

THE GOLDEN BOOK

OF THE

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

SINCE the Theosophical Society was started in 1875 to give the message of Theosophy, there is one doctrine which has drawn the especial attention of the modern world. It is the existence of the Masters of the Wisdom who are the perfection of humanity. The Theosophical Society, as a Society with objects specified in a Constitution, has hitherto never formally committed itself to any statement as to the existence of the Masters. Indeed, it has purposely refrained from doing so, in order that the largest number of men and women, of every religion and every race, might join in the work of promoting Brotherhood, without being called upon to profess any other creed than their belief in "The Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour".

Nevertheless, as a matter of fact, the idea of the Masters has been as a trumpet call to sacrifice for most of those who have worked for the Theosophical Society. It is true that there is no doctrine in Theosophy which is new, not even that of the existence of the Masters; all the main truths of Theosophy are found in the great religions. But as Theosophy presents these ancient truths to the modern world, the fact of the existence of Adept Teachers has not only appeared logical, but to many it has become the centre of all their Theosophical Idealism. For, if



FIG. 1
H. P. BLAVATSKY
before 1875

evolution is a fact, and if also the soul of man is immortal, then the necessary result of evolution must be the slow transformation of all souls into the grade of Masters of the Wisdom. Furthermore, as evolution has been a principle in the universe since the beginning of time, it is obvious that somewhere in past ages Masters of the Wisdom must have existed. So then, also, what the Masters are to-day, each one of us, whatever be his failings now, will be some day.

Such a line of thought and idealism has been inseparable from the growth of the Theosophical Movement, to a large number of those who have dedicated themselves to the cause of Theosophy. Naturally this dedication has been made easier because, from the beginning of the Theosophical Movement, a certain number of its workers have given testimony from their own personal knowledge to the existence of the Adept Teachers. Of these, the foremost is Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

The history of the Theosophical Movement begins with her. Throughout all her life, the predominant fact which guided her activities was that she was the pupil of one of these Masters, and the servant of all of Them as They compose a great Hierarchy of Adepts who govern and help the world. When H. P. Blavatsky started the Theosophical Society, she did so only at Their bidding, as she stated again and again.

It is this fact, that the Masters have stood from the beginning behind the Theosophical Society, which comes out in the most clear fashion as we study its origin from the historical material in our possession. The data for writing a history of the T. S. consists of (a) the letters of the Masters, wherein They describe Their plans, or give Their orders, (b) the letters and papers of H. P. Blavatsky and her colleague Henry Steele Olcott, (c) the published record of the Society's activities. Among the most interesting of H. P. B.'s papers is the series of Scrap Books which she kept, in which she has pasted cuttings from newspapers; on these she often comments

in her own hand, approving or dissenting. There are nineteen of these Scrap Books, covering the years 1874 to 1884. The title page of Scrap Book No. I is reproduced in Fig. 2.

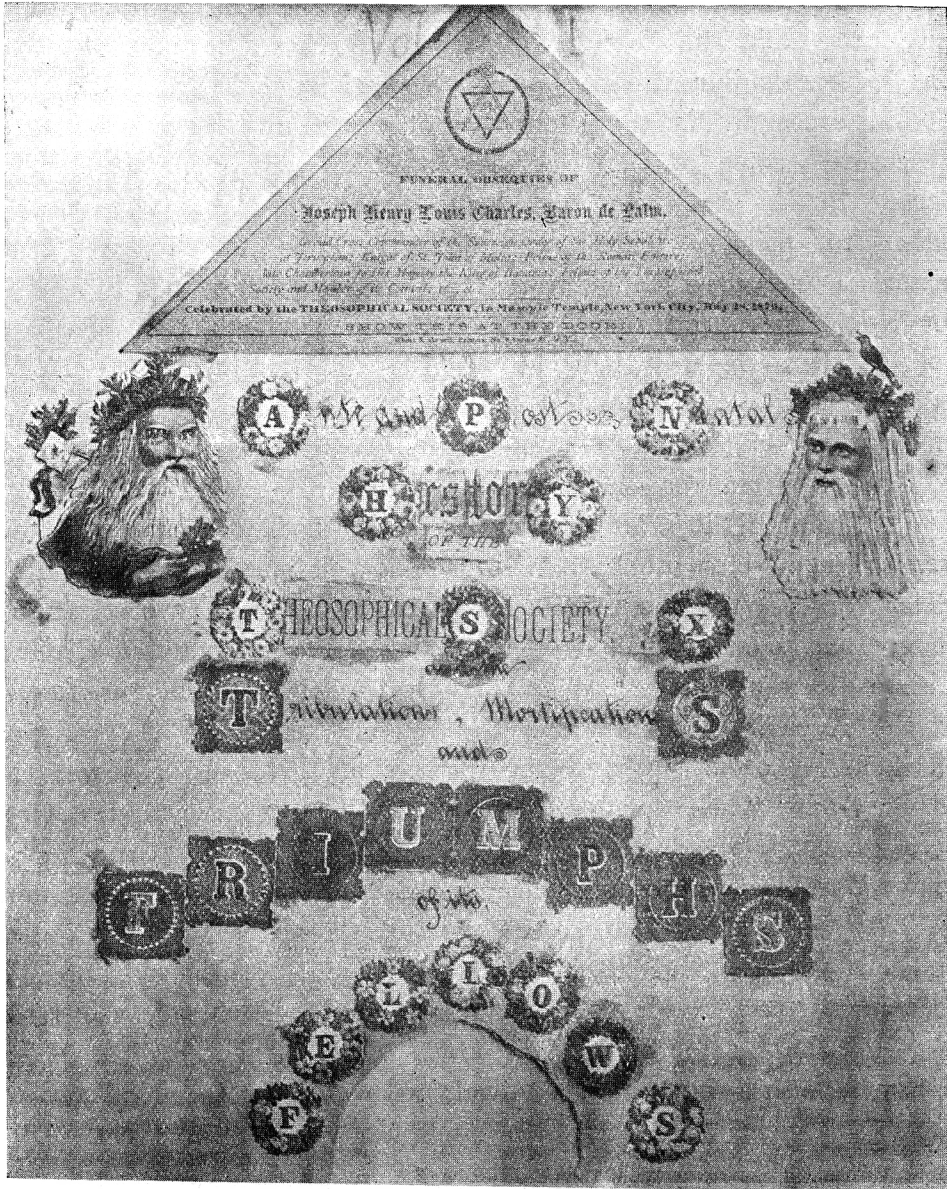


FIG. 2

These Scrap Books of H. P. B.¹ make very fascinating reading. Every newspaper reference to the T. S., which H. P. B. thought of any consequence for historical purposes, was put in her Scrap Books. This work evidently was done in spare time, and one delightful feature of the Scrap Books is the way that she pastes children's Christmas decorations and pictures in the Books, especially in those put together in New York. She often caricatures some of the pictures, to fit in with her mood. The Scrap Books are very old and several of them have nearly fallen to pieces. They are distinctly one of the groups of historical records for writing the story of the T. S. It is impossible to reprint them, as they are very voluminous. Perhaps one of these days, it may be possible to reproduce photographically all the principal volumes in which H. P. B. has written so much and so wittily. In this work many specimens are given of extracts from the earlier Scrap Books.

From H. P. B.'s own statements, both verbal and in writing, it is clear that from 1867 onwards she worked definitely under orders of the Masters. After her period of training under her own Master in Tibet, she was sent out by Him to initiate in the western world a revival of interest in the truths of the Ancient Wisdom. She had herself been taught certain of the facts of occultism, and the instructions given to her were to go out and "help people on to Truth". No precise directions were given in the beginning as to how she was to do this work.

With general orders clear before her, she made an attempt in 1870 in Cairo. She herself had control over invisible forces sufficient to command spirits to perform most of the spiritualistic phenomena herself. Round an interest in Spiritualism, she tried to make the first start in Cairo but failed. Then she passed on to Paris, where in 1873 she lived with her brother, till orders came to her in 1874 to go to America.

¹ Throughout this work, the initials "H.P.B." will be used for Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. She preferred to call herself by these initials, rather than by her name which was the appellation only of her physical body.

The situation in America at this time was interesting. There was a great revival of Spiritualism, and mediums on all sides were giving proofs as to an existence beyond the grave. The interest along this line by the general public is evidenced by the fact that Colonel H. S. Olcott was sent on behalf of the *New York Daily Graphic* to investigate the phenomena at the Eddy Homestead. The record of these investigations appeared as his book, *People from the Other World* (January, 1875). But about this time, however, while proofs were being accumulated as to spiritualistic phenomena, a large number of mediums were also being convicted of fraud.

When H. P. B. arrived, she saw that it was necessary to stem



FIG. 3

H. P. BLAVATSKY

the tide of distrust which was weakening Spiritualism, for there was evidence of fraud concerning even some of the best known mediums. She went therefore to the Eddy Homestead soon after her arrival. Her arrival is mentioned in the press cutting on the first page of her Scrap Book. (Fig. 5.) At the Eddy Homestead she met Colonel Olcott on October 17, 1874. As is narrated by Colonel Olcott in his book, a remarkable series of materialisations took place at once of Russian and Tartar spirits,

who could not in any way have been fraudulently imitated by the mediums.

