves*. This, then, is the sole crime of the would-be culprit, and no worse than this can be laid at his door.

And yet what is the reward of that kind man? He, who has never refused a service—outside what he considers his official duties—to any living being; he who has redeemed dozens of men, young and old, from dissipated, often immoral lives, and saved others from

terrible scrapes by giving them a safe refuge in the Society ; he who has placed others again on the pinnacle of Saintship *through their status in that Society*, when otherwise they would have indeed found themselves now in the meshes of "worldliness" and perhaps worse ; he, that true friend of every Theosophist, and verily "the readiest to serve and as unconscious of the service"—he is now taken to task for what?—for insignificant blunders, for useless "special orders," a *childish*, rather than untheosophical love of display, out of pure devotion to his Society.

Is then *human nature* to be viewed so uncharitably by us, as to call *untheosophical*, worldly and sinful the natural impulse of a mother to dress up her child and parade it to the best advantages ? The comparison may be laughed at, but if it is, it will be only by him who would—like the fanatical Christian of old, or the naked, dishevelled Yogi of India—have no more charity for the smallest human weakness. Yet the similitude¹ is quite correct ; since the Society is the child, the beloved creation of the Founder, he may well be forgiven for his

¹ So in manuscript.

too exaggerated love for that for which he has suffered and toiled more than all other Theosophists put together. He is called "worldly," "ambitious of power," and *untheosophical* for it. Very well; let, then, any impartial judge compare the life of the Founder with those of most of his critics, and see which was *the most Theosophical*, ever since the Society sprung into existence. If no better results have been achieved, it is not the President who ought to be taken to task for it, but the members themselves; as he has been ever trying to promote its growth, and the majority of "Fellows" have either done nothing, or created obstacles in the way of its progress, through sins of omission as of commission. Better unwise *activity*, than an overdose of too wise *inactivity*, apathy or indifference which are always the death of an undertaking.

Nevertheless, it is the members who now seek to sit in Solomon's seat, and they tell us that the Society is useless, its President positively mischievous, and that the Headquarters ought to be done away with, as the organisation called Theosophical *presents many features seriously obstructive to the progress of*

Theosophy. Trees, however, have to be judged by their fruits. It was just shown that no "special orders" issuing from the "Centre of Power," called Adyar, could affect in any way whatever either Branch or individual; and therefore any Theosophist bent on "self-culture," "self-involution," or any kind of *selfness*, is at liberty to act; and if, instead of using his rights, he will apply his brain power to criticise other people's actions, then it is he who becomes the *obstructionist* and not at all the "Organisation called Theosophical". For, if Theosophy is anywhere practised on this globe it is at Adyar, at the Headquarters. Let "those interested in the progress of true Theosophy" look around them and judge.

IV

COLONEL HENRY STEEL OLCOTT

BY ANNIE BESANT

H. S. OLCOTT, who came from an old English Puritan family settled for many generations in the United States, and whose grandmother was a descendant from one of the early members of the Dutch East India Company, was born in Orange, New Jersey, on August 2nd, 1832. He was only twenty-three when his success in the model farm of Scientific Agriculture, near Newark, led the Greek Government to offer him the Chair of Agriculture in the University of Athens. The young man declined the honour, and in the same year he founded, with Mr. Vail of New Jersey, "The Westchester Farm School," near Mount Vernon, New York, a School regarded in the States as one of the pioneers of the present system of national agricultural

education. He there interested himself in the cultivation of sorghum, just brought to the United States, and produced his first book, *Sorgho and Imphee, the Chinese and African Sugarcanes*, which ran through seven editions and was placed by the State of Illinois in its school libraries. This book brought him the offer of the Directorship of the Agricultural Bureau at Washington, an offer which he declined, as he also declined offers of the managership of two immense properties.

In 1858 Mr. Olcott paid his first visit to Europe, still bent on the improvement of agriculture, and his report of what he saw was published in Appleton's *American Cyclopædia*. Recognised as an expert, he became the American correspondent of the well-known *Mark Lane Express* (London), Associate Agricultural Editor of the famous *New York Tribune*, and published two more books on Agriculture.

This phase of his life concluded with the outbreak of the American Civil War, when his passion for liberty drove him to enlist in the Northern Army, and he went through the whole of the North Carolina Campaign under

General Burnside, and was invalided to New York, stricken with fever. As soon as he recovered, he prepared to start again for the front, but the Government, noting his ability and courage, chose him to conduct an enquiry into some suspected frauds at the New York Mustering and Disbursing Office. Every means was adopted to stop his resolute investigation, but neither bribes nor threats could check the determined young officer in his conduct of a campaign more dangerous than the facing of Southern bullets in the field. His physical courage had shone out in the North Carolina Expedition; his moral courage shone out yet more brightly as he fought for four years through a storm of opposition and calumny, till he sent the worst criminal to Sing Sing Prison for ten years, and received from the Government a telegram declaring that this conviction was as "important to Government as the winning of a great battle". Secretary Stanton declared that he had given him unlimited authority because he "found that he had made no mistakes that called for correction". Assistant Secretary Fox wrote that he wished to "bear testimony to the great

zeal and fidelity which have characterised your conduct under circumstances very trying to the integrity of an officer". The Assistant Secretary of War wrote: "You will have from your fellow-citizens the respect which is due to your patriotism and honourable service to the Government during the rebellion." The Judge Advocate-General of the Army wrote: "I cannot permit the occasion to pass without frankly expressing to you my high appreciation of the services which you have rendered while holding the difficult and responsible position from which you are about to retire. These services were signally marked by zeal, ability and uncompromising faithfulness to duty." These words signalise the qualities most characteristic of H. S. Olcott's life.

Mr. Olcott now became Colonel Olcott, and Special Commissioner of the War Department. After two years, the Secretary of the Navy begged for the loan of his services, to crush out the abuses of the Navy Yards, and he was made Special Commissioner of the Navy Department. With resolute and unsparing zeal, he plunged into his work, purified the Department, reformed the system of accounts,

and at the end received the following official testimony: "I wish to say that I have never met with a gentleman intrusted with important duties, of more capacity, rapidity and reliability than have been exhibited by you throughout. More than all, I desire to bear testimony to your entire uprightness and integrity of character, which I am sure have characterised your whole career, and which to my knowledge have never been assailed. That you have thus escaped with no stain upon your reputation, when we consider the corruption, audacity and power of the many villains in high position whom you have prosecuted and punished, is a tribute of which you may well be proud, and which no other man occupying a similar position and performing similar services in this country has ever achieved."

This was the man to whom Madame Blavatsky was sent by her Master to the United States to find, chosen by Them to found with her the Theosophical Society, and then to spend the remainder of his life in organising it all over the world. He brought to his task his unsullied record of public services rendered to his country, his keen capacity, his enormous

powers of work, and an unselfishness which, his colleague declared, she had never seen equalled outside the Ashrama of the Masters.

