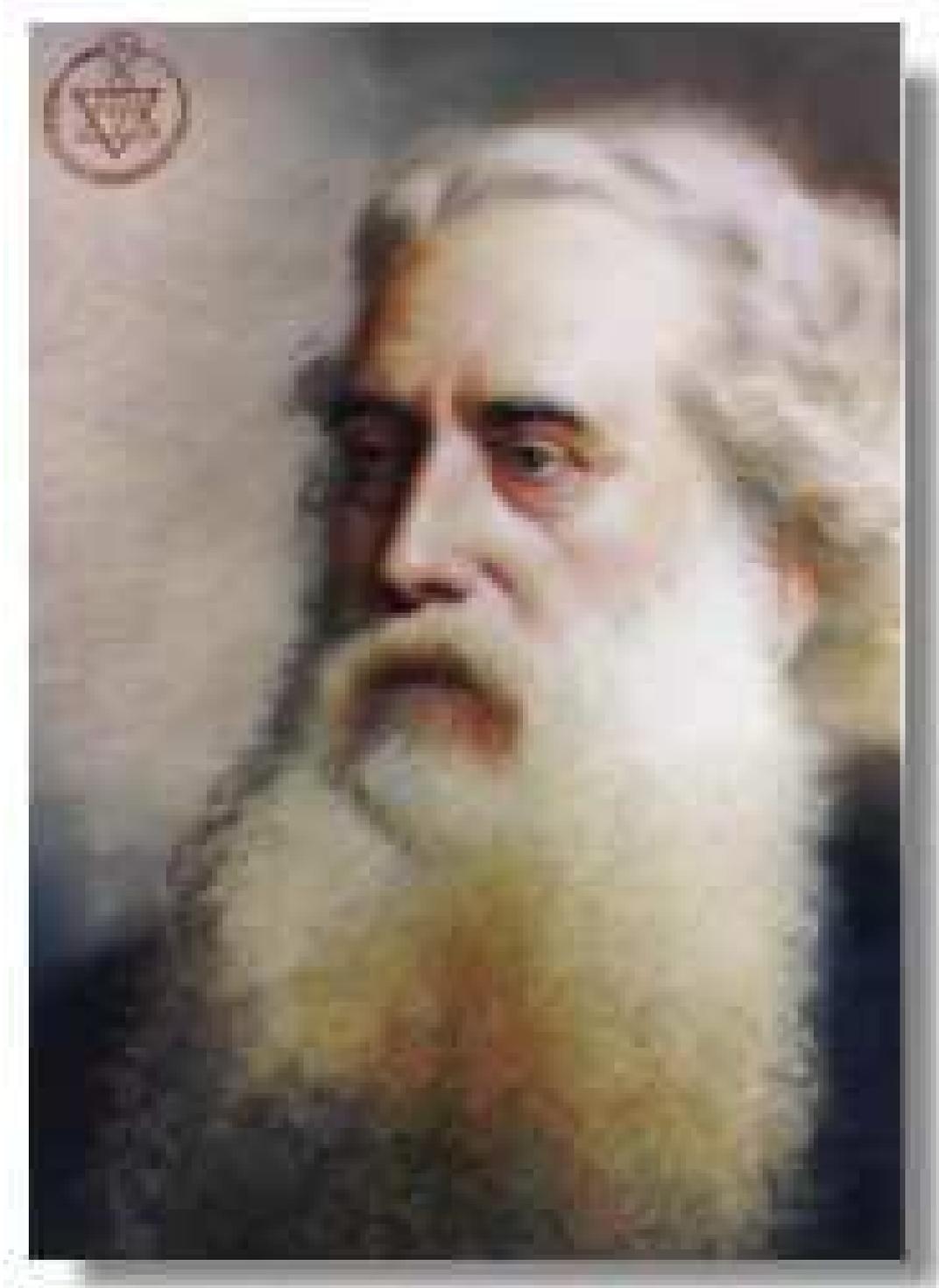




# Contact

The members' newsletter of the Brisbane Theosophical Society

**2014 Issue 3 September – December**



**Henry Steel Olcott**

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## Brisbane Theosophical Society

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**BOOKSHOP & LIBRARY:** (Closed on Public Holidays)

Monday and Wednesday .....10.30 am to 2.30 pm  
Friday..... 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm & 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm  
Saturday .....9.00 am to 12 noon

The programme of Lodge meetings is enclosed and is also placed on the Lodge website which will always be the most up-to-date source of information. Whenever there are changes to the programme an email circular is sent to all people who have given us their email address.

The Theosophical Society has no official statements of belief. It encourages members to seek the truth by various avenues, but always subject to respect for others. All views expressed in these pages are entirely those of the authors – not of the Society.

## PRESIDENT'S RAVINGS

### THE FORGOTTEN FOUNDER

My title may not be strictly accurate, but when I mentioned Colonel Henry Steele Olcott to a friend the other day, that was his reaction – “Ah, the forgotten founder.” However, I think it is true that, while we in the Society frequently refer to H P Blavatsky and her seminal writings (*Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*), we much less frequently speak of Colonel Olcott and his work.

Colonel Olcott was a very practical man and we have him to thank for much of the organisational work that established the Theosophical Society on a firm basis. He travelled extensively, establishing TS branches and lecturing to large crowds. Furthermore, from his comments in his *Old Diary Leaves*, he strongly influenced the decision in 1880 to change the emphasis in the Society from occult phenomena to the wider and more profound ideal of Universal Brotherhood.

But something that really surprised me when reading *Old Diary Leaves*, was the fact that Colonel Olcott was also a healer for a period in his busy life. It started in Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in August 1882, with a man who had been for eight years totally paralysed in one arm and partially in one leg. With no previous healing experience, HSO writes “I made some passes over his arm and said I hoped he might feel the better for it.”

After some further treatment the man “could whirl his bad arm around his head, open and shut his hand, and clutch and handle objects as well as ever...and in a day or two more he could jump with both feet, hop on the paralysed one, kick equally high against the wall with both, and run freely.” This was followed by further healings of the blind and deaf as well as the lame.

The news of this event spread rapidly and over the next year or so Olcott was besieged by crowds wherever he went which he found increasingly exhausting. It could not go on. Towards the end of 1883, Olcott says, “I received orders from my Guru to suspend all healings until further advices ... after treating one way or another some 8000 patients within the twelve month...”

Colonel Olcott set us an amazing example of service, and of the need for good organisation to provide a firm and enduring basis for the promotion of the work of our Society. We in Brisbane are slowly losing our valued volunteers so necessary for keeping the Lodge going. This year we have had to close on Tuesdays and Thursdays for lack of people to staff the front desk, library and bookshop. So any offer of help will be gratefully considered by the Executive Committee.