The curtain is raised - H.P.O.'s representation on October 11, 1877, with H.P.B. at Chittenden. H.P. Oleva is a *Rubin Spiritist* and H.P. Blavatsky is a *occultist*, one who laughs at the supposed agency of spirits! (but all the same, I think I see her hand!)



The twin among Sons of

The arrival of a Russian lady of distinguished birth and rare educational and natural endowments, on the 14th of October (the very day after a certain pseudo-investigator, who has since made his "statement," left), was an important event in the history of the Chittenden manifestations. This lady—the Countess Helen P. de Blavatsky—has led an almost eventful life, travelling in most of the lands of the Orient, searching for antiquities at the base of the Pyramids, and pushing with an armed escort far into the interior of Africa. The adventures she has encountered, the strange people she has seen, the perils by sea and land she has passed through, would make one of the most romantic stories ever told by a biographer. In the whole course of my experience I never met so interesting and, if I may say it without offence, eccentric a character. As I am about to describe some of the spirit forms that appeared to her in my presence at the Eddy homestead, and am dependent upon her for a translation of most of the language they spoke, it is important that I should say a few words concerning her occupation by way of preface. The lady has been so obliging as to comply with my request to be furnished with some account of herself, and cheerfully submitted to my inspection of documentary proofs of her identity.



Rubin Spiritist

MARVELLOUS SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS.

A SECOND IDA PEIFFER WITH THE EDDYS. APPARITIONS OF GEORGIANS, PERSIANS, KITHS, CIRCASSIANS, AFRICANS, AND RUSSIANS—WHAT A RUSSIAN LADY THINKS OF DR. BEARD.

The following letter was addressed to a contemporary journal by Mme. Blavatsky, and was handed to us for publication in THE DATA GRAVE, as we have been taking the lead in the discussion of the

religion, and she writes, through the pen and breath of this applicant: "But it is no escape from the horns of this dilemma? You, verily, Dr. Beard writes thus: "When your correspondent returns to New York I will teach him on any convenient evening to do all that the Eddys do." Pray why should a DAILY GAZETTE reporter be the only one selected by G. M. Beard, M. D., for initiation into the knowledge of so clever a "trick"? In such a case why not publicly denounce this universal trickster, and so benefit the whole world? But Dr. Beard seems to be as partial in

ing up a handful of mould and scattering it around, presses his hand to his breast—his gesture familiar only to the tribes of the Kurdistan.

Fourth—A Circassian comes out. I can imagine myself at Tiflis, so perfect is his costume of "water" (a man who either runs before or behind one or behind back). This one speaks. Now, he corrects his name, which I pronounced wrong on recognizing him, and when I repeat it he bows, smiling, and says in the purest Georgian-Tartar, which sounds so familiar to my ear, "Toboch ya, bichni" (all right), and goes away.

Fifth—An old woman appears with a Russian head-

Flashes of Dr. Beard's
The storm raised by Dr. Beard's lies
(H.P.B. I believe)

FIG. 4

At this time Colonel Olcott was interested in Spiritualism, but he had no glimpse of anything of an occult philosophy behind the phenomena. His contact with H. P. B., however, developed in him an interest in a more serious philosophy than Spiritualism could give. After her first months of defence of mediums, intended to show that however fraudulent some might be, there were undoubted facts behind the phenomena, H. P. B. attempted

Important note

After I am doing my best to identify myself during that shameful exposure of the mediums before the Spiritualists, I had to save the situation, for it was sent from Paris on purpose to convince to prove the phenomena of their reality & - show the fallacy of the Spiritualists' theories. "But how could I do it best? It did not want people at large to know that I had produced the same thing at will, I had received orders to the contrary, and yet I had to keep alive the reality, the genuineness & possibility of such phenomena in the hearts of those who from materialists had turned Spiritualists & were, owing to the exposure of several mediums fell back again, returned to their skepticism. This is why, selecting a few of the faithful, I went to the Holmeses and helped by Mr. John King & Kate King in the astral light produced the phenomena of materialization & - showed the Spiritualists at large to believe it was done thru the mediumship of Mrs. Holmes. She was terribly frightened herself, for she knew that this was the apparition was real. Had I do wrong? The world is not prepared for yet to understand the philosophy of occult sciences.

Let them assure themselves first of all that there are beings in an invisible world, whether "spirits" of the dead or "elementals" & that there are hidden powers in man which are capable of making a ghost of him on earth.

When I am dead & gone people will, perhaps, appreciate my disinterested mission. I have pledged my word to help people on to Truth while living & - will keep my word but then again & reveal me. Let ~~them~~ call me a medium & a Spiritualist, & other unimportant. The day will come when posterity will learn to know us better.

The poor, foolish, credulous Worked World

Mr. Olcott orders to form a Society - a secret Society like the Rose Croixan Lodge. He promises to help.

H. P. B.

FIG. 5

to create an interest in a philosophy of occultism behind the phenomena. It is at this time that she stated positively that Spiritualism was not everything. This drew on her the ire of spiritualists. In Fig. 5 we have in her own words her policy which she had followed up to this time.

IMPORTANT NOTE

“Yes. I am sorry to say that I *had* to identify myself during that shameful exposure of the *mediums* Holmes with the Spiritualists. I had to save the situation, for I was sent from Paris on purpose to America to *prove* the phenomena and their reality and—show the fallacy of the Spiritualistic theories of “Spirits”. But how could I do it best? I did not want people at large to know that I could *produce the same thing at will*. I had received ORDERS to the contrary, and yet, I had to keep alive the reality, the genuineness and *possibility* of such phenomenon in the hearts of those who from *Materialists* had turned *Spiritualists* and now, owing to the exposure of several mediums fell back, again, returned to their skepticism. This is why, selecting a few of the faithful, I went to the Holmeses and helped by M.: and *his power*, brought out the face of John King and Katie King in the astral light, produced the phenomena of materialisation and—allowed the Spiritualists at large to believe it was done thro’ the mediumship of Mrs. Holmes. She was terribly frightened herself, for she knew that *this once* the apparition was real. Did I do wrong? The world is not prepared yet to understand the philosophy of Occult Sciences—let them assure themselves first of all that there are beings in an invisible world, whether “Spirits” of the dead or *Elementals*; and that there are hidden powers

in man, which are capable of making a *God* of him on earth.

When I am dead and gone people will, perhaps, appreciate my disinterested motives. I have pledged my word to help people on to *Truth* while living and—will keep my word. Let them abuse and revile me. Let some call me a MEDIUM and a Spiritualist, and others an *impostor*. The day will come when posterity will learn to know me better.

Oh poor, foolish, credulous, wicked *world!*

M.: brings orders to form a Society—a secret Society like the Rosicrucian Lodge. He promises to help.

H. P. B.”

When Colonel Olcott met H. P. B., he was in the prime of

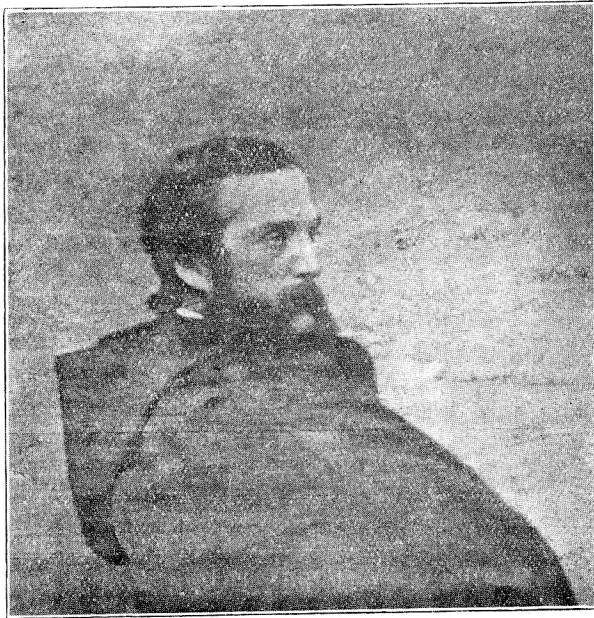


FIG. 6

H. S. OLCOTT
on military service

manhood. He had a splendid record behind him in public service. At the outbreak of the American Civil War, he was with the Federal forces and went through the whole of the North Carolina campaign. During this campaign, he contracted an obstinate fever and was sent to the base to recuperate. On his recovery, when he expected to return to the fighting line, he

was drafted by the Government to take charge of work at Washington. He had already made a name for himself as an

agricultural expert, and many were aware of his ability, and especially of his integrity. At this time there came to notice a great deal of corruption and "graft" in certain of the Government departments, and Colonel Olcott was deputed to investigate them, as "Special Commissioner of the War Department". This work took him some two years, and he was then transferred, at the request of the Secretary of the Navy, to do a similar work



FIG. 7
H. S. OLCOTT

of rooting out "graft" from the Navy Yards. The splendid record of his work is attested to by many testimonials from the heads of Government departments. He was an Attorney in 1868, and before he met H. P. B. had made a position for himself as a most dependable legal adviser.