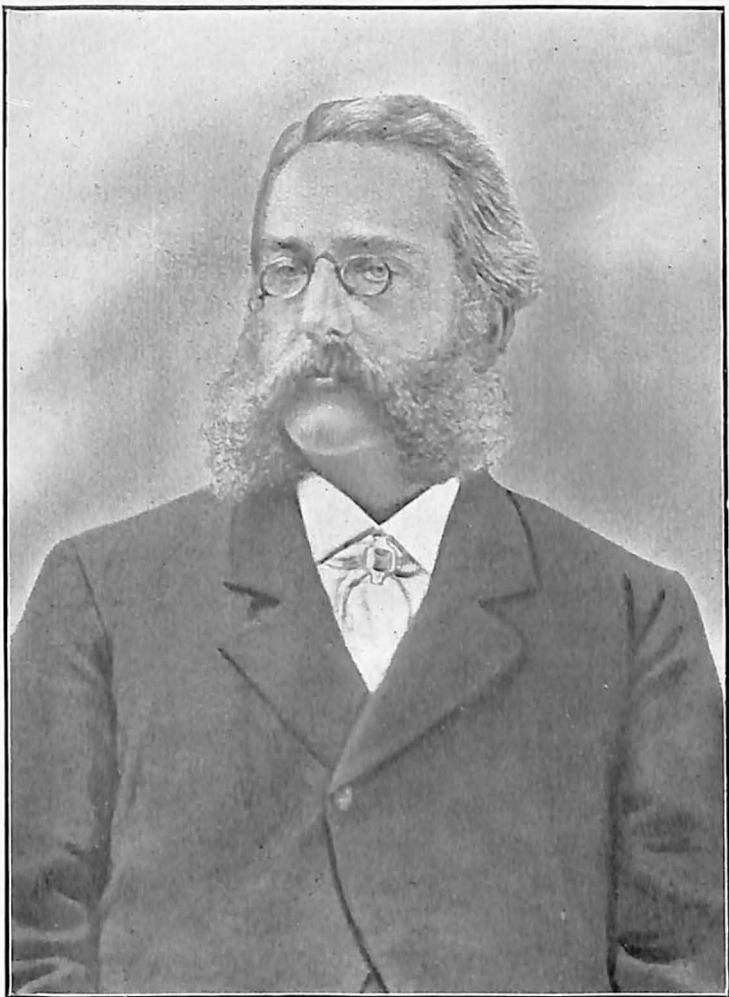
He was found by Madame Blavatsky at the Eddy's Farm, whither he had been sent by the *New York Sun* and the *New York Graphic*, to report on the extraordinary spiritualistic manifestations which were there taking place. So valuable were his articles that no less than seven different publishers contended for the right to publish them in book form. So keen was the interest aroused that the papers sold at a dollar (Rs. 3) a copy, and he was said to divide public attention with the second election of General Grant to the Presidency. The two brave hearts recognized each other, and the two clasped hands in a life-long union, terminated on earth when H. P. Blavatsky left in 1891, but not terminated, so they both believed, by the trivial incident of death, but to be carried on upon the other side, and when returned again to birth in this world.

Colonel Olcott, who had resigned from the War Department, and had been admitted to the Bar, was earning a large income as Counsel

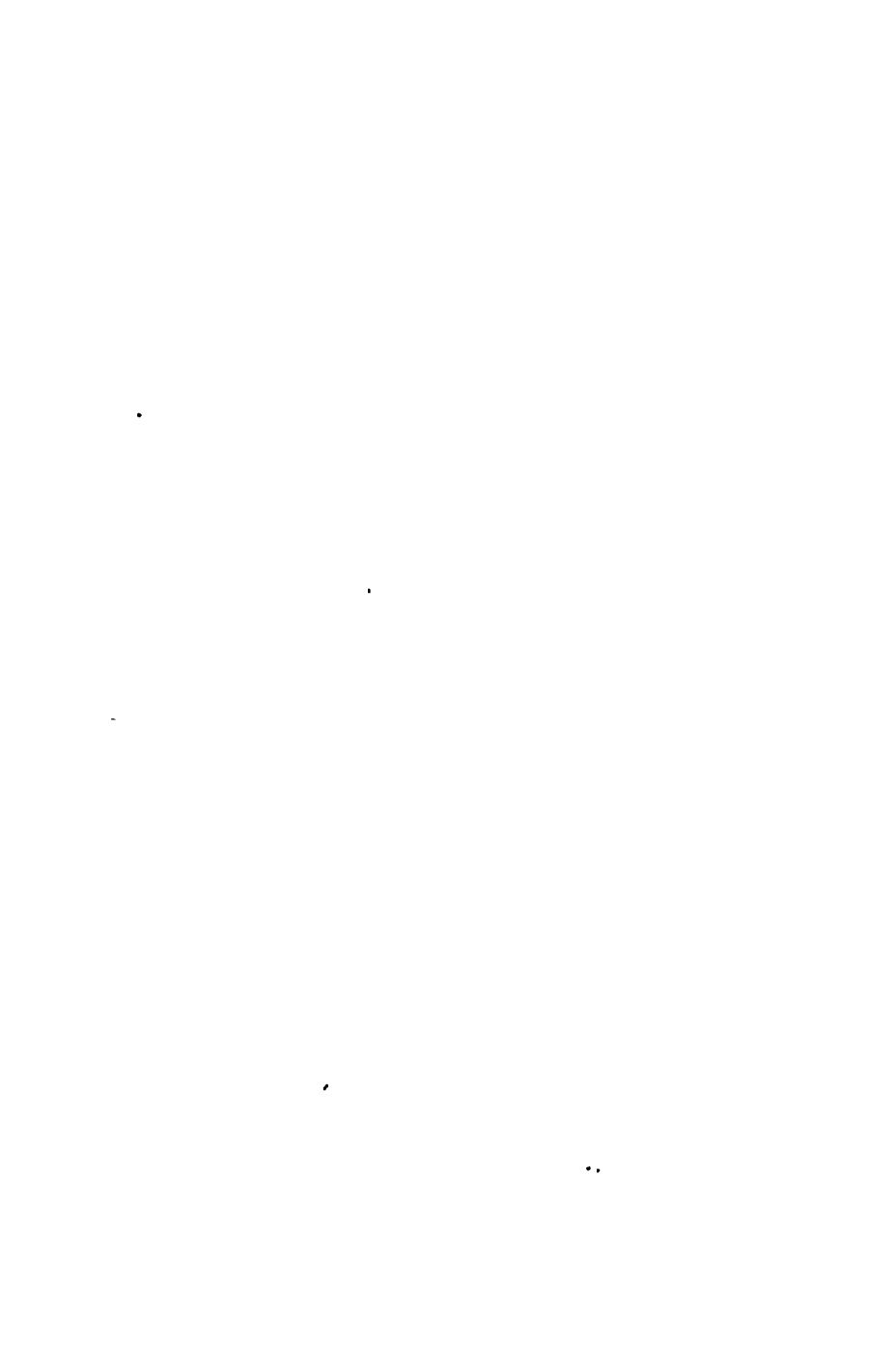
in Customs and Revenue cases when the call came. He abandoned his practice, and in the following year founded the Theosophical Society, of which he was appointed by the Masters President for life, and of which he delivered the inaugural address on November 17th, 1875, in New York. He studied with Madame Blavatsky, and largely Englished for her her great work *Isis Unveiled*, one of the classics of the Society.

In 1878, the colleagues left for India, and for a time fixed their residence in Bombay. There Colonel Olcott inspired the first exhibition of Indian products, urging on Indians the use of their own goods in preference to those of foreign manufacture; at the first Convention of the Theosophical Society in India, Svadeshism was first proclaimed, as at a later Convention the Congress was begotten. A vigorous propaganda was now carried on all over India, much hindered by Government hostility, but welcomed by the masses of Hindus and Parsis.

In 1880, began the great Buddhist revival in Ceylon, which has now 3 colleges and 205 schools, 177 of which received Government



COLONEL OLCOTT IN 1875



grants this year [1907]; 25,856 children were in attendance in these schools on June 30th, 1906. This work is due to the whole-hearted energy and devotion of Colonel Olcott, himself a professed Buddhist. Another great service to Buddhism was rendered by his visit to Japan in 1889, during which he addressed 25,000 persons, and succeeded in drawing up fourteen fundamental propositions, which form the basis of union between the long divided Northern and Southern Churches of Buddhism.

In 1882, the Founders bought, almost entirely with their own money, the beautiful estate of Adyar, near Madras, which they established as the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society. The work done from 1875 to 1906 may be best judged by the fact that up to the year 1906, the President had issued 893 charters to branches all over the world, the majority grouped in eleven Territorial Sections, and the rest scattered over countries in which the branches are not yet sufficiently numerous to form a Section. The most northerly branch is in the Arctic Circle, and the southernmost in Dunedin, New Zealand.

His time, his thoughts, his money, were all given to his beloved Society. One day I said to him: "Henry, I believe you would cut off your right hand for the Society." "Cut off my right hand!" he cried; "I'd cut myself into little pieces if it would do the Society any good." And so, verily, would he have done.

He travelled all the world over with ceaseless and strenuous activity, and the doctors impute the heart-failure, while his body was still splendidly vigorous, to the overstrain put on the heart by the exertion of too many lectures crowded into too short a time. "You will die as I am dying," he said to me lately; "they drive you just as hard." To the furthest north, to the furthest south, he went, cheering, encouraging, advising, organising. And ever joyously he returned to his beloved Adyar, to rest and recuperate.

