

The Founders arrived in London on January 3, 1879, and spent two weeks at the house of Dr. and Mrs. Billing. They sailed from Liverpool on the 19th by S. S. *Speke Hall* for Bombay, where they arrived on February 16. They were met on arrival by some of the Indian members of the Society, among whom was Mr. Hurrichund Chintamon (Fig. 43). The Founders were taken by him to a house in Girgaum, and there they lived for a month before finding a more suitable house at 108 Girgaum Back Road. At the end of 1880, they moved to a new house, "Crow's Nest," in Tardeo (Fig. 53); "Crow's Nest" became a great centre not only of activity, but also of many phenomenal appearances of the Masters.

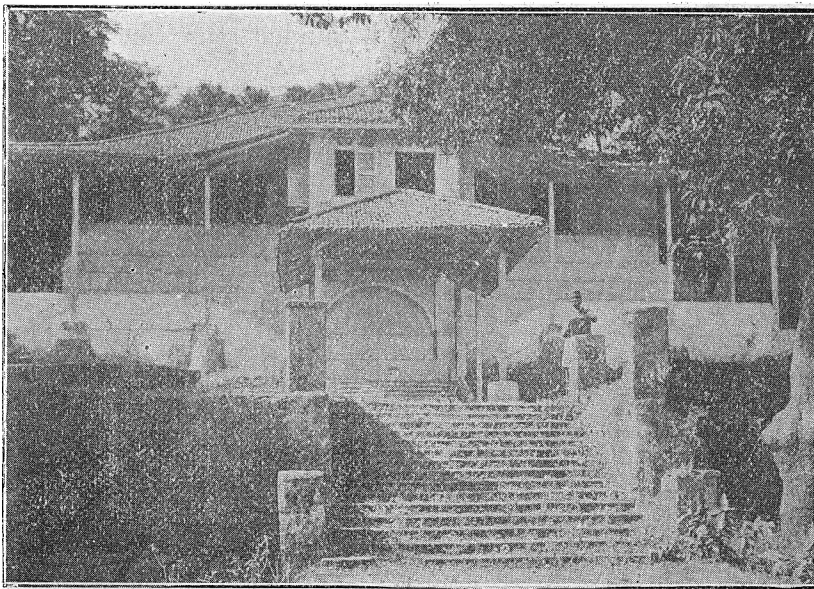


FIG. 53

CROW'S NEST—ENTRANCE

Surrounded by the teeming life of Bombay, and looking with the eyes of the practical American, Colonel Olcott saw what Theosophy could do for India. Theosophy meant to him primarily the service of his fellowmen, and not the treading of

a path to Liberation. He saw at once that, if only Indians would properly understand Theosophy, they could uplift their countrymen in a wonderful way. In the first Convention which was held in Bombay on November 29, 1879, there were not only addresses on Theosophy, but also an exhibition of Indian arts and crafts. (Fig. 55.) For, both H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott saw that Theosophy could become a power to reorganise India's life on national lines once again, if only Indians accepted, as a practical code of life, Theosophy in its entirety, and not merely the intellectual exhilaration which it brings to philosophical minds. In his Presidential Address to the Convention, we find Colonel Olcott speaking of reform in education, organisation of technological schools, and the revival of Sanskrit learning. Some members that very day organised, under the auspices of the