By May, 1875, she had attracted to occult philosophy a young spiritualist, Elbridge Gerry Brown, the editor of the *Spiritual Scientist*. His paper became for the time the medium for higher speculations. Thus we have an announcement in it, referring to the arrival of two of the Adept Teachers who were at the time trying to help H.P.B. The press-cutting is given in Fig. 8. It reads as follows.

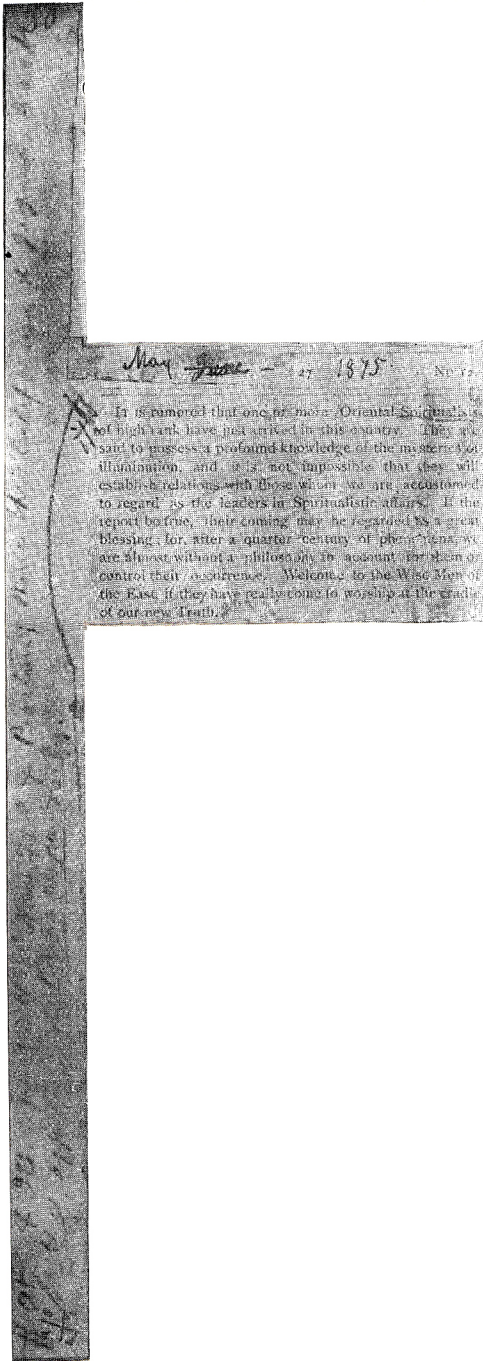


FIG. 8



FIG. 9

H. P. BLAVATSKY

MAY 1875

“It is rumoured that one or more Oriental Spiritualists of high rank have just arrived in this country. They are said to possess a profound knowledge of the mysteries of illumination, and it is not impossible that they will establish relations with those whom we are accustomed to regard as the leaders in Spiritualistic affairs. If the report be true, their coming may be regarded as a great blessing; for, after a quarter century of phenomena, we are almost without a philosophy to account for them or to control their occurrence. Welcome to the Wise Men of the East, if they have really come to worship at the cradle of our new Truth (!)”

[at the side, in H. P. B.’s handwriting,]

“At. . . and Ill. . .¹ passed thro’ New York and Boston; thence thro’ California and Japan back. M.: appearing in Kama Rupa daily.”

It is here necessary to explain how the Theosophical Movement in the beginning was under the supervision of certain Adepts and Initiates who belong to that branch of the Great White Brotherhood which is known as the Brotherhood of Luxor. In Figs. 10 and 11 we have the first letter received from the Brotherhood by Colonel Olcott. It reads as follows:

“From the Brotherhood of Luxor, Section the Vth to Henry S. Olcott.

Brother Neophyte, we greet thee.

He who seeks us finds *us*. TRY. Rest thy mind—banish all foul doubt. We keep watch over our faithful soldiers. Sister Helen is a valiant, trustworthy servant. Open thy Spirit to conviction, have faith and she will lead thee to the Golden Gate of truth. She neither fears sword nor fire but her soul is sensitive to dishonour

¹ Probably Atrya and Illarion (Hilarion).

and she hath reason to mistrust the future. Our good brother "John" hath verily acted rashly, but he meant well. Son of the *World*, if thou dost hear them both. TRY.

It is *our* wish to effect an opprobrious punishment on the man Child and through thy means, brother. TRY.

David is honest and his heart is pure and innocent as the mind of a babe, but he is not ready physically. Thou hast many good mediums around thee, don't give up thy club. TRY.

Brother "John" hath brought three of our *Masters* to look at thee after the séance. Thy noble exertions on behalf of our cause now give us the right of letting thee know who they were:

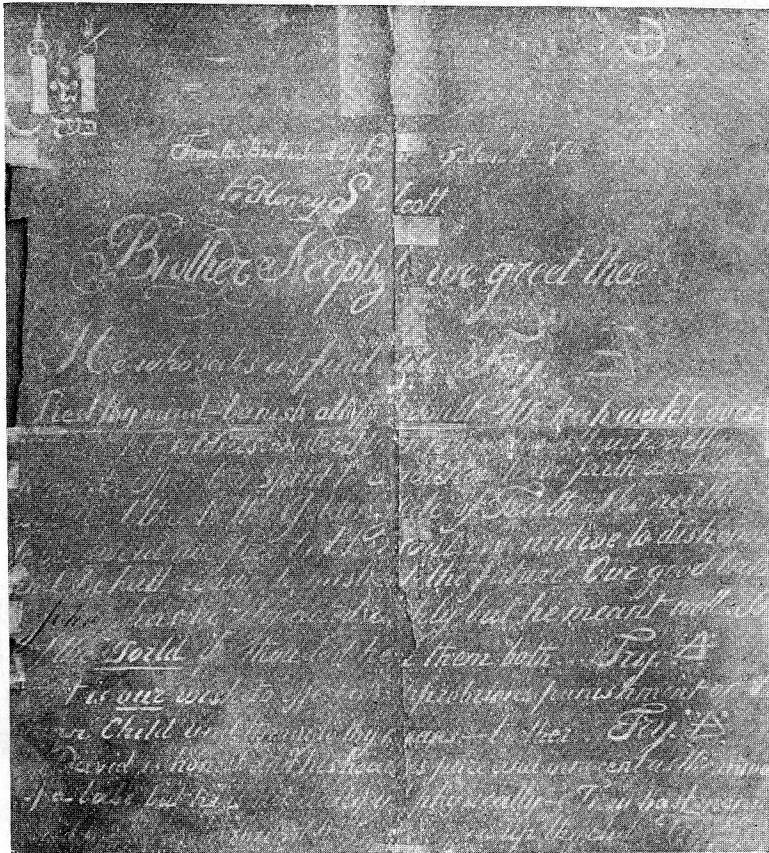


FIG. 10

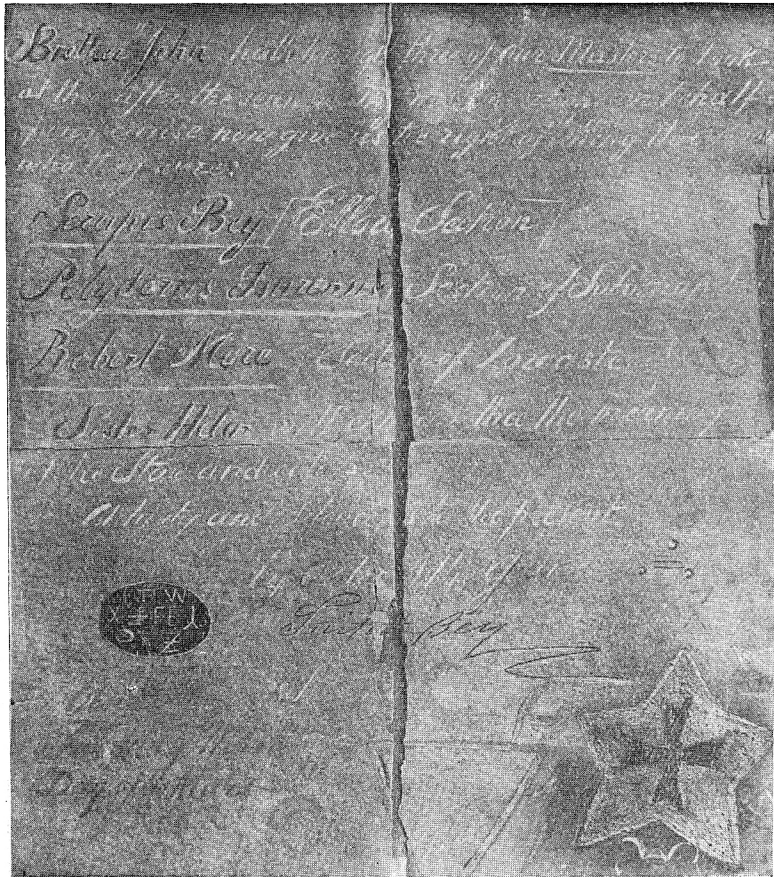


FIG. 11

SERPIS BEY (Ellora Section)

POLYDORUS ISURENUS (Section of Solomon)

ROBERT MORE (Section of Zoroaster)

Sister Helen will explain thee the meaning of the
Star and colors.