Many difficulties have confronted this lion-hearted man, during these thirty-one years. He stood unflinchingly through the discreditable attack on Madame Blavatsky by the Society for Psychical Research, and has lived to see Dr. Hodson accept more marvels than he then denounced. He steered the Society

through the crisis which rent from it for a time nearly the whole American Section, to see that Section welcome him to his native land with pride and exultation. He saw his colleague pass away from his side, and bore the burden alone, steadfastly and bravely for another sixteen years, knitting hands with Annie Besant, her favourite pupil, as loyally and firmly as with herself. Through good report and evil report he has worked unwaveringly, until his Master's voice has called him home. At that same order, he appointed his colleague Annie Besant as his successor, to bear the burden H. P. Blavatsky and he had borne. He endured his last prolonged sufferings bravely and patiently, facing death as steadfastly as he had faced life, and cheered in the last weeks of his illness by the visits of the great Indian Sages, to whom he had given the strength of his manhood, the devotion of his life. He has passed away from earth, and left behind him a splendid monument of noble work, and on the other side he still will work, till the time comes for his return.¹

¹ [On White Lotus Day, 1928, referring to H. S. Olcott, Dr. Annie Besant said that in his new body he had just joined the Theosophical Society.]

India has had no more faithful helper in the revival of her religions than this noble American, and she may well send her blessing to the man who loved and served her.

HENRY STEEL OLCOTT

BY C. W. LEADBEATER

IN any account of prominent Theosophists the name of H. P. Blavatsky must inevitably stand first; but just as certainly the second name on the list must be that of Henry Steel Olcott. He shared with her the honour of founding the Society, and if through her came the teaching, the spreading of which was the object of its existence, it was his administrative ability which made that existence possible, his hand which steered the Theosophical ship over many a stormy sea and through many a difficult passage. He had been prepared for his position not only by the special work of the earlier years of this life, but also by previous incarnations in different parts of the world in which he had held positions curiously parallel—always

connected with the preaching of a great religion, yet never himself the preacher, but the administrative officer whose work made the teaching possible.

He was born—this time—at Orange, in the State of New Jersey, on August 2nd, 1832. He appears to have devoted himself at first to agriculture, not merely theoretically but very practically as well. I remember his showing me a ring which he told me had been broken on his finger while actually holding the plough. He appears to have worked upon the model farm of Scientific Agriculture at Newark, and with sufficient success to attract attention, since at the early age of twenty-three the Greek Government offered him the Chair of Agriculture at the University of Athens—which, however, he did not accept. Indeed, he declined several good positions which were offered to him, even the directorship of the Agricultural Bureau at Washington. He did, however, accept a post as Associate Agricultural Editor of the *New York Tribune*, and (though we can hardly suppose that to have been included in his agricultural duties) he represented that newspaper at the execution of the

celebrated John Brown—thereby unquestionably risking his life for its sake.

The outbreak of the Civil War turned his thoughts from the tilled field to the field of battle. He joined the northern army, and fought through the North Carolina Campaign, but after that the Government withdrew him from active service, and set him the far more dangerous task of investigating frauds in some of the military departments. He spent some years in this work, in which he was most successful. He received thanks and testimonials from very high officials for the thoroughness and honesty with which he carried through the very difficult business entrusted to him. He was appointed Special Commissioner first of the War, and then of the Navy Department, and his services were as highly appreciated in the latter as in the former. When his work there was done, with the marvellous versatility of the American he made yet another complete change of profession, and became a very successful lawyer. At the same time he still continued to do occasional literary work, for it was when he was reporting the Eddy manifestations that he first met

Madame Blavatsky, and thus inaugurated the final stage of his life for which all these others had been but preparatory.

His first Theosophical work seems to have been to help Madame Blavatsky in the writing of the great book, *Isis Unveiled*—an experience during which he acquired an immense mass of varied information. The two companions worked together for three years in America, and a very wonderful time it was, as may be read in the first volume of *Old Diary Leaves*. Madame Blavatsky was at this time constantly performing some of the extraordinary phenomena which were afterwards so grossly misunderstood and misrepresented, and as the Colonel always took the keenest interest in such things he revelled in the unparalleled opportunity offered to him. During this time also he had the privilege of meeting again the Master whom he had known so well and served so faithfully in far-off lands and in other lives; and from this time onward his devotion to that Master never faltered or failed, but remained ever the strongest characteristic of a strong unselfish life.

In 1878 the Founders of the Society decided to move its Headquarters to India, where they

were received with great enthusiasm. This move brought a great change into the Colonel's life. In America he had been chiefly engaged in desk work, and learning and assimilating the wonderful new philosophy which altered so entirely his outlook on life. Now he had to teach as well as to learn, to come out before the public as a lecturer, as the director and organiser of a great Society which spread with remarkable rapidity. He devoted himself utterly to the welfare of that Society for the remaining twenty-nine years of his life, and they were twenty-nine years of very hard work, of almost incessant travelling and lecturing in all parts of the civilised world. In the intervals which he allowed himself to spend at his home in beautiful Adyar he was no less incessant in his labours, constantly planning for the improvement of the Headquarters, pulling down, rebuilding, adding a room here and a new department there, reaching always towards the great ideal of a spiritual and educational centre which he had ever in his mind.

To him was due the formation of the Adyar Library [in 1886], and the erection of the stately building in which it is housed ; it was he who

arranged the impressive opening ceremony of that library—a ceremony actually unique in the world's history up to that date, because of the willing co-operation of representatives of all the great religions—except one. Buddhist Monks from Ceylon, Hindu *Pujaris* from one of the great southern temples, Zoroastrian *Mobeds* from Bombay, and Muhammadan *Mullas* from the Deccan, all joined to bless the new venture, each performing the ceremony of consecration according to the rites of his own religion, but also each joining in the rites of the others, fully admitting them as standing on an equality with his own. The omission of the Christian religion on this occasion was no fault of the Colonel's, for he asked certain priests to attend as representatives, but received the discouraging answer that the other people were heathens, and that it would therefore be impossible to appear with them in public and take part in their ceremonies !

Another piece of work, the importance of which has never been properly appreciated by the majority of the Society, was the drawing together of the two great divisions of the Buddhist Church. The Northern and Southern

Churches had been separated for ages in doctrine as well as in practice, and it is due solely to the Colonel's exertions that they stand now upon a common platform, for he drew up a declaration of the fourteen essential points of the Buddhist faith, and obtained to this the signatures of the leaders of both Churches. He also arranged that a certain number of the young men wishing to enter the Order of Monks in either of the Churches should be sent to study under the teachers of the other, in order to bring about fuller knowledge by each of the other, and greater mutual comprehension. Few people in western lands have any idea of the importance of this result. If the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury could be induced each to acknowledge the other as of the true faith and in every way his equal, and if they could agree upon a creed to which both would attach their signatures as containing everything essential in Christian doctrine, we should regard it as a historical event of the first order and of world-wide import; yet the number of people who would be affected by such a *rapprochement* would be only about half as great as the number of those brought

into religious harmony by this one act of Colonel Olcott's.

He was always a great friend to education. To him was due the great Buddhist educational movement in Ceylon, which has founded three colleges and over two hundred schools, at which some twenty-six thousand children are now being taught. Ever the champion of the poor, the despised and the oppressed, he also took up enthusiastically the question of the education of the neglected Pariahs; and though this movement is as yet but in its infancy, it has already five schools¹ working very effectively in Madras. When people in the West can be brought to understand what it is that is being done for the Pariah, and how sore is the need of it, there can be little doubt that funds will flow in as they should for the endowment of these schools, in which, by the very nature of the case, the pupils can never pay for themselves.

Another very prominent characteristic in him was his strong sense of the duty of impartiality in his position as President of the

¹ [This was in 1909; since then three schools within the Municipal limits have been taken up by the Madras Corporation.]

Society. A man of intense and definite convictions on most points of public policy and social progress, he was yet meticulously careful never to pledge the Society to any of his own opinions—never even to express those opinions when speaking in its name.

Naturally many important and difficult questions came before him for decision, and I myself can bear testimony to the painstaking care which he devoted to their consideration, and the amount of thought which he lavished upon them before pronouncing judgment.

