

Fifty Years of Theosophy in Bombay



By
K. J. B. Wadia

FIFTY YEARS OF THEOSOPHY
IN BOMBAY



Annie Besant,
P.I.S. 1931



FIFTY YEARS OF THEOSOPHY IN BOMBAY

BEING A HISTORY OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE,
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, BOMBAY, 1880-1930

BY

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FOREWORD BY C. JINARĀJADĀSA, M.A.

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DEDICATED
TO
DR. ANNIE BESANT, P. T. S.
OUR
"FRIEND, PHILOSOPHER AND GUIDE"

FOREWORD

THE City of Bombay has been popularly called "the Gateway of India," and it is indeed that to most Theosophists who come from Europe and America to visit the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras. A few land in Colombo, but the majority get their first glimpse of the romance that is India at Bombay. It was at Bombay that the two Founders of the Society, Colonel H. S. Olcott and Madame H. P. Blavatsky, landed.

When the Theosophist from foreign lands sets foot in Bombay, he feels that he is not a stranger after all, for one or more of the Bombay Theosophists meet him at the pier or dock, to assist him with customs, coolies and all the other complications which harass the traveller on landing. The Theosophical brethren of Bombay have ever been forward in their hospitality to the visiting brother, and it is indeed a part of the true romance of India to be welcomed perhaps by two of the brethren who are respectively Hindu and Parsi, dressed in their differing garbs.

The Blavatsky Lodge of Bombay, whose fifty years' record of work is narrated here by my friend and brother K. J. B. Wadia, is now the oldest Lodge of the Theosophical Society, with an unbroken history. Two Lodges were formed earlier, the "London Lodge" and the "Ionian Theosophical Society" in the Ionian Islands, Greece. But the latter ceased to function after a few years, and the former severed its connection with the Society for a while. The Blavatsky Lodge of Bombay is therefore distinctly *primus inter pares* among the Theosophical Lodges of the world. It remained also, I believe, the largest Lodge numerically, till another Blavatsky Lodge, that of Sydney, was formed in 1922.

The annals of the Blavatsky Lodge have an historical value not only to its members, but also to the members of the

Theosophical Society at large. To read through the pages of this work is to get a rapid glimpse of the development of the Theosophical Movement in India. Name after name is mentioned of overseas visitors from Europe and America, who have helped in the building of the Movement in their own countries. As the editor of *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*, a work which passes in rapid review the growth of the Society in the first fifty years of its growth, I can testify that my friend Wadia's history of the Blavatsky Lodge's fifty years has a deep interest, reminding me constantly of Theosophical events which affected a wider field than that of the Lodge.

One chapter in the book, that on "Public Services and General T. S. Activities," is particularly useful as showing that the Theosophists of Bombay have understood Theosophy not only as a philosophical creed of the Spirit, but also as a practical gospel for the amelioration of men. In many a Theosophical Lodge in India, social service has not been dissociated from study; the record in this regard of the Blavatsky Lodge is one worthy of emulation by all Lodges.

The author of this work has compiled it as a labor of love—love of Theosophy, love of his Lodge, and love of his City. This surely is what a Theosophist should be, a profound idealist who does not separate himself from the life of his fellowmen, but on the contrary idealises them and their doings. I congratulate the Blavatsky Lodge that it has found such an enthusiastic historian, and I sincerely desire for the Lodge in the next fifty years of its life such a greater record still of usefulness as will deserve from its next historian the praise: "From glory unto glory!"

B. Jinarājadāsa

PREFACE

"YOU can't make me a better gift than being friendly," said Dr. Annie Besant, when some of us went to greet her on the morning of February 19, 1930, during the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of our Blavatsky Lodge.

This great thought has been my inspiration—and also the adage, "Better late than never"—in completing this my Jubilee gift. I had hoped to present it, as a memento, to each member of the Lodge, on the auspicious occasion of its Fiftieth Birthday. But circumstances were against it. However, I am glad to be able to bring out the book in the fifty-first year of my beloved Lodge.

My motive for writing this book was simply to preserve the history of the Blavatsky Lodge, Theosophical Society, Bombay, for the past fifty years: to place on record its various and interesting activities and to make permanent, in a collected form, the memory and work of the members and workers of those long years.

I acknowledge having freely used the valuable old records—splendidly preserved—of the Blavatsky Lodge; and *Old Diary Leaves*, by H. S. Olcott, and *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*, by C. Jinarajadasa. My acknowledgments, again, are due to the editor of *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*, for his generous permission to reproduce in this book nine illustrations from that volume.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to our elder brother, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, who has most graciously appreciated my efforts by encouraging me to publish the book and by writing a Foreword. I offer my best thanks to Mr. N. Sri Ram and Mrs. D. R. Dinshaw for reading and suggesting improvements in the manuscript and proofs respectively, and to those friends who have assisted me financially. Without the kindly help of all these, the book would not have seen the light of publication.

"The Glory," Theosophical Colony,

K. J. B. WADIA

Juhu, Bombay

April, 1931

He leads me on,
By Paths we did not know;
Upward He leads us, though our steps be slow,
Though oft we faint and falter by the way,
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day,
Yet when the clouds are gone
We know He leads us on.

He leads us on,
Through all the unquiet years,
Past all our dream-land hopes, and doubts and fears,
He guides our steps. Through all the tangled maze
Of sin, and sorrow, and o'erclouded days,
We know His will is done ;
And still He leads us on.

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CHAPTER I

ARRIVAL OF THE FOUNDERS AND SETTLING DOWN AT BOMBAY

Are you in earnest ? Seize this very minute
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it ;
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.
Only engage and then the mind grows heated ;
Begin and then the work will be completed.

JOHANN W. GOETHE

THE Theosophical Society is *now* a world-renowned Institution. With the blessings and guidance of the Masters of Wisdom, the Theosophical Society was founded on November 17, 1875, by Colonel H. S. Olcott and Madame H. P. Blavatsky, of happy memory, in the City of New York, U. S. A. ; but their hearts were bent towards India—the land of their Masters. By a happy coincidence, the first Indian they met in New York was Kawasji Merwanji Shroff, a well-known citizen and Corporator of Bombay, and subsequently the President of the Bombay Lodge ; he had the proud privilege of getting himself initiated as the first Indian, on the soil of America, at the hands of the Founders. They communicated with their friends in India and, after organising the Society in New York, they left the American shores on December 17, 1878. After spending about two weeks in London, they left Liverpool by the S. S. "Speke Hall" on January 19, 1879, and landed on the historical shores of the Apollo Bunder, Bombay, on February 16, 1879. Dear old Bombay !

In *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol. II, p. 12) Colonel Olcott gives a delightful description of his first arrival in Bombay thus:

"I had sat up on deck until 1 o'clock in the morning, looking at the majesty of the Indian sky, and straining my gaze for the first glimpse of the Bombay light. It came at last, as it were, a lamp rising out of the sea, and I went to bed to rest my weary body for the next day's work. Before sunrise, I was on deck again, and as we steamed rapidly towards our anchorage, revelled in the panorama of the Harbor that was spread before me. Elephanta, ahead of us, was the first locality we asked to be shown us, for it was the type and visible representative of that Ancient India, that sacred Bharatavarsha, which our hearts had yearned to see revived in the India of to-day . . . The streets of Bombay charmed us with their strikingly Oriental character. The tall apartment-houses in stucco, the novel dresses of the motley Asiatic population, the quaint vehicles, the overpowering influence of the whole picture on our artistic perceptions, and the delightful sense of being at last at the goal of our long-nourished expectations amid our dear "Heathen," to meet and live with whom we had crossed so many seas and buffeted so many storms—all these vivid impressions filled us with delight."

This will give an interesting idea to the present rising generation of Theosophists as to how the City of Bombay stood half a century ago. Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky were accompanied by their English friends and Theosophists, Mr. E. Wimbridge and Miss Rosa Bates.¹ Moolji Thakersey, Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma and

¹ Both Mr. Wimbridge and Miss Bates left the Society in July, 1880. See pp. 116-112 of *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II; also p. 207. See p. 72 of the *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, T. P. H., 1925. See also *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*, by C. Jinarajadasa, p. 33. Mr. Wimbridge subsequently started furniture manufacturing business in Bombay; and still a firm exists in his name. See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 209.



The Founders of the Theosophical Society



The house in which the Founders stayed on their first arrival in Bombay

Balaji Sitaram,¹ all holders of the Society's diploma, were the first Indians to greet the Founders on board the steamer. "All seemed strangers to us," writes Colonel Olcott, "but when they pronounced their names I opened my arms and pressed them to my breast." On the next day of their arrival, a reception was held in Bombay where nearly 300 guests were invited in their honor. On the second day following, the famous Elephanta caves were visited. At the express wish of the Founders they were put up in the Hindu locality, first in a small house on the verge of what is known as Kelewadi Lane, opening on the Girgaum Road, from where they went to reside in two small bungalows in the rear of the present Amroli House, No. 108, Girgaum Back Road; from here they shifted on December 30, 1880, to the famous "Crow's Nest,"² a fine bungalow on the hill near the Bombay Villard giving a panoramic view of Mahaluxmi, Parel and the Native Town. Mr. A. P. Sinnett, a colleague and co-worker of Madame Blavatsky, gives the following graphic description of H. P. B.'s life in Bombay :

"At this time Mme. Blavatsky's own home was established at Bombay, where she resided with Colonel Olcott and two or three persons, Indian and European, associated with the Theosophical Society. At first she lived in a comfortless native quarter of the town, but afterwards at a small bungalow called 'The Crow's Nest,' at Breach Candy, which had long been unoccupied owing to a bad reputation for snakes and ghosts, and was thus let to the Theosophists, quite willing

¹ Moolji Thakersey's death, see *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 207.

² See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 288, and *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*, p. 41. After the Founders vacated the "Crow's Nest" at the end of 1882 it remained vacant as a "haunted house" for very many years. However, from February, 1924 to January, 1927, it was occupied by a prominent member of the T. S., Jamnadas Dwarkadas, and became once again a popular rendezvous for Theosophical friends and upcountry visitors and guests. It is now (1930) under the process of demolition.

to brave all encumbrances of this sort, on reasonable terms. The building lay on the slope of a steep hill, and the upper part, an enclosed verandah with two or three rooms opening out of it, constituted Mme. Blavatsky's quarters. Here I visited her in 1881, and found her immersed in a constant ebb and flow of native visitors, members of the Society, and others. She would have admiring groups of such friends round her up to all hours in the evening, smoking innumerable cigarettes and talking Vedic philosophy with eager enthusiasm, or as eagerly and excitedly discussing some trumpery little incident connected with the progress or difficulties of the Society, or the misdoings of some 'enemy,' which a person of cooler temperament in her position would have found too insignificant to engage five minutes' thought. But Madame seemed to have no sense of the proportions of things, and the annoyance of the moment, whatever it was, would always fill her whole horizon. And then, if I may again quote a few words from my own former account of her, in the midst of some fiery argument with a Pundit about a point of modern Hindu belief that she might protest against as inconsistent with the real meaning of the Vedas, or a passionate remonstrance with one of her aides of the *Theosophist* about something done amiss that would for the time overspread the whole sky of her imagination with a thundercloud, she would perhaps suddenly 'hear the voice they did not hear'—the astral call of her distant Master, or one of the other 'Brothers,' as by that time we had all learned to call them—and forgetting everything else in an instant, she would hurry off to the seclusion of any room where she could be alone for a few moments, and hear whatever message or orders she had to receive. . . . Greatly promoted by the dogged determination and single-minded exertions of Colonel Olcott, the Theosophical Society grew rapidly during the years Mme. Blavatsky spent at

Bombay. Of course her excitable temperament and strangely defective judgment as regards the prosaic business of life were always leading 'the old lady,' as she came to be called at this time by her most intimate and affectionate friends, into hot water of all kinds, and she was always at war with some newspaper assailant whom she would more wisely have ignored. However, in India there was no reason why the Society should not grow."¹

It was at "Crow's Nest," we are told, that the Masters often visited our Founders. It was at "Crow's Nest" that they were surrounded every day by distinguished visitors and devoted friends like Prof. Ross Scott, Janardhan Sakaram Gadgil, Sorabji J. Padshah and his brother Burjorji, Dr. Dudley, Dr. A. M. Kunte, K. M. Shroff, Tukaram Tatya, Darbhagire Divcar, Jamshedji Saklatwala, K. M. Seervai, N. D. Khandalawala,² K. R. Cama, Fardunji Merwanji Banaji, Manekji Cursetji (Judge) and Miss Shirin Manekji Cursetji, Prof. John Smith of the University of Sydney,³ Rao Bahadur Gopalrao H. Deshmukh, Dr. (Sir) Bhalchandra Krishna, B. M. Malabari, Martand Babaji Nagnath, Panachand Anandji and many others, including Mr. and Mrs. Coulomb, who subsequently played such a notorious part at Adyar. Amongst the Bombay acquaintances and helpers, special mention should be made of "poor, slender, fragile *Damodar Mavalankar* who had thrown himself heart and soul into the work with a devotion which could not be surpassed".⁴ He was admitted in Bombay on August 3, 1879. He subsequently went with the Founders to Adyar, devotedly remained with them as the Society's Recording Secretary till 1885, "when he went to his Master's 'Ashram' and is still there in training for

¹ See pages 554-55 of *The Review of Reviews*, June, 1891.

² Mr. Khandalawala joined the Society on 9-3-1880 and was in constant correspondence with Madame Blavatsky and occasionally with Colonel Olcott.

³ See p. 153, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series.

⁴ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 211.

his future work for mankind".¹ Amongst the many-sided activities of the Founders, in Bombay, with Damodar and others, the most important ones were the formation of the First Council and the subsequent foundation of the Blavatsky Lodge; public lectures of the President-Founder and private talks of Madame Blavatsky; and the holding of the T. S. Anniversary Conventions and Conferences, about all of which more will be found in the forthcoming pages. The President-Founder opened his public Theosophical activities in India with the first inaugural address, delivered at the old Framji Cawasji Hall,² Bombay, on March 23, 1879. For over an hour he spoke on "The Theosophical Society and its Aims".³ "The crowd was so dense," writes Colonel Olcott, "as to pack the hall, balconies and stairways until not one more man could have been crowded in, yet as quiet, orderly and attentive as though each person had had ample room." (*Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 39.)

But the Founders' stay in Bombay did not simply end with all these public activities. As stated above, it was during the Founders' stay in Bombay that many occult phenomena happened; precipitated letters from the Masters were received, and on more than one occasion one or the other of the Masters appeared on the scene.⁴ The visit of the Master Hilarion in Bombay on February 19, 1881, and the Master M's appearance on horseback were very prominent; and above all was the mysterious round of Madame Blavatsky in search of the Occult Centre in Bombay

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 292-93; see p. 166 of the *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, by C. Jinarajadasa, and p. 58 of *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*.

² This famous historical public hall of Bombay was situated at Dhobi Talao since 1862, but was demolished and the surrounding Dhobis' Tank was filled in and a new Framji Cawasji Hall was built in 1917; it is now used as the Wellington Cinema House on the first floor, and a Free Reading Room and Library on the ground floor.

³ For the full text *vide* Colonel Olcott's *Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science*, p. 49 *et seq.*

⁴ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Chap. on Occult Phenomena in *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, and the *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*.

so graphically described by Colonel Olcott in the beginning of the fourth chapter of his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II. Soon after their arrival in Bombay and during their subsequent tour in Northern India, our Founders were unfortunately mistaken, and very falsely suspected, as "Russian Spies" and were often persecuted by the Police and the Political Department of the Government; but Colonel Olcott had a "friendly chat with the Secretary to Government in the Foreign Department," exchanged letters with the authorities, and got assurance from the Government of India that the Founders would not be put to any "disagreeable surveillance".¹

Keeping their headquarters in Bombay, both the Founders, either jointly or separately, went occasionally on lecturing tours to several other cities of India, Ceylon and Burma. After celebrating the Seventh T. S. Anniversary in Bombay on the 7th of December, 1882, they finally left Bombay for Adyar and settled there on the 19th of December, 1882, to establish permanently the now world-famous Headquarters of the ever-growing Theosophical Society. Since that date, Colonel Olcott has visited Bombay many a time but his familiar figure was seen last in March, 1905, when he was specially invited to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Blavatsky Lodge. He passed away and was cremated at Adyar on February 17, 1907. The foundation and growth of his beloved Bombay Blavatsky Lodge will be related in the next chapter.

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 228-31 and pp. 245-48.

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CHAPTER II FORMATION AND FOUNDATION OF THE LODGE IN BOMBAY

In happy toil,
Forget this whirl of doubt, We are weak—we are weak,
Only when still, put thou thine hand to plough
The spirit drives thee on.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

COLONEL OLCOTT was renowned for his great organising capabilities, and the first thing that he did, on arrival at Bombay, was to gather together round him many devoted friends and earnest students with whose help he formulated a scheme to establish a branch of the T.S. It was baptised on October 18, 1879, as the Bombay Branch of the Theosophical Society, but subsequently (April 7, 1891) christened as now popularly known: The Blavatsky Lodge, Theosophical Society, Bombay—the premier Lodge¹ of India. "The first formal meeting of the Theosophical Society, as a body, in India, was held on January 4, 1880, in the Library." (*Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 138.) The Lodge Charter is dated February 20, 1880, and over the signature of Colonel H. S. Olcott it bears the names of the following founding members:

1. Keshav Narsingh Mavlankar (Damodar's father).
2. Kawasji Merwanji Shroff.

¹ It was registered on July 9, 1906, under the Societies' Registration Act XXI of 1860, for the registration of Literary and Scientific and Charitable Societies, and as such exempted from income-tax.

3. Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh.

