

## THE JUDGE CASE

FROM the middle of 1893, there slowly began a difficulty in the Society which shook it to its very depths. It has been mentioned that, from 1886 onwards, W. Q. Judge had developed remarkable powers of initiative and organisation, and that under his guiding hand Theosophy in America had developed very rapidly. On the death of H. P. B. in 1891, the direction and control of the Eastern School of Theosophy had been vested by her verbally in Mrs. Besant. She had also written to Mr. Judge speaking of Mrs. Besant as her right hand, "my successor when I shall be called to leave you". Mr. Judge came over to England, and proposed that Mrs. Besant and himself should act as outer heads of the School, she in Europe and India and he in America. A slip of paper, in the well-known script of the Master M., was found in a drawer with other papers; on it were the words, "Judge's plan is right." Mrs. Besant accepted the message, without any doubt as to its genuineness, and the division of jurisdiction was made. In 1893 however, rumours began to spread that messages from the Masters were emanating from Mr. Judge, the genuineness of which could be questioned. These messages were not mere verbal messages, but written in the blue and red scripts of the Masters M. and K. H.

It was well-known that during the years 1880 to 1885, precipitated letters from both these Masters had been received by many; but all such letters were precipitated phenomenally, that is, the script was not written by hand. When messages in the two well-known scripts appeared in letters written by Mr. Judge, the recipients naturally thought that the red and blue