Activity and Silence as to the present.

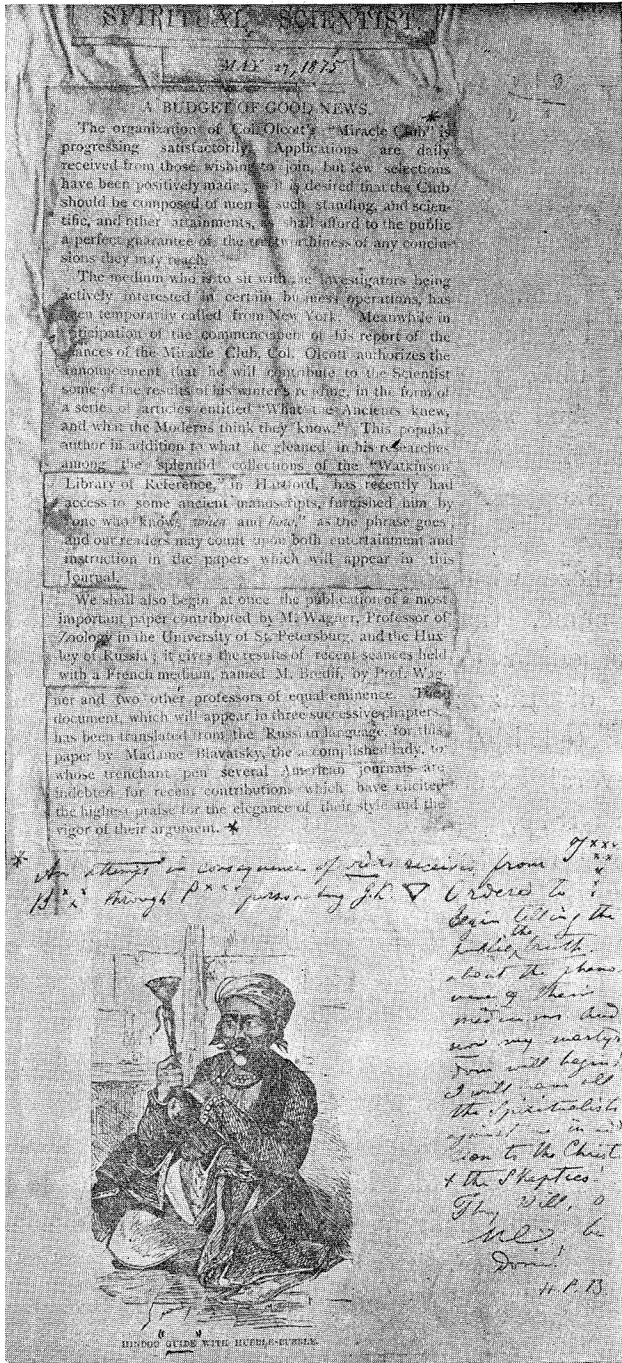
By Order of the Grand .:

TUITIT BEY

Observatory of Luxor.

Tuesday Morning.

Day of Mars."



The Egyptian Adept who calls Himself Serapis Bey took charge of the direction of affairs, and He gave instructions both to Colonel Olcott and H. P. B. The letters from this Master which the former received have just been published in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom* (Second Series), and the reader is referred to that work for details.

Working under the Master Serapis was another, whose name was Tuitit Bey. Serving these Adepts and Initiates, there acted as messenger "John King," well known then as the chief among the spirits at spiritualistic sances. What H. P. B. knew of John King has been published in letters of hers which have

FIG. 12

appeared in the *Theosophist*, August, 1923, and March and April, 1924.

In May, 1875, as H. P. B. narrates in Fig. 12, orders came to her to make a definite break with Spiritualism, and to make a new departure. Hence the organisation of the Miracle Club, the announcement of which in the *Spiritual Scientist* is found in her Scrap Book for 1874—5.

“An attempt in consequence of *orders* received from T.:. B.:. through P.: personating G. K. ∇. Ordered to begin telling the public the *truth* about the phenomena and their mediums. And *now* my martyrdom will begin! I will have all the Spiritualists against me in addition to the Christians and the Skeptics. Thy Will, O, M.:., be done!
H. P. B.”

In the list of those who formed the first nucleus of the Society there is one name, that of E. Gerry Brown, which is missing. He was the editor of the *Spiritual Scientist*, and the Egyptian Brotherhood of Luxor who were planning the Theosophical Movement expected him to be one of its most important members. Indeed in several letters of the Master Serapis, received by Colonel Olcott in 1875, specific directions are given to bring E. G. Brown closer to Their plans. Referring to H. P. B., Colonel Olcott and E. G. Brown, the Master used the following words: “This cause—in your country—depends entirely on the closest unity between you three—our Lodge’s chosen Triad—you, verily so, you three so utterly dissimilar and yet so closely connected to be brought together and linked in one by the never erring Wisdom of the Brotherhood.” This part of the plan was finally not successful. He joined the T.S. only in 1876, and so utterly did he drop out of the Theosophical Movement, that there is not even a picture of him among the records which the Founders brought with them from America.

The editor of the *Spiritual Scientist* was in the beginning sufficiently convinced of the existence of the oriental Teachers to

place his paper at Their service. There appeared in it an article by H. P. B. very faintly outlining certain of the occult teachings. This article was a reply to an article on "Rosicrucianism," by an author giving the pseudonym "Hiraf". Hiraf was a pseudonym composed of the initials of five men whose names were F. W. Hinrichs, W. M. Ivins, James Robinson, C. F. Adams and W. E. S. Fales. The last joined the T.S. later.

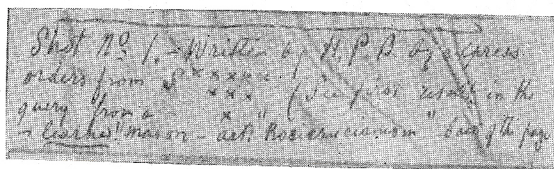


FIG. 13

"Shot No. 1. Written by H. P. B. by express orders from S.:. (See first result in the query from a learned!! Mason—art: "Rosicrucianism" back of the page."

Swiftly came the attempt to make the *Spiritual Scientist* the organ of the new teaching. There was issued a circular, Fig. 14, which describes this attempt. Colonel Olcott describes in *Old Diary Leaves* how after the circular was in proof he made a rearrangement of the paragraphs, then had the circular printed, and presented a copy to H. P. B. On receiving the copy, H. P. B. laughed and pointed out that the initial letters of each paragraph made the word TUITIT. She narrates as she writes on the circular:

[at top]

"Sent to E. Gerry Brown by the order of S.:. and T . . . B . . . of Lukshor. (Published and issued by Colonel Olcott by order of M.:."

[at bottom]

"Several hundred dollars out of our pockets were spent on behalf of the Editor, and he was made to pass through a minor "diksha". This proving of no

Printed by E. Gray Brown by the order of the
 G. & J. Brown of Luskshoor
 (Published and Bound by the order of the)

IMPORTANT TO SPIRITUALISTS.

THE spiritual movement resembles every other in this respect: that its growth is the work of time, and its refinement and solidification the result of causes working from within outward. The twenty-seven years which have elapsed since the rapings were first heard in Western New York, have not merely created a vast body of spiritualists, but moreover stimulated a large and constantly increasing number of superior minds into a desire and ability to grasp the laws which lie back of the phenomena themselves.

UNTHIL the present time these advanced thinkers have had no special organ for the interchange of opinions. The leading spiritual papers are of necessity compelled to devote most of their space to communications of a trivial and purely personal character, which are interesting only to the friends of the spirits sending them, and to such as are just beginning to give attention to the subject. In England the London *Spiritualist*, and in France the *Revue Spirite*, present to us examples of the kind of paper that should have been established in this country long ago—papers which devote more space to the discussion of principles, the teaching of philosophy, and the display of conservative critical ability, than to the mere publication of the thousand and one minor occurrences of private and public circles.

IT is the standing reproach of American Spiritualism that it teaches so few things worthy of a thoughtful man's attention; that so few of its phenomena occur under conditions satisfactory to men of scientific training; that the propagation of its doctrines is in the hands of so many ignorant, if not positively vicious, persons; and that it offers, in exchange for the orderly arrangements of prevailing religious creeds, nothing but an undigested system of present and future moral and social relations and accountability.

THE best thoughts of our best talents have heretofore been confined to volumes whose price has, in most instances, placed them beyond the reach of the masses, who most needed to be familiar with them. To remedy this evil, to bring our authors into familiar intercourse with the great body of spiritualists, to create an organ upon which we may safely count to lead us in our fight with old superstitions and monied creeds, a few earnest spiritualists have now united.