4. Bal Nilaji Pitale.

5. Pandurang Gopal.

It was, however, on the evening of April 25, 1880, that the Bombay Branch¹ was properly organised; the First Council was formed and the first officers of the Bombay Branch were appointed as under:

President: Keshav Nursingh Mavlankar.

Vice-Presidents: Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh and Khurshedji N. Seervai.²

Secretary: Framroze Rustomji Joshi.

Treasurer: Krishnarao N. Mavlankar.

The First Councillors: Edward Wimbridge, Moolji Thakersey, Sorabji Edulji Warden, Vinayak Ramchandra Patwardhan, Rustomji Cawasji Jabouli and Tukaram Tatya.

The last-named, Tukaram Tatya,³ was the life and soul of the Lodge. He came in touch with Colonel Olcott on April 9, 1880. He gave financial help and upliftment to the Lodge from time to time in every way. In the beginning, members and sympathisers used to meet for lectures, study classes and business purposes at 108, Girgaum Back Road, and subsequently at "Crow's Nest," the headquarters of the Founders and, after their departure to Adyar, at the residence of Sorabji J. Padshah⁴ somewhere at

¹ See the *Theosophist* for August, 1928, pp. 597-8.

² Mr. Seervai was the Recording Secretary in 1879 and brought in many members to the Society.

³ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 149. Tukaram Tatya was the founder of the Theosophical Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary (July 1, 1884) and also of the Bombay Theosophical Publication Fund. A helper in these, S. E. Warden, is still living amongst us.

⁴ Editor of the *Indian Spectator*, "a brilliant young Parsi". Along with Phirozshaw D. Shroff, Wimbridge, Damodar and others he accompanied the Founders to Ceylon on their first trip (see *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 22 and 152). After a few years he and his brother Burjorji J. Padshah "lost interest in the Society". Sorabji was the recipient of a letter from Master K. H. either in 1881 or 1882, in which the following memorable words were stated: "Bear with the world and those who surround you. Be patient and true to yourself, and Fate, who was a step-mother to you, my poor young friend, may yet change and her persecutions be changed into bounties" (see pp. 149-50, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series).

Khetwadi side. As their activities grew, they hired a room for the first time at a nominal rent at the Rampart Row on February 7, 1886, and then with the growth of the membership the locality of the Lodge was changed from time to time¹ till the Lodge was housed in its own spacious building at French Bridge, Chowpatty, on September 1, 1928, thanks to the charitable disposition of Tukaram Tatya in the early eighties and Miss Frances Henrietta Muller (in 1894-5), and later on of Mr. David Gostling and others, who bore the greater part of the Lodge rent. In the beginning the Lodge funds were naturally very meagre. There was only an entrance fee of Rs. 10 per member. It was Tukaram Tatya who first donated a sum of Rs. 200 towards the Lodge Fund on August 14, 1881, and the small beginning made by him has now ripened into an appreciable asset of about a lac and a half. Messrs. S. Narayan & Co. (the business firm of Tukaram Tatya), were the first Bankers of the Lodge till February 3, 1894, when by a special resolution the Lodge Accounts were transferred to the then Managing Committee of the Blavatsky Lodge.

Whilst Tukaram Tatya started the Lodge Fund with his first donation, it was the good fortune of Dadabhoy Dhunjibhoy Jassawala to offer anonymously on New Year's Day, 1898, a sum of Rs. 500 to form a nucleus of the Lodge Building Fund, which with the lapse of thirty years grew into the handsome structure which was raised at French Bridge, Chowpatty, on leasehold ground at a total cost of nearly Rs. 1,54,000. It should be noted here with gratitude that Dr. Annie Besant, the present President of the Theosophical Society, contributed a sum of £1,000 (Rs. 13,310-12-7) towards the cost of this building.

¹ Ravelin Street on 17-7-1887.
 No. 17 Tamarind Lane on 14-4-1889.
 No. 21 Churchgate Street on 11-4-1891.
 No. 37 Hornby Road (Nabob Bldg.) on 4-1-1894.
 No. 21 Hornby Road (Petit Bldg.) on 2-3-1904.
 No. 79 Apollo Street (opp. Imperial Bank) on 6-11-1916.
 No. 77 Apollo Street (opp. Share Bazar) from 14-11-1923 to 1928.

The foundation stone of this new building was laid by Dr. G. S. Arundale with full Masonic rites on January 11, 1927, and the Hall was duly opened by Dr. Annie Besant on June 1, and was first occupied by the Lodge on September 1, 1928. A sad incident happened in connection with this building. One of the Lodge members contributed Rs. 15,000 in memory of a deceased brother, towards the construction of the Hall; but certain conditions laid down not having been fulfilled the paid amount was unfortunately demanded back which was made good by some other members, and the memorial tablet was removed and replaced by one bearing the inscription: "There is no Power greater than Love."

The growth of the Lodge as regards its membership and manifold local activities was inevitable. The number of members continued to increase and spread in different parts of Bombay to such an extent that it was found desirable to establish from time to time other¹ branches in the City and the Suburbs. With the growth of Lodges in Bombay and other cities, the Charter was granted on July 17, 1891 for Theosophical Society in India, and the City of Benares was selected as the Headquarters for the Indian Section. Since the advent of Madame Blavatsky in India, it was however found that Bombay was one of the Occult Centres, and it was so far

¹ The other Branches with their charter dates are as under :

- Blavatsky Lodge, 20-2-1880 ;
- Dharmalaya Lodge, 2-3-1901, and
- Shri Krishna Lodge, 4-1-1911, amalgamated 1925 ;
- Ganesh Lodge, 1-10-1912 ;
- Bhandav Lodge, 1914, (defunct since 1920) ;
- Thana Lodge, 12-12-1918 ;
- Ramakrishna Lodge, 10-9-1919 (now defunct) ;
- Besant Lodge, 10-9-1919, amalgamated with Vile Parle Lodge in 1929 ;
- Olcott Lodge, Andheri, 9-8-1921 ;
- Youth Lodge, 19-12-1923 ;
- Vasanta Lodge, Santa Cruz, 21-3-1926 ;
- Dadar Lodge, 25-3-1928 ;
- Arundale Lodge, Vile Parle, 19-10-1928 ;
- Ananda Lodge, Juhu, 14-12-1928.

back as January 22, 1893, that the question of having a Headquarters in Bombay was mooted, but as the Lodge was "not in a position to meet expenses" to maintain such headquarters in Bombay, the idea was dropped. It was again on May 10, 1894, that a circular was received in Bombay from one of the most active Theosophists, Mr. Bertram Keightley, of London, (who subsequently visited and lectured at the Lodge) suggesting "to establish a central local Headquarters of our T. S. work at Bombay, Allahabad and Calcutta and to record a most emphatic protest against the proposal of the American Section to remove the Adyar Headquarters to America". However, nothing substantial was done. So far Bombay is not officially recognised as headquarters of any Province or part of India, but by virtue of its geographical situation and looking to its exemplary activities, both past and present, it is hoped that one day it will have the proud privilege to complete the triangle along with Adyar and Benares and be the Headquarters of the Western Presidency. It was in Bombay that the Founders' feet were laid; it was in Bombay that the first Indian T. S. Council was formed; it was in Bombay that the T. S. Annual Conventions and anniversary gatherings were held; it was in Bombay that the "Principles, Rules and By-laws of the Society" were revised and ratified¹ on February 26 and 28, 1880; it was in Bombay that the General Council Meeting was held on February 5, 1880; and it was in Bombay a medal called "The Medal of Honor of the T. S." was founded.² It was again in Bombay that the first session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1885, A. O. Hume, one of its founders, being a member of the Theosophical Society. So with the lapse of fifty years the hope is renewed that a Place of Honor may be assigned to Bombay

¹ See *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, p. 245.

² See the *Theosophist*, March, 1880, p. 134. Also *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 143.

and it may be possible to establish at Juhu,¹ a T.S. Headquarters for the Western Presidency.

Coming back to the question of the remarkable growth of the Blavatsky Lodge, it may be noted with pardonable pride and gratitude that the first batch of devoted, assiduous and earnest members not only presented to the Lodge useful articles such as chairs, tables, lamps and books, but also, in the early eighties, some of them swept the floor, dusted the furniture and lighted the lamps, for they could not afford to keep even a peon. On April 16, 1882, the services of a peon were first engaged. The clerical work was also honorarily done by members like Gajanan Bhaskar Vaidya who joined the Society in the early nineties. In 1893 a clerk, by name Ganpat Iyer, was first employed in the Lodge on a very meagre salary.² Amongst the many persons who occupied the clerical chair of the Lodge, mention must be made of two names, *viz.*, Harjiwan Kalidas Mehta (1903 to 1906) and Sakerlal Chotalal Dharia (1908 to 1918), who subsequently rose to membership of the Lodge; the former became a famous lecturer in Bombay, Gujerat and Kathiawar, and the latter a Committee Member and an Honorary Book Depot Manager. It is a remarkable thing in the history of the Lodge that one Pandurang Bendu Hari, a lodge peon and bill collector, drawing a very paltry sum as his salary, was so much interested in the Theosophical Society that he was at his own request initiated into the fold of its membership in 1903.³ The two decades between 1890 and 1910 were a period of much activity covering a series of lectures and an inrush of a large number of members, the most pleasing

¹ A beautiful suburb of Bombay along the sea and among palm trees, where some Theosophists have started a co-operative housing society. See Chapter VI.

² For a list of the Lodge clerks, see Chapter XIV.

³ At the time of his death, the Managing Committee passed a special resolution (on 23-8-1912) and placed on record their high appreciation of the faithful services rendered to the Lodge by their fellow member, Peon Pandurang, for the last 25 years.

feature of the time being the advent of devoted and intelligent Indian lady members. Miss. F. Muller was an active lady member of the Lodge in the early nineties. The first batch of Indian lady members who joined the Lodge were Mrs. Avabai P. D. Shroff in 1880 and Miss Avabai Muncherji F. Patel, (afterwards Mrs. Framji B. Patel), and Mrs. Soonabai S. Bandikuiwalla in 1899; the present number of lady members of Bombay comes to over one hundred. In the history of the Lodge so far only one member, Nusserwanji Framji Bilimoria, was made its Honorary Life Member on November 3, 1916. He joined the Lodge in 1886, and did yeoman's service in the capacity of writer, lecturer, author and Committee Member, in appreciation of which the above unique honor was bestowed on him. He passed away on August 15, 1922. His Theosophical services regarding Zoroastrianism are chronicled elsewhere. With the growth of membership, the expansion of the Library and Bookstall was noticeable, which will be dealt with in another chapter.

From the time of the inception of the Lodge till now, one member or another, one sympathiser or another, has either given various valuable articles or small gifts, or donated sums towards the purchase of the furniture. So on January 7, 1883, a few articles of furniture were bought for the first time from the Lodge funds; but in 1891 very handsome donations were received from the philanthropic Lady Dinbai Nusserwanji Manekji Petit, Khan Bahadur Navroji Pestonji Vakil and Jehangir Pestonji Vakil of Ahmedabad (all sympathisers), for the Lodge and Library furniture. On January 19, 1895, two platform chairs were presented by Nusserwanji Jehangir Boga. These chairs have now become historical, having been used by Colonel Olcott, Mrs. Besant, Bishop C. W. Leadbeater, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, Dr. G. S. Arundale and many others. The Lodge has also got in its

possession two very old black-wood carved sofas, one of which was in the use of Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky during their memorable stay in Bombay. Other valuable gifts to the Lodge in cash were from the executors of the late Mancher-shaw Bomanji Master¹ and the late Bai Putlibai Darabsha Patel who left to the Lodge a legacy of Rs. 1,268-10-8 (October 2, 1914) and Rs. 1,141-5-0 (February 8, 1917) respectively. Both of them were devoted members. Rs. 1,300 from two Parsi lady members, Miss Shirinbai and Miss Jerbai Hormusji D. Judge, were received in 1921-23. One earnest and generous member, Dorabji Rustomji Todywala, has assigned his life policy worth Rs. 3,000 to the Lodge. Framji J. Bilia contributed in 1918 Rs. 3,000 precisely for the Lodge propaganda work, and Cooverji H. Plumber gave Rs. 1,000 for the White Lotus Fund (August 11, 1911.)² Amongst valuable gifts in kind, by which the Lodge is really enriched, are a big oil-painting of Dr. Annie Besant worth Rs. 700 (contributed by several members on September 8, 1916); and a very handsome brass bust of Lord Buddha (worth about Rs. 1,200) received on August 3, 1927, and a beautiful marble bust of Dr. Annie Besant (worth about Rs. 4,000), both presented by Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas,³ one of the most prominent members of the Lodge; the busts were publicly unveiled on October 1, 1928, Dr. Besant's 81st birthday.

Thus—thanks to the benevolent contributors, rich and poor—the physical growth of the Lodge was visible year in and year out. Its intellectual growth and spiritual growth were not lagging behind, of which more in the forthcoming chapter. In the meantime, it is rather despairing to note how Colonel Olcott—on his return in July, 1880, from the short visit to Ceylon—found “the Bombay members inert and

¹ Mr. Master was the Lodge Librarian from 1904 to 1908.

² Both these funds are for the present wiped off in the Lodge Building Fund.

³ He joined the Lodge and the Society in 1910. For his political, social and Theosophical activities and Star services see Chapter XI.

the new Branch asleep".¹ But on November 10, 1888, when he and a party of European members "were warmly welcomed by our friends of the Bombay Branch" on their arrival from England, how gratefully and proudly wrote Colonel Olcott:

"Our (Bombay) Branch members did—as they invariably do—all that lies within their power to make new-coming colleagues feel welcome. It is in some respects a model Branch, having had the good fortune to possess energetic, intelligent and devoted officers from the beginning . . . But when we shifted to Adyar and the responsibility for the Branch's activity was definitely thrown upon Tukaram Tatya, Rustomji A. Master and two or three more, the latent life in the Branch showed itself. We left the group in 1882 with a majority of Hindu members, whereas now and for sometime past, they have kept away and the Branch is preponderatingly Parsi. Yet the self-same studies have been pursued, the identical Theosophical ideas have been taught and accepted, until now there cannot be found, the world over, a more thoroughly Theosophical Group than the Bombay T.S."² Yes, the Colonel was right. We are proud of our Mother Lodge and what Colonel Olcott saw and said in 1888 is true to-day as it was then, as can be ascertained from further appreciations given in this book. (See Chapter XVI.)

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 210.

² *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. IV, pp. 69-70.

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL GROWTH

FORMATION OF THE LODGE LIBRARY AND BOOK DEPOT

The best men, doing their best,
 Know peradventure, least of what they do;
 Men usefullest in the world are simply used;
 The nail that holds the wood must pierce it first,
 And he alone who wields the hammer sees
 The work advanced by the earliest blow.

E. B. BROWNING

WITH characteristic zeal, Colonel Olcott at the time of the first Convention which was held in Bombay on November 29, 1879, issued artistic invitation cards¹ and entertained guests at the opening of the Theosophical Lodge Library, and that of the Indian Arts and Crafts Exhibition, a precursor of future Conventions and Exhibitions. Colonel Olcott charmingly describes the beautiful scene of illumination and brilliant reception of 500 guests which included distinguished public citizens as Mr. Navroji Fardunji and Justice Kashinath Trimbak Telang and many Europeans, in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 113-114. As regards the Blavatsky Lodge Library not only individual members and sympathisers presented² books and cases to the Library, but from time

¹ See Figure 55 in *The Golden Book of the T.S.*

² Dinshaw Dorabji was the first member to present books to the Lodge Library on 22-4-1883 and Pestonji D. Mehta a bookcase on 26-8-1893. In 1904, the late D. M. Gokuldas, with a gift of 150 books from himself, started a Theosophical Circulating Library, which was kept up till his death in 1912.

to time valuable books were purchased¹ from the Lodge Funds. It now contains about five thousand books and many of them are very rare and some quite out of print. With the advent of D. Gostling as a Library member on December 7, 1892, and subsequently of the Lodge, the Library was enriched by the most useful and costly gifts from many friends, the first and foremost of whom being Mrs. Dinbai Nusserwanji Mankeji Petit in 1891, Khan Bahadur Navroji Pestonji Vakil and his brother Jehangir P. Vakil of Ahemedabad, Lt. R. W. Nicholson of Aden, Burjorji E. Unwala and the Dhyana Vardhak Mandali in 1892. Since 1893 the Trustees of the Parsi Panchayat are regularly presenting every year several books on Zoroastrianism and the Parsis. Miss F. Muller contributed Rs. 3,000 in cash and presented 150 books in a lot in 1893.

It is believed that the Library which was formally opened by Colonel Olcott was subsequently taken away to Adyar and is still going strong. It was in the December Convention of 1886 that the now famous Oriental Library² was opened at Adyar, when prayers were offered by the priests of different religions; it is very gratifying to note that Zoroastrianism was represented by a Parsi Theosophist member from Bombay—Ervarud Rustomji Kiasji Mody—who belonged to the Priestly Class. To this Adyar Library the following very old and most valuable six Samskrit volumes were presented by the Blavatsky Lodge through Dr. Annie Besant on April 18, 1914 :

- (1) *Mahābhārat* in three parts.
- (2) *Bhagvat Purana*, 10th Chapter.
- (3) *Amartya Sār* Complete (very rare).
- (4 to 6) Three Volumes of *Arabic and Persian Grammar*, published in 1810.

¹ It was on September 10, 1882, that books were purchased for the first time for the Lodge Library and a bookcase on August 26, 1891; the Library catalogue was, however, printed and first published on 21-4-1896.

