

December-January, 1952-3
The Theosophical Society
Adyar, Madras 20, India

My dear Friends:

Here I am in beautiful Adyar once more. I came first about forty years ago, when Mrs. Besant first opened Leadbeater Chambers for students. There is a picture of the man who built them for her on its walls, Sir Charles Harvey. He has passed over now. This is my fourth and, I feel sure, my last visit this life. I came for a short while twice before this time, once on my way home from Australia when I stayed for three weeks, and another time when I went to the great Jubilee Convention and fell ill at once with rheumatic fever, so missed it all that time! It seems to me even larger than I had remembered it. It is a very large estate, full of houses, which are homes of many workers, and are also used for many other purposes.

My ship took a long time coming for it was a cargo boat and so stayed a long time at ports. At Mombasa in British East Africa it stayed three weeks, so I gave the Indian Lodge there three lectures, sitting in a big chair with the listeners seated on the ground around me. Afterwards we had tea and Indian savouries. Then we put into Colombo in Ceylon, and there again I talked to the Lodge. They took me to see a very old and famous Buddhist temple which had wonderful paintings on the walls and a golden figure of the Lord Buddha with a painting of the Himalaya Mountains behind Him. When the ship put into Madras, Mr. Cook and some of the staff came to meet me. It was at first terribly hot, so that one poured with perspiration all day, but now, I am glad to say, it is cooling down. The rains have come.

Almost at once I saw the celebration of many "doll festivals." In every Indian home all the children's toys and little images of the gods, et cetera, are placed on a kind of altar in one corner and garlanded and decorated with flowers and fruit. Next I saw the offering of tools to the goddess Saraswati for her blessing. In every department of the work here, the printing house, the offices, the gardens, et cetera, all the tools used are placed before a Shrine erected to the goddess Saraswati. Her picture is there, garlanded. We had to visit a great number, and before each one bless burning camphor with our hands, and receive gifts of fruit and flowers. At Leadbeater Chambers all the knives and forks were displayed before her. Mr. Cook told me that in consequence they never have any accident or loss, not even a plate broken!

Then came Mrs. Besant's birthday. We had a meeting at 8 a.m. in the great hall. The chief speaker was to have been the Governor of Madras, who is a son of the famous Bhagavan Das, and knew Mrs. Besant well when he was a little boy, but unfortunately he fell ill with the flu, so another Indian speaker who was a pupil of Mrs. Besant spoke instead, and Mr. Cook asked me to give my own personal reminiscences. Afterwards we all went upstairs to the room she used to occupy and where a bust of her stands, and placed flowers before it.

Then I went to the Olcott Panchama School, where Dr. Srinivasa Murti and Mrs. Lavender were conducting a display by the children. It is quite wonderful what a sense of drama, and what grace, these little poor children have. Afterwards they and the fishermen's children were seated on the ground and given a tasty Indian meal. Some of the surrounding children strayed in and wept when they could not receive a dinner too. But I was told that when the others had finished they would have what was left over.

The School of the Wisdom is now in full swing. It meets in the lovely Olcott Bungalow quite near the sea. I am on the "faculty" and my chief work is to conduct a weekly class on meditation and the inner life. We do not exactly lecture. We all sit round tables placed in a square, and discuss everything. It is very enjoyable. It is a small School this year with English, Australian, French and Viet Nam members. Yesterday afternoon we listened to two short talks on their religion from a Parsee lady and a Hindu gentleman.

Then, on Tuesdays we all go over to Mr. Cook's home for a concert, on the gramophone, of classical music. This last Tuesday we could not go, because just as we were having dinner all the lights suddenly went out on account of a near thunderstorm, and we sat in the dark until someone produced candles.

Every Sunday morning at 8 a.m. there is an F. S. meeting in the Shrine Room, and afterwards some of us go on to the L. C. Church, where Bishop Shores officiates. His faithful "boy," with the boy's wee little son of about six, are the Bishop's servers, and very well they help, too. The wee boy, looking very important, takes the collection! There is always Benediction, too, after dinner on Sundays.

We have a temple of almost every religion in the grounds. Besides the L. C. Church which is so beautifully proportioned inside that it is a joy to look at, there is a Hindu temple, a Buddhist Shrine and a Zoroastrian temple. I am not quite sure whether there is a Moslem mosque, too. We shall soon have at the School of the Wisdom Mr. Duncan Greenlees, who has produced a wonderful series of recensions of all the great religions, far more interesting and inspiring than the old Max Muller publications. I shall try to take the whole series back to Africa with me. They are being published by the T.P.H. here. The T.P.H. are also reprinting my little book on Meditation as well as the pamphlet, "The Mystery of Life, and how Theosophy unveils it."

I have given you so many descriptions of things this time that there is not room for the discussion of any spiritual theme. But you must all come here whenever you possibly can. It is not what one exactly learns here that matters. It is the opening of the intuition that can come as one lives in this very marvellous atmosphere. I have come across a paper where I wrote down forty years ago what Mrs. Besant said about life at Adyar. She asked us to try to realize what Adyar is. So much land was acquired by order of the Master, so that it might be physically isolated and Their influence thrown into it, for currents go out from Adyar all over the world. The atmosphere is so strong, especially in the Shrine Room that one is bound to be affected by it. It may give great peace or stir up tension resulting in irritability or depression. The whole talk is so useful, not only for people living here, that I think I will give it in extenso in my next letter.

Meanwhile, my friends, I send you all the love and power I can imagine from Adyar, the Master's Home as Mrs. Besant loved to call it. It is still as wonderful as ever, though I can see many modern improvements, too. It is in the Shrine Room, where Mr. Jinarajadasa has had the two pictures of our Masters by Herr Schmiechen cleaned, that one feels it most. Blessings to you and a happy Christmas and New Year, from

Clara Codd.

And the heartiest of holiday greetings to you from your Secretary. Your assistance during this year toward the expense of mimeographing and mailing of these letters has been gratefully received, as have your many notes of appreciation. Please note my new address: Room 323 Empire Building, Denver 2, Colorado.

Ever fraternally yours,
Mary G. Patterson