INSTEAD of undertaking the doubtful and costly experiment of starting a new paper, they have selected the *Spiritual Scientist*, of Boston, as the organ of this new movement. Its intelligent management up to the present time, by Mr. E. Gray Brown, and the commendable tone that he has given to its columns, make comparatively easy the task of securing the cooperation of the writers whose names will be a guarantee of its brilliant success. Although the object has been agitated only about three weeks, the Committee have already received promises from several of our best known authors to write for the paper, and upon the strength of these assurances many subscriptions have been sent in from different cities. The movement is not intended to undermine or destroy any of the existing spiritualistic journals; there is room for all, and patronage for all.

THE price of the *Spiritual Scientist* is \$2.50 per annum, postage included. A person sending the yearly subscription is entitled to a copy for himself without extra charge. Subscriptions may be made through any respectable agency, or by direct communication with the editor, E. Gray Brown, No. 18 Exchange Street, Boston, Mass.

For the Committee of seven.

BROTHERHOOD OF LEAVE & Co.

Share out 7 and make 14
 The price of the paper is \$2.50 per annum, postage included. A person sending the yearly subscription is entitled to a copy for himself without extra charge. Subscriptions may be made through any respectable agency, or by direct communication with the editor, E. Gray Brown, No. 18 Exchange Street, Boston, Mass.

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FIG. 14

avail—the Theosophical Society was established. W . . . (See pages further). The man might have become a POWER, he preferred to remain an Ass. *De gustibus non disputandum est.*”

This attempt having failed, she received further orders. (Fig. 15.)

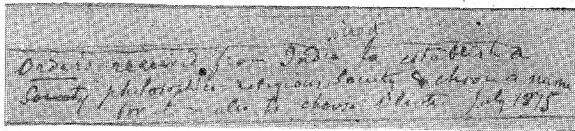


FIG. 15

“Orders received from India direct to establish a philosophico-religious Society and choose a name for it—also to choose Olcott. July 1875.”

It was in September, 1875, that the orders which H.P.B. received as to organising a Society seemed capable of fulfilment. For several months, while H.P.B. was living in New York at 46 Irving Place, many interested in Spiritualism and occult phenomena had been meeting of an evening in her rooms. On September 7, at one of these informal meetings, a certain Mr. G. H. Felt read a paper on “The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians”. It was at this meeting that Colonel Olcott had the idea of organising a Society, though evidently he knew nothing of the orders which H. P. B. had received months before. H.P.B. approved of Colonel Olcott’s suggestion, and then and there all present agreed to form a Society. The gathering adjourned, to meet next evening, September 8. On the motion of W. Q. Judge, Colonel Olcott was elected to the Chair. Mr. Judge was elected Secretary to the meeting. The individuals present who handed their names as members of the new Society were as



FIG. 16

H. P. B.'s Seal in 1875

follows: Colonel H. S. Olcott, Madame H. P. Blavatsky, Chas. Sotheran, Dr. Chas. E. Simmons, H. D. Monachesi, C. C. Massey of London, W. L. Alden, G. H. Felt, D. E. de Lara, Dr. W. Britten, Mrs. E. H. Britten, Henry J. Newton, John Storer Cobb, J. Hyslop, W. Q. Judge and H. M. Stevens. A committee of four was appointed to draft a Constitution and By-Laws. There was a meeting on September 13,

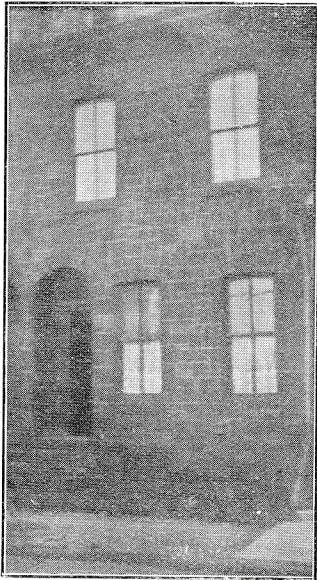


FIG. 17

H.P.B.'s Residence in 1875,
3420 Sansom Street, Philadelphia

when it was resolved that the name of the Society should be "The Theosophical Society". Then later on October 16, a meeting was called "to organise and elect officers," and the "Preamble and By-Laws" were ordered to be printed. On October 30, the Society met at 206 West Thirty-eighth Street, and the meeting finally endorsed the By-Laws. The permanent officers were then elected, and the first publication of the Society was issued, three pages from which are reproduced in Figs. 18, 19, 24. We have in this little pamphlet the first list of officers of the Society. It is interesting to note that the seal of the T. S. had been determined upon even at this early date. The meeting then adjourned till November 17, when the Society met at Mott Memorial Hall. It was on this occasion that Colonel Olcott delivered his formal address as President.

It will be seen that the first idea of the Society originated on September 7, and the officers were elected and By-Laws approved on October 30. Colonel Olcott however, from 1881 onwards, fixed on November 17 as the official birthday of the Society, following the American precedent about the President of the United States. The voting for the "electors" of the President takes place on November 4, and on this day

for all practical purposes the new President of the United States is elected. But the true legal election takes place much later, at a session of the "electoral college". Then in March, the newly elected President takes the oath of office, and delivers his inaugural address. Colonel Olcott considered that the Theosophical Society as a public organisation could be considered to begin its

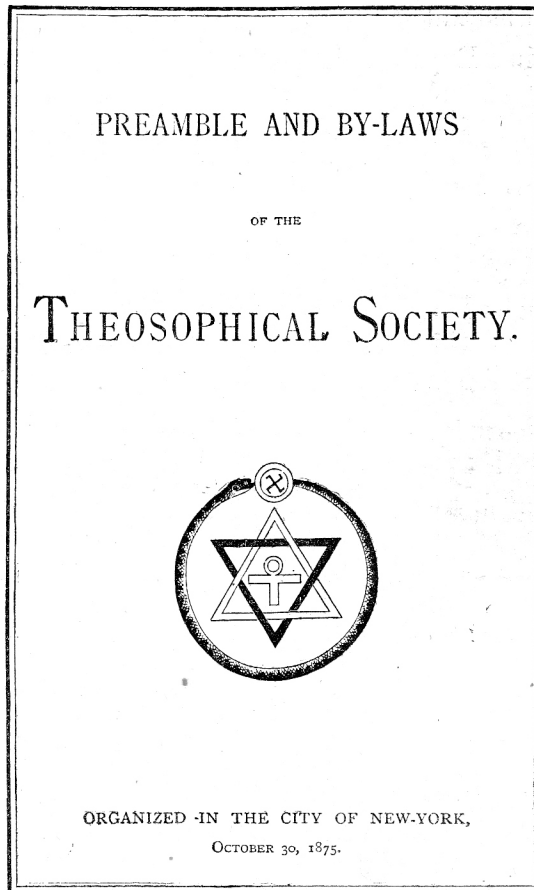


FIG. 18

career only after the inaugural address of its first President. This is the reason why he settled on November 17 as the official birthday of the Society.

Among the original band who organised the Society, there is one member who played a very important rôle in the early years. This is C. C. Massey of London (Fig. 22), a highly cultured man and mystic and by profession a Barrister. He brought into the Society various people, among whom was Miss Emily Kislingbury (Fig. 25), who was greatly attached to both the Founders, and visited them in New York. In 1877, Dr. J. S. Cobb, one of the original band, was authorised when going to London to organise the members in England into the British Theosophical Society.

OFFICERS AND COUNCIL.

President,

HENRY S. OLCOTT.

Vice-Presidents,

S. PANCOAST, M.D., GEORGE HENRY FELT.

Corresponding Secretary,

MME. H. P. BLAVATSKY.

Recording Secretary,

JOHN STORER COBB.

Treasurer,

HENRY J. NEWTON.

Librarian,

CHARLES SOTHERAN.

Councillors,

REV. J. H. WIGGIN,
MRS. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN,
R. B. WESTBROOK,
C. E. SIMMONS, M.D.,
HERBERT D. MONACHESI.

Counsel to the Society.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

This, the first Branch of the Society, was formed next year. The second Branch was at Corfu, in the Ionian Islands in Greece.

BY-LAWS.

CHAPTER I.

THE title of the society is "THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY."

CHAPTER II.

The objects of the society are, to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe.

CHAPTER III.

FELLOWS.

The society shall consist of active, honorary, and corresponding fellows.

1. Honorary fellows shall be chosen on account of their distinction as theosophists.

2. Corresponding fellows shall be chosen from those who have aided the advancement of theosophy.

3. Fellowship shall be conferred only upon persons in sympathy with the objects of the society.

4. Nominations for fellowship shall be made in writing by two fellows in good standing, at a regular meeting of the society, and referred without debate to the council, which shall vote thereon not sooner than thirty nor later than sixty days thereafter.

5. Any fellow may, on the recommendation of the council, and by a vote of two thirds of the fellows present at a regular meeting of the society, be expelled.