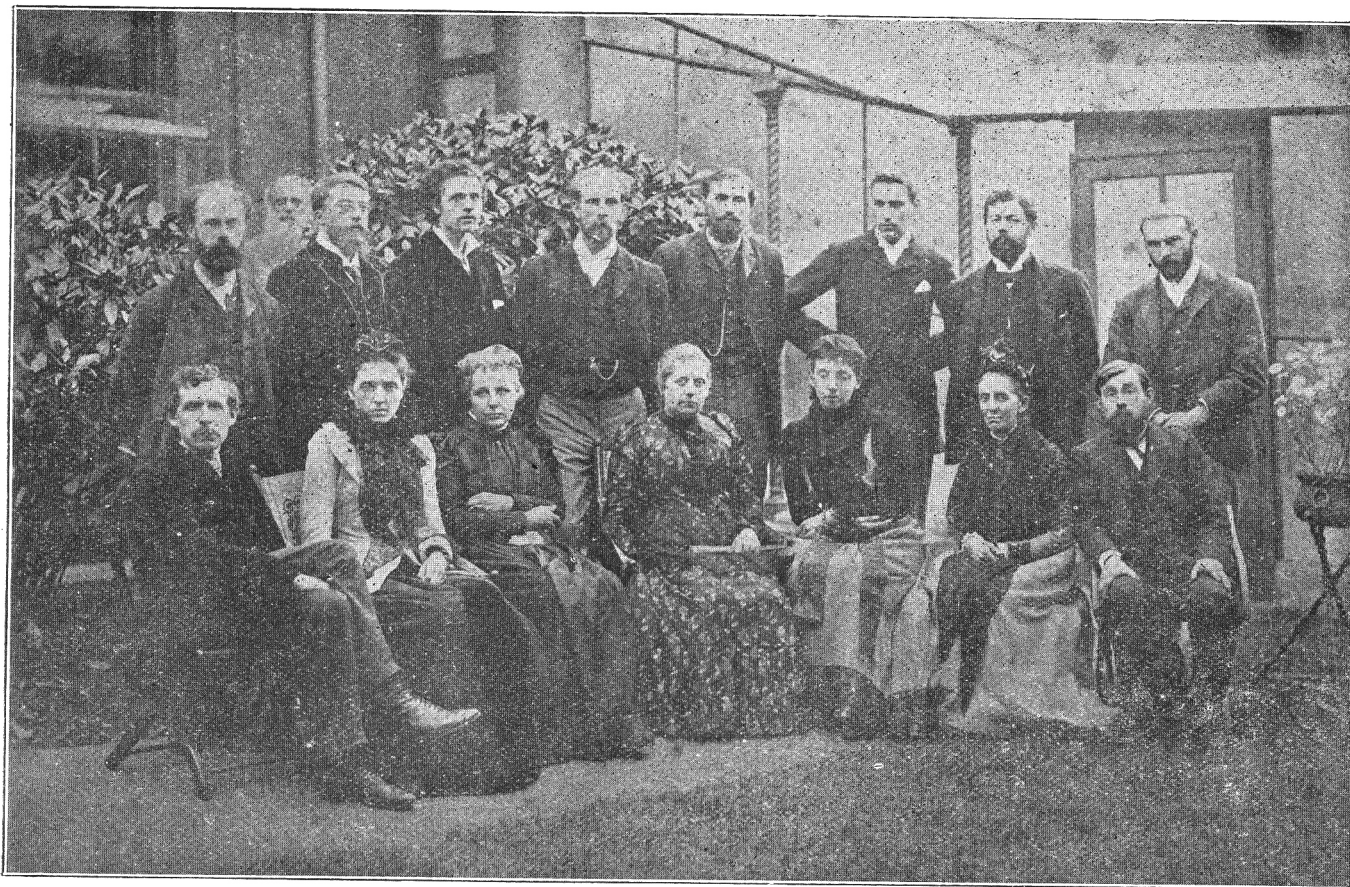


FIG. 140

## HEADQUARTERS WORKERS IN LONDON, AFTER H. P. B.'s DEATH

Standing: Claude F. Wright, Pertram Keightley, Walter Old, E. T. Sturdy, John Pryse, Sydney Edge, Dr. Archibald Keightley, G. R. S. Mead.

Seated: Herbert Burrows, Laura Cooper, Mrs. Besant, Countess Wachtmeister, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, Emily Kisingbury, James Pryse.

Standing, at back: Colonel Olcott.

scripts were messages from the Masters precipitated on the letters in transit. Many however soon began to doubt the genuineness of the messages, and presently some went so far as to say that the messages were not precipitated by the Masters but written by hand by Mr. Judge.

At this time Mr. Judge was holding the office of the Vice-President of the Society, though that office had not been



FIG. 141

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY, W. Q. JUDGE, COLONEL OLCOTT, G. R. S. MEAD

conferred on him by any resolution of the Society. He was Vice-President, but technically only *de facto* and not *de jure*. But he had for several years signed documents as Vice-President, and all had accepted him as the holder of that office. When charges were made that he was sending bogus messages, a very difficult situation arose. Mrs. Besant had herself received some of the messages from Mr. Judge, and had not at first doubted their genuineness. Later she had misgivings, but said nothing till, when she came to India in 1893, others who had received similar messages placed the scripts before her. She then saw that those who doubted their genuineness had done so not out of malice but most reasonably. The only way to solve the difficulty was to ask Mr. Judge to explain. But he refused to explain, and yet insisted on remaining as Vice-President. There was only one procedure left, which was for the Society to make a formal inquiry into charges made against its second officer.

Seeing that much was at stake, and that the Society was being profoundly disturbed, Mrs. Besant at Colonel Olcott's pressing request took up, with much reluctance, the task of formulating the charges. Since Mr. Judge was the Vice-President, and since in the T.S. Constitution there was an article outlining the procedure to be followed when any charge was laid against the President or the Vice-President, Mrs. Besant formulated six charges, and presented them to the President of the Society for enquiry. She however did an unusual thing, which showed that she was not moving in the matter out of personal animus against a most devoted worker; she sent a copy of the charges and the evidence for them to Mr. Judge, so that he might know definitely what was stated against him. After much delay, with bitterness increasing between those for and against Mr. Judge, finally a Judicial Committee was called in London to inquire into the charges.

The Judicial Committee met on July 5, 1894. Mr. Judge was present, and he pointed out that the charges, irrespective



of their truth or falsity, were formulated against him as Vice-President of the Society, and that he had never been *de jure* Vice-President, for he had never been so appointed by the Society. The Committee decided against him on this point, and ruled that they had the power to proceed, since he was *de facto* Vice-President. Then Mr. Judge pointed out that the charges against him were not in his capacity as Vice-President but merely as a private member. He declared further that the Committee could not in any way inquire into the charges, for they involved the question whether the Masters existed or not. The Judicial Committee upheld Mr. Judge on this point. They decided that it was impossible for the Theosophical Society officially to make any pronouncement whether the Masters existed or not, and such a pronouncement would have to be made if an inquiry were to be begun as to the genuineness or falsity of messages purporting to emanate from Them through Mr. Judge.

Matters thus came to an impasse. The charges were not met, but on the other hand, such was the nature of the charges, that it was impossible for any body of people to inquire into their truth or falsity. Matters would have remained in this unsatisfactory state, but for the action on the part of one member of the London Headquarters. He had had in his possession for a while all the evidence against Mr. Judge, and without permission he transcribed copies of them. On the failure of the Judicial Committee, he determined to force the issue, in another way. He placed the material in his hands with a London journalist, and a London newspaper published a malicious and garbled story of the whole case. When day after day the newspaper narrated the story of the scripts of the Masters, which had appeared on letters written by Mr. Judge, and all the other data which made up the case against him, insistent demands were made by many Theosophists all over the world that Mr. Judge should meet the charges, even if no Judicial Committee was entitled to inquire into their truth or falsity.