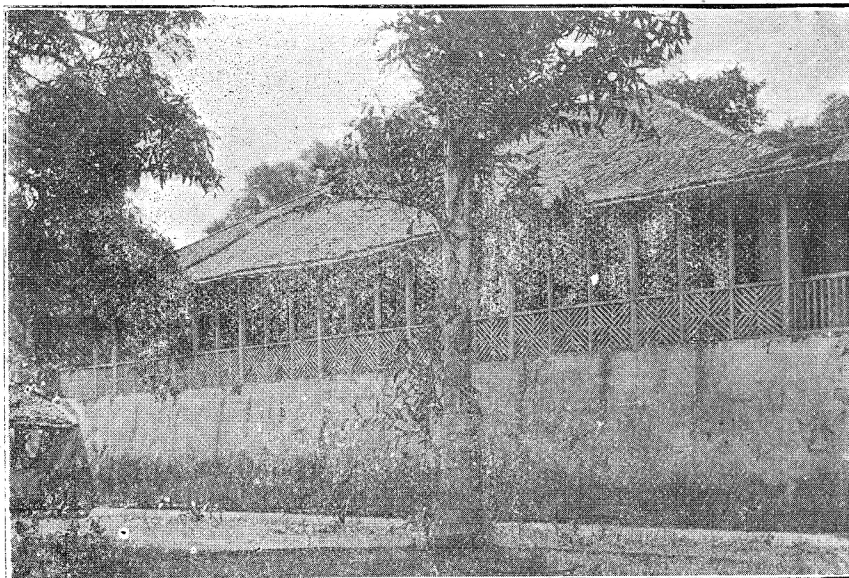


FIG. 54

CROW'S NEST, UPPER PART WITH H. P. B.'s ROOM

T.S., the Aryan Temperance Society. Soon afterwards, the development of Theosophical activities tended to be restricted to

the religious and philosophical fields, and it was only many years later that Indian Theosophists began vigorously to revive the spirit of Indian culture in education, social reform and political reconstruction.

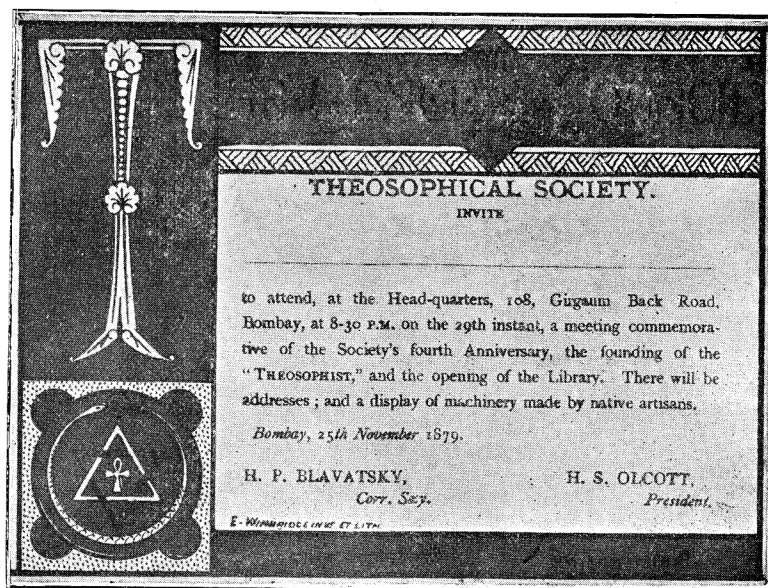


FIG. 55

The most noteworthy event of this year is the commencement of *The Theosophist* on October 1st. The magazine was quite different in appearance from what it is now. Fig. 56 shows the appearance of the cover. Its size was 13 inches (33cm.) long, and 9 inches (24cm.) broad. The historical sense of the Founders, and their utter belief in the future of the Society, could not be better illustrated than by the first paragraph of this first issue of *Theosophist*, which runs as follows:

“For the convenience of future reference, it may as well be stated here that the committee, sent to India by the Theosophical Society, sailed from New York December 17th, 1878, and landed at Bombay, February 16th, 1879; having passed two weeks in London on the way.”