The Colonel's final illness was a long one, for his physical body was strong, and he sank but gradually into the peace of death. He endured most patiently and bravely much suffering and weariness, but through it all his one thought was always for the welfare of the Society which he so loved. His last days were cheered by frequent astral visits from his old colleague H. P. Blavatsky, and on several occasions by the gracious presence of the Masters whom he had so faithfully served. And when, on February 17th, 1907, at last came the moment at which he was to lay

down the burden of the flesh, the Great Ones came and stood around his bed ; all who had at different periods of his life directed his studies--the Kingly Teacher under whose orders both he and Madame Blavatsky had specially worked, together with the gentle Brahmana to whose erudition *The Secret Doctrine* owes so much, and the Egyptian Master who had taken charge of the Colonel in the earlier days—all these, with H. P. Blavatsky herself, were there to receive him and to welcome him as he returned victorious from the battle of his earthly life. Soon he will come again to carry on to greater heights the work which he has so well begun, and those who laboured under him this time may well have the opportunity of serving with him then, if they but take to heart the lesson of his life—the lesson of unswerving loyalty and whole-souled devotion to the Great Cause which was always for him the one thing to which all else must yield, for which he stood ever ready to sacrifice ease and comfort and even life itself. Faithful unto death in this life as in that other lived so long ago, he stands before us as an examplar of courage, loyalty and unselfishness.

For the great Masters he lived, he lives and he will live ; when once more he raises Their banner, may we have strength to follow him as he has followed Them !

VI

LEST WE FORGET

BY M. R. H.

ON the 17th of February, 1907, there occurred the passing of our beloved President-Founder, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, at Adyar.

What a flood of memories and affection sweeps over me as I recall the event—memories of my constant wonderment of him during the months prior to his death, and affection that has been hallowed by the ages!

There is no use chronicling here the events associated with his founding and serving the Theosophical Society, for they are so well known; but I wish that every one could know the details of many important things that happened in the long last days when that great soul was passing from our midst, departing with the promise of his Master (made at

his death-bed) to take him to His home in the Himalayas for a long rest, and then to find him a new body in which he might continue his work for the Society.

In glancing back to those eventful months preceding his death, it is difficult to choose two or three of the many events to relate here, as they were all so impressive. Sometime I shall describe them fully in print and thus share them with all Theosophists.

It might be thought that since the Colonel seemed so long dying by inches, his environment was filled with sadness. Not at all. He would not allow us even to *look* sad. As soon as he thought there were sad feelings around, he would begin to tease us, tell humorous stories (even though in constant pain), recite odd bits of poetry, and otherwise divert our thoughts.

He was particularly anxious not to leave this life without righting every possible wrong of which he felt he might have been the cause. He sent letters of apology, had people come to see him and "talk it over," and finally said: "I can't think of anyone else that I might have wronged, and I feel so happy and full of affection for them all."

His courage and faith as he felt death drawing nearer and nearer were truly marvellous. In fact, he yearned to die. On several occasions he tried to will himself free, whispering, over and over again ; " I must go, I *will* go, take me, Master." He talked so joyously and radiantly of what work he was going to do " up there " for the members when they came there during sleep, and all that he expected to accomplish when he came back. He made a very wry face and some witty remarks about the dreaded " baby stage " of a new body, which provoked no end of mirth.

And so the days passed up to the last few, and there was no cessation of his humour, kindness and tender sollicitation for all of us who nursed and helped him in other ways.

Very beautiful indeed were the companionship and affection that blossomed between himself and Mrs. Besant during the long weeks that she remained at his bedside like a ministering angel. Long hours, day and night, she would sit by his side, for he was always very happy and contented when she was near.

One of the last pronouncements which he dictated to me for publication was about her,

and it should always remain a living appeal to all members. It read, in part: "I rejoice more and more day by day that the Masters wished her (Mrs. Besant) to succeed me, for I feel sure that she is the only person at present so well fitted to be your President. I ask you all, in memory of me, to be loyally devoted to her as your leader, because her ideals are also mine and she will work for our Society's welfare so long as she lives. Be devoted to her also because I wish to ask you to help, in some measure, to repay her for her constant tender devotion and care during my last illness."

The outstanding events of all those wonderful days were the visits of the Great Ones to his bedside. On one such occasion They suddenly appeared. It was evening, and Mrs. Besant was holding a large meeting on the flat roof just outside the entrance doors of his apartment. It might have seemed at first that the Great Ones were only there astrally, but subsequent events proved that They were in tangible, physical bodies.

When Colonel saw Them he sprang from his bed unaided (though it usually took two

or three of us to lift him), prostrated himself with his arms about Master M.'s feet, thrilled with joy. The Master lifted him tenderly and placed him on the bed, and Master K. H. arranged the pillow under his head.

Long, important and profoundly impressive were the conversations among them, and many were the words of praise and gratitude uttered by the Masters.

At another of Their visits the Colonel complained feelingly to Master M. about one of the members who had caused him and the Society a great deal of trouble, and ended by saying that the person was a very dangerous, evil enemy. The Master K. H. put His hand on the Colonel's shoulder, and with a divine tenderness in His voice, said: "Then he has all the more need of your love and compassion!"

I feel sure that Colonel Olcott will not mind my drawing aside the veil for only a few moments from the sacredness of those visits of the Masters. It is done purposely, because doubt has arisen in the minds of some of the members as to the existence of the Masters and Their overshadowing the Society.

Instead of doubting, remember that our two Founders were the soul of honour and bear the Masters witness. As Their willing servants, they brought us Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. What greater boon could have been given us, left us as a sacred heritage, than that of aiding to transmit to others the knowledge of Theosophy—the essence of all Truth.

VII

THE PRESIDENT-FOUNDER

BY A. P. SINNETT

DATING the beginning of his Theosophical activity from the year 1875, when the Society was first established, he has thus devoted thirty-two years of strenuous life to the noble purpose of extending the influence of the Society all over the world. Very few of its members now living can have known him longer or more intimately than myself, as I made his acquaintance in the year 1879 in the infancy of the movement, and have been in close touch with him ever since, and I venture to say that by none can his single-minded, unselfish devotion to the cause the Society represents be more cordially and appreciatively recognised than by myself.

I affirm from long knowledge of the fact that he was never actuated in any course he ever took from the beginning to the close of his Theosophical career by any other than the purest motives, while the universal affection in which he was held throughout the Society was enough to show how widely his character was understood, how unreservedly it commanded admiration. The work he did has given rise to a structure of colossal magnitude. In all quarters of the globe its solid results are apparent. But for those who knew him best it is not so much for what he did as for what he was that his memory will be cherished with the tenderest regard.

VIII

IN MEMORIAM

BY UPENDRA NATH BASU

THE second of the two Founders of the Theosophical Society has just passed away from our midst, and with him has set one of the brightest stars of the religious world. True to his lifelong faith in the occult power of the number 7, Colonel Olcott chose for his departure from this sublunary sphere the hour of 7 in the morning on the 17th day of February in the year 1907. So the time must have been very auspicious for him. Looked at from the point of view of the Hindus too, he should have a splendid future: for his translation occurred in the day time, during the bright fortnight of the moon and the northerly course of the sun. And how could it be otherwise, seeing that his life was one of willing sacrifice to the noblest ideals that have ever inspired mankind?

My acquaintance with this great soul commenced as early as the year 1879, when he first came to India, and when I had the proud privilege of serving as his interpreter at an address which he gave to the pandits of Benares. I was only a youth of sixteen at the time, but even then I felt a mysterious attachment for him—an attachment which soon developed into ties of Theosophical Brotherhood, and later on into warm friendship enduring to the last day of his life; and I shall cherish the fond memory of his affection for ever. So magnanimous was his heart that, although he was old enough to be my grandfather, he never turned a deaf ear to any of my appeals to him, and I never failed to find ready redress for any of my grievances. In his private relations he was simple as a child and kind as the kindest of mothers; and yet withal brave and strong, and possessed of an organising capacity that may well arouse the admiration of generals and ministers.

These, however, were his minor qualifications. It was as President of the Theosophical Society, as founder and leader of a world-wide movement, endeavouring to work out the ideal of

the Universal Brotherhood of Man, almost utopian in its loftiness, that he shone out radiantly among his contemporaries. In him the Society found its unity, in his even-handed justice was preserved its solidarity. This ideal of Brotherhood, it is true, was not new, almost every great religious reformer was animated by it. But it remained only a dream with most of them; and it turned into sect at the point of realisation with others. But to him belonged the credit of giving it practical and definite shape. His was the glorious achievement of bringing together into fraternal co-operation and harmonious relation men and women from the far East and the far West, from the remote North and the distant South, men and women of all faiths and creeds—Buddhist, Christians, Hindus, Parsis, Mussalmans, and even Freethinkers, and before he died there were over 16,000 persons on the roll of his Society, scattered all over the civilised world. And these persons are recruited from all ranks and grades of the social scale; one counts among them princes, noblemen, judges, magistrates, scientists, philosophers, politicians, lawyers, physicians, poets, novelists and the like,

and all of them looked up to him as their leader—their final referee on all questions of constitution, their highest peacemaker.

