

*Dear May: I always
enjoy your notes. I am
thinking of you - & surely
understand. Thank you
for your continued support
of the letters. Love P*

LETTER 47.

Box 863, Johannesburg,
South Africa
April-May, 1953

My dear Friends:

I am writing this in Bombay, having just left Adyar on the same train as Brother Raja. He has sailed for Australia, and on Monday next, March 9, I shall set sail for S. Africa again. I cannot tell you how glad I am that I had these beautiful five months in Adyar once more. This is the fourth time I have visited our Theosophical Mecca. The first time was in 1912, and then I stayed two years. The other two were very short, between journeys, and in one I spent most of my time in hospital with rheumatic fever. Adyar is as lovely as ever. The trees have grown and there are flowers everywhere. After the Shrine Room, the great wonder to me is the banyan tree, one of the largest in the world. It is almost incredible and it is kept so beautifully. Round every subsidiary trunk ferns and flowers are planted. From North to South it measures 220 feet and from East to West 205 feet. The total area exceeds 40,000 sq. ft. Can you imagine such an enormous tree, all one? Says the notice board: "It is a unique specimen. Two others, equally large are known to exist, but from one of these the central trunk has rotted away, and the other appears to have originally consisted of two trees which have since grown together. This tree continues to grow, and from the mother root extend many off-spring. It has been the centre of many notable gatherings of the Theosophical Society, and thousands of visitors have rested in its shade."

I saw many of these visitors myself. I came across two American ladies taking photos of it. And one day an Indian gentleman I found staring at a small, poor specimen near by. He asked me if this was the famous banyan tree. "Oh! Good gracious no!" I replied, and led him to where the marvel stood. I can remember when Dr. Besant used to speak under its shade on a little platform, with all of us seated on the ground under its tremendous branches. Nowadays the Convention lectures are given at the Gopala Amphitheatre, a picture of which you will see in the March Theosophist. The tree attracts thousands of visitors. I think I told you that one month we had more than 11,000 visitors touring our grounds and buildings. We have become quite famous all over India. It must do all those people much good to spend some hours in our sacred home. Often I would see schools and colleges looking at the symbols of the various religions in our great hall. That alone would surely give them an idea.

About the last ceremony I saw at Adyar was the inauguration of our new President, Sri Ram. Brother Raja put the ring of H. P. B. upon his finger, and that was pictured in all the papers next day. I believe the best of them will appear in the Theosophist. Tree-planting seems to be a frequent ceremony in Adyar. A tree was planted by Sri Ram, by the Governor of Madras, who is the son of our famous B hagam Das, by the Countess of Mountbatten, and by the President of India. This last seemed to me such a simple, honest, unpretentious man. I thought to myself that India is surely in safe hands with such a President, and such a Vice-President as Professor Radhakrishnan.

(I must tell you, but in the room where I am typing pretty little sparrows keep flying in. The Indian sparrow likes to fly into houses, and to build her nest there if she can. I wish they would come and perch on my finger, but they have not got that far as yet.)

We commenced Sri Ram's inauguration at 8 in the morning with the Prayers of the Religions. Then Raja summed up the line of Theosophical Presidents, and put H. P. B.'s ring on Sri Ram's finger; then Sri Ram spoke to us, but in many ways the nicest meeting of all took place in the afternoon, under the banyan tree,

where we had a big teaparty, and Sidney Cook spoke to us, saying that Sri Ram acquired dominance by the power of his gentleness. Then Sri Ram spoke again, such a happy little speech. He said we must all help him, every one, for he could not do without the help of every single one of us.

Another interesting thing that happened was a teaparty to the Moral Rearmament people who are touring India with a play. We put up some of them at Leadbeater Chambers for a week or two, and they all came to the L. C. Church, wearing hats, of course! I wonder what they thought of us with no hats? Yesterday I went to a Novena to our Lady of Fatima in a big R. C. Church here. I had to tie a grey veil over my head. I went because one of our Parsee members was miraculously healed by the statue of our Lady of Fatima which recently toured India. The cure was instantaneous, and he was so impressed that he has now become an ardent Catholic.

Last Sunday I went to hear Krishnaji. He spoke on the roof of a big school, in the open air. On a low charpoy, with an electric lamp on either side of him, he sat cross-legged, and spoke to us and answered many questions. He has grown much whiter than when I last saw him, and it seemed to me that he had also grown immensely in a deep compassion for mankind. His voice was deep and wonderful. And as I listened to him--though I never can exactly "understand" him--I was conscious of an illimitable feeling of joyous freedom, as if I belonged to the universe, and the universe belonged to me, and there was no fear, only happiness and love. It also seemed to me a little pathetic. There was Krishnaji trying so hard and so patiently to bring illumination to about 2,000 people, but I felt that many of them came because it was the latest sensation. One man asked him what he was going to give us instead of God. What questions they do ask him, poor man! And Krishnaji replied that those who let loose the atomic bomb which killed thousands "believed in God." On the other hand the communists did not "believe in God." So between them we all suffered nameless and unending miseries.

"The art of being kind" is what this sad world needs most. In a letter to Laura Holloway the Master K. H. writes: "The greatest consolation in and the foremost duty of life, child, is not to give pain, and avoid causing suffering to man or beast." I think that when we all grow old it will help us most to look back and remember that we were always, or nearly always, kind. And so much cruelty is done in the name of religion, and even sometimes, I fear, under the auspices of Theosophy. Do not be unkind, do not be narrow, do not think you know. Only God knows, and God is Love. It is better, wrote the Master K. H., in another letter, to err on the side of mercy than on the side of harsh judgment. For with what measure we mete it will be measured to us again one day. The Christ told us that His judgments were just because He was one with the Father, but our judgments are rarely just because we do not know all the factors in the case.

More next time. The next Letter will be from S. Africa again. And I take this opportunity to thank everyone of you who so sweetly sent me Christmas cards and letters. Some day, please do not mind, I will answer every one.

Your affectionate friend,

CLARA CODD

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