² See pp. 97-99 and Fig. 111 of *The Golden Book of The T.S.*

Thanks are also due to Byramji M. Malabari, a well-known journalist and public citizen, for enriching our Library with a set of Emmanuel Swedenborg's books in 1895; and to Jehangir B. Petit, another public citizen, for presenting a complete set of *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1901 and several other books in 1926. Dadabhoy Dhanjibhoy Jassawala, a devoted member and an enthusiastic vegetarian, presented during his life-time several books and bookcases, and after his demise, his good widow presented his whole library to the Lodge in 1911. Sirdar Nowroji Padamji of Poona presented to the Lodge Library several books in 1913 and the late Munchershaw Bomanji Master, Lodge Librarian for many years, left by his will a legacy of Rs. 1,268 and a number of books for the Library in 1915. Colonel Hart of Persia presented several books in 1921, and Arthur Robson some in 1924. The whole library with the bookcases of the late Navroji Adurji Deputy—a most earnest and devoted member and custodian of the Lodge—were transferred to the Lodge Library by his heirs and executors in 1921. A bookcase and several books, which were kept in the Lodge, belonging to the late Manekji D. Panday were, after his demise (April 19, 1925), presented to the Lodge, by the Order of Service to which Mr. Panday belonged. A lot of valuable books from the family of the late Surendranath Vithal Mulgaokar were presented in 1928; and in 1929 our good members, Kuverji Ruttonji Jassawala and Framji Byramji Patel, presented to our Library several of their valuable books. As, from time to time, our Library received many valuable gifts of books and magazines, a rule was made always to give away duplicate books and magazines to sister Lodges in Bombay and upcountry who were in need of them. On August 5, 1925, several Theosophical books were presented to the Bombay Municipal Library. Besides, from October 4, 1893, the

Lodge Reading Room has been kept open and free to the public.

Turning our attention from the Library to the Book Depot, it is very interesting to note that with the increase of membership, and the general interest of the public in Theosophical literature the promoters—rather the promoter—of the Depot found it very necessary to start it on a business footing in connection with the Lodge. The said promoter was Manmohundas Dayaldas Shroff, a devout and earnest Hindu member. In 1897, he started of his own accord and in a private capacity a Theosophical Book Depot, and not only ordered out and sold Theosophical books, but from time to time published some. Manmohundas D. Shroff had joined the Lodge in 1889 and was elected Hon. Treasurer in 1891 and subsequently one of its Vice-Presidents. David Gostling, Dadabhoy Dhanjibhoy Jassawala, Manmohundas D. Shroff, Navroji Aderji, Hormasji Dadabhoy Santoke, Pestonji Dinshaw Khan, Dhanjibhoy Navroji Kurlawala, Kuverji Ruttonji Jassawala and Dr. Arthur Richardson formed themselves into a “Book Depot Committee of Guarantors,” who conducted and financed the Book Depot very successfully with Manmohundas D. Shroff as Hon. Manager for life. His services as such were very exemplary. From a small sum of Rs. 300 he raised this concern to the value of Rs. 3,000. However, by a special members’ resolution the private ownership of the Book Depot and its funds was transferred to the Lodge on December 1, 1906; since then it is managed by the Lodge.

After the demise of Manmohundas on October 5, 1913, Pritamlal D. Dhuru was appointed Hon. Manager and after his death (September 21, 1915), Sakerlal C. Dharia worked as an Hon. Manager till 1929.

CHAPTER IV

MORAL AND MENTAL GROWTH

STUDY CLASSES AND PUBLICATIONS

A little learning is a dangerous thing.
 Drink deep or taste not the Pierrian spring,
 Those shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 And drinking largely sobers us again.
 Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
 In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
 While from the bounded level of our mind,
 Short views we take, nor ken the lengths behind ;
 But more advanced behold with strange surprise,
 New distant scenes of endless science rise.

ALEXANDER POPE

THE chief care of the Founders was to see that, along with the physical growth of the Lodge, the intellectual and spiritual growth of the members was not neglected. So they at once began study classes and arranged public lectures and private discourses. "Every evening," writes Colonel Olcott, in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 21, "we held an *impromptu* durbar, when the knottiest problems of philosophy, metaphysics and science were discussed. We lived and breathed in an atmosphere of mind amidst the highest spiritual ideals." For fifty¹ years the Lodge has kept up its reputation for "the highest spiritual ideals" by not only regularly holding study classes and private discourses but

¹ Vide the interesting article "Fifty Years of Theosophy," by C. Jinarajadasa, in *Theosophy in India*, of July—September, 1925, in which he graphically describes the marked change in world-thoughts in the Jubilee year of the Society compared to those in the year of the Foundation of the Society.

also getting many public lectures delivered by members and scholars. Thus, devoted, zealous and studious members, day in and day out, have tried their utmost to imbibe in themselves the ennobling teachings of Madame Blavatsky, and the first batch of such members were fortunate enough to get first-hand Theosophical knowledge from the Founders themselves. In spreading Theosophical teachings they had in the beginning to endure "abuse and obloquy," for the public looked upon the Founders and the members with an eye of suspicion and some took them to be mystics, visionaries and dreamers of heavenly dreams. However, they cared not for the sneers and jeers, attacks and arguments, controversies and counter-opinions, but worked on day and night, producing scholarly articles,¹ lectures and discourses, thus enriching the public mind by Theosophical teachings of noble kind. It is very interesting to note that the first Lodge study class was conceived and organised on May 28, 1882, and the book chosen for study was *Isis Unveiled*, by Madame Blavatsky. It was conducted by K. M. Shroff, S. St. Lawrence, Rustomji Sorabji Daver, Vithal Pandoorang Mahtre and other members by rotation and was attended by members and sympathisers of those good old days. It must be remembered that in those early days there were no Theosophical Outlines and Manuals as we have them now.

In the year 1887, through the exertion of Panachand Anandji Parekh, who defrayed the expenses of the Pandits, a Samskrit study class was started, the curious part of which was that the orthodox Brahmin Pandits who came to teach Vedanta to the non-Hindu Theosophists conducted their teaching within

¹ While in Bombay Colonel Olcott and H. P. B. conceived, founded and edited the official monthly organ of the Society called *The Theosophist*, the first number of which was published in Bombay on October 1, 1879. Having appeared regularly every month for 50 years it celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1929. From January, 1930, it was transferred to America—the birthplace of the Theosophical Society; but retransferred to Adyar in January, 1931. It was in this Magazine that Colonel Olcott and the Bombay members contributed many scholarly articles. The Official Organ of the President during 1930 was *The Adyar Theosophist*.

closed doors. Other Samskrit and Vedanta Classes were conducted in 1895 and 1915, when keen students like S. V. Edge, E. T. Sturdy, N. D. Khandalawala, N. F. Bilimoria, R. M. Mobedjina and others, regularly attended. The enthusiasm for keeping up such general Theosophical Study Classes, both Elementary and Advanced, for the benefit of the members and the sympathetic public for such a long and useful period of 50 years rested with devoted members, old and new. Some of them have gone to their heavenly rest, but some are fortunately still working amongst us. Here are gratefully named all who conducted these classes :

In 1891-92 a Pandit, by name T. S. Ganpat Iyer, was actually engaged by Miss Muller at her expense to conduct Vedanta Classes. He was also appointed the first clerk of the Lodge. In the early eighties and nineties, Panachand Anandji Parekh, Nusservanji Framji Bilimoria and Rustomji Muncherji Mobedji conducted study classes, in Vedantism, Zoroastrianism and Theosophy ; followed by Jehangir J. Vimadalal, Burjorji E. Unwala, Jal Rustomji Aria, R. N. Biju in general Theosophical literature. Two devoted members belonging to the Parsi priestly class, Ervard Jamshedji Phirozshaw Nalladaru and Ervard Dossabhoy Hormusji Dastur, explained in their weekly study classes *Dinkard*, a Zoroastrian religious book in the light of Theosophy ; and Fredoon K. Dadachanji did likewise with another book called the *Dasatir*. A devoted and studious member, Kawasji Burjorji Mistry, continued his weekly study classes for years together, expounding the Precepts of Surdas in the light of Theosophy. Jehangir Sorabji—once the General Secretary of the Indian Section and afterwards the President of the Lodge—conducted from 1913 till his demise in 1916 his most interesting and very largely attended study classes in several Theosophical subjects which talks are fortunately preserved and

published in a Memorial Volume called *The Eternal Pilgrim and the Voice Divine*. Burjorji Edulji Unwala, Jal R. Aria, Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadlal, Vicaji Edulji Vakharia, Ruttonji Fardunji Gorwala, Framji Byramji Patel, Wamanrao R. Kelkar, Shiavax Hormasji Jhabwala, Rustomji Dinshaw Kanga, Phirozshaw Ruttonji Green and K. J. B. Wadia have at one time or another conducted study classes in Elementary and Advanced Text-books on Theosophy, Religion and Science either in the Lodge rooms or in other localities of Bombay. With the influx of lady members in 1899 and looking to the interest they took in Theosophical study, a special separate class for them was found necessary. Such a Ladies' Class was first formed in November, 1900, and was conducted by Dadabhai Dhunjibhai Jassawala. Jal R. Aria, however, to suit the convenience of the lady members, used to visit their respective houses to give special Theosophical teachings from Dr. Besant's *Ancient Wisdom*. Such special Ladies' Study Classes in the Lodge rooms and other localities of Bombay were subsequently and permanently kept up by Miss Meherbai A. Dadyseth, Munchershaw Kavasji Doctor, N. F. Bilimoria, Rustomji Kavasji Parakh, Harjiwan Kalidas Mehta, Ruttonji F. Gorwala, Phirozshaw R. Green, F. B. Patel Khurshedji, J. B. Wadia and Miss Navazbai Baria (Mrs. Minocher P. Mullan).

An innovation in the form of devotional music and sacred songs was introduced in the Lodge in 1905, since when on special occasions certain lectures are accompanied by music and songs. For giving an impetus to devotional songs and sacred musical concerts thanks are due to our members, Damodar Jagjiwan Master, a professional musician, to the Minocherhomji family and Mrs. Sherbanoo Kapadia. A Lotus Circle Committee was formed in 1912 to start local classes to infuse Theosophical thoughts amongst the little children of members and sympathisers. Every

week Theosophical talks were given to these little ones, who were also entertained with songs and instrumental music well organised by the late Peshotan Byramji Kabraji, but unfortunately for want of support and the subsequent resignation of Mr. Kabraji and other Committee Members these interesting Lotus Circle Classes were stopped. Mr. and Mrs. K. J. B. Wadia tried to revive them in 1921-22 but with little success.

Here I cannot omit mentioning, in passing, something about the Esoteric Studies pursued by a few of our more earnest and zealously devoted members in order to make some real spiritual progress along with the intellectual. It was in 1888 (October 9) that Colonel Olcott issuing an official circular announced the foundation of the Eastern School of Theosophy thus: "To promote the Esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of the Esoteric Philosophy, there is hereby organised a body, to be known as the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society". (See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. IV, p. 60.) The aims and objects of E. S. T. duly announced Madame Blavatsky became its first Corresponding Secretary and Head of this Department with whom the members had to correspond; and after her with Dr. Annie Besant the appointed Outer Head of this Ancient and Secret Section. In pursuance of the third object of the Society, this Section was established; and many members in the City of Bombay from those early days up to now have availed themselves of the opportunity given to them for evolving and developing the inner faculties, tendencies and powers, latent in them. In the new spacious building of the Blavatsky Lodge a beautiful and big Shrine Room has been specially provided for such earnest students who care to join the Section or School and follow the spiritual Path. We have seen how the Lodge study classes and practical esoteric discourses helped a good deal in promoting healthy

intellectual and spiritual growth amongst all the members and others who took advantage of the same. Let us now see how a great deal of enthusiasm for Theosophical literature was created in the public mind by public lectures which were delivered in Bombay from time to time by our Founders, leaders, members and sympathisers from the platform of the Theosophical Society—ever broad and ever liberal.

It has been said how tremendous was the influence created on the Bombay audience by Colonel Olcott's first opening address delivered on March 23, 1879, at the old Framji Cawasji Hall. In this inaugural lecture he explained what the Theosophical Society is and its aims and objects, and in his closing remarks referred to dear old Mother India and exhorted his hearers in the following most enchanting and prophetic words which thrill our hearts even to-day:¹

“But as the unrestful ocean has its flux and reflux, so all throughout Nature the law of periodicity asserts itself. Nations come and go, slumber and reawaken. Inactivity is of necessity limited. The soul of Aryavarta keeps vigil within the dormant body. Again will her splendor shine. Her prosperity will be restored. Her primitive philosophy will once more be interpreted, and it will teach both religion and science to an eager world. Her ancient literature, though now hidden away from the quest of an unsympathetic West, is not buried beyond revival. The hoof of Time which has stamped into dust the vestiges of many a Nation, has not obliterated those treasures of human thought and human inspiration. The Youth of India will shake off their sloth, and be worthy of their sires. From every ruined temple, from every sculptured corridor, cut in the heart of the mountains, from every secret *vihara* where the custodians of the Sacred Science keep alive the torch of primitive wisdom, comes a

¹ P. 80, *Theosophy, Religion and Occult Science*, by H. S. Olcott.

whispering voice, saying: 'Children, your Mother is not dead, but only sleepeth!'"

The seeds that were sown by Colonel Olcott were carefully nurtured and cultured by his immediately faithful followers like Khan Bahadur N. D. Khandalawala, N. F. Bilimoria, Dr. Jehangir K. Daji, Panachand Anandji, M. A. Hydari, Rustomji Ardeshir Master and Dadabhoy J. Soonawala who kept up the link of Theosophical studies, and delivered innumerable lectures, wrote articles and enlightened the public who craved for the Truth. Coming to the later times, the Lodge produced many speakers of whom some are fortunately still among us. The period between the years 1895 and 1915 was very remarkable specially for the number of lectures which were delivered by the members themselves in rotation, in English and in Gujarati, regularly twice a week at the Lodge or in a public hall, with syllabus prepared months before; but unfortunately the same practice was not kept up for one reason or another; though it must be said that not a single month, nay, a single week, has passed without a public lecture under the auspices of the Lodge either from a member or an outsider. On many occasions, the Lodge benefited by the visits and learned discourses of distinguished scholars and leaders of which something will be said later on. In the meantime, we may gratefully acknowledge the services rendered, in the form of lectures and discourses, newspaper and magazine articles, by devout, earnest and well-read members like Dr. Pestonji Navroji Pavri, Nusserwanji Framji Bilimoria, Rustomji Minocherji Mobedji, Narayan Rai Verma, Dadabhoy Jivanji Soonawala, David Gostling, Keshavlal V. Drivedi, Dhunjibhai Navroji Kurlawala, Phirozshaw Rustomji Mehta, Dinshaw Pestonji Ghadiali, Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, Dadabhoy Dhunjibhoy Jassawala, Dr. Virji Jina Raval, Dinshaw Dorabji Writer, Pestonji Dinshaw Khan, Rustomji Kiasji Mody, Dr. Arthur Richardson, E. G. Sutcliffe, Manmohandas Dayaldas Shroff,

Pritamlal D. Dhuru, Navroji Aderji, Pestonji Dhunjibhai Mahaluxmiwala, Mobed Jamshedji Phirozshaw Nalladaru, Dhunjibhai Dorabji Gilder, Pestonji Dorabji Khandalawala, Manekji D. Panday, Jal Rustomji Aria, Pandarinath Kashinath Telang, Jehangir J. Vimadalal, Harjiwan Kalidas Mehta, Miss Motibai Edulji Batliwala, Fardun Kershaspji Dadachanji, Miss Dinbai Nusserwanji Umrigar and K. J. B. Wadia.

Out of these Harjiwan Kalidas Mehta, Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadalal and K. J. B. Wadia did not rest satisfied with conducting study classes and delivering lectures; but when occasion demanded they went on special lecturing tours round the different cities of Gujerat, Kathiawar and other distant parts of India and did the mission of spreading Theosophical truths as far as it lay in their power. Similarly the late Jal R. Aria and the late Manekji D. Panday went many a time on lecturing tours in many parts of India. A special word must be added about the late Miss Motibai Edulji Batliwala. She passed away on New Year's Day, 1913. Amongst the lady members of the Lodge, she was the most eloquent and fluent public speaker, and as such did yeoman's service during the period of her membership not only in the City of Bombay but occasionally in upcountry also. The cause of temperance was at the heart of Dhunjibhai Dorabji Gilder, and the cause of vegetarianism was taken up by R. M. Mobedji, N. F. Bilimoria, J. J. Vimadalal, K. J. B. Wadia and D. D. Jassawala.

In the next chapter, we shall meet the distinguished Theosophical visitors and learned sympathisers who have from time to time adorned the Lodge with their presence and who, during the last fifty years, have put the Lodge in a deep debt of gratitude for their really scholarly and inspiring discourses which they delivered from the ever green platform.

CHAPTER V

INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS AND THEIR DISCOURSES

We are trying to show to the world that however separate we may be from each other, throughout the globe, how ever unknown a member may personally be to another, there is that infrangible union of thought in the Theosophical Society from China to Peru. . . . Wherever there is a temple of Theosophy in brick and mortar, there is the same sign that the day will come when it will give regeneration to a few aspiring souls. Every Branch is an oasis in the desert of Maya where the weary pilgrim may drink waters of life to thirst no more.

JEHANGIR SORABJI,

The Eternal Pilgrim and the Voice Divine.

THE ball of Theosophical teaching set rolling in Bombay by Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky was kept moving by devoted residential members of intellectual calibre by their lectures, study classes, books and articles. But even greater service than theirs was rendered by many distinguished Theosophical scholars, leaders and reputed speakers who visited the Lodge and delivered under its auspices their innumerable and most valuable discourses—many of which have not been printed or published, and so have unfortunately gone into oblivion.