Of course he was not perfect: for no man in flesh and blood can be perfect; and we have heard criticisms against his financial administration, his injudicious selection of subordinates, and trivial things of that sort, but never a breath has stirred against his impartiality, his uniform regard for all faiths, his equal treatment of the followers of all creeds. In fact he maintained the eclecticism of the Society in a most admirable manner, and as such has proved himself to be an ideal President of the T. S. His loss, therefore, to us is irreparable, and it is more than doubtful if we shall ever find a successor to his office imbued through and through with the same spirit of tolerance, hand in hand with the same love of religion in the true sense of that word. How then can we close this humble tribute to his memory, except with the prayer that his soul may spread its protecting wings over the Society to whom his best energy and profoundest devotion were given while in the body!

LX

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT

BY A. P. WARRINGTON

I REMEMBER well my first touch with the Colonel. It was in the early part of the present century following hard upon a tour which had just been made by Mr. Leadbeater. I had gone from my home in Virginia to Washington expressly to meet him. I had learned that he was to give a lecture on "Personal Magnetism," or something of the sort, in some hall in Washington, and I made it my business to attend. When he entered the hall I remember distinctly being impressed by two things: first, his royal carriage as he marched with splendid dignity and self-confidence down the aisle to the platform; and

the other, his shortness of stature, that is to say, shorter than his manner would suggest.

The Colonel gave an interesting lecture, and afterwards shook hands with many people. One elderly lady came up to him to be healed. She complained of suffering some kind of pain or ailment in the lower part of her back. The Colonel was seated at the moment and said to her: "Give me your handkerchief." The lady did so. He placed the handkerchief upon the indicated spot on her back and proceeded to blow on it with a deep breath two or three times. He then removed the handkerchief, handing it back to her with some remark about feeling better.

When we left the hall I joined the party and the Colonel said there was one thing he wished very much to have, and that was a drink of American soda water. "Warrington, I have not had a drink of American soda water for twenty-five years. Take me to the nearest drug store and let's have one together."

The next day we went together to Mt. Vernon. It was my first visit, by the way, to our National American shrine, and, therefore, it was a double pleasure that I could go there

with Colonel Olcott. He seemed to enjoy the visit almost as a boy would do. All the old-fashioned gardens with the borders of boxbush, unchanged since they were planted in the eighteenth century ; the old kitchen fire-place and the antique utensils ; the various treasures of the house of Washington, especially interested him ; but above all, I think, he was captivated most by the beauty of Mt. Vernon as an admirable and rare place of residence, for he said to me a number of times what a beautiful model it was for a country gentleman's home, with its charming old residence, its great trees and lawn, and especially the exquisite location upon the river.

I can say to you from experience that the Colonel was an early riser. As a matter of fact I was not such, and never had been. I had always valued my sleep of the sunrise hours ; but during the visit at the Massó house, morning after morning the Colonel would come to my window which opened on the patio, and standing there in his pyjamas would recite poetry to me, thus making sleep impossible. I seem to remember now at this distance of time the tones of his voice rolling into my window

soon after sunrise : " Arise, Awake, Seek out the Great Ones and Get Understanding."

From the day of my birth to the present moment it has been very difficult for me to make the electric battery of my body do its proper duty, and during those weeks with Colonel Olcott I had an excellent opportunity to see for myself what a dynamo of energy was his body. He was fully aware of the inefficiency of my body, and he kept me near him much of the time. As he sat close beside me I could feel the superabundant energy of his powerful body flowing into mine and energising it, giving it its proper feeling of well-being.

The Colonel had a little box. In that little box he had some useful trinkets which he showed to me over and again. He seemed as proud of these curious little things as a small boy of his strings and toys. I knew then that he was a man of very wide scope of sympathies, for he could be at once the boy or the great organiser and leader. It is my opinion anyhow that the best men never grow up. If they did, they would simply be some sort of an adult machine.

I count it as having been one of the greatest privileges of my life that I could have come into touch with this striking personage of our Theosophical history. A kindlier man there never was, nor ever a friendlier one, nor one more thoroughly devoted to his ideals. To him the Masters of the Wisdom were living presences. In no sense were They in his life the far-off deities of an act of Sunday worship. They lived in his every thought and speech, and his entire life turned upon the axis of Their being.

It would be hard to believe that anyone who had created an organisation in which he had become so thoroughly enwrapped as the Colonel with the Theosophical Society, would not soon again find his way into that Society by an immediate rebirth. I hope, therefore, that some day we shall have the honour once again of looking to him as the Society's leader and organiser; for few can put the amount of zeal, continued interest and reverent thought into a work that can be given by him who created it, whose child it is.

X

HENRY STEEL OLCOTT

BY A. SCHWARZ

THE memory of Colonel Olcott calls up the picture of a unique personality, striking in appearance, a born organiser, independent, open-minded, large-hearted, of a lovable and joyous disposition, possessing in a remarkable degree the qualities which eminently fitted him for the office of President of the Theosophical Society, and accounted for a splendid record of public work in his earlier career.

I had my first glimpse of him in 1893, when he came to Ceylon to meet Mrs. Annie Besant on her first visit to the East, and when he presided at a lecture on "Karma" which she gave in the Public Hall of Colombo. That lecture was my introduction to Theosophy, but I little dreamed at the time that in later years

I should become closely associated both with Mrs. Besant and Colonel Olcott. During the next few years, whenever I passed through Madras I took the opportunity of calling at Adyar for the purpose of buying books and also in the hope of making the personal acquaintance of Colonel Olcott. As ill-luck would have it, he was absent on the first two or three occasions and I did not meet him till February 18th, 1897, a date I had forgotten and only discovered accidentally when, looking through his *Diaries* some years ago, I found my visiting card pasted in at that date.

Adyar has the complete set of these *Diaries*, in which, from 1878 to 1907, the Colonel briefly entered every evening the principal events of the day, pinning or pasting in visiting cards, notices of lectures, invitations, menus of dinners, newspaper reports, also a few letters—in one of which I discovered a long-forgotten dollar-note—and stating his judgment in succinct remarks about events and people, serious, humorous, sometimes caustic, even interspersed with a few jokes he had heard and wished to remember. These served him in later years as the basis of his *Old*

Diary Leaves, originally published monthly in *The Theosophist* and later in book-form. Unfortunately he passed away before he could bring his reminiscences up to date, and so we miss a great deal of interesting information on the history of the Theosophical Society, which the *Diaries* would have called up in the Colonel's mind, but which no one else can completely reconstruct from his short entries. The five published volumes bring the history of the Society up to the year 1898, and younger members especially should not fail to read these fascinating reminiscences, valuable both as a historical record and because through them Colonel Olcott becomes a living personality to the reader.

I have a happy recollection of that first meeting with him, for it was the beginning of a lasting friendship. I had, however, to remodel my preconceived notion of what the President of the Theosophical Society might be like. I had pictured him as a solemn old gentleman who would talk to me about Theosophy, the Masters, the Society, instead of which I found him to be a man of the world, jovial, frank, leading the conversation on to topics of

the day, yet at the same time revealing in some undefinable way the serious and deeper side of his nature. Before I left he was good enough to depute Dr. English to show me, at my perhaps somewhat bold request, the paintings by Schmiechen of our two Masters, a favour which I greatly appreciated.

From that time onward I had many opportunities of coming into ever closer touch with him, for on his frequent visits to Colombo he usually stayed in my bungalow, and my appreciation of our President-Founder grew, as I learned to know the real man. Often, when in the mood, he would talk to me till late at night about H. P. B., the Masters, and the early days of the Society, his frankness and love of truth being so apparent that his testimony regarding the existence of the Masters and H.P.B.'s relation with Them has ever since carried supreme weight with me. Through his work for the revival of Buddhism and of education he had immense influence with the Buddhists of Ceylon. His genial ways and real friendship for the people endeared him to them to such an extent that his name became a

household word in the Island, as well as in many places in India. I remember how for years after his death the quickest way to find our Headquarters at Adyar, or the Colonel's bungalow "Gulistan" in Ootacamund, was not by asking for *the Theosophical Society* or *Gulistan*, but for *Olcott Bungalow*, his name being the better known.