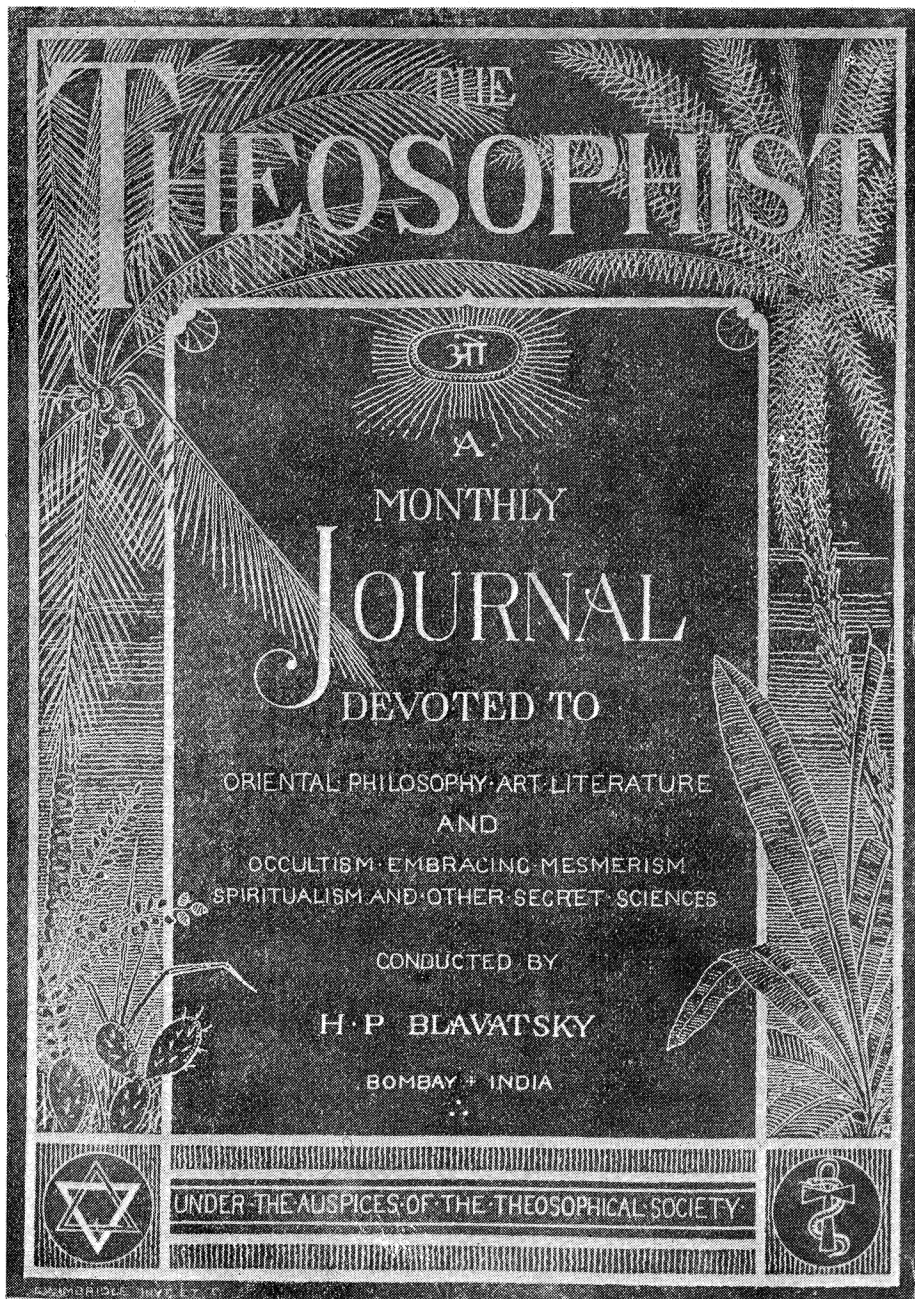


FIG. 56

The first issue of the *Theosophist* is remarkable in revealing not only the mystical elements underlying Theosophy, but



FIG. 57

H.P.B. IN 1880

also the intensely practical nature of their application. The following articles appear, after the preliminary introductory paragraphs. (1) What is Theosophy; (2) What are the Theosophists? (3) The Drift of Western Spiritualism; (4) Antiquity of the Vedas; (5) The Autobiography of Dayanand Saraswati Swami; (6) The Learning among Indian Ladies; (7) Brahma, Iswara and Maya; (8) The Inner God; (9) Persian Zoroastrianism and Russian Vandalism; (10) Review of *The Light of Asia*; (11) The Works of Hindu Religion and Philosophy mentioned in the Brahma Yojna; (12) Aryan Trigonometry; (13) Technical Education; (14) A World Without a Woman; (15) Magnetism in Ancient India. In the article on Technical Education by E. Wimbridge, who came with the Founders to India, appears a paragraph which shows that the Theosophists of 1879 saw clearly into one aspect of India's problem.