But Mr. Judge, acting now on what he claimed to be the orders of his Master, declared in November, 1894, that



FIG. 142

ALEXANDER FULLERTON

Mrs. Besant was no longer the head of the Eastern Division of the E.S.T., that she was under the influence of Dark Powers of evil, and that the Master had appointed him the sole Head of the E.S.T. Most of the members in Europe and India utterly rebelled against these declarations of Mr. Judge, while nearly all the members in the United States firmly believed in his integrity. This most difficult situation suddenly came to an end at the Ninth American Convention held in Boston, on April 28, 1895. At this Convention, 75 Lodges out of a total of 101 determined to secede from the Parent Society, and to make a new organisation called "The Theosophical Society in America". It elected Mr. Judge as its President for life, and declared the Convention to be the first of the new Society. Fourteen Branches, following the lead of Alexander Fullerton, who was Assistant General Secretary under Mr. Judge, and for many years one of his most devoted adherents, remained loyal to the Parent Society, and they were chartered as the American Section, with Mr. Fullerton as the General Secretary.

Colonel Olcott, in his address to the Convention of 1895, summed up the situation as follows:

"The disturbing causes which were so long seething below the surface of our affairs, at last culminated in

the formal secession of 75 of the 101 American Branches on our register of 1894, and the formation of a new Society, with Mr. W. Q. Judge as Life President, which assumed our corporate name and seal, and took possession of the records, office property and money of our American Section. Of our remaining Branches 14 have remained loyal to our Constitution and have been re-chartered by me as the American Section T.S. The unenumerated ones have, I believe, not yet decided as to which party they will adhere to. I have elsewhere ruled (see Executive Notice of 5th June from Zumarraga Spain) that our American colleagues were within their constitutional rights to secede from the Society, individually and collectively. If they had confined themselves to that I should have had to utter no word of protest, but only to wish them Godspeed and offer our hearty co-operation and brotherly help. For we have no patent to a monopoly of the world's reformatory work, and if there were fifty similar societies it would be all the better. But this lawful and proper action of the Boston Convention of last April was tainted with an act of treachery and an insult to the memory of H. P. B. and to her surviving Co-Founder. A vote was passed virtually declaring that all the building up of the Society done by her and myself after we left for India in 1878, was unconstitutional and unwarranted; the central authority having always remained at New York, and no lawful Theosophical Society having ever existed elsewhere; that the T.S. Branches in Convention at Boston were an enlargement of the New York original centre, and that Adyar was but the centre of the *de facto*, irregular and adventitious body, which was bearing the name without representing in law or equity that first centre. In this spirit I was officially addressed by



FIG. 143

E. AUG. NERESHEIMER



FIG. 144

CLAUDE F. WRIGHT



FIG. 145

E. T. HARGROVE

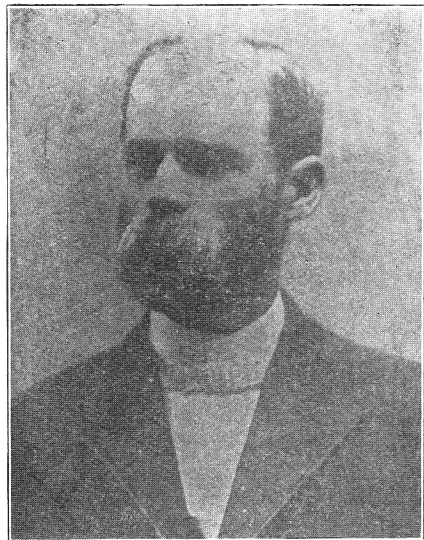


FIG. 146

JEROME A. ANDERSON

Mr. Judge, and the fraternal message sent to be read at the London Convention of the European Section, in July last, was framed in the same tone. As I presided on the latter occasion in my official capacity, it was evidently impossible for me to admit the preposterous claim thus formulated, and so I ruled the document out of order; to have done otherwise would have been for me to stultify every official act of mine as President since 1878, and cast upon the memory of H.P.B. the same stigma of irregularity in official conduct, since we invariably acted together in all important Society business, and what one did, the other approved of and supported."

With the exception of Alexander Fullerton, who was the Assistant General Secretary, and a small band of members, nearly all the most efficient workers in America left with Mr. Judge. The American Section lost by the Judge secession J. D. Buck, E. Aug. Neresheimer, E. B. Page, Claude F. Wright, E. T. Hargrove, James Pryse, Julia C. Ver Planck, Dr. Jerome A. Anderson, (Figs. 143—146) and others too numerous to mention. They took with them all the records and the property then owned by the American Section. The fourteen Branches that remained loyal to the Parent Society had to start all over again. But to-day they make a strong effective body of 7,000 members, while all those who belong to the various organisations which are the offshoots of the Judge secession probably number less than a thousand, not only in America only, but throughout the world.