FIG. 24

Pasquale Menelao was its President, and Demetrius Socolis Secretary (Figs. 26, 27)

When the Society was organised, its objects were put formally very briefly as follows:

"The objects of the Society are, to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe."

At its commencement, the Society was like any other Society accepting as members all who applied. In 1876, however, a change took place in one particular, which was to make



FIG. 20
G. H. FELT

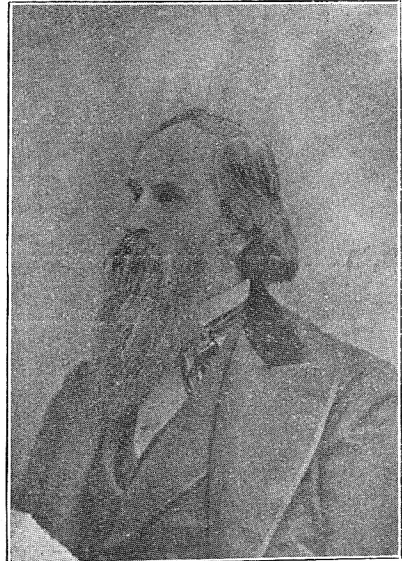


FIG. 21
H. J. NEWTON

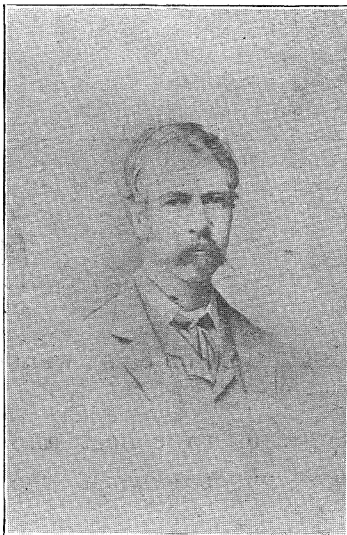


FIG. 22
C. C. MASSEY



FIG. 23
EMMA H. BRITTEN

FOUNDING MEMBERS

the Society semi-secret. Signs and words of recognition among members were instituted, and where possible a member was formally initiated into the Society. Membership in it was then graded



FIG. 25
EMILY KISLUMBURY

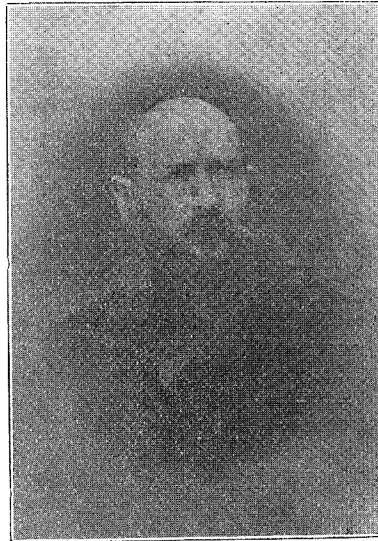


FIG. 26
PASQUALE MENELAO



FIG. 27
DEMETRIUS SOCOLIS



FIG. 31
T. A. EDISON IN 1878

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY:

ITS ORIGIN, PLAN AND AIMS.

[PRINTED FOR THE INFORMATION OF CORRESPONDENTS.]

- I. The Society was founded at the City of New York, in the year 1875.
- II. Its officers are a President ; two Vice-Presidents ; a Corresponding Secretary ; a Recording Secretary ; a Treasurer ; a Librarian ; and Councillors.
- III. At first it was an open body, but, later, it was re-organized on the principle of secrecy, experience having demonstrated the advisability of such a change.
- IV. Its Fellows are known as Active, Corresponding and Honorary. Only those are admitted who are in sympathy with its objects, and sincerely desire to aid in the promotion of the same.
- V. Its Fellowship is divided into three Sections, and each Section into three Degrees. All candidates for active fellowship are required to enter as probationers, in the Third Degree of the Third Section, and no fixed time is specified in which the new Fellow can advance from any lower to a higher degree ; all depends upon merit. To be admitted into the highest degree, of the first section, the Theosophist must have become freed of every leaning toward any one form of religion in preference to another. He must be free from all exacting obligations to society, politics and family. He must be ready to lay down his life, if necessary, for the good of Humanity, and of a brother Fellow of whatever race, color or ostensible creed. He must renounce wine, and every other description of intoxicating beverages, and adopt a life of strict chastity. Those who have not yet wholly disenthralled themselves from religious prejudice, and other forms of selfishness, but have made a certain progress towards self-mastery and enlightenment, belong in the Second Section. The Third Section is probationary : its members can leave the Society at will, although the obligation assumed at entrance will continually bind them to absolute secrecy as to what may have been communicated under restrictions.
- VI. The objects of the Society are various. It influences its fellows to acquire an intimate knowledge of natural law, especially its occult manifestations. As the highest development, physically and spiritually, on earth, of the Creative Cause, man should aim to solve the mystery of his being. He is the procreator of his species, physically, and having inherited the nature of the unknown but palpable Cause of his own creation, must possess in his inner, psychical self, this creative power in lesser degree. He should, therefore, study to develop his latent powers, and inform himself respecting the laws of magnetism, electricity and all other forms of force, whether of the seen or unseen universes. The Society teaches and expects its fellows to personally exemplify the highest morality and religious aspiration ; to oppose the materialism of science and every form of dogmatic theology, especially the Christian, which the Chiefs of the Society regard as particularly pernicious ; to make known among Western nations the long-suppressed *facts* about Oriental religious philosophies, their ethics, chronology, esoterism, symbolism ; to counteract, as far as possible, the efforts of missionaries to delude the so-called "Heathen" and "Pagans" as to the real origin and dogmas of Christianity and the practical effects of the latter upon public and private character in so-called civilized countries ; to disseminate a knowledge of the sublime teachings of that pure esoteric system of the archaic period, which are mirrored in the oldest Vedas, and in the philosophy of Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius ; finally, and chiefly, to aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity, wherein all good and pure men, of every race, shall recognize each other as the equal effects (upon this planet) of one Uncreate, Universal, Infinite, and Everlasting Cause.
- VII. Persons of either sex are eligible.
- VIII. There are branches of the parent Society in several countries of the East and West.
- IX. No fees are exacted, but those who choose may contribute towards the Society's expenses. No applicant is received because of his wealth or influence, nor rejected because of his poverty or obscurity.

Correspondence with the parent body may be addressed to "The Theosophical Society, New York."

into three Sections. Fuller description of the Society's organisation and aims at this time is given in Fig. 28. All who were admitted as members started at the bottom, in the third division of the Third Section. When the Founders finally settled in India, and came into closer contact with Swāmi Dayānand Saraswatī, a scheme was mooted to develop the Second Section. It was to have a secret ritual of a Masonic type; the Second Section, however, was never thus formally inaugurated, though one admission into it, that of the Buddhist High Priest N. M. Subhūti, is on record. This ritual, which was agreed upon by the Founders and the Swāmi, exists among the records of the Society.

One of the striking facts in the early days of the Theosophical Society is shown in the phrase in the circular issued by the Founders, which is shown as Fig. 28. It states that one object of the Society is,

“to oppose the materialism of science and every form of dogmatic theology, especially the Christian, which the Chiefs of the Society regard as particularly pernicious; to make known among Western nations the long-suppressed *facts* about Oriental religious philosophies, their ethics, chronology, esoterism, symbolism; to counteract, as far as possible, the efforts of missionaries to delude the so-called ‘Heathen’ and ‘Pagans’ as to the real origin and dogmas of Christianity and the practical effects of the latter upon public and private character in so-called civilised countries.”

Because of such statements, many have declared that the Society had in its beginning an anti-Christian bias. There was certainly not the slightest bias against Christianity *as the body of teachings given by its Founder*. But when both H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott remembered the history of the Christian Church, and how that Church had often martyred those who tried to reach out into the larger spheres of truth not under its dominion, a strong antipathy to all Christian theology was the

natural result. In addition, they knew the strong materialistic tendency in the forms of Christianity which were preached in orthodox churches, and which resulted in a social condition which held the masses in economic subjection, and which upheld a social system which was profoundly unethical and anti-Christian. Furthermore, the spread of these narrow forms of Christianity, which were inseparable from Missionary effort, did great harm to many oriental peoples. The greatest disservice was done to humanity fifty years ago by Christian Missionaries considering all the non-Christian peoples as steeped in the darkness of the devil. An article was written on October 6th, 1875, in the *Sunday Mercury* of New York by Herbert Monachesi praising the religions of India

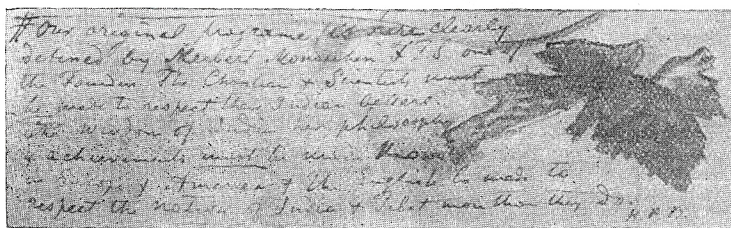


FIG. 29

and China, and at the end of this article, which H. P. B. pasted in her Scrap Book, she has written as follows (Fig. 29).