Best wishes



*I described the true Universal Brotherhood to be a common kinship between all sentient beings that had the divine spark manifested in them in whatsoever degree; the ant and the elephant had it as well as man, and all men of every race and kindred had it in common...*

H S Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, 2, p101

## **BRISBANE LODGE NEWS**

### **Brisbane Theosophical Society Executive Committee for 2014**

*President:* Brian Harding  
*Vice Presidents:* Phillipa Rooke, John Harris  
*Secretary:* Phoebe Williams  
*Treasurer:* Patricia Ossenberg  
*Committee:* Marie Bertelle, Aldo Donadel, Christine Gwin, Robyn Rizzo

#### **Sub-Committees for 2014**

*Library:* Patricia, Phillipa, Phoebe, Robyn  
*Bookshop:* Brian, Patricia, Phoebe  
*TOS representative:* Robyn  
*Finance:* Brian, John, Patricia, Phillipa, Phoebe  
*Program:* Brian, Marie, Phillipa, Phoebe  
*Property & Equipment:* Brian, Christine, John, Phoebe  
*Publicity:* Brian, Christine, Robyn

### **Program Listing**

The Lodge program continues to be in the form of a 3-fold A4 sheet that can be folded into a pocket sized leaflet like the various Theosophical Society brochures. The weekly groups are included in sequential context between the Friday night meetings, so that it is clearer what is on and when. The programme is enclosed with this newsletter. It can also be seen on the website, and the pocket document version can be downloaded as an Acrobat PDF file. If your printer can print double sided, set it to do so with landscape orientation and to flip on the left side.

### **Annual membership fees**

Please note that annual membership fees are due by 30 September, 2014.



#### **Did you know:**

*The Charter for the Brisbane Lodge of the Theosophical Society was signed by Henry Steel Olcott on 21 January, 1895. This issue of 'Contact' celebrates his life and contribution as the 'forgotten founder' of the Theosophical Society.*

### **Library News**

#### **Brisbane Lodge Members-only Library and Reference Library**

The Members-only Library and the Reference Library are great resources for TS members looking for deeper theosophical insights. They are upstairs and hold a fine collection of old and new books. These collections are available for the use of members during library opening hours. Ask for the key at the Reception Desk, for access to these collections. They contain some very old and rare books.

#### **OPAC on-line Theosophical Libraries index**

The project to index all the libraries of the TS in Australia on the National Libraries on-line system, OPAC, is now nearly complete. If you find a wanted book is in another Lodge library, it can be obtained on loan for members. To access the on-line index, go to the National TS website <http://www.austheos.org.au> You will find it on the drop down menus.

#### **The Campbell Theosophical Library**

This is in the Head Office of the TS in Sydney. An index to its extensive collection of books and periodicals is maintained on the TS National website. You need to visit the library to read the material, but there is a service for providing photocopies.

## New Additions to the Library

*A Message from Arunachala* by Paul Brunton  
*Becoming Vegan* by Brenda Dairs & Vesauto Melina  
*Classical Islamic Philosophy* by Taufi Ibrahim & A Sagadau  
*Gaia: The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine* by J Lovelock  
*Gospel of St Luke* by Rudolf Steiner  
*Hindu Mythology & Religion* by John Dowson  
*I Ching, the Book of Change* by John Blofeld  
*Jung's Thoughts on God* by Donald Dyer  
*Lectures on Ancient Philosophy* by Manly P Hall  
*Lost knowledge of the Ancients* ed by Glenn Kreisbey  
*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* by Gershom Scholem  
*Manifestations of Karma* by Rudolf Steiner  
*Man's Life on Earth & in the Spiritual Worlds* by R Steiner  
*Meister Eckhart* trans. Raymond Blakney  
"Mejda" by Sananda Lal Ghosh  
*Needles of Stone* by Tom Graves  
*Psycho-synthesis* by Will Parfitt  
*Reflections on the Christ* by David Spangler  
*St Augustine Confessions* by St Augustine  
*Socratic Discourses by Plato & Xenophou* by Plato & Xenophou  
*Tai Chi, The Perfect Exercise* by Arthur Rosenfeld  
*Taoism, the way of the Mystic* by J C Cooper  
*The Inner Eye of Love* by W Johnston  
*The Jewel in the Lotus* by Grace Cooke  
*The Sound of Music & Plants* by Dorothy Retallack  
*The Spiritual Traveller* by M & N Palmer  
*The Sufi Message Vols. 14 & 12* by Hazoat Inayat Khan  
*The Tao of Silence* by Re Po Hu  
*The Zen Way to Martial Arts* by Taiser Deshinaru  
*Time, Narrative & History* by David Carr  
*Time: The Ultimate Energy* by Murry Hope  
*Towards a Planetary Vision* by David Spangler  
*Venture Inward* by Hugh Lynn Cayce  
*Ways to Self-Realization* by M Sadhu  
*Whispers from Eternity* by Paramahansa Yogananda  
*Yoga Nidra* by Swami Satyananda Saraswati  
*You Can Conquer Cancer* by Ian Gawler  
*Zohar the Book of Splendour* by GG Scholem



## New Additions to the Bookshop

*A Pilgrimage to Guadalupe* by Swami Kriyananda..... \$22.00  
*Book of Life* by Krishnamurti.....\$35.00  
*Breath By Breath* by Larry Rosenberg.....\$37.50  
*Chakras & Esoteric Healing* by Zachary Lansdowne.....\$24.00  
*Christian Gnosis* by C W Leadbeater.....\$27.00  
*City of God* by Saint Augustine.....\$10.00  
*Facing a World in Crisis* by Krishnamurti.....\$26.00  
*Heart Without Measure* by Ravi Ravindra.....\$30.50  
*Inspirations from Ancient Wisdom* by H P Blavatsky.....\$28.00  
*Living in the Light of Death* by Larry Rosenberg.....\$26.00  
*Rules for Spiritual Initiation* by Zachary Lansdowne.....\$19.00  
*Three Steps to Awakening* by Larry Rosenberg.....\$22.00  
*Relationships: to Oneself, To Others, To the World* by Krishnamurti..... \$22.00  
*You Can Heal Your Heart* by Louise Hay.....\$17.00  
*What are You Doing With Your Life* by Krishnamurti.....\$22.00  
*Readings in the Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.....\$12.00



*Our duty as people is to proceed as if limits to our ability did not exist. We are collaborators in creation.*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin



## TS Classics CD

Many people have appreciated the CD of searchable TS classic literature that was compiled by the Philippines TS. But if you have upgraded your PC recently you are very likely to have found it no longer works. The search programme within the CD system will not work on Windows-7 64 bit or on Windows-8. It does work on Windows-7 32-bit, but most new computers sold since Windows-7 was introduced have been supplied with the 64-bit version of Windows pre-loaded.