Let us, however, meet in chronological order these distinguished persons who favored the Lodge with their presence and enlightened the hearers with their discourses. The first and foremost was A. P. Sinnett, the then (1872) Editor of the *Pioneer*, and later the Vice-President of the

T. S., who was received and welcomed at the "Crow's Nest" by H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, and he visited Bombay on July 5, 1881, on his way to Allahabad. It is stated in the Minutes of that date that Mr. Sinnett gave a resumé of the working of the Branch Societies in England, France and other places. He also gave a brief sketch of the book he had lately published, *The Occult World*, and of his experiences in the matter and exhorted all the brethren to persevere and be true Theosophists. He was again in Bombay on December 7, 1882 to celebrate the Seventh Anniversary of the Theosophical Society. After his retirement (he was a journalist of very wide experience) he unfortunately fell into financial difficulties and only three months before his passing away a "Testimonial Fund"¹ was raised to relieve him of his worries, and a sum of Rs. 629 was collected through the exertion of Mrs. Navazbai M. P. Mullan and was sent to him on behalf of the Bombay Theosophists.

The next visitors were Prof. John Smith of the University of Sydney in 1882² and William Q. Judge of America in July, 1884.³ Then in 1889 came Charles Francis Powell,⁴ a very enthusiastic worker in the field of Theosophy, who subsequently went to Adyar and helped Colonel Olcott in the formation and development of several Lodges in India. His whole lecturing tour in India was arranged by the Bombay Branch, which received a very interesting and appreciative letter from America which is referred to in Chapter VII.

¹ Vide Mr. Sinnett's pathetic acknowledgment in *Theosophy in India* for March, 1921. Mr. Sinnett was born on 18-1-1840, joined the Society in 1879 and passed away on 25-6-1921. Vide also General Secretary Mr. Purnendu Narayan Sinha's "In Memoriam" in *Theosophy in India* for July and August, 1921. A Memorial meeting was held in Bombay by all the T. S. Lodges on 22-8-21. (See also *The Golden Book of the T. S.*)

² See Letters from *The Masters of the Wisdom* (Second Series), p. 153.

³ We need not enter here into the controversy known as the Judge Case. See *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, and *Old Diary Leaves*.

⁴ See *Old Diary Leaves*. Vol. IV, page 211, and *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, p. 95. He died while on a lecturing tour on February 8, 1890.

Bertram Keightley, afterwards the General Secretary, and his cousin, Dr. Archibald Keightley, were in Bombay in 1894; and so was Walter R. Aldis. Countess Constance Wachtmeister, a great and good friend and devout follower of Madame Blavatsky, was the sixth visitor who arrived in Bombay on February 26, 1894, and February 27, 1899. Major Peacock and Lt. W. Beale, while in Bombay in 1891-93, did very good service to the Lodge by their lectures, organising work and publication of the *Pauses*. E. T. Sturdy, an English ascetic, and Miss Anna Ballard, an American lady journalist,¹ were the next who stayed for some time in Bombay, and did some useful work in the nineties. May 21 of 1889 is a red letter day in the history of the Theosophical Society, when Mrs. (now Dr). Annie Besant was admitted by Madame H. P. Blavatsky into the fold of Theosophy. By a special resolution of the Blavatsky Lodge passed on August 15, 1891, an invitation was actually sent to her to visit Bombay for a course of lectures but she could not come to India till November 16, 1893, on which date she laid her feet for the first time in this body on the sacred, and to her dear, land of India at Tuticorin.² Her services to India, social, religious, educational and political since then are so very well known that they need no recapitulation here.

It was on March 15, 1894, that she set her foot for the first time in Bombay. A most warm welcome was accorded to her by members, sympathisers and friends, and to an address³ presented to her on the morning of her arrival, she delivered a most stirring reply, and those present had the privilege to listen to her silvery tongue. In most eloquent and memorable words she said :

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, pp. 21-22.

² She arrived with Countess Wachtmeister at Colombo on November 9, 1893.

³ For the address see *The Theosophic Gleaner*, Vol. III, February, 1894, page 167. This was done at the Lodge Hall then situated on the top floor of the Nabob Building, Hornby Road, Fort, Mr. David Gostling presided.

“I would say to you, ‘do not lay so much stress on what has been said of sacrifice in my life,’ for real sacrifices are not those which during life the world may judge. They are those that lie in the spirit which is within man and those whose eyes see spiritual vision below the line of attraction. Service has its own reward. To be permitted to serve is the greatest reward that one can have and the privilege of helping a movement is one that brings with it everything which may bring gratitude; but this lesson I think you may perhaps fairly learn, and that is that however cloudy may be the intellect, however mistaken the intellectual position—for my position was a mistaken position and intellectually I was clouded—however much the glamor of senses may deceive you, still I think that if the heart be set on human service, if the inner desire of life is to help others and to make their lives better, with however small or feeble instinct, that desire of service, that high spiritual desire, will inevitably lead one who desires to serve to the feet of those whose higher title is that they are brothers and servants of men.”

Her first public lectures in Bombay were delivered at the old Novelty Theatre (where now stands the Excelsior Theatre) on the 15th, 17th and 19th of March, 1894, on “Theosophy *versus* Materialism,” “Death and Life after Death” and “Ancient and Modern Civilisations”. Then followed her regular visits to Bombay, twice or even thrice a year, when she gratified her innumerable hearers by her most eloquent lectures and a number of learned discourses which are too many to enumerate here.

The next arrival in Bombay on October 20, 1896, was Dr. Arthur Richardson, a very sympathetic soul and a devout worker in the cause of Theosophy in general and Education in particular. He was brought by Mrs. Annie Besant specially as the Principal of the Central Hindu College, founded and opened by her on July 7, 1898. He was an acquisition to

the Lodge for his erudite lectures and Committee work till he left Bombay for Benares on July 3, 1898.

Then another well-known lady, Mrs. Katherine A. Tingley, who though not belonging to the Parent Society, professed to be the leader of a certain Sect in America, paid a week's visit to Bombay in October, 1896, with her party consisting of her Secretary, E. T. Hargrove, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Fall Wright, H. T. Patterson and others. Her handbills declared: "On behalf of the Theosophical Movement which was begun in America by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, continued by William Q. Judge and now under the leadership of Mrs. Katherine A. Tingley who having arrived in Bombay invites the public to a meeting in the Town Hall." There was some correspondence and editorial strictures both *pro* and *con* in the Bombay newspapers of that time. As stated above she and her party did some propaganda work in the Town Hall of Bombay, but without any tangible result.¹

Mrs. Tingley was followed by another lady visitor, Miss Lilian Edger, M.A., of New Zealand, a scholar, author and lecturer. Her stay in Bombay was very short in 1901 but in November-December, 1907, she delivered a course of very interesting public Theosophical lectures in the old Framji Cawasji Hall, Dhobi Talao. Yet another good old lady member, Miss A. J. Willson, a quiet and sincere worker in the field of the Esoteric Section, and a great helper of Dr. Besant, has often visited Bombay since 1902. Sakaram Ganesh Pandit in November, 1902, and J. C. Chatterji, a Bengali scholar, in 1904, were the next visitors, and Dr. Peebles of America in 1906.

Then came in Pandit Bhawanishankar. From 1903 to 1909 he paid his annual visits to the Lodge regularly and,

¹ See *The Golden Book of the T.S.*, pp. 140-141. Mrs. Tingley passed away in July, 1929.

staying for a week or two in Bombay, delivered stereotyped discourses on the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Unfortunately his views regarding the Theosophical Society and E.S. matters clashed latterly with his hearers' and, being on the point of creating disharmony, his visits ceased.

Like Pandit Bhawanishankar, there was another fluent speaker and a devoted student of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, F. T. Brooks, who yearly visited the Bombay Lodge for a week or two from 1907 to 1912 to deliver a course of very interesting and elucidating lectures on the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*. He passed away in August, 1916.

In January, 1898, some efforts were made to invite the worthy author and leader of the Society Mr. (now the Rt. Rev.) C. W. Leadbeater to Bombay, but he could not come till April, 1906, when the Bombay public in general and members in particular were greatly benefited by his ten days' visit full of lectures, discourses and private meetings.¹

In 1907, the well-known Theosophical educationist, Mrs. N. A. Cortwright, and in 1908 the world-famous violinist and Theosophist, Miss Maud MacCarthy, paid their respective visits to the Lodge.

Mrs. Hilda Powell came to us in 1909 and was for a year or two the President of the Lodge. As propagandist and lucid lecturer, she created a good impression amongst the Europeans of Bombay. Then we had amongst us Miss Margaret Carr in 1908, K. Narayanswami (June, July, 1909), Swami A. Govind Acharya (December, 1909), Miss K. Browning (January, 1911), Mr. and Mrs. Alan Leo, the well-known astrologers in 1911, Prof. Ernest Wood of the Sind College, now Recording Secretary of the T. S., in 1909, 1911 and 1920, Miss Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the popular

¹ An unfortunate opposition against him in 1908-1909 led him to resign; but subsequently the opposition subsided and he was reinstated.

American poetess on March 11, 1911, S. V. Subramanyam in May, 1911, Miss H. S. Albaruss in July, 1911, T. S. Luxmi Narayan Aiyar, Irving Cooper, Captain A. E. Powell and Major Peacock in 1912; and an extremely keen student of "Rounds and Races," Thomas Prime, in 1913; Prof. E. A. Wodehouse, Howard Eddie and Capt. E. G. Hart of Persia in 1913, Dr. E. C. Gatsinger, in May, 1914, K. E. Anklesaria of Karachi in 1911 and 1914, Pandit I. N. Gurtu in 1912, 1915, 1919 and 1924, Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala, Professor in the Calcutta University, in 1915, being the other distinguished visitors who benefited the Lodge and the Bombay public by their series of studied lectures.

After this survey in chronological order of visitors it is but proper that a special mention be made of some. Mr. C. Jinarajadasa had arrived at Adyar in December, 1901, and Mr. (now Dr. and Bishop) G. S. Arundale, (with his aunt Miss Francesca Arundale) ¹ at Benares in 1903, both with a previous reputation as Theosophical and educational workers. Bombay members were exceedingly anxious to see and hear both of these well-known speakers. However, the first visit of Prof. Arundale to Bombay was in 1913 and that of Mr. C. Jinarajadasa in 1914. Both paid visits to Bombay then and later as occasion arose. It was, however, an exception to find Dr. George and Mrs. Rukmini Arundale coming down to Bombay and staying there for a little over a month in November, 1928. Dr. Arundale has a paternal attraction for Bombay, and it was specially owing to his enthusiastic efforts that Bombay was able to get its new Lodge building; and it was therefore but fit that his 50th birthday was celebrated on the 1st of December, 1928, on the beautiful terrace of the newly opened building.

¹ She too visited Bombay in 1920 and 1923. She passed away at Adyar on March 23, 1924.

Coming to other distinguished visitors, their names are Madame Anna Kamensky and Madame N. L. Pogosky of Russia, who were the first Russian speakers (in English) to speak in our hall on December 14, 1916. Theodore Bell, Mr. and Mrs. Boelaars, Miss Van Prague of Australia, Mr. and Mrs. Kruisheer of Java, Prof. A. Mijo Mosca of Italy, all came in 1923. Dr. J. H. Cousins, the well-known sweet singer from Ireland and his wife, Mrs. Margaret Cousins, the musician, visited Bombay in 1921, 1923, and 1924; on 21st of July, 1927, Dr. Cousins delivered his famous address on the "University of the Future" in the historical Convocation Hall of the University of Bombay. The Bombay Lodge, while celebrating his birthday on July 22, 1927, was fortunate enough to listen from the poet's lips to some of his own best poems. T. Ramachandra Rao in 1918; Commander F. B. Bignold, R. N. R., from England, and B. Subramanyam of Mysore in 1924; Dr. J. J. van der Leeuw of Holland, author and lecturer, Prof. R. P. Kulkarni of Gwalior, Framji Cursetji of Bhavnagar, Manilal Doshi of Ahmedabad, and A. F. Knudsen in 1920; L. F. Polderman of Java and L. S. Haroorary of Agra, Lady Emily Lutyens of England, Madame I. de Manziarly of France, Miss E. M. Amery and Mrs. Walter Tibbits in 1922; Mr., Mrs. and Miss Henry Eicheim, musicians from America, R. Colnutt and Mrs. Duckworth of England, Capt. Max Wardall of America and Madame Poushkine of Russia in 1926; Miss Knudsen of South Africa in 1927; Ervard Khurshedji Shapoorji Daboo of Surat and M. S. Aiyangar of Bengal in 1928; all these gave us series of learned discourses. While concluding this chapter, it must be said that gratitude and thanks are due to all the above-named prominent persons who graced the City of Bombay in general and the Blavatsky Lodge in particular by their presence and by their learned lectures and inspiring discourses.

But, of all the visitors, the crowning glory must go to Mr. J. Krishnamurti, who was accorded a hearty welcome by the Bombay Theosophists in the year 1924 when the T. S. Convention was held in Bombay; and again on November 2, 1927; and his discourses on the Higher Life in the Blavatsky Lodge Hall in November, 1929, were heard with rapt attention by the members and the public.

T. S. CONVENTIONS, CONFERENCES AND FEDERATIONS IN BOMBAY

"The days have turned into weeks, the weeks into months;
The months have added themselves and make the years."

The value of a Convention does not lie so much in the lectures listened to and in the discussions as to future activities as in the mutual goodwill and appreciation of each other's high motives which are realisable more at Conventions than at other times. Without the presence of anyone whom we consider "great," to inspire us, we do as a matter of fact inspire each other at Conventions and Federations. When good workers inspire each other and bring out the best in each other, then Theosophy is indeed a power in their lives. C. J. Inghram, *et al.*, in *January-March 1925*, p. 5.

The wheels of time roll on, and with the completion of every year, new hopes, new ideas and new light crop up. When, this year, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky served the seeds of the Theosophical tree, they hardly dreamed that its branches would spread over every country and clime with such rapidity as would compel the numerous Sections to hold their separate Conferences and Conventions in a spirit of Brotherhood; and yet it is as nowadays such Conventions and Conferences are the common chief and attractive features of the Theosophical Society; but we can easily imagine how Colonel Olcott was glad when he succeeded in holding such Conventions in the old days in the face of opposition and attack, when Theosophists were

But of all the visitors, the crowning glory must go to Mr. J. Krishnamurti, who was accorded a hearty welcome by the Bombay Theosophists in the year 1924 when the 2nd Convention was held in Bombay; and again on November 2, 1927, and his discourses on the higher life in the Blavatsky Lodge Hall in November, 1929, were heard with rapt attention by the members of the Society.

CHAPTER VI

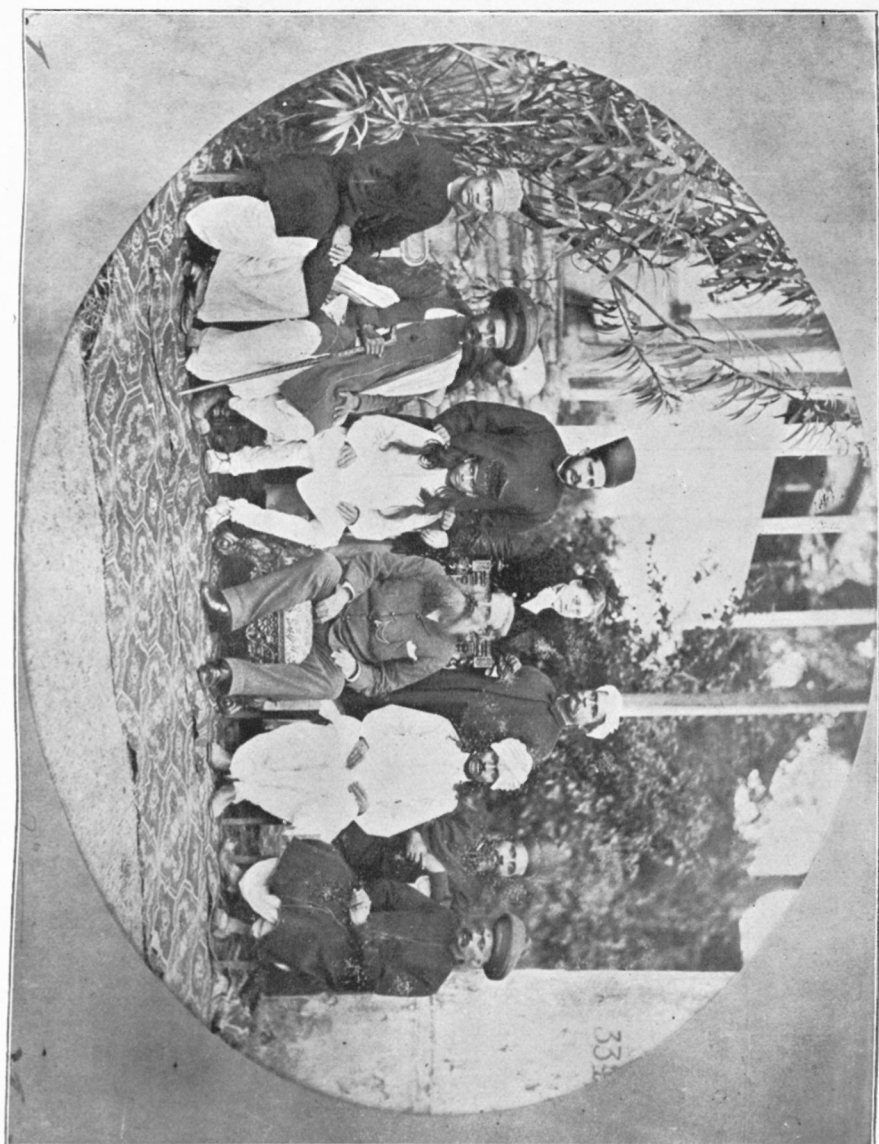
T. S. CONVENTIONS, CONFERENCES AND FEDERATIONS IN BOMBAY

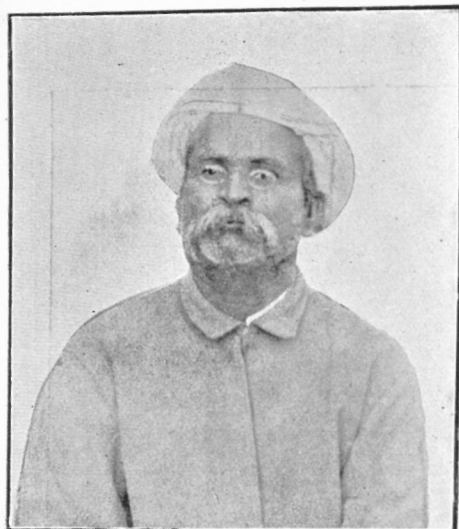
“The days have turned into weeks, the weeks to months;
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THE wheels of time roll on, and with the completion of every year, new hopes, new ideas and new light crop up. When, fifty-five years ago, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky sowed the seeds of the Theosophical tree, they hardly dreamed that its branches would spread over every country and clime with such rapidity as would compel the numerous Sections to hold their separate Conferences and Conventions in a spirit of Brotherhood; and yet it is so. Nowadays such Conventions and Conferences are the common, chief and attractive features of the Theosophical Society; but we can easily imagine how Colonel Olcott was glad when he succeeded in holding such Conventions in the old days in the face of opposition and attack, when Theosophists were