“Our original programme is here clearly defined by Herbert Monachesi, F.T.S., one of the Founders. The Christian and Scientists must be made to respect their Indian betters. The Wisdom of India, her philosophy and achievement *must* be made known in Europe and America and the English be made to respect the natives of India and Tibet more than they do.

H. P. B.”

One interesting document which refers to this early period is the pledge of secrecy which each member had to sign. Fig. 30 gives the reproduction of the Pledge which was signed by Thomas A. Edison (Fig. 31) who joined the Society in 1878.

After the Society was founded, the members met but infrequently, and fairly soon the only activities were the informal

THE
 THEOSOPHICAL  SOCIETY.

FOUNDED IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK, A.D. 1875.

*In accepting fellowship with the above named society, I hereby promise to ever maintain **ABSOLUTE SECRECY** respecting its proceedings, including its investigations and experiments, except in so far as publication may be authorized by the society or council, and I hereby **PLEDGE MY WORD OF HONOR** for the strict observance of this covenant.*

*Dated at Menlo Park N.J.
 this Fourth day of April 1878*

Thomas A. Edison

FIG. 30

gatherings of members and those interested in occultism at the apartment of H. P. B. It was at this period that she began the writing of the monumental work *Isis Unveiled*. The publishing of *Isis* was as the throwing wide of a net, for the book spread from America to other lands, and correspondence was begun with inquirers in India and Ceylon. Colonel Olcott has mentioned how he had met in one of his travels Mr. Mooljee Thackersey of Bombay (Fig. 32), and correspondence was now begun with him. One of the first from India to join was Mr. K. M. Shroff (Fig. 33), a Parsi of Bombay. A more important addition was the famous Buddhist High Priest of Colombo, Mohottiwatte Gunānanda (Fig. 34), who joined the Society in 1877. There joined the Society at this time, from Germany, Emil Prince of Sayn Wittgenstein; from Russia, Professor A. Aksakoff; from England, Alfred Russell Wallace, F. R. S. (Figs. 35—37); from France, D. A. Courmes (Fig. 38), who organised the Society in France, and F. J. Leymarie a leading spiritualist of France.

During the first three years, except for the writing of *Isis*, there was not very much Theosophical propaganda in



FIG. 32
MOOLJEE THACKERSEY



FIG. 33
K. M. SHROFF



FIG. 34
RT. REV. M. GUNANANDA



FIG. 35
EMIL, PRINCE WITTGENSTEIN

America. But the two principal people necessary for the Movement, H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott, had been brought together,



FIG. 39

H. P. B. IN 1877

and formally cemented in a mutual regard and a common dedication to the great cause of Theosophy. Next to these in devotion to the Society was a young Irishman, William Quan Judge (Fig. 42), who at the time of the Society's founding was twenty-four. Both his service and disservice to the Society will be narrated later at its proper place.

About this time correspondence was begun with Mr. Hurrychund Chintamon (Fig. 43), the representative in Bombay of the famous Swāmi Dayānand Saraswati (Fig. 44). This Swāmi was himself a

pupil for a while of the Great Brotherhood. Under the central impulse from the unseen, which organised the Theosophical Movement in New York, another Movement having a similar objective was organised in 1875 in Lahore in India. This was the Arya Samaj, which in its origin was an attempt to revive a purer form of Hinduism. These two divisions of the common effort of the Great Brotherhood joined hands. Seeing that there were so many points in common between the Society and the Arya Samaj, the Founders entered into a pact for a common effort. So close was the relation in the beginning between the



FIG. 40

H. P. B. IN 1878

two bodies, that all the T. S. diplomas issued to members bore the striking phrase "The Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of Aryavart" (Fig. 45). The diploma shows that the two first Vice-Presidents, Dr. S. Pancoast and G. H. Felt have been replaced by Prof. Alexander Wilder (Fig. 46), a learned scholar in western mystical traditions, and J. A. Weisse.

Towards the close of 1878, a most important event in the life of Colonel Olcott was the appearance in his room of his



FIG. 41

H. S. OLCOTT IN 1875

Master. He has described the incident in his *Old Diary Leaves*. The turban which the Master then gave him is still at Adyar. So too exist at Adyar all the letters received by him in 1875 from the Master Serapis, most of which have just been published in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom* (Second Series).

A little before orders were received by the Founders in 1878 to come to India, two noteworthy members joined the Society. They were Mr. E. Wimbridge (Fig. 47) and Miss Rosa Bates, both

lately come to America from England. These two threw in their lot with H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott, and decided to go to India. All the belongings at the "Lamasery," which was the nickname given to H.P.B.'s apartment in 47th Street, corner



FIG. 36

A. AKSAKOFF

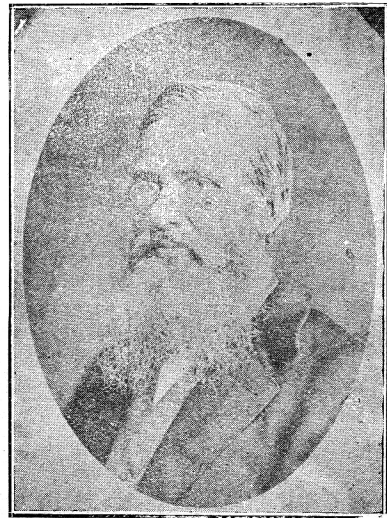


FIG. 37

ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE, F.R.S.

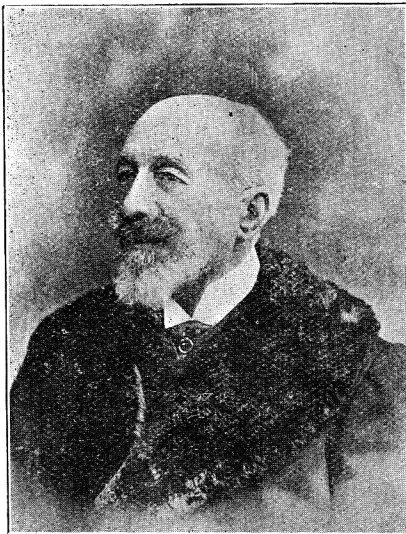


FIG. 38

D. A. COURMES



FIG. 43

HURRYCHUND CHINTAMON

of Fifth Avenue (Fig. 48), were disposed of by auction. Miss Bates was sent ahead with some of the luggage, and H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott and Mr. Wimbridge sailed for London by S. S. *Canada*, on December 17. It is stated, in one of the letters received by Colonel Olcott from his Master, that as a matter



FIG. 42

W. Q. JUDGE

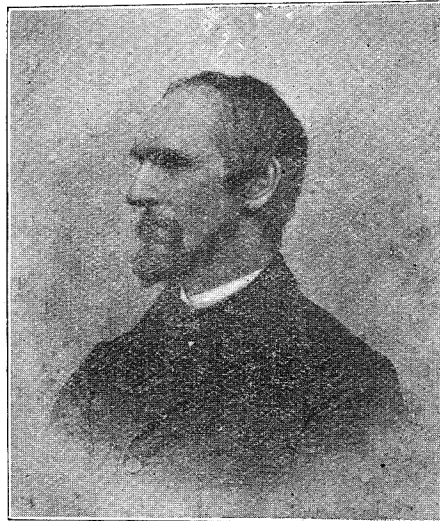


FIG. 46

ALEXANDER WILDER

of fact the Founders should have started from America for India a little earlier than they actually did. Colonel Olcott has mentioned that the original idea was to go to Ceylon, and that it was only after correspondence with Mooljee Thackersey that Bombay was decided upon as the destination.

It is interesting here to note that long before the Founders left, arrangements were made, should necessity arise, for the permanent transference of Headquarters from New York to wherever the two principal Founders might happen to be. A resolution of the Council was passed as follows on July 16, 1877, as if at this time the Founders had in view the transference of the Society to India.

“That the Head-quarters of the Society may be transferred by the President, to any foreign country

where he may be temporarily established; and he may appoint any Fellow in good standing, to fill pro



FIG. 44

SWAMI DAYANAND SARASWATI

tempore, either of the executive offices, as he may find it necessary for the transaction of business.”

By August of next year, evidently orders had been received to move to India, and so at a meeting on August 27, 1878, it was resolved that,

“in case the Headquarters of the Society shall be at any time temporarily established in a foreign country, the President may, in his discretion, admit suitable persons to active fellowship upon their application in writing, and their taking the oath re-

quired of candidates; he shall also have full power and discretion to make such rules and regulations, and do such things as he may consider necessary for the welfare of the Society, and the accomplishment of the objects which it represents.”