Recently the Philippines TS people have produced an updated version of the CD system that will run on 64-bit. If any of you are in need of an update to be able to use the TS CLASSICS CD on a 64-bit computer, please contact me and I can provide a software patch to upgrade it. This applies of course only to people who have previously bought the CD. New purchases from here on will be the upgraded version.

Geoff Harrod [geoffrey.harrod@gmail.com](mailto:geoffrey.harrod@gmail.com) Tel: 07 3378 8534

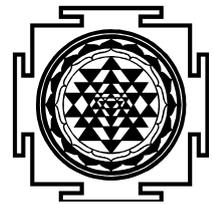


## Upcoming Events

### Silent Meditation Retreat

Friday September 12 to Sunday September 14, 2014

Presented by the Brisbane Theosophical Society at the  
Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre,  
2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook, Qld 4213.



We invite you to join us in the tranquility of this lovely bushland setting, for a weekend of meditation. Whether you are a beginner or a long-term practitioner, this retreat offers the opportunity to experience the beneficial effects of meditation, in the company of like-minded people. With gentle guidance from our facilitator, Rod Bucknell, you will learn how to make meditation an integral part of your life. To facilitate your practice, silence will be observed from first thing Saturday until after lunch on Sunday. You will have a private room, and all meals are vegetarian.

Registration forms are available in the Lodge Library or can be downloaded from the Brisbane TS website, [http://www.theosophyqld.org.au/brisb\\_lodge.htm](http://www.theosophyqld.org.au/brisb_lodge.htm)

### National TS Science Group Seminar

Monday September 29 to Thursday October 2, 2014

All TS members who have some scientific/medical/health training or who are keenly interested in attending this seminar are welcome to apply. Total cost will be \$250 for your registration, accommodation, meals (vegetarian) and all sessions. No smoking is allowed. Space is limited, so please lodge your application as soon as possible, along with a cheque or money order for \$250 (which includes a \$50 non-refundable deposit). Registrations close on September 8, 2014.



Panel discussions and presentations will be designed to stimulate some interesting discussions and be informative to all participants. They will include:

- Richard Silberstein "The nexus between bioelectric fields and past life memories"
- Victor Macgill "Mind through Matter: focusing on embodied cognition"
- Olga Gostin "Menticulture: a key to understanding Aboriginal cultures"
- Victor Gostin "Noosphere: the reality of a mental world"
- Kevin Davey "The Proem and Modern Cosmology – An Opportunity to Stretch the Mind"

Registration forms are available in the Lodge Library or can be downloaded from the Brisbane TS website, [http://www.theosophyqld.org.au/brisb\\_lodge.htm](http://www.theosophyqld.org.au/brisb_lodge.htm)

*The word wonderful is scarcely strong enough to characterise the cures made by Colonel Olcott while on his present tour... It is the simple fact that cases given up by learned European and native physicians as hopeless and incurable have been cured by him as by magic...*

Supplement to *The Theosophist*, May 1883.

## Colonel Henry Steel Olcott

By Dr Annie Besant

Published in *The Theosophist*, Volume 27, March 1907



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 of one of the early members of the Dutch East India Company, was born in Orange, New Jersey, on August 2, 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 honor, 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 Sugar-canes*, 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 Cyclopaedia*. Recognized 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 characterized 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 signalize 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 entrusted 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 characterized 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 spend the remainder of his life in organizing 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 equaled outside the Āsrama of the Masters.

He was found by Madame Blavatsky at the Eddy 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 taking place there. 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 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 lifelong 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 17, 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 Parsees.

In 1880 began the great Buddhist revival in Ceylon, which has now three colleges and 205 schools, 177 of which received Government grants this year [1907]; 25,856 children were in attendance in these schools on June 30, 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 counties 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, organizing. 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

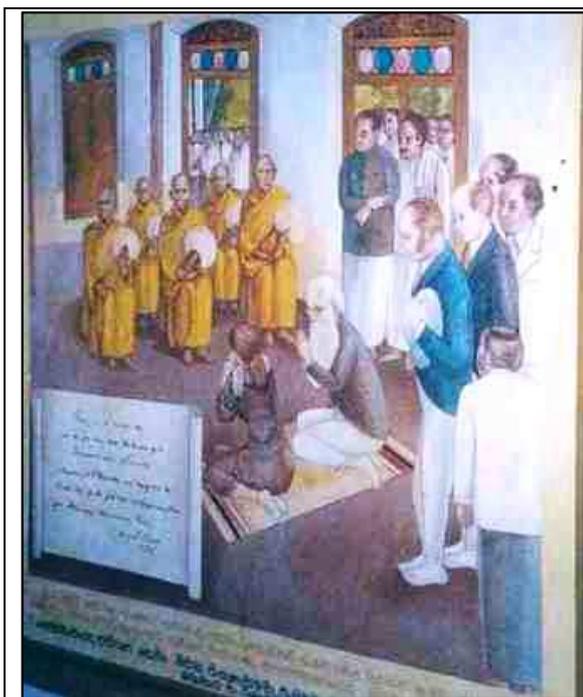
Society through the crisis which rent from it for a time nearly the whole American Section, to see that Section welcome him to his native land with pride and exultation. He saw his colleague pass away from his side, and bore the burden alone, steadfastly and bravely for another sixteen years, knitting 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.

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.



*Him [Olcott] we can trust under all circumstances, and his faithful service is pledged to us come well, come ill.*

K.H.



*On 19th May 1880, H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott, "took pansil" at the Wijayananda Pirivena located at Weliwatta in Galle, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). The painting to the left, located in the temple existing at the Pirivena mentioned above, depicts the moment HPB and HSO recited the Panchasila before the Buddhist elders and thus became Buddhists.*

*The photo of the painting was taken by Pedro Oliveira (2004).*

## Colonel Olcott: An Ever-Inspiring Example

By Pablo D. Sender

Published in *The Theosophist*, Volume 128, March 2007



We are commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of our President-Founder, Colonel Henry S. Olcott, and these articles are the means for gratefully expressing the blessings resulting from his life's effort. It is not easy to speak about past Theosophical leaders. On the one hand, some people tend to be over-critical, pointing out whatever errors they think one or the other leader made in his struggle to uplift humanity. They do not realize they are judging situations from a distance, with hindsight, challenging actions and decisions that were very difficult to make at the time. We should have only respect for all those who have given their lives for the benefit of others, following their example to the best of our ability. On the other hand, we should try to avoid idealizing their character and creating a myth that departs from reality, which also has undesirable consequences. In fact, Olcott himself said:

As the Co-Founder of the Society, as one who has had constant opportunities for knowing the chosen policy and wishes of our Masters . . . I protest against first giving way to the temptation to elevate, either them, their agents, or any other living or dead personage to the divine status, or their teachings to that of infallible doctrine. Not one word was ever spoken, transmitted, or written to me by the Masters that warranted such a course, nay, that did not inculcate the very opposite.