From 1899 till his death I attended most of the Annual Conventions at Adyar, events to which I always looked forward with keen anticipation both of a spiritual refreshment and a physical rest. The combination of Mrs. Besant as teacher, giving her magnificent lectures on "Avataras," "The Pedigree of Man," "The Bhagavad-Gita," etc., and of Colonel Olcott as President, keeping every one in good humour with his friendly, jocular remarks, was a happy one indeed. Compared with our present-day larger Conventions, those early ones were more in the nature of large family-gatherings. This gave them a peculiar charm, for members got to know each other, and year after year one met the same old friends. The few Europeans were usually housed at Headquarters in cadjan (palm-leaf) huts or cubicles on the roof ;

the Indians in one or two large cadjan sheds. Many of them however settled down at night in the spacious Headquarters Hall, which then served as a dormitory, and was usually filled with rows of figures sleeping side by side on the floor. In the morning, the bedding was rolled up and piled against the walls. The Colonel was an ideal host. He knew his Theosophical family, personally received his guests (literally embracing his older friends), looked after the comfort of every one, and always presided at the European table in the old dining-room which in those days could easily accommodate the small number of Europeans and Parsis who attended. Meal-time offered a great opportunity for his jokes and he was fond of teasing his more intimate friends.

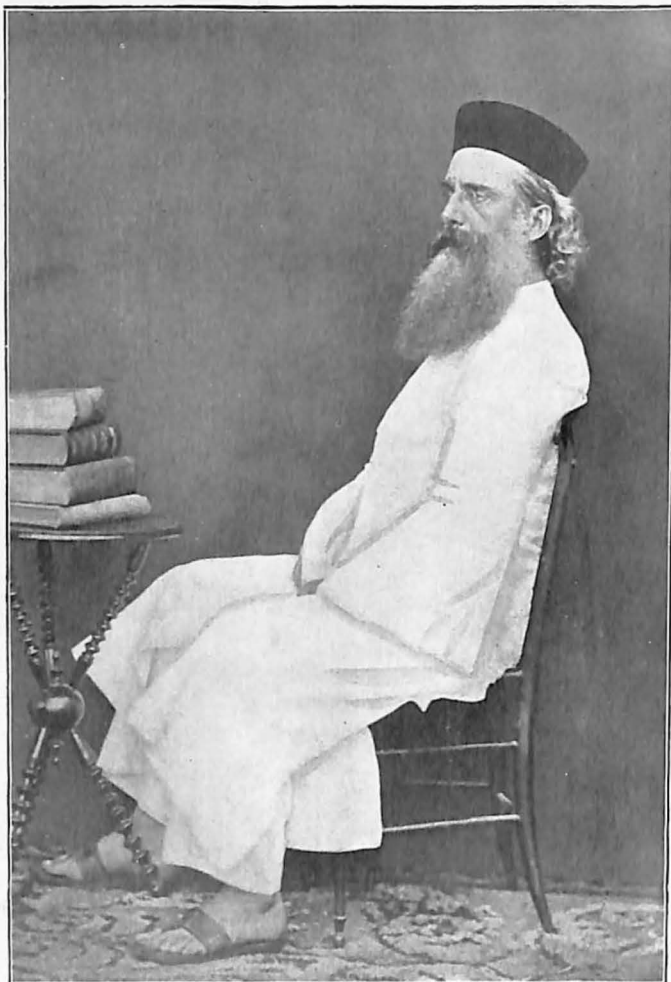
Convention visitors were considered guests of Headquarters, but a collection was made to cover expenses as far as possible, the well-to-do brothers being expected to pay for the poorer ones. At these collections the Colonel proved an excellent auctioneer. "Who will give Rs. 100 for an armchair in Devachan?" and similar jocular remarks kept the audience in roars of laughter and brought many a currency

note from its hiding-place. Being a good organiser he naturally had an eye to business. Some years before I settled at Adyar, I confided to him during one of my visits that it was my wish to work for the Society in some way after retiring from business, but that, not being a writer or lecturer, I did not see in what capacity I might be useful. Promptly came his reply that it was always possible to work by proxy, by paying for a lecturer or efficient worker who could not support himself. I did not take his very practical advice, but bided my time, and not long after, at the time of his death, the problem solved itself when I was offered the office of Treasurer which fortunately I did not need to work "by proxy".

I wonder whether newer members realise how much the Society owes to its President-Founder, what courage, hard work and self-sacrifice were needed to start and guide the Movement, how his organising capacity was indispensable to H. P. B. for the spreading of her teachings. Madame Blavatsky was the teacher and occultist; Colonel Olcott the organiser. He never claimed to be an occultist, but his writings and lectures

disclose the possession of a great deal of occult knowledge, and deserve careful study, for no one can have a complete insight into the foundation, growth and problems of the Theosophical Society who has not read them. He was fond of saying that he had been bidden by his Master to be the doorkeeper of the Society and that position he meant to and *did* hold to his end. *That* he considered his special Dharma ; in its fulfilment he found his satisfaction and inspiration, setting an example to all of us.

Such was Colonel Olcott as I knew him, an outstanding personality whose greatness largely overbalanced a few weaknesses, and whose memory I cherish not only for his personal friendship but also for his invaluable services to the Theosophical Society and to the world. What more could any of us wish for than to have to our credit a life of service and aspiration such as has been that of the President-Founder ?



COLONEL OLCOTT IN 1883

XI

COLONEL OLCOTT AS A GREAT MESMERIST

BY B. RANGA REDDY

I CAME to know about Colonel H. S. Olcott, the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society, when he and his co-worker, H.P.B., visited Nellore in the month of May, 1882, to form a Theosophical Lodge there. They stayed there for three days, and admitted nearly forty persons as members of the Theosophical Society.

On the evening of the first day Colonel Olcott delivered a lecture on "Mesmerism". An hour or two after, some of the newly joined members requested him to illustrate what Mesmerism was. He asked them (they were about fifteen or twenty members) to stand before him in a semicircle, made some passes on the face of every one, asked them to

close their eyes firmly and said : “ You can't open your eyes ; try if you can.” All opened their eyes except three. One of these three was a District Court Vakil, the second an Assistant Surgeon of the District, and the third was about sixteen years old son of a District Munsif. Then the Colonel said that these were the sensitive persons and asked the District Munsif to bring his boy next night so that he might mesmerise him and show the effects of mesmerism to others. Next night the Munsif did not bring his boy as the mother objected. But the other two members who had been found sensitive attended along with other members. All these sat in front of Colonel Olcott. The Assistant Surgeon asked the Colonel if he could cure the pain which he had had in his knee for a long time. Colonel made some passes on the knee and the pain disappeared. Then the Colonel turned his attention to the sensitive Vakil, made some passes on his body and said : “ You cannot move your legs.” The Vakil tried his best to get up but could not. The Colonel, then, made some more passes on the Vakil's face and said : “ You cannot say your name.” We all asked him to

say what his name was ; but he could not say his name though he was speaking other words. Then the Colonel dismissed all of us and we went to our houses admiring the work of Colonel Olcott.

Colonel Olcott was an excellent lecturer. When he first delivered a lecture in Madras on " The Scientific Basis of All Religions " he called the B.A.'s and M.A.'s " Bad Aryans " and " Mad Aryans " as their views were materialistic.

Every year I used to attend the Convention meetings at Adyar. The delegates used to take their meals in a cadjan shed put up near the Indian Section building. Sometimes there were heavy rains, causing much inconvenience to sit in the shed for taking meals. Two or three years before the Colonel passed away I went to him to take leave of him after attending the Convention. He embraced me and said: " Would it not be nice to have a *Dharamshala* in the T.S. compound ? " I said " Yes," and went away. It so happened that immediately after the Colonel's death I had to come to Adyar and construct the building now called the Bhojanashala, where the residents and visitors take their meals conveniently.

XII

SOME REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL OLCOTT

BY SARAH E. PALMER

MANY have written about the character and work of the President-Founder. The chief events of his life are well known to most Theosophists, especially to the readers of *Old Diary Leaves*. It seems to me, however, that the picture is incomplete without depicting the *human, fun-loving*, side of the Colonel's nature. He well deserves to be placed on a pedestal for the largeness of his individuality as indicated by his great work in life. His personality also was much in evidence, and those who knew him best were his staunchest friends. Perhaps some Boswell will yet appear to show the Colonel as he was. A few little items will be enough to reveal his innate goodness

and geniality. Three years spent at Headquarters, beginning fifteen years ago, give me this opportunity of writing about him. If the solemnity of the subject is not manifest in this production it will doubtless be due to karmic limitation either on the part of the Colonel or the scribe.