“If India is ever to be freed from her present humiliation of exporting the raw material and importing it again after manufacture, she must commence by imparting to her youth a systematic knowledge of those industrial arts and sciences, the lack of which compels

her to purchase in foreign markets goods which should in most cases be manufactured to advantage at home. To persist in the present course, while millions of her people are starving for want of employment, is more than a mistake—it is a crime. It is the more unpardonable when we consider the characteristics of her labouring class, a people of simple habits, docile and obedient, contented with wages that would not suffice for a bare subsistence in the West, and patient in the extreme. Here, surely, one would suppose manufactures of all kinds could be carried on so inexpensively as to defy competition. That such is not the case is, we believe, entirely owing to the lack of technical education; and poorly as most of the Indian work of to-day is executed, it will inevitably be worse ten years hence, unless timely steps are taken to introduce a system of education which, in the future, will not only elevate the Hindu artizan to the level of his Western brother, but in some particulars surpass him; a system tending to revive the glories of that ancient time when India held a place in the front rank of Industrial science and art.”

The coming of the Founders to India was in many ways the real beginning of the Movement, so far as effective work is concerned. For, immediately after the proclamation of the Theosophical ideals, a number of cultured Hindus gathered round the Founders, and a nucleus was made from which work could be organised for the development of the Movement. Furthermore, the more suitable conditions of India, and the centre of force growing round the Founders, made it possible for the Adept Teachers to communicate more directly by phenomenal appearances and by letters with Colonel Olcott, and with many others whom They desired to link with the growing Movement. The work expanded northwards and southwards from Bombay.

Mr. A. P. Sinnett (Fig. 58), who was then the Editor of the *Pioneer*, joined the Society in 1879. With him was closely associated his brilliant wife Mrs. Patience Sinnett (Fig. 59), who wrote one of the earliest Theosophical manuals, *The Purpose of Theosophy*. The Founders were invited by the Sinnetts to their house in Allahabad, and there Mr. Sinnett was brought closely into touch with the Master K. H. Through the link thus made, a stream of teachings was sent to Mr. Sinnett and to Mr. A. O. Hume, in answer to questions by them. These teachings were presented to the world in 1881 by Mr. Sinnett in his book *The Occult World*.

Southwards the movement expanded in quite a different fashion. It has been mentioned that the Buddhist priest Mohottiwatte Gunānanda, the High Priest of the Temple at Kotahena in Colombo, had joined the Society in 1877. This able man was a brilliant orator, and he took up a strong militant attitude against the proselytism of Christian missionaries who had been working for several generations, and who had greatly

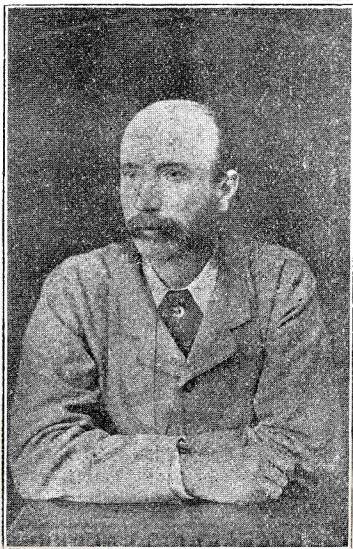


FIG. 58

A. P. SINNETT



FIG. 59

MRS. PATIENCE SINNETT



FIG. 61

Sitting: D. K. Mavlankar, H. S. Olcott, S. J. Padshah, H. P. B., E. Wimbridge, Mrs. P. Anandji. Standing, (extreme right) P. Anandji

enfeebled the spiritual virility of Buddhism. Through correspondence, a bond was made with another equally famous High