With this in mind, let us examine some features of Col. Olcott's character and actions, which serve as an inspiring example for all of us aspirants to become true Theosophists.

### Col. Olcott's selection

During his multifaceted professional career, Col. Olcott had shown great courage, unimpeachable honesty, and considerable ability for organization. He was a great man but yet, apparently, he was just a normal human being. That is, he neither had any special intellectual or psychic gift (except, maybe, his almost inexhaustible vitality and magnetic healing power), nor was he an Initiate as were H. P. Blavatsky (HPB), Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, among others. Nevertheless, Col. Olcott was chosen as one of the main actors in the creation and establishment of the Theosophical Society (TS), a movement meant to spread esoteric knowledge and encourage the spiritual upliftment of humanity.

HPB wrote in her *Scrapbook*, in July 1875: 'Orders received from India direct to establish a philosophico-religious society and choose a name for it, also to choose Olcott.' This may seem a bit strange, especially taking into account that people with apparently more occult knowledge and ability than him were attracted to the TS, even during its initial years, and one might have thought that some of them could have provided a better alternative for a movement such as this. But Master M. said:

So, casting about, we found in America the man to stand as leader – a man of great moral courage, unselfish, and having other good qualities. He was far from being the best, but (as Mr Hume speaks in HPB's case) – he was the best one available.

And Col. Olcott's life demonstrated that the Masters were right. But it is interesting to note that They had originally chosen not only two (Olcott and HPB) but three persons to

form the nucleus of a movement in its period of gestation. The third one was an American, E. G. Brown, then editor of the *Spiritual Scientist*, who was interested in understanding the occult laws behind spiritualistic phenomena. He was a good option because the Masters wanted to begin the Theosophical Movement by improving the Spiritualistic theories (which were the only power in the West fighting against the reigning materialism) and gradually turning them towards the Esoteric Philosophy. Master S. said in a letter to Col. Olcott:

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.

But notwithstanding the never-erring Wisdom of the Masters, Man – having free will – chooses his own destiny, and E. G. Brown, after having worked for a short time for the Masters' project, failed to continue with it. HPB wrote about him: The man might have become a *Power*, he preferred to remain an Ass. This fact shows us that there is nothing we can take for granted about a man's future and decisions, which highlights all those Theosophists who succeeded in fulfilling their task, apart from their innate potentialities.

### The Foundation of the TS

HPB was the Teacher, the main channel for Theosophical teachings to reach the world. But if the Founders were to be a lasting and consistent force in the evolution of humanity, they needed a healthy and strong organization as vehicle. The main task of Col. Olcott was the shaping, administration and expansion of the new-born movement, and the very existence of the Theosophical Society as an international and well-organized institution today, after more than 130 years since its foundation, is a testimony to Col. Olcott's success in his chief task. Mrs Besant wrote to him:

Without you and your work, we could have but a vague congeries of stray individuals, aspiring after the spiritual life, each for himself. With and through you these are welded together into an instrument for uplifting the world.

This was exemplified by what happened with many of those who followed HPB as a teacher but were not interested in the TS as an instrument to spread the teachings. After her death they could not remain united and scattered around the world (some of them founding their own movements, most of which have now disappeared).

The TS was founded at a very critical period in human evolution (at the end of the first 5,000 years of Kaliyuga) to provide opposition to the ever-increasing materialistic forces that threatened to kill the spiritual aspirations of humanity. And Col. Olcott was placed, in HPB's words, 'in the executive lead of one of the most difficult movements in the history of human thought.' As our President-Founder rightly said in his inaugural address in 1875, the TS was without precedent. Previously, esoteric teachings were given only to the few and in secrecy, in the Ancient Mysteries or in different secret societies; but now the TS attempted to reveal a relatively large part of this knowledge openly. In the words of Mahatma M.:

One or two of us hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitively, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research.

With that in view, the TS published books openly and established a system of 'public education' in esoteric and spiritual knowledge through public lectures and study groups in Lodges. It was a dangerous 'experiment', as the Master said, and, to make things more difficult, the TS was not to be a new cult, but freedom of thought was to be one of its pillars. To be successful, the movement obviously required a strong, flexible, and healthy organization, and our President-Founder had a very hard task in organizing the Society, facing many delicate and challenging matters. And that work had to be done in the midst of various influences, apparent and occult, converging directly upon him and his colleague and teacher, HPB. As Master M. wrote in a critical moment for the TS:

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'. Fools, fools! who do not see that all Asura-dugpas are at work for the destruction of the Society, their only, their last enemy of Salvation, on the present troubled waters of Kali-yug!

### Col. Olcott, a Theosophist

How did he manage to continue among those powerful influences? Although he had some hints from his Master, these were rarely given, and only in special circumstances. For the rest of the time he had to rely on his common sense and intuition. Probably some mistakes could have been avoided if he had been an Initiate, with a wider perception of things in their occult connotations and a more fluent communication with his Master. But what was the reason for his not being an Initiate? The Master M. said:

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 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*.

He could not be a 'regular' chela mainly because he led a restless life, constantly travelling all over the world giving lectures, founding TS Branches, helping the Buddhist and other causes, etc. And at this point we come to one of the reasons why the Masters chose Col. Olcott for such an enormous task as the foundation of the TS: this example of self-denial is the proof that he had the mark of a true Theosophist. – Not for himself, but for the world he lives; – for, this – and not 'occult' abilities – is the main qualification required for the Theosophical Path.

As Master KH said:

However well fitted psychically and physiologically to answer such *selection*, unless possessed of spiritual as well as of physical selfishness, a chela, whether selected or not, must perish as a chela in the long run.

And this unselfishness was certainly one of his most remarkable virtues, as the Masters, HPB, and nearly all who knew him well, mention incessantly. No more emphatic words than those written by HPB in a letter to him could be quoted: 'Were it not for your gigantic unselfishness, your unparalleled devotion, your kindness, and sincere zeal – I do not know who would be President of the TS.' He always put the interest of the Cause above his own, and even above his honour, and in virtue of that he was ever willing to undo whatever mischief he might have done. As the Master KH wrote:

He is one ... 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.' These qualities made him a really useful servant of the Cause, and made the Master say in that very letter: 'Him we can trust under all circumstances, and his faithful service is pledged to us come well, come ill.

We can also see how his unselfishness was the shield that allowed him to undergo safely the trials which caused many would-be occultists to fall one by one, because troubles arise (in our life and in the work of the TS) when we are ambitious or self-centred, seeking our own benefit. Karma always plays an important role in our lives, and that is especially the case in our Society, due to its occult nature. Therefore difficulties will come, but if we work with devotion, zeal, and unselfishness, as much as we can, we do not have to fear any situation. Many times we have to work in the midst of complications, some of them not even created by this personality – those seeming 'personal injustices'. But it cannot be helped, because every would-be Theosophist has to work out to some extent his old karmic debts before being of any real use. Even our leaders had to face criticism and attacks that were nothing but results of old karmic causes. As HPB wrote to Col. Olcott:

Do you suppose you have not a Karma to atone for your previous lives? Your share of abuse, dishonour, vilification in the present drama, in which you at least are quite innocent, can it be the Karma of your actual life? No, it is all the shadow of the past one. So it is with me. I suffer for my misdeeds of centuries ago.