On January 17, 1879, Colonel Olcott issued an order as follows:

“By virtue of the authority vested in me, I hereby designate and assign the following named Fellows of

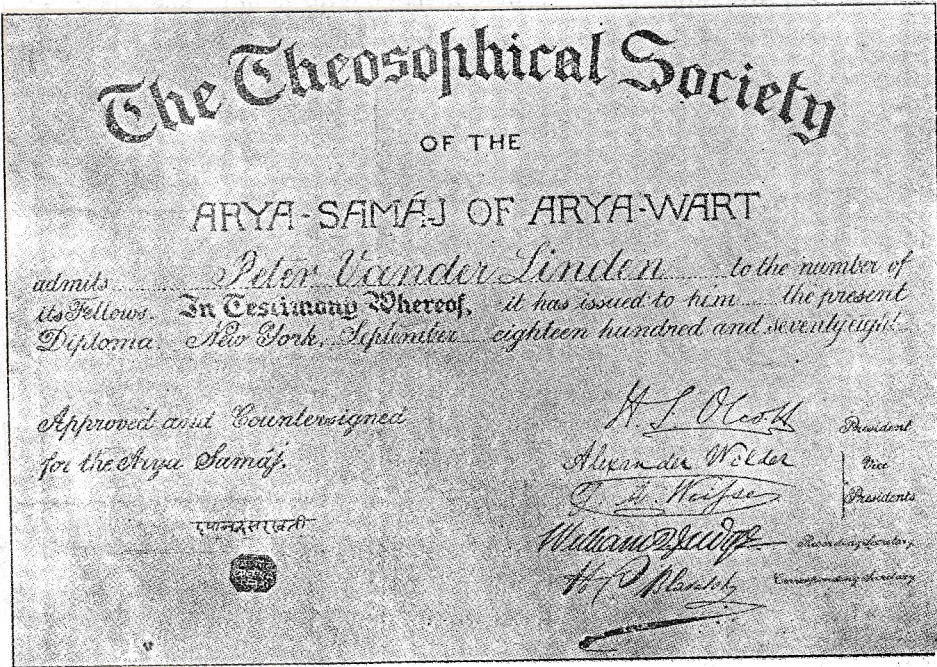


FIG. 45



FIG. 47
E. WIMBRIDGE

the T. S. to perform the duties of the offices respectively named, with full power: President, *ad interim*, Fellow Major Abner Doubleday (Fig. 49), U.S.A.; Corresponding Secretary, *ad interim*, Fellow David A. Curtis; Treasurer, Fellow George Valentine Maynard; the Rec. Secy., Fellow W. Q. Judge will notify them of this order, and, after consultation with Fellow Doubleday, call an early meeting of the Society's officers to carry

out certain instructions which that gentleman has received, among which are a change of the passwords."

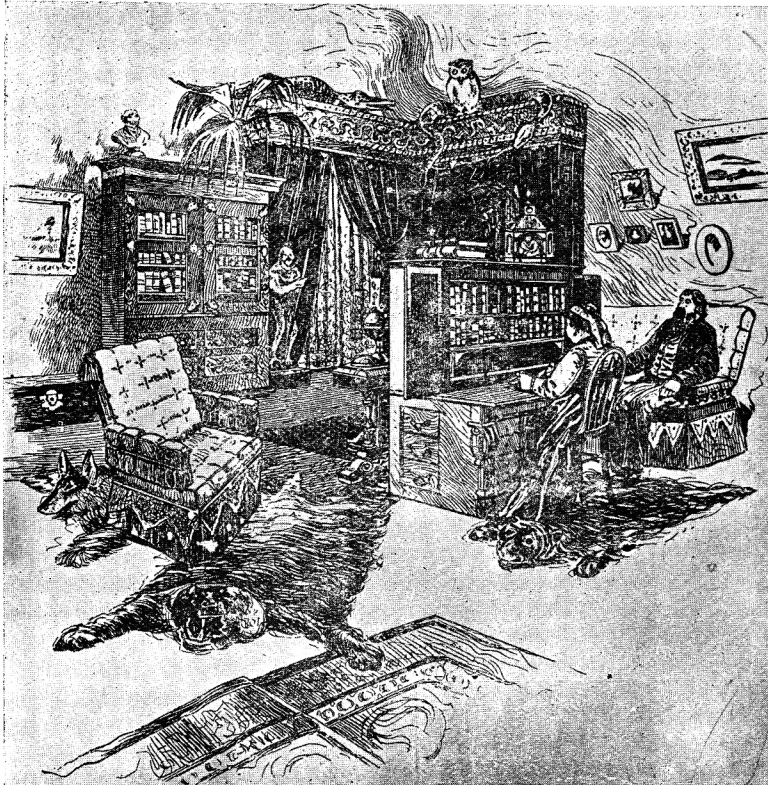


FIG. 48

One interesting link with the past is Mr. John W. Lovell, acting now in 1925 as the Treasurer of the New York Lodge (Fig. 50). Mr. Lovell joined the T.S. on September 23, 1875, and still holds the receipt issued to him (Fig. 51) by C. Sotheran, then acting as Secretary, though the election of the permanent officers of the Society took place on October 30. Mr. Lovell is the only member now living of the first year of the Society to greet its Jubilee.



FIG. 49
MAJOR ABNER DOUBLEDAY

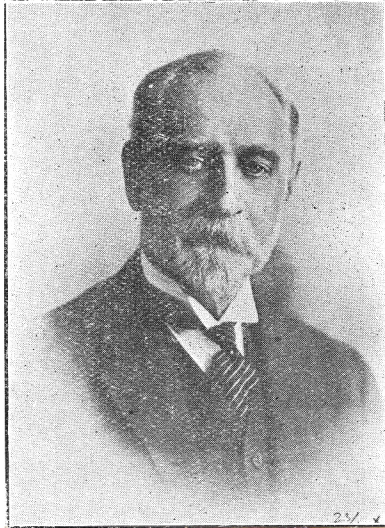


FIG. 50
JOHN W. LOVELL

Received of Mr John W.
Lovell the sum of \$5.00
on account of the Theosophical
Society.
Sept. 23. 75
Cottman

FIG. 51

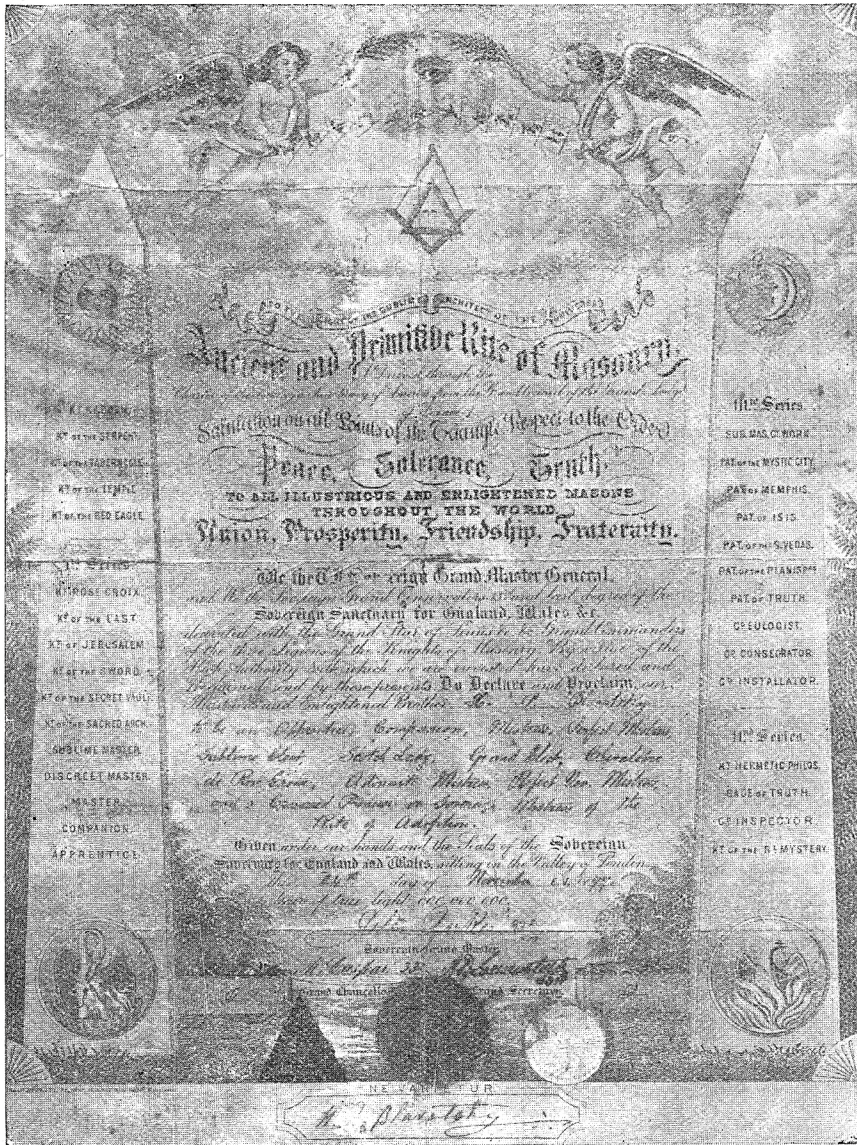


FIG. 52

H. P. B.'s MASONIC DIPLOMA