With the secession of W. Q. Judge in 1895, the office of Vice-President of the T. S. became vacant. Colonel Olcott appointed Mr. A. P. Sinnett to the office. Within a year of being elected President, Mr. Judge, who had been for many years ailing, passed away on March 21, 1896. In April, E. T. Hargrove was elected in his stead as President. Some time before his death, Mr. Judge had appointed, as the head



of his E. S. T. in America and Europe, a person who was utterly unknown to most of his followers. This was Mrs. Katherine A. Tingley. All his followers most loyally accepted this lady as his nominee and successor.

On stepping into the shoes of Mr. Judge, Mrs. Tingley found a most excellently organised Society, united and full of

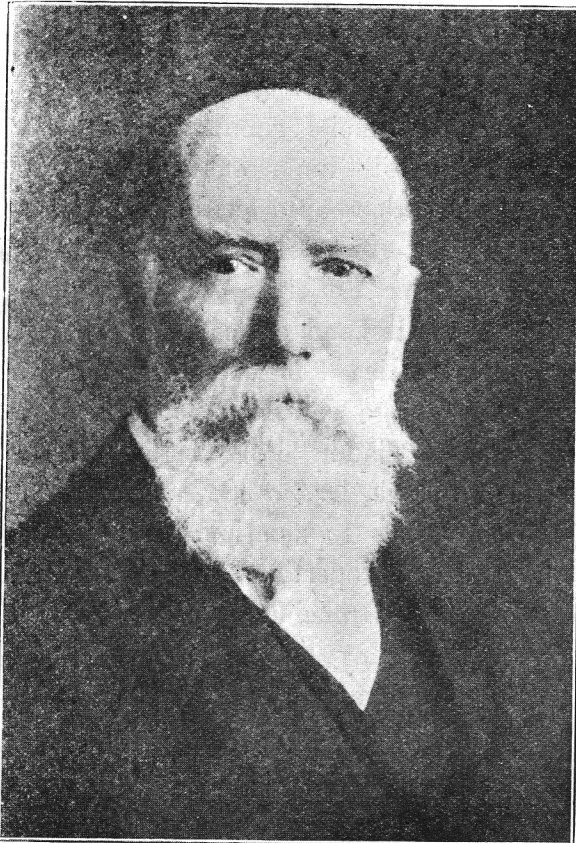


FIG. 147  
A. P. SINNETT



FIG. 148  
MRS. PATIENCE SINNETT

the zeal which Mr. Judge had instilled into it. It went to pieces very quickly under her leadership. She determined on going on a dramatic "crusade" throughout the world, and duly departed from America on June 13, 1896, and went from country to country with a band of her followers. Directly she returned

to America in February 1897, divisions arose among her followers, and E. T. Hargrove, Dr. J. D. Buck, Dr. A. Keightley and Mrs. Julia C. Ver Planck Keightley and many others threw off their allegiance to Mrs. Tingley, and on September 1, Mr. Hargrove resigned his office as President.

Next year, at the Convention of the new Society in February 18, 1898, Mrs. Tingley changed the name of the organisation into the "Universal Brotherhood" and made the "Theosophical Society in America" one division of it. The above-named followers of Mr. Judge then seceded from her, and thereafter they claimed that the organisation which they then founded was the original Theosophical Society of 1875. From this group several offshoots arose later, one of which was "The Temple of the People" at Rochester, under the leadership of Dr. W. H. Dower and Mrs. F. La Due. Mrs. La Due was known in her inner circle as "Blue Star," and was said to be the mouth-piece of the Master Hilarion. Her organisation was later transferred to Halcyon, California and is still known as the "Temple". A second group formed "The Theosophical Society of New York," under Dr. J. H. Salisbury. Another offshoot led by Robert Crosbie began in Los Angeles as the "United Lodge of Theosophists," and it is with this body that B. P. Wadia, on leaving the T. S., identified himself. Still one more offshoot has arisen, "The Blavatsky Association" of London, under the leadership of Mrs. Alice C. Cleather, one of the group in London round H. P. B. Mrs. Cleather sided with Mr. Judge, and then followed Mrs. Tingley, till she lost faith in the latter. Mrs. Tingley's organisation is at Point Loma, California, with one Branch in Sweden. As none of these organisations publish regular statistics, it is difficult to know what is their real strength.

They all express complete devotion to H. P. B., and each claims to be the most perfect channel of her message to the world.