Some members of the TS leave the Society when facing criticism or un-pleasant circumstances, but if we understand more deeply the nature of those situations, we will handle them with humility and 'a courageous endurance'. Coming back to our President-Founder, there is one more thing I would like to mention. He said:

I have been taught to lean upon myself alone, to look to my Higher Self as my best teacher, best guide, best example, and only saviour. I was taught that no one could or ever would attain to the perfect knowledge save upon those lines.

He did not wait for external powers to guide him. He learnt to rely on his own limited abilities and he stood up to difficulties, constantly struggling to perceive the right path to follow. Every one of us has to do the same. Our common sense and intuition may not yet be an infallible tool, and many a time we may fail, but the very effort to perceive the truth constitutes our training. As Col. Olcott said, 'it is when we are thrown upon our own resources that we are enabled to bring out the powers latent in our characters.' Sometimes we forget this fact and we want someone to tell us what to do, or we may complain about why the Masters are not more accessible. But if we realize that Their main work is to help to awaken our spiritual nature, and not to please personalities, we come to the same conclusion as did Col. Olcott:

The very inaccessibility of the Masters is an advantage to all those who wish to acquire knowledge, because in the effort to come near them, to get any communion with them, one insensibly prepares in himself the conditions of spiritual growth.

If we can work through the Theosophical Society devotedly, humbly offering whatever ability we have, looking at the wonderful aim of our institution – that of uplifting the human condition – forgetting our little personalities, and relying upon our Higher Self, we will be useful servants of the Masters, and we will be paying the best homage we can to the memory of our dear President-Founder.

## Quotations from Henry Steel Olcott

“Fanatics if you please; crazy enthusiasts; dreamers of unpractical dreams; devotees of a hobby; dupes of our imaginations. Yet our dreams were of human perfectibility, our yearnings after divine wisdom, our sole hope to help mankind to higher thinking and nobler living.”

H S Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, 2, p25



H.P. BLAVATSKY AND COL. H.S. OLCOTT IN LONDON  
Last photograph taken of them together. H.P. B.'s tobacco-basket is now  
In the possession of Geoffrey Watkins, London.

“One result of this visit [of a Master] was that, on the 25th of the month [Feb 1881] she [HPB] and I had a long and serious discussion about the state of affairs, resulting – as my Diary says – ‘in an agreement between us to reconstruct the TS on a different basis, putting the Brotherhood idea forward more prominently, and keeping the occultism more in the background...’”

H S Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, 2, p294



H. S. OLCOTT AND BUDDHIST PRIESTS AT MÂLIGÂKANDA TEMPLE, COLOMBO  
+ the High Priest H. Sumangala.  
(From *The Theosophist*, Vol. LIII, August, 1932)

# The Theosophical Worker

## Excerpt from "A guide to work in the Theosophical Society"

By Hugh Shearman

TPH Adyar; 1959



In the Theosophical Society there is a core of members who regard the Society not merely as a source of inspiration, interest and information, a congenial meeting ground for diverse types of people or a pleasant way of spending time. They regard it as a work to be done for humanity; and some regard it as a work to which they are specially commissioned upon a high authority, and feel that, in serving humanity in this way, they are also serving an inner life or power that is to be intuitively or mystically apprehended within the Society.

### The Worker

It is those who regard the Society in one way or another as a work to be done; a service to be fulfilled without reference to self, who are its main source of strength. It is such people whose patience and insight carry the work forward in times when the superficial enthusiasm of the less deeply engaged members is tending to flag. It is such workers who have unobtrusively withdrawn the work into the silence of their hearts in times of persecution only to bring it forth again when persecution ends, the flame being brighter than before. And, as well as these strongest and staunchest workers, there are others who draw nearer year by year to the standard of strength and stability that these have established.

### The Tree and the Fruit

The strength of a good Theosophical worker comes from the fact that he does not depend for encouragement or stimulus upon external results. The success of his activity is measured for him by its quality and its relevance to his inner experience and not primarily by its immediate overt fruitage of visible results.

To be indifferent to external results would alone lead merely to carelessness and ineffectiveness. Results certainly matter and are important; but the best results in our work are not obtained by concentrating anxiously upon bringing them about solely by external means. They are the fruit and not the tree. If we keep thinking of the fruit and at the same time neglecting the tree, the fruit itself will soon deteriorate in quality. The tree in this case is our inner life and deeper purpose, and the fruits for our Society may be increased activity and useful influence. The inner life and deeper purpose must be cultivated before outer activity and influence can be brought about in the best way and on sure foundations.

The member, whose work for the Society is grounded upon an experience of inner purpose, is not worried by a recession in membership or by various material difficulties. There may be much trouble and suffering through these things, but there does not need to be anxiety or disappointment if the worker is established in the true purpose of the work.

### Praise and blame

Certain fruits of actions are likely for the present to be denied altogether to the Theosophical worker. He will not receive praise or recognition for what he does, or the recognition will be of a kind that does not matter and is of no value. Indeed the glow of personal admiration can at times be a chilling indication of failure. For example, if an earnest worker gives a talk in which he tries to convey something that he has deeply felt and valued, and if at the close of his talk everybody

praises him and tells him how wonderful he is, he has obviously failed to some extent; for he has attracted attention to his own personality and not to the message which he had to give. The praise is neither good nor bad but simply irrelevant. The message of Theosophy and the work of the Theosophical Society are not personal matters; not yours or mine or anybody's. They belong to a whole that is vastly greater than any personality.

If personal approbation is irrelevant to our work, so is personal condemnation, whether of ourselves or of others. Our behaviour springs from our condition and stage of psychological growth; and, while we may often have to draw other people's attention to their obligations, it is no more useful to be angry with them for their shortcomings than to be angry with a child for not being grown-up.

A frequent inconvenience suffered by Theosophical workers is the failure of others to keep promises that they make. This usually arises, not from any malice, but from people's immaturity and their failure to be really in control of their own lives and impulses. Without condoning a fault, it is more useful to seek out ways of helping the defaulting party to avoid its repetition than to condemn it indignantly. And if we ourselves do things that are an annoyance to others or fail to do things that we ought, it is more useful to find out how we gave rise to disharmony than to try to defend ourselves and argue that we were right.