H. P. B., H. S. O., Tukaram Taiya, Damodar Mavlanekar and others at Crow's Nest

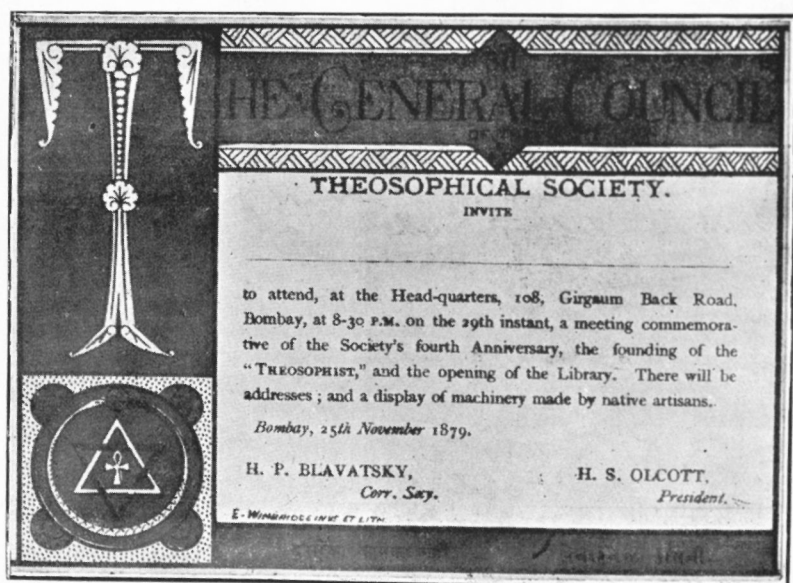




Tukaram Tatya



K. M. Shroff



Invitation card for the first Convention held at Bombay

considered converted Buddhists or dreamers and visionaries, and there were also ignorant newspaper attacks.

Thanks to the courage of the President-Founder, within a year of his arrival at Bombay, he held the very first Convention on November 29, 1879, at No. 108 Girgaum Back Road, to celebrate the Fourth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Theosophical Society; and with his ingenious mind he arranged, along with the Convention, an Indian Arts and Crafts Exhibition—a forerunner of such Exhibitions in the future.¹

“On 12th January, 1882,” says Colonel Olcott, the “Anniversary of the T. S. was celebrated at Framji Cawasji Hall, in the presence of one of our usual monster audiences. Black-guard handbills had been freely circulated to try and do us some harm, but the most cordial and sympathetic spirit prevailed throughout the meeting. Mr. Sinnett was present and spoke, and the other speakers, besides myself, were Moorad Ali Beg, and Messrs. D. M. Bennett and K. M. Shroff, all receiving great applause. Damodar read the Treasurer’s Report, which very completely vindicated H. P. B. and myself from the low calumny that we were running the Society for personal profit. I have a Diary note of a few days later, stating that Mr. Shroff brought us word that the meeting had done us great service in bringing around public sympathy to our side.”²

Colonel Olcott presided, and he seemed to be a little dejected when he said: “We have got beyond the preliminary stage of polite phrases on both sides. You know just how we keep our promises and we know what yours are worth. The scented garlands Bombay brought us in February, 1879, withered long ago, its complimentary speeches of welcome

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 113-14, and also *The Golden Book of the T.S.*, pp. 42-43.

² *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 332-3.

long since died away in the air." He was dejected but he was not disheartened and went on with his work.

The Seventh Anniversary of the Society was celebrated, again at Bombay (in the Framji Cawasji Hall), on December 7, 1882, when both M. M. Chatterji and Norendranath Sen, then well-known Theosophical workers and speakers, were present.¹ "An unusual dignity was given to the occasion by the presence in the chair of Mr. A. P. Sinnett, author of *The Occult World*. Around the hall were suspended 39 metal shields, painted blue upon which were inscribed the names of the Branches of our Society, which have been founded in Asia. Behind the President-Founder, a sepoy held the beautiful banner which has just been worked for the Society by Madame Coulomb."²

Unusually, the Seventh Annual Business Meeting of the Bombay Branch was held in public at the Framji Cawasji Hall on October 18, 1886, when in the absence of Colonel Olcott, the Founder, or Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh, the President of the Lodge, Kawasji Merwanji Shroff occupied the chair and made bold to lay an account of its proceedings of the past twelve months before the public. This annual report was followed by speeches from Mirza Husain Khan, solicitor, A. D. Ezekiel, Shamrao Vithal and Dr. Fakirji Ruttonji who were the main speakers.³

Colonel Olcott being on tour in Europe, instead of the Annual Convention, a Conference was held in Bombay from December 26 to 28, 1889, presided over by Navroji D. Khandalawala. As reported (in the *Theosophist*, January, 1890) "the meeting was in every respect a remarkable success . . . One circumstance which greatly contributed to the good feeling and cheerfulness of the Brothers in Conference was the news

¹ Vide *The Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom* (Second Series), p. 108.

² See the Supplement to the *Theosophist*, January, 1883.

³ The whole proceedings were printed and published in a pamphlet, a copy of which is preserved by the Lodge.

that New York, London and Adyar, were in future to pull together in unity and unison, and that, for the present at least, the disintegrating forces . . . had been overcome and silenced.”¹

A special resolution protesting against the attacks on the Founders and expressing ample confidence in them was passed in this Conference.

Then came the great event of celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the Bombay Branch of the Theosophical Society, *viz.*, the Blavatsky Lodge. Colonel Olcott came down specially from Madras to preside on this silvery occasion. The celebration meetings were held for four days in March, 1905, for the public at the Framji Cawasji Hall, and for the members at the Lodge Hall then situated at the old Petit's Building, Hornby Road, Fort. On the first day of his arrival (March 17) Colonel Olcott was accorded a hearty welcome at the Lodge by its then President, David Gostling—a public citizen and a devout Theosophist. Dinshaw D. Writer, Rustomji Nusserwanji Koyaji (who is fortunately among us now) Rustomji Kiasji Mody, Manmohandas Dayaldas Shroff, L. G. Chandavarkar and N. F. Bilimoria were the principal speakers. Colonel Olcott, who rose amid great cheering, said he would make but a few remarks as he had to deliver an address at the public meeting to be held next evening. He referred to the modest beginning made by the Society in Bombay in 1879 and said that the seed which they had then sown had germinated and fructified, and had now raised a crop in forty-three different countries, for their Society had extended its Branches to all parts of the world. They now stood there as representatives of a great and successful movement. They had never taken a single pie from anybody either for teaching any spiritual facts or knowledge which they had, or for their services in any other way, and he thought they could say with just pride that they had done something

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. IV, pp. 201-2.

to bring life and happiness, progress and enlightenment to mankind.

The next day (March 18th) a public celebration was held at the Framji Cawasji Hall, Dhobi Talao, the same place where Colonel Olcott had delivered his first address in India in 1879. David Gostling presided on behalf of the Lodge, and the Bombay public welcomed once again the President-Founder. Ganesh Bhaskar Vaidya, G. E. Sutcliffe, D. N. Coorlawala, Lt. Merwan Sorab Irani, Jehangir J. Vimadalal and the newly entered Bahman P. Wadia, were the principal speakers on this occasion. B. P. Wadia said amongst other things in this meeting :

“ In the midst of the ravages of time and the vituperations of maligners, the solid foundation of the Theosophical Society has stood the test well for the justification of its existence. Like the welcome lighthouse, it has fulfilled its mission of shedding lustre in the midst of darkness, and has been instrumental in guiding many a track-lost ocean-plougher from off the hidden rocks of materialism and dogmatism, and dominating over their treacherous masks, it has stood over the billowing foams (bickerings and malignings) of the surging ocean of humanity in the midst of storms and tempests (ebullitions of Avidya). It holds its own and will do so for ever, as truth is its main prop and love and brotherhood its subsidiary supports.”¹

In appreciation of his services and in loving memory of this event “two beautiful silver goblets were given” to Colonel Olcott who made a fitting reply. He referred to those early days when he and Madame Blavatsky worked hand in hand for the spread of Theosophy. On the next day (March 19th) Colonel Olcott was taken to the Elephanta Caves; and on March 20th he was entertained with a musical programme of the well-known singer, Damodar Jagjiwan.

¹ See p. 31 of a pamphlet *Twenty-five Years of the Blavatsky Lodge, T.S., Bombay.*

Master, one of our members. On the Parsi Jamshedi Navroz Day, March the 21st, the Silver Jubilee celebrations terminated with a group photograph of Colonel Olcott and members of the Lodge, of those days. The Colonel has detailed in the *Theosophist* for April, 1905, his memorable visit to Bombay on this great occasion.¹

The next event of importance was the holding of the second session of the Gujarat and Kathiawar Theosophical Federation in Bombay from October 10 to 12, 1908, at China Baug, Girgaum, the residence of Dharamsey Morarji Gokuldas,² one of our most devoted and active members, presided over by Jehangir J. Vimadalal. Likewise, the first session of the Maharashtra Theosophical Federation in which many of the Blavatsky Lodge members took active part was opened at the old Shunkersett's house, Thakurdwar, Bombay, by Dr. Annie Besant in October, 1913, when she delivered a stirring message to the Maharashtra Theosophists.³

The Fortieth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society was held in Bombay in the Christmas week of 1915. All the business meetings were held at China Baug, Girgaum, the residence of Ruttonsey D. Morarji and his brothers; a large Shamiana holding about 7,000 persons was put up for public meetings in the open space of the Improvement Trust at New Gamdevi where at present the Alexandra Road is situated. At this time there were only four active Lodges in Bombay, *viz.*, the Blavatsky (1880), Dharmalaya (1901), Shri Krishna (1911), and Ganesh (1911); these formed a Joint Committee and very successfully carried out the Convention Programme, the chief

¹ One of the members, P. C. Taraporewala, wrote an article in appreciation of the 25 years' work of the Bombay Lodge in the *Sanj Vartman* of March 17, 1905.

² D. M. Gokuldas passed away on 20-5-1912.

³ Her whole address has been preserved in a pamphlet printed at the *Times of India* Press in 1913.

feature of which was the series of four very deep and learned discourses on "God," "Man," "Right and Wrong" and "Brotherhood," subsequently published in book form under the title of *Life's Deeper Problems*, by Dr. Annie Besant; and two by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa on "World's Reconstruction: National and International, Intellectual and Spiritual," and one specially to the students of Bombay on "What India Expects of Her Youth". This Fortieth Convention was attended by about 7,000 persons, and 886 delegates from different parts of the world. Dr. Besant's appreciation¹ of the above Convention was expressed in the *Adyar Bulletin* of January, 1916:

"The experiment of moving our Theosophical Convention outside Adyar and Benares has proved gloriously successful, and it was in the fitness of things that we should go first to Bombay—Bombay where our Founders landed, where the first Indian Lodge was formed, where the 'Crow's Nest' was the centre of Theosophical activities and the blessings of the Masters rested on the infant Society. How much of struggles, of sufferings, of successes, fill the space intervening between then and now. The Society has reached the age of 40 years, and the sapling there planted has become a mighty tree. What will it be when another 40 years have passed and our successors, in 1955, look out on a world changed beyond recognition from the world of to-day? The Blessed One, the Desire of all Nations, will have come and probably gone; the New Era will be well on its way. He will have proclaimed 'Behold! I make all things new,' and the earth, now sodden with blood, strewn thick with the slain, shall have blossomed into flowers, shall be rich with fruit, children playing joyously in the sunshine with none to make

¹ For other appreciative notes see *Theosophy in India* for January and February, 1916; the *Theosophist* for February, 1916. The detailed report of this Convention as prepared by its then General Secretary, K. J. B. Wadia, was printed by the Committee in a separate pamphlet.

them afraid. How longingly the eyes of Hope gaze over the battlefields and the hospitals, to rest on that golden vision of a renovated world."

Bombay was destined to have another Convention in its midst on a greater scale than ever before, namely the Forty-ninth Anniversary of the Society which was held in December (24th to 30th), 1924, in the Elphinstone School buildings and grounds which were placed by the Government at our disposal during the session. Besides the four Bombay Lodges mentioned above, which had organised the 1915 Convention in Bombay, five more Lodges, at this time, were in existence in Bombay City and Suburbs, *viz.*, Thana (1918), Besant (1919), Ramakrishna (1919), Olcott (1921), and the Youth (1923), and these nine Lodges organised and carried out the 1924 Convention programme very successfully. Dr. Annie Besant who presided was invited to a reception on the evening of December 23, when she, on behalf of the Convention, opened the Arts and Crafts Exhibition specially organised and arranged by Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Cousins. This was highly appreciated by the Bombay public and the Press. The significant event of the season was the initiation by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa of 80 new members to the Society. Never was such a large number admitted at a time in Bombay.

The chief feature, however, was the set of four lectures as noted below :

On the 24th: "The Real and the Unreal in a Nation's Life," by Dr. Annie Besant;

On the 25th: "The Citizen as a Divine Agent," by Mr. J. Krishnamurti;

On the 26th: "Brotherhood as a Reality," by Lady Emily Lutyens; and

On the 27th: "The Spiritual Organisation of a Nation," by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa.

All these are published in book form under the general title *The Basic Unity of Life*. Of this Convention Dr. Besant wrote in the *Theosophist* for February, 1925, as under :

"In order that the Fiftieth Anniversary be at Adyar we accepted the invitation of the Bombay Lodges to hold the Forty-ninth in their great City and right nobly they rose to the occasion."¹

The first session of the "Convention of Young Theosophists" arranged by the Bombay Youth Lodge, T. S., which was founded by Dr. G. S. Arundale a year before, was also held under the chairmanship of Miss Mithan A. Tata, Bar-at-Law,² at the same place as the 1924 T. S. Convention.

The Dharmalaya Lodge, an offshoot of the Blavatsky Lodge, and founded in 1901 by the late Ganesh Bhaskar Vaidya, celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1926.³ Shri Krishna Lodge, founded in 1911, was amalgamated in 1925 with the Dharmalaya; and the Besant Lodge, founded in 1919, with the Arundale Lodge in 1929. Since 1916 the annual events such as Adyar Day, White Lotus Day, Dr. Besant's Birthday, the Foundation Day, etc., are jointly celebrated by all the Bombay Lodges. And now comes the great news that the General Council of the Indian Section in Benares, on December 28, 1930, passed a resolution that all the Bombay Lodges be constituted into an Autonomous Federation, and that Gujarat, Kathiawar, Bombay, Maharashtra and the Marathi-speaking Lodges of Central India and Central Provinces be constituted into a Western Division with Bombay as its Headquarters.

¹ For the appreciation and impressions of Dr. Besant, the President, *vide* the *Theosophist* for January and February, 1925; for Mr. Jinarajadasa's and Mr. Krishna Nandan Prasad's opinions see *Theosophy in India* for January-March, 1925. A separate report detailing the proceedings and other functions in connection with the Forty-ninth T. S. Anniversary Convention as prepared by K. J. B. Wadia and M. S. Pradhan, the Joint General Secretaries, was printed and published by the Committee.

² See *The Young Theosophist* for December, 1924, and January, 1925.

³ See the separate printed short history entitled *Krishna Dharmalaya T.S. Silver Jubilee*.

CHAPTER VII

PROPAGANDA, PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

SANATAN DHARMA EXAMINATIONS

Our cause is good, our ideal high, our work brings us present joy and future hope, and we are co-workers with the Greatest Sons of Man.