In those days Colonel Olcott boasted that he had never yet felt tired. His physical endurance would have been remarkable even for a young man. He had been accustomed to attend to his own correspondence and thought nothing of writing seventeen letters on foreign post day. The whole compound and its activities had the benefit of his personal supervision, and the servants were kindly treated and were devoted to his service. Trivedi, his right-hand man, a Pariah, was always trusted with the transportation of bank deposits, an object-lesson in itself for those who despised these outcasts.

Someone spoke of a clever swimmer who could smoke a cigar while floating on the water. The Colonel said he could do better than that himself, and was challenged to try. Trivedi found his bathing suit and had the

Adyar river-bed cleaned out for some distance. The next morning all were summoned to the bank whence we saw the Colonel tranquilly floating about while smoking a cigar and reading his newspaper.

In the evening he liked to sit on the flat roof and read. If the book pleased him he often read aloud. He was, however, happiest when singing old-fashioned songs. One was a rollicking Irish ditty requiring some action. A chance visitor with a good voice was very welcome at Headquarters, for Adyar was a very quiet place in those days.

After giving a lecture he usually allowed questions. Once a man in the audience asked whether the Logos manifested of his own volition or was compelled to manifest. The Colonel replied that he could not say as to that, he was "not on speaking terms with the Logos". A man asked if he must give up smoking. He answered: "It is this way: if you *can* stop you needn't, if you can't stop you must."

In an old number of *The Theosophist* I came across a misprint. It spoke of the "two flounders of the Society". I asked the Colonel

if he had noticed it. He said : " Noticed it ! I should think I have." He said the melancholy feature of the case was that he himself had read the proof.

Two people who had read a little about occultism told him that they had selected him as their *guru* and had come to Headquarters to place themselves under his spiritual influence, and receive occult instruction. He assured them it was not his line. They persisted, so he called for his joke-book, a scrap-book containing newspaper jokes he had been collecting for years. He handed it to them and told them to read it, it would do them good.

He once spoke of having been out of incarnation for 2,000 years. He said : " I hope they will not keep me out so long next time."

He was broad in his sympathies and faithful to his friends. A few will remember how Prince Harisinghji was poisoned with coal gas while in Benares at Convention time nine years ago. The Colonel would have hurried back to Adyar to supervise the publication of the Convention documents, but he remained at his friend's bed-side and wept when the Prince died several days later.

When Madame Blavatsky's statue was made and placed in the Headquarters Hall, he pointed to another alcove and said: "When Annie passes over I will place her statue there."

A Hindu astrologer in Madras had told him he would die from the effects of a fall from a height. He said this was not the first time he had been told this. He did not quite believe it but was a little more careful in going about the roof when it was dark. Some places then were unprotected by a parapet wall. The fall, however, was destined to be far away from India.

He was in his element when Adyar was full of Theosophists at Convention time. He had a good memory for names and faces and to him the gathering was a veritable reunion. It does not seem strange that he will sometimes revisit his beloved Adyar again, though he must come half the way round the earth to reach it.

XIII

MORE REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL OLCOTT

BY J. HARRY CARNES

I FOUND the Colonel to be an exceedingly lovable and kindly individual. Merely from outer appearance one could almost feel his personal honesty and uprightness. In this respect he was the most unique individual I have ever met, and I regard the occasion as one of an unusual privilege for myself. I also remember well what seemed to me to be his regal manner, and on more than one occasion he peremptorily ordered me around as though I had been his slave, these orders involving considerable personal inconvenience and also an expenditure of money. It never occurred to me to feel offended, nor did I feel in the slightest way any resentment because of these

orders, or the manner in which they had been given. I know of no other person who could "get by" the way he did with me.

I well remember Colonel's visit to Washington and his lecture there on "Magnetic Healing". For the most part it had to do with his own personal experiences in making cures in India, by showing where the centres were in the body and how to arrange his hands upon them preliminary to pouring into the person his own magnetism. For this purpose he would call up a person in the audience and graphically disclose the precise location of these centres. He also told the circumstances under which he came to make any cures. The one that I remember was that he was travelling in India when certain Christian emissaries for the purpose of propaganda made cures on the Indians by invoking the name of the Christ. This stirred the ire of the Colonel, who proceeded immediately to join the assemblage, and to state that he too would make cures, but in the name of the Lord Buddha. The Colonel stated that up to that time he had never made any. His success, however, was immediate and had the usual consequences. Upon the

advice of his Teacher, however, and after the lapse of about a year in making numerous cures, he gave up this method of healing.

When he was in Chicago the Colonel's beard attracted the attention of the street gamins, who saw a fancy resemblance between him and the, at that time, prominent individual called Dowie. This notoriety greatly annoyed the Colonel. It rather amused me, because it presented a situation in which there was no possible come-back for the Colonel, since he could not prevent the boys from orally heckling him.

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BY A. K. SITARAMA SHASTRI

IN the summer of 1893 I was spending a few weeks in Adyar. Colonel Olcott gave me some proofs and asked me to correct them. That business, at that time, was considered by me a dirty job. When the President-Founder gave me the proofs to read I boasted that even in the Government offices I would not do this "dirty" work, and pleaded that I might be given some other work. To this the President-Founder said: "Sitarambabu, if you want to serve the Masters you should not call any of Their work 'dirty,' and inasmuch as you have aversion for this work your Master will so arrange that you will be in the printing press." These may not be the exact words but the gist of what he said. The President-Founder prophesied and his successor put me in charge of printing work [Vasanta Press]. The moral is: "Do not have aversion for any sort of work In His Service."

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

BY C. W. LEADBEATER

A MILLION years ago in old Atlantis, in the great City of the Golden Gate, there reigned a mighty King. One day there came to him a soldier whom he had sent out to head an expedition against a troublesome tribe on the borders of that vast empire. The soldier reported victory, and as a reward the King gave him the position of Captain of the Palace Guard, and placed specially in his charge the life of his own only son, the heir-apparent to his throne. Not long afterwards the newly appointed captain had an opportunity of proving his faithfulness to his trust, for when he was alone with the young Prince in the palace gardens a band of conspirators rushed upon them and tried to

assassinate his charge. The captain fought bravely against heavy odds, and though mortally wounded succeeding in protecting the Prince from serious harm until help arrived, and the two were borne together into the presence of the King. The Monarch heard the story and, turning to his dying captain, said: "What can I do for you who have given your life for me?" The captain replied: "Grant me to serve you and your son for ever in future lives, since now there is the bond of blood between us." And with a last effort he dipped his finger in the blood which flowed so fast from his wounds, and touched with it the feet of his sovereign and the forehead of the still unconscious Prince. The King held out his hand in benediction, and replied: "By the blood that has been shed for me and mine, I promise that both you and he shall serve me to the end."

So was the first link forged between three leaders of men of whom we all have heard; for that great King is now the Master M., the Prince, his son, has been known to us as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and the Captain of the Guard as Henry Steel Olcott. Through all the