### Isolation

Sometimes a Theosophical worker is placed in a position of great isolation and has, as it were, to hold an outpost in the work. He may also be profoundly isolated in his own home and family and social background. If this happens, it should be accepted that this is the role that the work requires of him. It is the quality of our acceptance of a situation that is important and not the transformation of that situation into something that may be personally more congenial. It is useless to think, 'If only I had some understanding person to help me, or if only I had more time and money to devote to the work!' If that is our situation, it is obvious that what the work asks of us is that we should go on without a helper or without time and money. While the work of the Society is a prime duty to the Theosophical worker, it is equally important that for its sake he should himself grow into a good Theosophist; and he will do that best when drawing upon the resources of his own character rather than upon outer circumstances and other people.

Sometimes a devoted worker finds himself in a place where, in spite of his best efforts, the membership of the Society is declining and the work seems likely to die out altogether. Often, if he will keep right on to the end, a new group of people will appear and take up the work. But sometimes the work is actually going to die out for a while in a particular locality, probably because of the prevailing condition of the community there. In such a case, it is the task of the worker at that place to conduct as prolonged and efficient a rearguard action as he can, recollecting that it is by the quality of our work now that we lay a claim upon the future.

It has sometimes happened that a Theosophical worker has found himself to be the only person to attend a meeting that has been arranged. His obvious task then is not to lament the absence of others but to go on and hold the meeting alone,

pursuing such studies and meditations as he feels to be suitable for the occasion. Whatever overt results may ensue, he will know, if he is grounded upon the inner life and intention of our Society, that his thought is not wasted at such a time

Looking away from the occasional difficulties and frustrations of individuals, it can be seen that our work as a whole has made great headway and exerted a great influence upon the world since the Society was founded.

Something has already been achieved whose results no human calamities, vicissitudes or baseness can ultimately efface. To that growing success every hard or lonely struggle of an isolated worker is an effective contribution; and, in recognizing this fully, he can discover that he is not alone at all. Loneliness arises from measuring our lives and work by anxiously and competitively personal standards. If, by forgetting ourselves in the work, we lose sight of these personal standards, we can discover that we are members of a great company and can never be lonely.

Theosophical work also involves much drudgery and much outwardly unrewarding attention to innumerable small details. If the drudgery is approached with an attitude of openness, accepted and unremittingly dealt with, there comes through it a certain inexpressible experience of detachment and power and a gradually appreciable deepening of the inner nature.

### Changing Human Nature

It might be said that the purpose of the Theosophical Society is to change or transform human nature. This is, after all, the only effective way of changing the human world and bringing into outward and active manifestation that Universal Brotherhood of Humanity which we recognize as a reality but which for so many is still only a vague transcendental hope or not even that. And the one part of the totality of human nature which we are most directly responsible for changing is our own nature.

As well as being many other things, the Theosophical Society is a training ground for human character, and its service is a discipline through which the profounder lessons may be learnt. Theosophical workers can discover this according to the measure of the sacrifice they make for it. That it should be a school for heroes and a means of educating true saints was the intention of its Founders. It is open to any member to take up the challenge which that intention offers. And a major part of the challenge may lie in the fact that all his fellow members have a perfect and admitted right to be neither saintly nor heroic.

In changing his own character, the Theosophical worker may be wise to remember that one of the greatest sources of possible loss of balance is not his vices but his virtues. Any talent which he may have – organizing ability, psychic capacity, knowledge of some special subject, some particular form of goodness or reliability may, by asserting its importance, obliterate a balanced appreciation of the wholeness of things. This can easily happen when a person has some form of psychic sensitiveness. The range of things that he perceives by means of that sensitiveness – usually a very much narrower range than he realizes – seems very important to him, and he can lose his sense of proportion. Many other capacities – a clear analytical mind, special experience of some subject, a special devotion to some aspect of truth – can equally cause him to make a fool of himself and betray the wisdom to which he professes to aspire, if he lets the personal importance of such a capacity run away with him. Safety lies only in self-effacement and the unremitting service of something greater than self.

### Indecision

One of the greatest difficulties of the Theosophical worker

seems to be indecision. He often sees that he ought to work, feels that he has a duty to work, and yet does not do it gladly. He may therefore fall back upon repeating platitudes and living to some extent in terms of platitudes; but this will not make him happy.

Indecision often takes the form of doing some good and worthy kind of work which is nevertheless not the work that most urgently requires to be done. It is good work and will bring some fruit of commendation and good results, but it is not really the best work in the circumstances. It has been said that the good is the enemy of the best. In the Theosophical Society it has often been the conventionally and respectably good rather than the actively bad which from time to time has defeated and stultified the best. Indecision causes people to evade the real heart of the matter, but they continue from habit and a sense of duty to put up a very solid display of good work from which the highlights of more essential achievement are nevertheless absent.

These crises of indecision arise from failure to recognize and experiment honestly with that law of sacrifice which is the essence of Theosophical work. By that law the old pattern of personal values and preferences must be abandoned before a new one is known and enjoyed. We have had the great good fortune through our studies in the Society to come to know that there is something beautiful, new and unknown awaiting us, that there are fresher fountains and wider spaces than are known to the narrow conventions and orthodoxies; but we have to move on and lay living claim to that unknown, abandoning the known that has kept it from us and us from it.

It is essentially fear of the unknown and dependence on the known that create the bleak and barren state of indecision. Fear, therefore, is to be sought out and brought to the surface in our lives and dissipated, and dependence is to be recognized and challenged as to its worth. It is not enough that our Theosophy should come to us on good authority. We shall never be happy until we bring it to the test of living experience and find that sacrifice is a reliable way of life. Then we shall be happy and effective workers and not merely dutiful ones.



*In the truest service the consciousness of self is forgotten – you help because you cannot do other than help.*

N. Sri Ram

## Incidents of Healing



By H S Olcott

Published in Old Diary Leaves, Volume Two, 1895

The year 1883 was one of the busiest, most interesting and successful, in the Society's history: certain of its features were very picturesque, as will duly appear. Forty-three new

Branches were organized, the majority in India and by myself. My travels extended over seven thousand miles, which means much more than it would in the United States, where one has a railway train to take him to any desired place, and has not to shift to the backs of elephants or have his bones ground together in spring-less bullock-carts. My colleague and I were separated most of the time, she stopping at home to carry on the *Theosophist* and I wandering over the Great Peninsula to lecture on Theosophy, heal the sick, and found new Branches.

The first weeks of January were given to the settlement of our household in the new headquarters, and my Diary is full of details of the buying of furniture, the arrangement of the "Shrine Room," of now polluted memory, but which was to us, during the next two years, a spot hallowed by frequent intercourse with the Masters and many palpable phenomenal proofs of their active interest in ourselves and in the great movement.