FIG. 60

RT. REV. H. SUMANGALA

Priest in Ceylon, H. Sumangala, the Principal of the Vidyodaya College for Buddhist Priests (Fig. 60), whose residence was the Temple in Maligakanda in Colombo. He was made in 1880 one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society. On the invitation of these two High Priests, H. P. B., Colonel Olcott, Damodar K. Mavalankar, E. Wimbridge, S. J. Padshah, P. D. Shroff and Mr. and Mrs. Panachand Anandji left Bombay by steamer in May, 1880, and arrived in Galle in Ceylon (Fig. 61). The utmost enthusiasm greeted the arrival of the Founders, and they

formally identified themselves with Buddhism by reciting the Five Precepts after the High Priest A. Dhammārāma at Vijayananda Temple in Galle (Fig. 62). Long before the Founders left New York, both of them were strongly drawn to eastern religions and especially to Buddhism. Therefore, on their arrival in Ceylon, they threw themselves whole-heartedly into reviving the waning spirit of Buddhism. It is difficult to realise to-day to what extent the efforts of Christian missionaries had denationalised the Buddhists of Ceylon. All the principal schools were in the hands of the missionaries, who steadily brought pressure to bear on the children, till these began to be ashamed both of their religion and of their national traditions. There was hardly a Buddhist who did not have as his or her personal appellation some Christian name.

The aim of both the Founders, and especially of Colonel Olcott, was to organise the Buddhists so that the true spirit of

Buddhism with its high morality might at least be known by all. Towards this end, in 1881 he put together the simple teachings of Buddhism in a Buddhist Catechism. This small book was care-

This is to certify that
 on the 19th May 1880 the Founders of the
 Theosophical Society
 Madame H. P. Blavatsky and myself took the
 Pancha Sila for the first time at Vijayanaraidakshara
 from Akshemama Dhammarama Thera
 Henry S. Olcott F.R.S.

FIG. 62

fully revised by the High Priest H. Sumangala and his assistant H. Devamitta. The booklet was immediately translated into Sinhalese and put on sale. Since the first copy sold, probably to-day over half a million copies have been distributed in Ceylon, quite apart from the English and foreign translations of this Catechism which appeared soon afterwards. The second activity of Colonel Olcott was to organise Buddhist schools throughout the Island. He travelled from village to village, collecting funds, instituting committees, and in every way rousing the people not to spend so much of their money on merely building temples when schools for their children were so urgently

needed. Needless to say, bitter attacks were made on the Founders by the Christian missionaries of the Island. But a revival was started in Buddhism which has progressed steadily, till to-day there is a powerful Buddhist educational movement to teach Buddhist children their own faith, as well as to give them a secular education.

The work for Buddhism, to which Colonel Olcott consecrated himself to the end of his life, was not done by him in his official capacity as President of the T.S. He knew that, as President, his duty was to encourage the revival of religion in all the religions of the world. He was most keen on the revival of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. But work for any particular religion could not be officially undertaken by the President of a Society whose motto was "There is no religion higher than Truth". This, however, has never prevented individual members, even while holding office in the Society, from throwing themselves vigorously, in their unofficial capacity, into whatever humanitarian work appealed to them. The following is a clear statement by Colonel Olcott on his relation to the Buddhist work.¹ What he says is equally applicable to other specialised forms of religious endeavour by Theosophists, whose activities have been sometimes criticised as violating the neutrality of the Society.

"With Sri Sumangala Maha Nayaka, and H. Dharmapala, I am engaged in a great scheme of Buddhist revival and propaganda, for which, of course, the T. S. is not responsible as a body, and in which it can interest itself only as being one branch of its comprehensive work of promoting Universal Brotherhood, Religious Tolerance, and the study of ancient Religions, Literatures and Sciences. My chief desire has been and shall ever be to help the followers of each of the ancient religions to find and live up to its noblest ideals, demonstrating its Theosophical foundation and its

¹ Presidential Address, 1892.

essential unity with all other cults. As for Buddhism, my aim is to help to purge away its impurities, restore its pristine beauty, unify its various conflicting schools and sects, and diffuse a knowledge of the Hindu-Buddhist doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation throughout Christendom. I am doing my Buddhistic work as a private individual, yet at the same time in the spirit of a real President of this non-sectarian, this altruistic and progressive Theosophical Society.”



FIG 63

H.P.B. about 1879