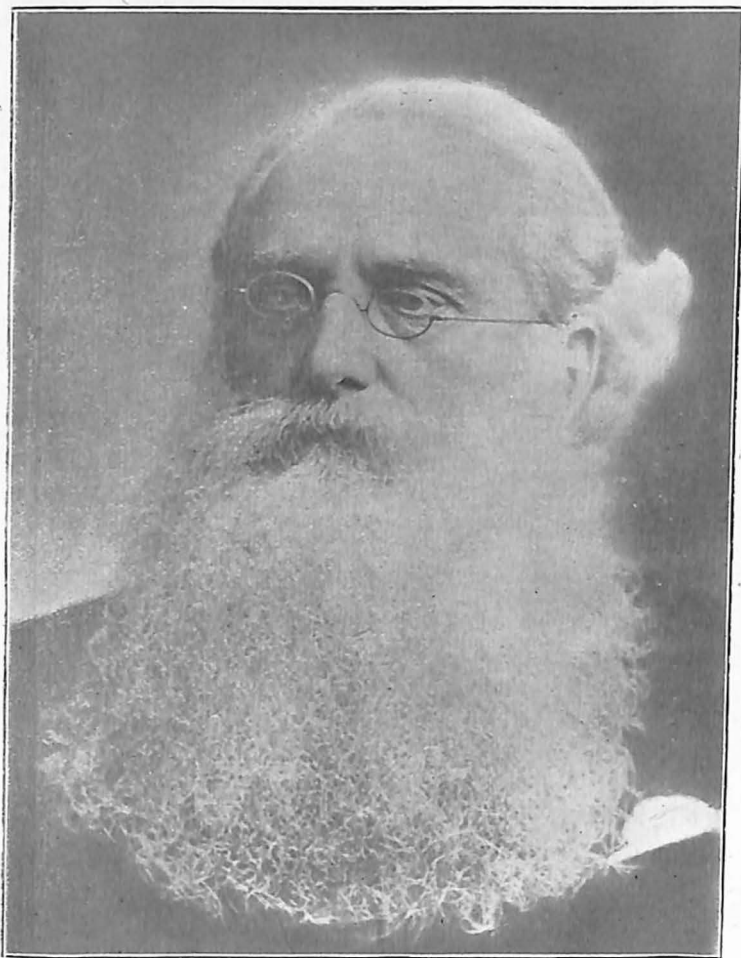
ages since, through many strange vicissitudes, the link has been kept unbroken and the service has been rendered, as we know, and it will be through the ages yet to come.

Since then as Gushtasp, King of Persia, he protected and assisted in the foundation of the present form of Zoroastrianism, and later as the world-renowned King Asoka he issued those wonderful edicts which remain until this day graven upon rocks and pillars in India to show how real were his zeal and his devotion. And, when at the end of that long and strenuous life he looked back upon it with sorrow to see how far short of his intentions even his wonderful achievements had fallen, his Master showed him, for his encouragement, two visions, one of the past and one of the future. The vision of the past was the scene in Atlantis when the link between them was forged ; the vision of the future showed the Master as the Manu of the Sixth Root-Race and our President-Founder as a lieutenant serving under Him in the exalted work of that high office. So Asoka died content in the certainty that the closest of all earthly ties, that between the Master and His pupil, would never be severed.

Having thus taken a prominent part in the spreading of the two great religions of the world, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, it was appropriate that he should be so closely associated with the work of this great movement which synthesises all religions—the Theosophical Society. Never himself the spiritual teacher, he has always been the practical organiser who made the teacher's work possible. In this life as in all those others, his ruling principle was always that of passionate loyalty to his Master and to the work which he had to do. When first I met him a quarter of a century ago that was the dominant feature in his character; through all the years that I have known him that above all other motives ruled his actions.

If we turn to the outward details of this past life of his, we still find the same keynote of devotion to duty. The Assistant Secretary of the United States Treasury wrote to him with regard to his public work for the Government:

“I wish to say that I have never met with a gentleman intrusted with important duties, of more capacity, rapidity and reliability than



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have been exhibited by you throughout. More than all, I desire to bear testimony to your entire uprightness and integrity of character, which I am sure have characterised your whole career, and which to my knowledge have never been assailed. That you have thus escaped with no stain upon your reputation, when we consider the corruption, audacity and power of the many villains in high position whom you have prosecuted and punished, is a tribute of which you may well be proud, and which no other man occupying a similar position and performing similar services in this country has ever achieved."

He showed the same energy and capacity in his work for the Theosophical Society. Few of our members realise the extent and the success of his labours, for much of what he did can be properly appreciated only by those who have travelled in those Eastern lands which he loved so well. To his untiring exertion was due the rebuilding and enlargement of the Society's Headquarters at Adyar. It was he who founded the great library there, and on the occasion of its opening gathered together to bless its inception priests of all the leading

religions of the world—the first occasion in history on which such representations had met in fraternal accord, each freely acknowledging the others as standing on an equal footing with himself.

To him is due the great movement for Buddhist education in the island of Ceylon, in consequence of which up to the present [1908], 287 Buddhist schools have been founded, in which over 35,000 children are being taught. He it was who brought together on a common platform of belief the Northern and Southern Schools of Buddhism, separated for more than a thousand years; he it was who took up the education of the neglected Pariah class.

Many and great were the difficulties in his way in holding together and directing so complex a movement as the Theosophical Society; yet in every land he was always popular, by every nation he was eagerly welcomed. His utter devotion to the welfare of his Society and the transparent honesty of his purpose could not fail to impress all who met him. I speak of him with feeling, for I had special opportunities of knowing him well. I shall never forget his fatherly kindness to me,

when as a comparatively young man, quite new to Indian life, I first went to reside at the Headquarters at Adyar. Since then I have met him in many countries; I have passed weeks alone with him (except for an interpreter and a servant) in a bullock-cart in the jungles of Ceylon; I went with him on the journey which carried Theosophy into Burma in 1885. Under circumstances like these one quickly gets to know a man with far greater intimacy than is afforded by years of ordinary social life, and I can unreservedly bear testimony to the whole-souled devotion of the man—to the fact that during all this time his one anxiety was the furthering of the Theosophical work, his one thought how to please the Master by doing with all his might that which had been given to him.

We all know how courageously he bore his sufferings, how all through his illness his constant thought was still the welfare of the dear Society to which his life had been devoted. We remember how when the time came for him to leave the body three of the great Masters stood beside him, as well as his old colleague and friend, H.P. Blavatsky. His

cremation was a grand and worthy ceremony. The pyre was of sandal-wood, and his body was covered with the American flag and the Buddhist flag, the latter a standard which he himself had invented, bearing in their right order the special colours of the aura of the Lord Buddha.

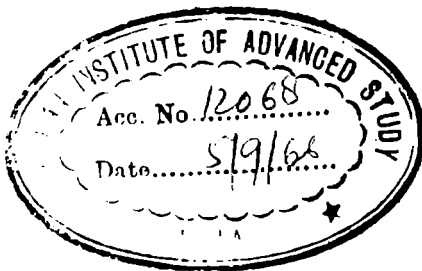
He was unconscious for a while after death, but is now fully awake and active. As I was always deeply attached to him, his Master told me to act as a kind of guide to him when necessary, and to explain to him whatever he wished. He had always been keenly interested in the powers and possibilities of the astral plane, and as soon as he could see it clearly he was full of eager and insatiable desire to know how everything is done, to understand the rationale of it, and to learn to do it himself. He has an unusually strong will in certain directions, and that made many of the experiments easy to him even when they were quite new. He is most at home in work which involves the use of power in some way—to fight, to cure, to defend. He is full of big schemes for the future and is just as enthusiastic as ever about the Society which he loves.

His attention has been attracted by the strong thought about him involved in writing this ; he stands beside me now, and insists that I shall convey to the members his most earnest advice to give whole-hearted loyalty and support to his noble successor, to put aside at once and for ever all pitiable squabbling over personalities, all unprofitable wrangling over matters which are not their business and which they cannot be expected to understand, and to turn their attention to the one and only matter of importance—the *work* which the Society has to do in the world. His message to them is : *Forget yourself, your limitations and your prejudices and spread the truths of Theosophy.*

Of his future we can say little as yet. His own wish is to take another body quickly so as to work along with Madame Blavatsky¹ in her present incarnation, but I do not yet know whether this can be arranged. It depends partly upon the stage of his own development, and partly upon when and where the Masters think that he will be most useful. His great talent is organisation, and we have seen that

¹ [On White Lotus Day, 1928 (May 8), Dr. Annie Besant, in a speech about H. P. B., said that she is now a learned Pandit living in North India.]

he has already practised it in Zoroastrianism, in the great missionary enterprise of Buddhism and in the foundation of the Theosophical Society. No doubt he may have similar work to do in connection with the next religion, and again at the establishment of the Sixth Root-Race, but as yet we do not know exactly when these events will take place. Be they when they may, the great man whom in this life we *know* as Henry Steel Olcott will be ready to bear his part in them, to lead us as he led us before, devoted as ever to the service of his Master, faithful as ever through life and through death.



LAST MESSAGE OF THE
PRESIDENT-FOUNDER

TO my beloved brethren in the physical body, I bid you farewell. In memory of me, carry on the grand work of proclaiming and living the brotherhood of religions. To my beloved brothers on the higher planes, I greet and come to you, and implore you to help me to impress on all men on earth that there is no religion higher than truth, and that in the brotherhood of religions lies the peace and progress of humanity.

February 2, 1907.

H. S. OLCOTT