Marion Crawford's *Mr. Isaacs* was sent us at this time by his uncle, Mr. Sam. Ward, one of our most enthusiastic members, who also wrote me certain interesting particulars about its production. It was – he told us – inspired by the published accounts of Mahatma K. H., and the idea so took possession of Mr. Crawford that, having once begun writing, he gave himself no rest, scarcely even food, until it was finished. He wrote it in less than four weeks, and Mr. Ward says that it almost seemed as if his nephew had been under the influence of an outside power.

Mr. Crawford makes – as any true occultist will tell him – the mistake of having his ideal Eastern adept, Ram Lal, meddling in the love affairs of the hero and heroine, whereas this is inconsistent with the tendencies of a person who has evolved up to and lives mainly on the plane of spirituality. Bulwer was equally wrong, nay worse, in making his adept, Zaroni, abandon, after ages of spiritual striving and success, the fruits of his Yoga, and drop to the vulgar level of us weaklings, who are held in the bonds of the flesh and give and are given in marriage. Both Zaroni and Ram Lal are, as presented to us, practically impossibilities, save as aberrations of nature and the victims of overpowering conspiracies of brutish forces, which they must have vanquished over and over again as they mounted upward from the lower levels where passion reigns and the guiding light of wisdom is hidden. Sexual unions are perfectly natural for the average human being, but perfectly unnatural for the evolved ideal man.

Friendly letters came pouring in to us this month from Sweden, France, Uruguay, Russia, and America, thus showing how the interest in Theosophical ideas was spreading. At this time the covenants for purchase of the Adyar property were signed and exchanged, and I set to work to raise the money, heading the list with a donation of Rs. 2000, or one-fifth of the sum needed, from H. P. B. and myself – the mention of which fact is, perhaps, pardonable in view of the cruel things said about our having exploited the Society for our personal gain.

On the 16th January a public reception was given us by the Madras (Native) public at Pachaiappa's Hall. It was a scene of great enthusiasm and excitement. The building was packed to the doors, its approaches crowded, and everything done to signify the pleasure felt in our change of

home. Raja Gajapâti Row, a well-known personage in the Madras Presidency, took the chair on the occasion, and speeches were made by him and Judges P. Sreenevasa Row and G. Muttuswamy Chetty, of the Court of Small Causes. I observe that in the course of my response I broached the idea of making a sort of Hindu Sunday School Union, to open schools and publish catechisms for the religious education of Hindu youth, on their own lines, and that it was warmly supported by the leaders of the Hindu community and unanimously ratified by the cheering audience. At that time it might, perhaps, have been regarded as a fanciful scheme; but now, thirteen years later, we see in it a fair way to being realized; a number of Hindu boys' societies are fully at work, and the little magazine which represents their interests has a constantly growing circulation.

As our lives are made up of unconsidered trifles, and as I wish to give my narrative the seal of reality, I have mentioned many little incidents which help to fill in the picture and place us, pioneers, before the mind's eye as living beings, not as the absurd exaggerations which have been so often and so unfortunately indulged in. If H. P. B. wrote mighty books, she also ate her fried eggs swimming in grease every morning, and this narrative has to do with the actual personage instead of the ideal. So I record a little detail that interested me enough at the time to make me record it. The presence of a little river back of the house awakened in us the old love of swimming, and we all went in for it, H. P. B. with the rest of us. It must have astonished our European neighbors to see us four Europeans – for that was the time of the two Coulombs – bathing along with a half dozen dark-skinned Hindus, and splashing about and laughing together, exactly as though we did not believe we belonged to a superior race. I taught my "chum" to swim, or rather to flounder about after a fashion, and also dear Damodar, who was up to a certain point one of the greatest cowards I ever saw in the water. He would shiver and tremble if the water was half-knee high, and you may believe that neither H. P. B. nor I spared him our sarcasms. I remember well how all that changed. "Fie!" said I. "A pretty adept you will make when you dare not even wet your knee." He said nothing then, but the next day when we went bathing *he plunged in and swam across the stream*: having taken my taunt as meant, and decided that he should swim or die. That's the way for people to grow into adepts. TRY is the first, last, and eternal law of self-evolution. Fail fifty, five hundred times, if you must, but try on and try ever, and you will succeed at the end. "I cannot" never built a man or a planet.

On the 17th February I was again on the move, embarking for Calcutta on the French mail steamer "Tibre." After a pleasant voyage, I reached my destination on the 20th, and was put up at the Guest Palace (Boitakhana) of the Maharajah Sir Jotendra Mohun Tagore. His house was virtually converted into a hospital, for the sick crowded in upon me for treatment and their friends to look on. One of my first cases was an epileptic boy who was having fifty to sixty fits every day. His disease, however, speedily succumbed to my mesmeric passes, and by the fourth day the convulsions had entirely ceased. Whether the cure was permanent I do not know. Perhaps not, for it seems unlikely that deep-seated causes, so powerful as to produce such a great number of fits in a day, should be driven out by a few days' treatment. One would have to keep up the treatment for, possibly, weeks before one could say there was a complete restoration of health. Yet it may have been so for aught I know. Epilepsy, while one of the most fearful of diseases, is at the same time one of those that yield most

surely to mesmeric treatment.

I had a number of equally interesting subjects. Among them a young Brahmin, of probably twenty-eight years, who had been suffering from face paralysis for two years, sleeping with his eyes open because unable to close the eyelids, and incapable of projecting his tongue or using it for speech. When asked his name, he could only make a horrible sound in his throat, his tongue and lips being beyond his control. It was a large room where I was at work, and I was standing at one end of it when this patient was brought in. He was stopped just within the threshold by my committee, for examination. When they stated the case they drew back and left the sick man standing alone and looking at me with an eager expression. He indicated in sign language the nature of his affliction. I felt myself full of power that morning; it seemed as if I might almost mesmerize an elephant. Raising my right arm and hand vertically, and fixing my eyes upon the patient, I pronounced in Bengali the words "Be healed!" At the same time bringing my arm into the horizontal position and pointing my hand towards him. It was as though he had received an electric shock. A tremor ran through his body, his eyes closed and reopened, his tongue, so long paralyzed, was thrust out and withdrawn, and with a wild cry of joy he rushed forward and flung himself at my feet. He embraced my knees, he placed my foot on his head, and he poured forth his gratitude in voluble sentences. The scene was so dramatic, the cure so instantaneous, that every person in the room partook of the young Brahmin's emotion, and there was not an eye unmoistened with tears. Not even mine, and that is saying a good deal.

A third case was the most interesting of all. One Babu Badrinath Banerji, of Bhagalpore, an enrolled pleader of the District Court, had lost his sight. He was completely blind, and had to be led by a boy. He asked me to cure him – to restore sight, that is, to a man suffering from glaucoma, with atrophy of the optic disc, who had passed through the hands of the cleverest surgeons of Calcutta, and been discharged from the Hospital as incurable!