H. S. OLCOTT

COLONEL OLCOTT, the President-Founder, did not rest satisfied with simply establishing a Centre or a Lodge, but with his great shrewd insight, within a very short period of his arrival, he began touring in Bombay, India, Ceylon and Burma. Not only did he carry with him his reputation as a great scholar, but as a healer also showed his great love and affection for all humanity, with the result that he founded on sound footings the T.S. Branches everywhere. On Good Friday, April 11, 1879, he commenced the Founders' memorable tour in Northern India, when Moolji Thakersey and Colonel's favorite servant Babula, both of Bombay, accompanied them; and when the two Founders started for their first tour in Ceylon on May 7, 1880, they were accompanied by the Bombay members, Damodar K. Mavlankar, Purshotam and Panachand Anandji, Sorabji J. Padshah and Phirozshaw D. Shroff.¹ Again, on February 20, 1884, when Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky started for England they

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Volume II, p. 152; also *The Golden Book of the T.S.*, p. 49.

were accompanied by a Bombay member, Burjorji J. Padshah, "one of the cleverest Parsi graduates of the Bombay University, then there was Babula, our trusty servant," another Bombay man.¹

And this touring habit of Colonel Olcott for doing Theosophical propaganda was at once taken up by the Bombay Blavatsky Lodge when the opportunity occurred. In 1889 Dr. Jehangir Khurshedji Daji and in 1890 Tukaram Tatya were the General Secretaries of the South Indian Section, and as such they organised very successfully a lecturing tour of Charles F. Powell. Charles Powell's premature death² at Adyar on February 8, 1890, was much deplored. Regarding Mr. Powell's successful tour, the following interesting and appreciative letter was received from America:

"THE LOS ANGELES THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

Los Angeles, Cal.,

Feb. 27th, 1889.

"TO THE SECRETARY OF THE BOMBAY

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

Bombay, India.

"DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

"It gives me sincere pleasure to state that I am officially authorised by our Branch to express to you our gratitude for the fraternal reception which our worthy brother, Mr. Charles F. Powell, has received at your hands.

"The absence of the sense of separateness which you illustrate in this instance is an encouraging demonstration of the fact that the higher and the nobler qualities of Being are beginning to have a practical hold on men, and that notwithstanding the materialism and personality of the age,

¹ See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 73.

² See *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, Chap. XII.

Theosophy is bound to establish an active Brotherhood, alive to the best intentions of the soul.

"Trusting that our friend's residence among you will tend to form a new and vital bond between the energetic and aspiring West and the meditative, metaphysical East, I am in the name of our L. A. T. S.,

"Yours very respectfully,

(Sd.) LOUISE A. OFF,

Secretary, L. A. T. S."

In later years, Manekji D. Panday, Jal R. Aria (1907), Jehangir J. Vimadalal, Miss Motibai E. Batliwala, Hurjiwan Kalidas Mehta and K. J. B. Wadia went from Bombay on lecturing tours on different occasions; they also distributed Theosophical leaflets and pamphlets free or sold books and thus spread the Theosophical literature far and wide.

It was in Bombay again that Colonel Olcott and H. P. B. founded the historical monthly magazine, *The Theosophist*,¹ the official organ of the Society, the first number of which was printed and published in Bombay on October 1, 1879. The Blavatsky Lodge, however, took up the idea of having a monthly organ of its own. *Pauses*, a popular journal of Theosophy, was started in September, 1891, with this queer and curious note:

"A periodical intended to supply men and women with material for thought, and to guide into a fitting channel those vague aspirations to know the Why and Wherefore of the Great Problems of Life and Nature, which assail us during the pauses that occur after a surfeit of work or amusement."

Editorial and other help was given by Major C. L. Peacock and Lt. W. Beale, both² Military Officers, taking an

¹ The Golden Jubilee Number of the *Theosophist* was issued at Adyar in October, 1929, which contains the news about its birth and growth.

² Both of the Fifth Bombay Light Infantry who having joined the Baroda Lodge came to Bombay in 1890 and were very active members of the Lodge.

active part in the affairs of the Lodge and the Society. However, in 1893, both these officers had to leave Bombay and the third volume of the *Pauses* appeared with the new title *The Theosophic Gleaner* from September, 1893. In the beginning it was edited by Dr. J. K. Daji, but owing to some misapprehension, the editorship was soon transferred to that indefatigable journalist and one of the most devout members, Nusserwanji Framji Bilimoria, who conducted it very regularly till August, 1905, helped by guarantors and managers like R. K. Mody, D. D. Writer, D. D. Jassawala, D. Gostling and others. Its charge was taken up by B. P. Wadia who again changed its name in January, 1907, to *Theosophy and New Thought*, which ceased to exist from January, 1908, when B. P. Wadia left Bombay for Adyar in that year. From 1908 to now, the Lodge has been without a Theosophical organ in English, though two Anglo-Gujarati monthlies, called *Cherag* founded and edited by N. F. Bilimoria in 1900¹ and *Dharmajagrati* founded and edited by V. R. Karandikar in 1914,² serve some purpose in vitalising Theosophical thoughts; an effort was made in 1925 by S. V. Khandekar and Mrs. Goolbanoo K. Wadia, who jointly edited a folio journal called *Activity* giving out the Theosophical news for the information of the Bombay members among whom it was distributed freely, but for want of sympathy and support that too ceased to exist in 1927. It now rests with the members of the present day to start and maintain a purely Bombay Theosophical Organ for the benefit of its many Lodges and in order to bring their many members into closer contact.

It is a very remarkable thing to note that when the "Parliament of Religions" was held in Chicago in August, 1893, one of our active workers, Virchand R. Gandhi, was

¹ Now edited by his son Ardeshir N. Bilimoria at Navsari.

² Now edited by Prof. R. S. Bhagvat at Thana.

one of the speakers; it was but proper that the Blavatsky Lodge, at the request of W. Q. Judge, should have raised a sum of money and sent it to him in appreciation of the work done at the Parliament.

To support such Funds and to publish Theosophical leaflets and pamphlets for free distribution among the members, libraries and the outside public, a special fund called the "Free Distribution or the Propaganda Fund" was started in August, 1897, to which Framji Jamshedji Bilia contributed in July, 1918, a sum of Rs. 3,000¹ to put it on a strong footing and to make it one of the permanent features of the Lodge. Generous members and friends gave from time to time special contributions, for instance in 1898 to the Central Hindu College² at Benares, an offspring of Dr. Annie Besant, or to the Theosophical Public Purposes Fund managed by her. At this stage, it may be said to the credit of the Parsi members of the Blavatsky Lodge that they contributed thousands of rupees towards the constructions of both the Parsi Building³ and the Zoroastrian Shrine⁴ at Adyar in 1914 and 1925 respectively.

A word must be said here about what was known as the Sanatan Dharma Examinations promulgated by its Honorary Secretary, Manmohandas Dayaldas Shroff. In connection with these, several books, known as *Sanatan Dharma Series*, were published both at Benares and Bombay, and every year competitive examinations were held regularly in Bombay amongst Hindu boys and prizes were given to them. In *Sanatan Dharma Series*, Hindu religious

¹ This amount was subsequently utilised in 1926 for the Building Fund.

² In response to Dr. Besant's letter to the Lodge, dated April 11, 1898; she also came down to Bombay specially to collect funds for her College, which was subsequently merged in the Benares Hindu University.

³ Known as the Besant Zoroastrian Home. About Rs. 10,000 were donated by the Parsi members through the exertion of Jamshedji Framji Madan.

⁴ Through the exertion of Phirozshaw R. Green and Framji J. Bilia about Rs. 10,000 were donated by the Parsi members.

precepts were treated in the light of Theosophy to suit the rising generation. Every praise for this noble work was due to Manmohandas Dayaldas Shroff who till his death on October 5, 1913, worked at it with intense zeal. After his death it was continued for some time by his son, Nanabhai M. D. Shroff, and the late Pritamlal Dhirajlal, but for some unknown reason, this useful institution was stopped. Another kind of propaganda work was for some time done in the years 1914-15 by an enthusiastic member, Labhshankar Luxmidas. A humanitarian and zealous worker, he worked in the cause of vegetarianism, kindness to animals and above all, Theosophy. Every year on his visit to Bombay from Junagadh he invited from the student world essays on the subjects named above and offered valuable prizes for the same.

Then came the famous three months of Universal Brotherhood Campaign from October to December, 1923. During this period, the Theosophical propaganda work was done jointly by the City and Suburban Lodges on a very huge scale. A series of weekly or fortnightly public lectures were arranged in the Sir Cawasji Jehangir Public Hall and prominent citizens of different nationalities by invitation spoke on religious, brotherhood and kindred subjects. A very large quantity of literature consisting of leaflets and pamphlets of original Theosophical articles or reprints was distributed. A little book called *The Universal Brotherhood: A Few Selections from the Standard Authors*,¹ compiled by K. J. B. Wadia, was sent to almost all the Lodges round the world and distributed freely amongst all the Bombay members and their friends.

¹ Société Theosophique de France while acknowledging receipt said: "It is a valuable contribution to the Brotherhood Campaign." With respect to the same a friend wrote from London: "Your selections for the compilation of the *Universal Brotherhood* are extremely good and appropriate and as they have been taken from so many sources there is sure to be some very acceptable ones for all and should certainly raise quite a step anyone who cares to read it."

From the very inception of the Blavatsky Lodge, some of its members like K. M. Shroff, N. D. Khandalawala, Dr. J. K. Daji, N. F. Bilimoria, R. M. Mobedjina, P. D. Mahaluxmiwala, Dinshaw Merwan Irani, Manmohandas D. Shroff, Labhshankar Luxmidas, Pritamlal Dhirajlal, J. J. Vimadalal, D. D. Jassawala, Harjiwan Kalidas Mehta and K. J. B. Wadia have written innumerable newspaper and magazine articles in English and in Gujarati. Also they have printed and published for free distribution at their own or Lodge's expense hundreds of Theosophical leaflets and pamphlets, original or reprints, too numerous to mention here, thus spreading Theosophical news and views amongst thousands of readers.

But this was not all; the premier Lodge, rather some of its prominent members, started a Theosophical Publication Fund and published many valuable books, original and reprints, as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

BOMBAY THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATIONS

To all the great nations of the world and to the chief religious sects in the East and the West ; the followers of Moses, of Jesus, of Buddha, of Confucius, of Zoroaster, of Mahomet, of Nanak, and the various Branches of the Hindu Church, grace be to you and peace everlasting. Gather ye the wisdom of the East and the West, and assimilate the examples of the Saints of all ages.

KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

EVER grateful are we in Bombay to Tukaram Tatya for his very noble and unique services rendered to the Blavatsky Lodge in the cause of Theosophy. He did not rest satisfied with providing the Lodge with funds and furniture but with his usual ingenious mind started and maintained a fund called the "Bombay Theosophical Publications Fund," through the instrumentality of the Committee of which he printed and published many valuable treatises and books pertaining to the *Vedanta*, *Upanishads* and *Gita*. The famous *Discourses on the Bhagawad-Gita*, by T. Subba Rao, and *A Collection of Esoteric Writings*, by the same author ; *An Introduction to the Study of the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* and *A Purpose of Theosophy*, by Mrs. A. P. Sinnett, were the important volumes out of many published with the help of the above-named Fund in the eighties and nineties. In a very carefully preserved copy of a printed report it is said with reference to this Fund that "the object of the Committee in publishing these and similar works is to spread a knowledge of Oriental philosophy and by the proceeds of sales to form a fund, which may, in course of

time be employed in charitable work of different kinds." With such a laudable object in view and also "to bring the sacred volumes within the reach of poor scholars," this Fund has been kept up till now and is managed independently by the firm of Messrs. Narayan & Co., in which the late Tukaram Tatya was a partner. Coming to the later years, the records of the Lodge show that the following were published either by the help of the above-mentioned fund or by raising private donations or at their authors' own expense.

PUBLICATIONS IN 1886—1891

Sanctity of Fire, (Gujarati), by Pestonji N. Pavri.

The Law of Karma, (Gujarati), by Pestonji N. Pavri.

Theosophy: Its Aims and Objects, by Tukaram Tatya.

The Value of Theosophy, by Tukaram Tatya.

Five other pamphlets, by Tukaram Tatya.

The Standard of Morality among the Parsis, (Gujarati), by N. F. Bilimoria.

IN 1892

An Epitome of the Key to Theosophy, by Tukaram Tatya.

The first edition with two impressions of the well-known Gujarati book called *Theosophy*, was published anonymously in 1890 and 1910 respectively; its author, Framji Byramji Patel, published a revised and enlarged edition in 1924 and it has now become a standard book in the Theosophical Gujarati literature.

IN 1893

Text with English Translation of Mahima Stotra and the Higher Life.

Text with English Translation of the Uttara Gita.

And many other Samskrit, Hindi, Marathi and English Books.

IN 1895

A Collection of the Esoteric Writings of the late T. Subba Rao.

The Yoga Sara Sangraha with Samskrit Text and English Translation.

Namdev Gatha in Marathi.

Lectures in English on the Vedanta, by Dr. Deussen.

IN 1896—97

Zoroastrian Ceremonies, by N. F. Bilimoria.

Dangers of Committing Suicide, (Gujarati), by N. F. Bilimoria.

English Lectures in the Study of Bhagwad-Gita, by T. Subba Rao.

Prohibition of Flesh-eating, (Gujarati), by R. M. Mobedjina.

Tukaram's Gita and Jnaneshwari Marathi Text, etc., etc.

IN 1898—99

Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy, by N. F. Bilimoria.

Fire Worship, (Gujarati), by N. F. Bilimoria.

Pure Thoughts, Pure Words and Pure Deeds, by D. D. Jassawala.

The Three Paths: Karma, Jnana and Bhakti, by Dr. Besant,

Gujarati translation by M. D. Shroff.

A Gujarati translation of *Light on the Path*, with the translator's notes and eruditions, was published by its author, Rustomji Muncherji Mobedjina, in 1903; also *Karma* by F. K. Dadachanji and four Gujarati books by N. F. Bilimoria; and in the same year Maneckji Dadabhoy Panday produced his very popular book, *State of Man After Death*, which has become a classic in Gujarati Theosophical literature. Its Fourth Edition was published in 1923. In 1904 were published reprints of *Theosophy*, by Justice F. C. O. Beaman, *Why You Should Study Theosophy*, by J. J. Vimadalal, *Religion and Religions*, by Rev. R. H. Newton,¹ *Some Facts Concerning the T.S.*, by D. D. Jassawala; and *Vegetarianism versus Meat Diet or the Diet Question in the Light of Medical Science, Religion and Theosophy*, by the same author in 1905; 21,000 copies of *Some Information Regarding the T.S.*, by D. D. Jassawala and *Reincarnation*, by P. D. Mahaluxmiwala, were published in 1908; *The Power of Prayer*, by Bahman S. Banaji, *Sayings of Kabir*, by B. P. Madon, and *The Message of Zoroaster*, by N. F. Bilimoria, were published in 1909; *The Mystery of Death*, by J. R. Aria in 1905, *Light on the Path*, by N. M. Desai, *Essays and Opinions, in Favour of Vegetarianism*, by D. D.

¹ Freely translated and favorably criticised by K. J. B. Wadia in *Jam-e Jamshed* of 24th and 25th of November, 1904.

Jassawala, *Parsi Social Reforms*, by Jamshedji Patel in 1907.¹ Also Gujarati pamphlets on Parsi communal subjects by P. D. Mahaluxmiwala and K. J. B. Wadia were published in this year. *Twenty-five Years of the Blavatsky Lodge, T.S., Bombay*, by N. F. Bilimoria, appeared in 1905. *Sayings of Kabir*,² by Byramji P. Madan, first printed with Theosophical comments in 1909, became so very popular that the fifth edition was published in 1926. *Work and Wisdom of H. P. B.*, (1908 White Lotus Day Lecture), by K. J. B. Wadia, was printed and published in 1913; also a Gujarati translation of C. W. Leadbeater's *To Those Who Mourn*, by Cawasji Hormasji Cooper, and *Light of Avesta and the Gathas*, by Faredun Kersaspji Dadachanji. A most valuable collection of speeches, discourses and articles of the late Jehangir Sorabji, an erudite scholar and writer, were edited after his demise in 1916 by his son Dr. I. J. S. Taraporewala and his disciple M. K. Vessavewala, and a big memorial volume called *The Eternal Pilgrim and the Voice Divine*, or *Some Hints of the Higher Life* was published at great expense by Jehangir R. Gilder and Jalbhai H. Bilimoria in 1917. A Gujarati translation of *What Theosophy Does for Us* was published in 1922. In 1923 was published a booklet *Universal Brotherhood*, being selections from the standard authors, by K. J. B. Wadia; in 1924, *Meditation on Mazda*,² a short prayer, and a third edition of the Gujarati *Bhagwad-Gita*; *New Message to Parsi Theosophists*,² by Ervard Khurshedji Shapoorji Daboo in 1928; and *The Mystery of Death*,² by F. J. Bilia in 1930.

¹ These nine books are in Gujarati.

² In Gujarati.

CHAPTER IX

PROMINENT BOMBAY WORKERS WHO WENT
ABROAD

New occasions teach new duties ; time makes ancient good
uncouth ;

They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast
of Truth ;

Lo ! before us gleam her camp fires ! we ourselves must
pilgrims be,

Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the
desperate winter sea,

Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted
key.

JAMES RUSSEL LOWELL

WE have seen in the previous chapters who were the Bombay members who went with the Founders in the early eighties to Ceylon and to England, but there is no record of the actual work they did there then. We shall, however, turn our attention to other devoted workers from Bombay who went to Adyar, Benares and other places volunteering their services as almost permanent workers in the cause of Theosophy. The first and foremost of these was Damodar Keshav Mavlankar, who has been referred to in passing in Chapter I. This member has a mysterious history behind him. Since the arrival of the Founders, he wholeheartedly worked with them, went with them to Adyar and was the Treasurer of the T.S. in 1883 and General Recording Secretary till 1885. He accompanied Colonel Olcott while the latter was on a lecturing tour in 1883 in Northern India, where he personally came into

touch with his Master. One day all of a sudden he was missing. The mysterious disappearance of Damodar for three days is described by Colonel Olcott in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, pp. 26-65, which undoubtedly make very exciting reading. Tukaram Tatya wrote from Bombay to the effect: "I have constantly been thinking of poor brother Damodar. It is very nearly a year since he left, and we have hitherto had no authentic news about him. If you have any recent information about him please communicate it to me." But it seems that everybody's lips were sealed to reveal the secret of the whereabouts of Damodar till we were told in later years that he was still in his Master's Ashram, and awaiting the call to reappear once again on the open field of Theosophical work.¹

Leaving aside this mysterious man for a while, let us come to other workers who have given their devoted and missionary services in the sacred cause—Mr. Panday and Mr. Aria. Both of them were very earnest and active members of the Blavatsky Lodge. Manekji Dadabhoy Panday, an architect by profession, was initiated on September 28, 1896, but being in love with higher work he left his job, wrote his popular classical book, *The State of Man After Death*, and went to Benares in April, 1898. He was made the Inspector of the Lodges, and in that capacity he travelled far and wide in India and delivered hundreds of lectures till he passed away at Cawnpore on April 18, 1925, and was cremated there. He presented to the Society his bungalow at Benares. Genial in nature and deep in wisdom he did yeoman's service to the Society. Jalbhai Rustomji Aria, a share and coalbroker by profession, was the Blavatsky Lodge Treasurer from 1903 to 1907; he left Bombay on

¹ His coming in touch with his Master is described by Damodar in December-January, 1883-84 *Theosophist*, which was reprinted in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series. See pp. 6, 7, 188-191. See also First Series, 1919 Ed., p. 71; *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 259; and *The Golden Book of the T.S.*, pp. 49, 58, 65,

December 12, 1908, to fill the place of General Recording Secretary at Adyar ; which post he occupied till his passing away on June 8, 1928, at Adyar, where he too was cremated. His special study was Astrology. He presented several acres of land called "The Besant Grove" to the Adyar Headquarters.

Then came on the field B. P. Wadia, "Polaris" of *The Lives of Alcyone*. Having joined the Bombay Lodge in 1903, with J. D. Mahaluxmiwala he edited the *Theosophic Gleaner* and *Theosophy and New Thought*. Mr. Wadia offered his services to Colonel Olcott, on April 15, 1904 ; and after Colonel Olcott's death he renewed his offer to Dr. Annie Besant which was accepted. Amongst the good wishes of his friends, he left Bombay for Adyar on February 3, 1908. He was put in charge of the Theosophical Publishing House and later of the daily *New India* which was then edited by Dr. Annie Besant. During the 1917 Home Rule crisis Mr. Wadia was interned by the Madras Government on June 16, 1917, along with Dr. Annie Besant and G. S. Arundale, but they were released unconditionally on September 17, 1917. Mr. Wadia accompanied Dr. Besant, P. K. Telang and Jamnadas Dwarkadas in May, 1919, on their mainly political and partly Theosophical tour in England, from where he went to America in October, 1919, as the Labor Representative from the Government of India at the Washington Conference of the League of Nations. So far he was the right hand of Dr. Besant and her great friend and helper. However, on his return to India in 1920, he lost his original zeal, fidelity and sympathy for Dr. Besant. He left Adyar for good and went back to America, on February 5, 1921, from where he sent in his resignation in the shape of a long printed circular letter, dated July 18, 1922. Seceding from the Parent Society, he identified himself wholeheartedly with what is known as the "United Lodge of Theosophists" of Los Angeles—a body of students who profess to

follow only the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge. After residing and working in America for seven years he returned to India in May, 1929, with his cultured American wife, and settled down in Bombay. Mr. Wadia with the help of his old Adyar colleague, T. L. Crombie, Mrs. Sophie Wadia and a few other friends established on November 17, 1929, a branch of the "United Lodge of Theosophists" in Fort, Bombay.

The next person who went to Adyar was Kuverji Ruttonji Jassawala. He joined the Blavatsky Lodge in 1896 and was its Hon. Treasurer from 1913 to 1916. Having trained himself as a gardener under his brother, the late D. D. Jassawala, he offered his services at Adyar where he arrived on June 19, 1916. The gardens at the Headquarters have been in his charge, which he has developed to such an extent that appreciative references have been made in the Annual Reports.

Miss Meherbai Ardeshir Dadyseth, one of our enthusiastic Parsi lady members, went to Adyar in July, 1921, as an honorary worker. For some time she worked in the Theosophical Publishing House and some time in the President's Office. She retired and returned to Bombay in 1926. Another Parsi lady member, Mrs. Dosibai R. Dinshaw, who was initiated at Bombay in 1921, went directly to Adyar in that year and is at present a worker there.

During the Convention of 1886, the famous Library at Adyar was inaugurated, and the President-Founder in the right Theosophical spirit invited the priests of different religions to say the opening prayers; one of them, Ervard Rustomji Kiasji Mody,¹ was our Bombay representative. Likewise when the Besant Zoroastrian Home was opened for the Parsis at the Adyar Headquarters in December, 1914, another Bombay

¹ See Fig. 111 of *The Golden Book of the T.S.*, pp. 97-99. See also *Old Diary Leaves* Vol. III, pp. 388-389.

Parsi priest, Ervard Dosabhai Hormusji Dastoor performed the opening religious ceremony (with another priest from Madras). Once again, during the memorable celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Society at Adyar in Christmas week of 1925, another Parsi priest, Ervard Khurshedji Shapoorji Daboo, and several other Parsi members took part in the Zoroastrian religious ceremonies and chanted the ancient Avestic Prayers at the time of laying the foundation-stone of the Zoroastrian Shrine.

Another Parsi member of a devoted heart and cultured mind who offered his services in the cause of Theosophy was the late Jehangir Sorabji. Having served for several years in the Treasury Department of the Nizam's Dominions, he retired and went to Benares, and became the General Secretary of the Indian Section in 1908-1911; retiring from that high office, he came down to Bombay and was the worthy President of the Blavatsky Lodge till he passed away in 1916.

Besides the above it is noteworthy that many other Bombay members, especially belonging to the Dharmalaya Lodge, went to Adyar, Benares and other different centres to do the educational or Theosophical work. The first who went to Benares was S. Raghvendra Rao in 1899, followed by the late P. K. Telang who was for several years Hon. Professor of History at the Central Hindu College, and subsequently the General Secretary of the Indian Section, at Benares. After these went C. S. Trilokekar, as a teacher of the Central Hindu College, Benares; he is now the Principal of the Theosophical College at Madanapalle. Dr. Vasanji Premji Dalal followed him as Professor of Chemistry. Many other workers went subsequently as follows: N. G. Paranjpe to Cawnpore (since deceased); M. G. Kantikar (still at Benares); R. G. Tilak (since deceased); S. A. Hazare (still at Adyar); J. N. Dandekar (now in Bombay); V. R. Karandikar (now in London); D. K. Telang (now at Benares as the

General Secretary, Indian Section); V. R. Samant to Adyar (now in Bombay); P. N. Dandekar to Benares (since deceased); M. S. Wagle to Benares (since deceased); S. V. Khandekar to Adyar (now in Bombay); M. G. Kolatkar (Adyar); L. B. Raje to Adyar (now in Bombay); V. C. Patwardhan to Adyar; Mrs. Malati Patwardhan to Adyar.¹

It is indeed wonderful that these and many other workers from Bombay went out in the service of the Masters. Let their services be cherished and rewarded. And those who had no such opportunity to go out in the service of the Masters may well be reminded of the words of Milton that "they also serve who only stand and wait".

¹ This list has been kindly supplied to me by Dr. V. S. Trilokeker, the President of the Dharmalaya Lodge.—K. J. B. W.

CHAPTER X

YOUTH, STAR, SCOUT AND OTHER KINDRED MOVEMENTS AND ALLIED ACTIVITIES

PARSIS AND THEOSOPHISTS

Oh ! timely happy, timely wise
Hearts that with rising morn arise.

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all find
New treasures still, of countless price,
Goodwill provide for sacrifice.

The trivial round, the common task
Would furnish all we ought to ask
Room to deny ourselves ; a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

JOHN KEBLE

It is certain that those who come into contact, directly or indirectly, with either Theosophical literature or the Society are inspired in one way or other to do some service, somehow, somewhere, in the interests of humanity or the world in general. The spirit of Brotherhood and the ideas of service and self-sacrifice are evident in them, and as a result, a Theosophist in his individual capacity, or in co-operation with his colleagues, often starts and maintains several interesting movements or activities, and one cannot overlook them while chronicling the Theosophical events of the past fifty years.

With the advent of the Founders, in Bombay a spirit of enthusiasm soon spread to revive the modern religions from

their lingering state. Colonel Olcott took particular interest in reviving Zoroastrianism during his few years' stay in Bombay. From the very beginning of the Lodge in Bombay, the predominant element of membership has been that of the Parsis. Colonel Olcott's famous lecture on "The Spirit of Zoroastrianism"¹ delivered at the Town Hall of Bombay on February 14, 1880, presided over by the well known prominent citizen of those days, Nanabhai Byramji Jijibhoy, was printed verbatim by K. M. Shroff for free distribution, which had the desired effect amongst the Parsi community.

Two Parsi Oriental scholars of repute, K. R. Camaji and Ervard (now Dr. Sir) J. J. Mody, were attracted towards the Founders. Khurshedji Rustomji Camaji and Colonel Olcott did some correspondence² re Archæology and excavations of ancient Persia and other subjects. Mr. Camaji in his later years took much interest in Theosophy and to the great surprise of his friends and admirers this Parsi reformer actually joined the Theosophical Society in 1905 and remained a staunch member till the day of his death on August 20, 1909.³ Ervard (afterwards Shamsul Ulema Dr. Sir) Jivanji Jamshedji Mody, though not a member of the Society, when he went on his first European tour in 1899, was given a letter of introduction to Madame Blavatsky signed by K. M. Shroff, Phirozshaw Rustomji Shroff, Rustomji Ardeshir Master and twenty-three other Parsi members, dated June 29, 1889, introducing to her the then young priest who had proposed a vote of thanks to Colonel Olcott at his Bombay Town Hall lecture on Zoroastrianism on February 14, 1882. Dr. J. J.

¹ See *Theosophy, Religion and Occult Science*, pp. 301-348; also *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 334. It is also published as a pamphlet by T. P. H., Adyar.

² See Introduction, *Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy*, edited by N. F. Bilimoria; also *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 30.

³ See the article by Navroji Aderji in Camaji's appreciation in *Theosophy in India*, September, 1909, also that by K. J. B. Wadia in *Activity* of October 1, 1924 and p. 134 of *Camaji's Memoirs*, by S. M. Edwards.

Mody is in sympathy with our Movement and has delivered many public lectures from our Society's platform and written many articles on Zoroastrianism in the official organ of the T.S., *The Theosophist*.

Most sincere thanks are due to two other Bombay Parsi Theosophists of humble calibre, namely Nusserwanji Framji Bilimoria and Dhunjibhai Jamshedji Medhora; both of them wrote many books and delivered many lectures on Zoroastrianism in the light of Theosophy.¹ With the above two may also be named Navroji Dorabji Khandalawala, Dhunjibhai Navroji Kurlawala, Rustomji Muncherji Mobedji, P. D. Mahaluxmiwala, Jehanghir Jamshedji Vimadalal and K. J. B. Wadia who did their utmost to infuse the spirit of Theosophy in the Parsi community by their periodical public lectures and articles on Parsi and Theosophical subjects.

In 1890 great efforts were made by Parsi Theosophists, like Dr. Jehangir Khurshedji Daji and Byramji Dinshaw Panday, to spread the cause of vegetarianism amongst the Parsi community. Their humanitarian efforts were later taken up and revived by Dadabhai Dhunjibhai Jassawala, Nusserwanji Framji Bilimoria, Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadalal and Khurshedji J. B. Wadia in 1903, who in that year founded a body called "The Zoroastrian Jashan Committee"—verily an offshoot of the Blavatsky Lodge. Some modern Parsi Theosophists—J. J. Vimadalal, Faredun K. Dadachanji, P. D. and K. D. Mahaluxmiwala and others—resigned from the Lodge in 1912 and identified themselves with this sectarian body through which they have been trying to spread in the Parsi community the old orthodox Zoroastrianism. The Rathestar Mandal was founded in 1911 by Bahman Sorabji Banaji; he and K. J. B. Wadia, both members of the Theosophical Society, have identified themselves with it and

¹ They are given in Chapter VIII. Nusserwanji Muncherji Desai and Mr. Kotwal of Navsari and Karachi respectively are the other Theosophists who influenced the Parsis of Bombay by their books.

are trying their level best to infuse among their co-religionists the spirit of Brotherhood and co-operation with the other sister communities and religions. Dinshaw Merwan Irani was another Parsi Theosophist who did yeoman's service to the Parsi community by organising innumerable Parsi public lectures and printing or reprinting many pamphlets and leaflets on Zoroastrian subjects, all teeming with Theosophical thoughts and published by him for free distribution. Dr. Arthur Richardson and Miss Lilian Edger's interest in Zoroastrianism and their learned public lectures in Bombay attracted many Parsis to Theosophy.

On March 8, 1903, Dr. Annie Besant delivered by invitation her famous public lecture ¹ on Zoroastrianism in the old Novelty Theatre, Fort; on another occasion in 1906, again by invitation, she delivered a special public address to the Parsi community at the Sir J. J. Parsi Institution on the "Parsi Central College" when Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy, Bart., presided.² As a result of all these activities of the Parsi members of the Theosophical Society, they were invited to the famous Zoroastrian Conference held from 16th to 18th April, 1910, and by a special resolution all the Parsi members of the Theosophical Society who desired to attend the Conference were elected as its delegates, (April 4, 1910). The Besant Zoroastrian Home for the Parsis and the Zoroastrian Shrine Building ³ were built at the Adyar Headquarters mainly by the support and help of the Bombay Parsi Theosophists. These and several books by N. F. Bilimoria ⁴ and others on

¹ This lecture was subsequently enlarged and embodied in her *Four Great Religions*.

² See the *Sanj Vartman* of October 26, 1906.

³ The Besant Zoroastrian Home for the Parsis was opened in Convention Week, 1914, and by a special resolution of the donors, the property was handed over to the President of the Society on March 29, 1915. The foundation of the Zoroastrian Shrine was laid during the Theosophical Society's Jubilee Convention of 1925. At all these times, the ceremonies according to the Zoroastrian religion were performed by Parsi priests and laymen. By the exertion of Framji J. Bilia, Civil Engineer, plans were made and both the buildings were raised.

⁴ He also rendered an artistic service to Zoroastrianism, see Ch. XV.

Theosophic Zoroastrianism are living monuments to show the relationship held between the ancient religion of Zoroaster on the one hand and the Parsi Theosophists on the other. Such appreciable activities¹ amongst the Zoroastrian Theosophists led even an anti-Theosophist like Dastur Dr. Manekji Nusserwanji Dhala of Karachi to devote a chapter in a book of his to Parsi Theosophists and to remark that "in the early eighties of the last century, the Parsi members of the Theosophical Society entered the arena of religious controversy and gave new zest to it. Since that time or during the last three decades, they have produced a fairly considerable literature in Gujarati, and are at present a potent factor in shaping the religious beliefs of a section of the community through their active propaganda".²

After reviving Zoroastrianism in Bombay and Buddhism in Ceylon, Colonel Olcott's next interest was in the Youths of India. He went from City to City forming the Indian Boys' Association. On April 28, 1896, he delivered in the City of Bombay (at the old Novelty Theatre, Fort) a lecture on "The Best Education for Boys in India"; on the spot he formed such an Association as named above and asked the audience to choose its President, and Colonel Olcott was much pleased when the audience, on the spur of the moment, called out the name of Ardeshir Bilimoria, the elder son of Colonel Olcott's friend, Nusserwanji F. Bilimoria. For one reason or other, the said Association did not prosper, but the result was that Ardeshir, then a young member of the Society, founded the "Zoroastrian Brotherhood," an association formed of Parsi youths to take genuine interest in the ancient lore of Zoroaster, the Founder of the Iranian religion. Thus, the Youth Movement started

¹ Vide J. J. Vimadala's article on "Theosophy and the Parsis" in *Theosophy in India* for February, 1904, in which the writer describes the early activities of the Parsis in relation to Theosophy.

² See pp. 352-3 of Dr. Dhala's *Zoroastrian Theology*, published in New York in 1914.

by Colonel Olcott began to bear fruit in other shapes in later years. It was in the regime of Dr. Annie Besant, that institutions like Lotus Circles for the little ones and the Golden Chain and the Order of the Round Table for the grown up children were founded, and to-day we have got amongst us their Branches in Bombay in which many children of our members and sympathisers take an active part. Then we have in Bombay the Youth Lodge, T. S., of the new world-organisation of Young Theosophists started so recently as 1923.¹ At the instance of the President, Dr. Annie Besant, the General Council made a special change in the Constitution of the Society so as to enable even the minors to join the Society if they so chose. Such a Youth Lodge was founded in Bombay—in the Blavatsky Lodge Hall, 77 Apollo Street, Fort—on November 19, 1923, by Dr. George S. Arundale with Miss Meher M. K. Vessavewala as its first President and Sunder B. Kabadi as its first Hon. Secretary.

Another activity of Dr. Annie Besant was to organise in 1918 the Boy Scout Movement in India, independent of the Baden-Powell Movement in England, with which it subsequently amalgamated, and in 1921 Dr. Besant was made the first Honorary Commissioner² for all India. Bombay Theosophists, old and young, were not lagging behind. With an experienced leader in Byramji Hormusji Mehta, a young graduate of the Bombay University and an enthusiastic member of the Bombay Youth Lodge, a Rover's Troop was at once formed and registered as the 83rd Bombay Vasant T.S. Rovers. The first batch of such sixteen Rovers³ were initiated on the sparkling sands of Juhu, a lovely suburb of Bombay,

¹ See *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, pp. 239, 291 and 307.