Ask the nearest surgeon, and he will tell you what that means. Now I had never treated a blind man, and had no idea whatever as to the chances of my doing the patient any good; but in mesmerism one can do nothing if one has the least doubt of his power to do: self-confidence is the one thing indispensable. I first tested the man's sensitiveness to my mesmeric current, for these were not cures by hypnotic suggestion that I was making, but downright, honest, old-fashioned psychopathic, i.e., mesmeric ones. I found, to my great satisfaction, that he was the most sensitive patient I had ever met with. Blind, unable even to distinguish day from night, and, therefore, unable to see my motions and take suggestions from them as to my purposes, he stood before me, and as I advanced my finger-tips to within a half-inch of his forehead, and concentrated my will upon my hand that it should be to his nerves as a strong magnet to the suspended needle, his head inclined forward towards my fingers. I moved them slowly away, but the head also moved, and so kept following them until his forehead was within a foot's distance from the floor. I then shifted the hand noiselessly to the back of his head, and at once he moved it upward and upward until I thus drew him backwards, so that he overbalanced, and I had to catch him in my arms to keep him from falling. This in silence, without a word or a sound to give him the clue to my proceedings. My way being thus cleared, I held the thumb of my clenched right hand before one of his eyes, and that of the left over his neck, and willed a vital current to run from the one to the other, completing with my body a magnetic circuit, of which one glaucomic eye and the optic tract, to its seat of development in the brain, formed parts.

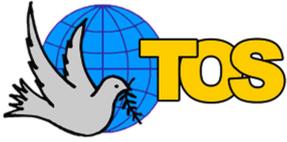
This process was continued for about half an hour, the patient remaining fully conscious always and making remarks from time to time as he chose. At the end of the experiment he could see a reddish glimmer of light in that eye. The other eye was then operated upon similarly, with the same result. He returned the next day for further treatment, and this time the light lost its reddish color and became white. Persevering for ten days, I was finally rewarded by seeing him with restored sight, able to read with one eye the smallest type in a newspaper or book, to dispense with his leader, and go about like anybody else.

A surgeon friend of mine pointing out to me the signs of glaucoma, I found the eyeballs as hard as nuts, and set myself to make them normally elastic, like my own, which I did by the third day, by simple passes and the holding of my thumbs, with "mesmeric intent," i.e., with concentration of will upon the result aimed at, before the sightless orbs. This cure naturally created much talk, as the patient held every needed written proof of his malady having been pronounced incurable by the highest medical professionals; besides which, his blindness was well known to the whole community of Bhagalpore. Two medical men, graduates of the Calcutta Medical College, studied the eyes through an ophthalmoscope and wrote a report of their observations to the *Indian Mirror*, from which I think it was copied into the *Theosophist*. The sequel to the cure was most interesting and striking. His sight faded out twice and was twice restored by me; the first time after it had lasted six months, the second time after a whole twelvemonth. In each case I found him totally blind and restored his sight with half an hour's treatment. To cure him permanently I should need to have him by me, where I could give him daily treatments until the glaucomic tendency had been completely extirpated.



*The answer to our questions then must be that Applied Theosophy is surely a possibility; and that it consists of the moral influence brought to bear upon the practical evils of life by the exertions of individual Fellows who have behind them, severally and collectively, the spiritual power created by unity of purpose, of ideas and loyalty to the truth; a power for good*

From 'Applied Theosophy' by H. S. Olcott,  
Adyar Pamphlet No. 143 November 1930  
(Reprinted from *The Theosophist* June 1889)



## T.O.S. news

Brisbane Theosophical Order of Service, 355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane Q 4000  
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### Dates for your diary

All interested people are invited to attend the planning meetings which are held quarterly from 10.00 to 11:30 am in the T.S. rooms. The final meeting in 2014 is the AGM on **Saturday 6 December**. It will be followed by a short business meeting and a Christmas high tea.

### Thank you for supporting our June Concert

It was a most enjoyable afternoon of music and we raised \$1,436 to fully fund for one year, the Qandeel home-school in Pakistan that the Brisbane TOS supports.

### Invitation to participate in our Healing Group

We have started a Healing Group that meets in the upstairs room of the TS at 9:30 a.m. on the first Saturday of every month. The healing meditation takes 30 minutes and is based on a meditation developed by renowned author and clairvoyant, Geoffrey Hodson.

All interested people are invited to join us. Since the meditation starts at 9:30 a.m., please arrive by 9:25 a.m.

### September Art Exhibition to benefit the mobility aids project in Assam, India

You and your friends are warmly invited to attend our Art Exhibition in the heritage TS building on Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 September. Enjoy time browsing through the displays of affordable artwork, and chatting over a snack in the garden.

All money raised at the Art Exhibition will be used to provide mobility aids. We have supported this project for several years. All money is used for mobility aids since the administrative work both here and in India is done by volunteers. Our donations enable the Assam TOS to purchase hand-operated tricycles and wheel chairs for people who cannot afford them. A modest donation of AU\$750, for instance, can purchase three tricycles and three wheel chairs. We have had some wonderful success stories of how this small act of generosity provides many recipients with independence and the opportunity to earn a living.

See the poster below for more information.



## Mobility for Life

### Art Exhibition

**Paintings, Jewellery, Cards, Photography, Prints, Ceramics, etc.**

**Exhibition Hours: Saturday 6th September, 9am - 4pm  
Sunday 7th September, 9am - 4pm**

**Venue: Theosophical Society auditorium**

**Artist painting demonstration : Saturday 11am**

Multi award winning figurative artist, Regina Dolan, will give an insight into her amazing technique with oils. Not to be missed!

**Portrait drawings: Saturday 11.30am - 4pm. Sunday 10am - 4pm**

Have your portrait done by Krystyna Soler who generously donates her time and wonderful talent for \$15 per sitting. Lovely sensitive work!

**Artist talk: Sunday 2.30 pm.** Sophie Munns will present a half hour powerpoint talk about her ongoing project, *Homage to the Seed*. Sophie has had residencies at Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens, as well as at Kew Gardens in London.

**Pop up Shops:**

**Garden Cafe...** tea, coffee, soups and lots of homemade goodies all weekend.

**Jams, Chutneys, Preserves...** homemade with lots of love

**Arty Parts...** vintage frames, haberdashery, buttons, & bits.. an artist's heaven

**Phoebe's Paraphernalia...** paper goods, and lots of fun buys



## The Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society is a worldwide body whose primary object is to promote Universal Brotherhood. The Society imposes no beliefs upon its members, who are united by a common search for truth. Its constitution declares three objects:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being.

The Theosophical Society has no official doctrine. All philosophies, religions and methods of spiritual practice are within its scope of interest but not endorsed. Material published in this journal therefore does not carry any endorsement or represent any official viewpoint of the organisation.

The Motto of the Society is ***There is no religion higher than Truth.***

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**Brisbane Theosophical Society**  
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### Contact

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