² See Figure 184 in *The Golden Book of the T.S.*

³ Amongst those who joined this movement there were prominent members like Mavji Govindji Seth, D. A. Jayawant, Amirbux K. Bawa, M. V. Tampi, C. B. Kora, Jal Minocherhomji, Nadir F. M. Garda, Krishna Menon, K. J. B. Wadia and others. On October 27, 1927, the Troop gave the Scout Salute to Dr. Besant and Krishnaji on their return from England to "Vasant Vihar," their place of residence at Bombay. All of

on September 11, 1927. Amongst the Theosophists, Jamnadas Dwarkadas and the late Narotam Morarji Gokuldas held the official post of District Scout Commissioner; it is now held by Dingmal Taroomal Thadani, also a member of our Society. M. V. Venkateshwaran, who started the Scout Movement at Madras, at the instance of Dr. Annie Besant, is now holding the official post of the Provincial Scout Secretary for the Bombay Presidency with Headquarters in Bombay.

Yet another movement in Bombay must be chronicled in which some of the members of the Theosophical Society take a most active part, namely the French Co-Masonic Movement. "It was in the year 1903 the seed of this movement was implanted in the Indian soil by the very illustrious Sister, Mrs. Annie Besant, who has for the first time in the history of modern Freemasonry thrown open the doors of Masonic Lodges to the women of India."¹ Tuesday the 19th of March, 1907, will remain a red letter day in the history of Co-Masonry in Bombay, when the first two Indian ladies, Mrs. Anusuyabai Dinkar Bhandarkar and Mrs. Ruttonbai Phirozshaw Unwala, who were already members of the Theosophical Society, were initiated into the ancient mystery of Freemasonry.

There was another movement called the Order of the Star in the East² towards which the Bombay Theosophists were attracted in a very great number. It was in the year 1909 that Dr. Annie Besant—a modern John the Baptist—announced publicly for the first time the

them looked very smart at the big rally of 11,000 scouts in Bombay on December 11, 1927, and the Troop's services during the recent Bombay Riots in 1929 were honored and appreciated by the authorities. In 1930 the Constitution was changed and the Troop thrown open to non-Theosophists.

¹ Dr. V. S. Trilokekar, who was one of the pioneers of this Movement in Bombay, has written a very interesting article on Progressive Masonry in *Theosophy and New Thought* for October, 1907, in which a group picture of the first two Indian lady Masons is also given.

² See *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, pp. 168-172.

Coming of a World-Teacher and proclaimed a very young boy—J. Krishnamurti—then her ward, the Head of the Order, herself holding the office of the Protector. On January 11, 1911, the order was organised as a world-wide movement, and since that date up to now Krishnaji by his ennobling articles and books, public discourses and private talks, has wielded a very great influence over the minds and hearts of many, and has a very large following mainly among the members of the Theosophical Society. A Branch of the Order was at once started in Bombay by Dr. V. S. Trilokekar and Jamnadas Dwarkadas (both prominent members of the Theosophical Society), and through the Bombay Branch a copious Star literature was spread. However, in the summer of 1929, to the surprise and regret of many, the Order was peremptorily dissolved by Krishnaji; but the Star Publishing Trust continues to spread his Gospel of Happiness and Truth and Love and Wisdom and to point out to each and all their goal of life. The modern Theosophical magazines and books are tinged with Krishnaji's thoughts, or permeated with Krishnaji's teachings. The Star literature has now become part and parcel of the Theosophical literature.

Efforts were made in Bombay in November, 1895, for spreading "free education among the women of India," with a thoughtful circular by the late Virchand R. Ghandi, but lady workers were not forthcoming then in appreciable numbers.

However, one of the greatest subsidiary Theosophical activities, the Women's Indian Association,¹ was started at Adyar on White Lotus Day, 1917, by Mrs. Dorothy Jinarajadasa with Dr. Annie Besant as President and Mrs. Margaret E. Cousins² as the Honorary General Secretary—its worthy object being to band women into groups for the purpose of

¹ See *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, Figure 216, and pp. 285-87.

² All three visited Bombay more than once and stirred up the women of Bombay with their thrilling addresses.

self-development, education, and for the definite service of others. A women's Association was already in existence in Bombay and this was turned into a Branch of the new Association on July 25, 1917, by Mrs. Hiranbai A. Tata,¹ a prominent and very active member of the Blavatsky Lodge. With the Theosophical inspiration what useful, efficient and active work is done by the Bombay Branch of the W. I. A., can be ascertained from its regular Annual Reports. A similar institution of its kind called the Young Ladies' Training Institute is run since 1917 by Mrs. Tata's sister Mrs. Ruttonbai Framji Pavri, another lady member of the Blavatsky Lodge.

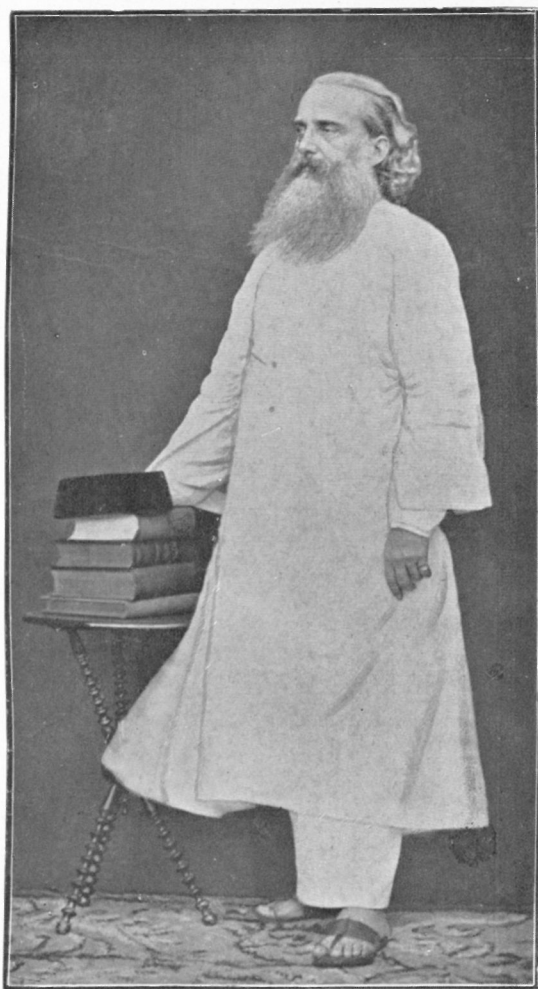
With the exception of one or two, all the above-named allied institutions are now housed in the new commodious building of the Blavatsky Lodge.

The Order of the Brothers of Service was founded at Adyar in 1917.² Bombay contributed many members to this Order, including B. P. Wadia, J. R. Aria, M. D. Panday and C. S. Trilokekar.

We shall now see in the next chapter how some of the Bombay Theosophists take active parts in the public life of the City.

¹ During Mrs. and Miss Tata's five years' stay in England, the Bombay Branch was well managed by Mrs. Goolbanoo K. Wadia from 1919 to 1923. Miss Mithan Tata who belongs to the Society and the Lodge is the first Parsi lady Bar-at-Law, and has the honor to practise in the High Court of Bombay. There are now (1931) three Branches of the W. I. A. in Bombay, at Fort, Chowpatty and Dadar, all managed by Mrs. Tata.

² See *The Golden Book of the T.S.*, p. 179.



Colonel Olcott in 1883



Madame Blavatsky

CHAPTER XI

PUBLIC SERVICES AND GENERAL T. S. ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL

When I am dead and gone, people will, perhaps, appreciate my disinterested motives. I have pledged my word to help people on to Truth while living and will keep my word. Let them abuse and revile me. Let some call me a medium and a spiritualist and others an impostor. The day will come when posterity will learn to know me better.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

It is certain that Theosophy has infused in many the spirit of self-sacrifice and service; it has inspired many a mind to nobler living; it has stirred many a heart to higher aspirations; and as a result, very many Bombay members, besides working in one way or the other in the Theosophical Society and its kindred associations, take an active part in their individual capacities in other public bodies for the social, political, humanitarian and spiritual upliftment of the City.

For instance, the first Indian Theosophist, Kawasji Merwanji Shroff, was once a prominent Bombay Municipal Corporator, and Colonel Olcott's old colleagues, Navroji D. Khandalawala and Dr. Sir Bhalchandra Krishna, were one time or other members of the Legislative Councils; the latter was also a Bombay Municipal Corporator. In the recent years also, Ruttonsey D. Morarji, Jamnadas Dwarkadas and Framroz J. Ginwala were once the members of the Municipal Corporation, where Kanji Dwarkadas is a present sitting member. Kanji Dwarkadas, who takes a leading part in

the Bombay Vigilance Society and Children's Welfare Society, was also a member of the Legislative Council, whereof Framroz Jamshedji Ginwala was also a member.¹ Mr. Ginwala as a public citizen takes a good deal of interest in the Bombay Labor Movement, and in the Association for the Blind.

The late Tukaram Tatya, David Gostling, K. R. Camaji, Dharamsey Morarji Gokuldas and his brother, Narotam Morarji Gokuldas, who was once the Sheriff of Bombay, Rao Bahadur Vassanji Khimji, Rao Saheb Purshotam Odhavji, all very prominent members of the Society, were worthy citizens who were respected immensely for their public services to the City and humanity in several ways.

In social reform also, the Bombay Theosophists have taken a leading and prominent part. It is very pleasing to find, for instance, how in those old days Hindu orthodoxy was set aside when so far back as on December 1, 1880, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky were invited with another European friend by a Bombay Hindu Theosophist, Gopalrao Vinayak Joshi, to dine with him in Hindu fashion, when even his family priests (Brahmins) were present; again on another occasion (September 3, 1885), Tukaram Tatya invited Colonel Olcott to dine with him at his Bandra country house; how Tukaram had to fight this social reform with his family has been described by Colonel Olcott in his *Old Diary Leaves*.² Such intercommunal dinners are nowadays very common during the Theosophical Conventions and Conferences; and social gatherings, international vegetarian dinners and wholeday picnics are a regular annual feature and factor of the Bombay T. S., inaugurated and organised by K. J. B. Wadia since 1920. Coming to the sphere of social work, such as visiting the hospitals, prisons, the poor and the sick, some

¹ R. D. Morarji once represented Bombay in the Council of State; and J. Dwarkadas in the Legislative Assembly.

² See Vol. II, p. 114, and Vol. III, p. 295.

members—especially of the Bombay Youth Lodge—are taking a keen interest and willing part. In September, 1921, during the stay of Colonel E. G. Hart and F. R. J. Gerrard, two prominent Theosophists, efforts were made to organise such activities on practical Theosophical lines.

Amelioration of suffering humanity is the keynote of the Theosophists. With characteristic zeal and creditable enterprise Tukaram Tatya—himself a healer—founded and opened in the Fort, Bombay, on July 1, 1884, his well-known Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary, aided by Dr. Chabildas Tribhovandas and a Committee of seventeen Theosophists, with Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh as Chairman and K. M. Shroff as the Hon. Treasurer.¹ The following extract from the printed "Report of the Annual Meeting of the Bombay Branch of the Theosophical Society" held publicly at the Framji Cawasji Institute on October 18, 1886, will show what a beneficial work this dispensary was doing: "The total number of cases treated during the two years was 40,063, which gives a daily average of about 65 cases. . . . Amongst the patients treated in this Dispensary, there were many who had failed to get relief in other hospitals and private dispensaries, and yet the average of recovery has reached to 80 per cent." Cases of fever, whooping cough, diabetes, paralysis, madness and even leprosy were successfully treated by the mesmeric method in addition to homeopathic treatment. It is a very gratifying fact that the venerable Dr. Debendranath Tagore of Calcutta handed over his valuable furniture in his bungalow at Bandra—a suburb

¹ The following were the first Organising Committee Members: Dr. Bhalchandra Krishna, Dr. Vithal Pandurang Mahtre, Dr. Jehangir Khurshedji Daji, Tullakchand Manekchand, Framji Rustomji Camaji, Dr. Pestonji Navroji Pavri, Dr. Vithaldas Manohardas, Dr. Abbas Alibhai Hathiwalla, Dr. Fakirji Ruttonji Hadvaidd, Phirozshaw Rustomji Mehta, Fardunji Merwanji Banaji, Nusserwanji Dorabji Bahdurji, Khudabux Shermahomed, Janardhan D. Kolatkar, Nusserwanji R. Koyaji, Dinshaw Dorabji Writer. At this time the Lodge was located in a small room on Hornby Road, near Sir J. J. Parsi Benevolent Institution, hardly accommodating a score of people. It was here that this charitable dispensary was conducted, afterwards it was removed to Cawasji Patel Street. Colonel Olcott refers to it in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. IV, p. 63.

of Bombay—to utilise the sale proceeds for the benefit of this Dispensary. In 1898, when Tukaram died, it had a fund of nearly Rs. 20,000 at its disposal and was managed by an independent Committee and the Dispensary was attended by Pestonji Dinshaw Khan, another healer and Theosophist, assisted by R. P. Kamat. Since Mr. Khan's death in 1920, the Theosophical Society or the Blavatsky Lodge had no hold over this Dispensary, and I believe its mission having been fulfilled, it is now closed.

Giving medical relief to the poor has been a characteristic of the Blavatsky Lodge. When dire famine was raging in India from October, 1896 to March, 1897, a special General Meeting of the members was called on November 22, 1896, to form the Bombay Theosophical Famine Relief Committee. D. Gostling sent earnest appeals in the Bombay papers of November 28, 1896. Donations were raised. Theosophical literature was sold in aid of the Famine Fund and by the gate money that accrued from the public lectures of Dr. Besant and others in Bombay great help was rendered to the Famine Committee.¹ Likewise, when the great Bubonic Plague was playing havoc in Bombay in 1896-99, an enthusiastic local member, Dadabhai Jivanji Soonawala, a chemist by profession, rendered help to hundreds of suffering people by visiting the afflicted houses and disinfecting them by his specially prepared gas; he gave relief to hundreds of suffering patients by ministering unto them colored bottles containing magnetised water. Again when the terrible influenza epidemic was raging in Bombay in 1918, one of the members, K. J. B. Wadia, with the help of his friends, rapidly organised a Parsi Emergency Corps, which moved from street to street and house to house and rendered great help to suffering

¹ For the Statement of Account, see the *Prasnotra*: the Indian Section Gazette for August, 1897.

humanity. The services of D. J. Soonawala and those of the Parsi Emergency Corps were highly appreciated by the Municipal authorities and the Bombay Government. Yet again, during the recent Gujarat Floods in 1927 enthusiastic lady members like Mrs. Tehmina J. Romer, Mrs. Goolcher Byram Talati, Miss Meherbai Ardeshir Surti and Mrs. Shirinbai Navroji Daver actually went on behalf of the Lodge into the afflicted area and rendered help to the deserving.

Mrs. H. A. Tata and Kanji Dwarkadas have been doing splendid work for women-workers and their children, and in Juvenile Courts, Children's Welfare Society, Prison Reform work, etc.

Some of the Bombay Theosophists, it seems, are the pioneer reformers in breaking the ancient social customs. They came forward to assist in every way George S. Arundale to marry a cultured Madras Hindu lady, Miss Rukmini Nilakanta Sastriar, whose wedding rites were performed in Hindu fashion in 1920 at Bombay.¹

Turning from public and social T. S. activities to Education, one instance is enough to show the work done by members of the Blavatsky Lodge. The Hon. Ruttonsey D. Morarji, M. R. Jayakar, Jamnadas Dwarakadas, Jamshedji D. Mahaluxmiwala, Kanji Dwarkadas and others formed themselves into an independent Committee and founded on Theosophical lines a co-educational institution called the Fellowship School with a fine fund at their disposal. It was opened at Chowpatty on June 10, 1927, with the well-known Theosophist and educationist, Mangaldas T. Vyas, M.A., as its first Principal, and a teaching staff consisting of many men and women members of the Theosophical Society.

Now there remains another department of public service of which something must be said and that is political. We

¹ This took place on April 27, 1920, at the Amroli House, opposite China Baug, Girgaum, very likely just where the Founders stayed on their first arrival in Bombay.

have seen in previous chapters how Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky in the beginning of their Indian tour were suspected as Russian spies, which after all proved to be a baseless rumor, and how the Founders, from the very beginning of their Indian career, remained aloof from politics; as a matter of policy, the Theosophical Society is also kept aloof from politics, leaving each individual member to act in this respect as he or she likes and thinks best. It was, however, with the advent of Dr. Annie Besant in 1907 as the President of the Society who is ever first in the political field, besides being a great social, educational and religious worker, that some of the Theosophical followers took to Indian politics. There were some political difficulties in 1912 against the Indians of South and East Africa and public meetings were held at Bombay to sympathise with them. A special joint general meeting of all the Bombay Lodges was summoned on August 30, 1912, when the following resolution was unanimously passed:

"We, the members of the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society, Bombay, send herewith greetings to the members of the various Lodges of the Theosophical Society in South and East Africa. At the present critical juncture when color and race problems of a difficult and complex character are calling for solution in South Africa, we wish to reach out the hand of fellowship across the seas and to offer you our sympathy and encouragement in your efforts, to remove the causes of friction between the members of the different races, to remove, as far as possible, racial antipathies and color prejudices and to promote the feeling of Brotherhood between men and women, colors and nations in South and East Africa. As members of a Society which holds up as its foremost ideal the Universal Brotherhood of Mankind, without distinction of race, creed, caste, sex or color and which makes the acceptance of that ideal binding upon all its

members, it is your and our duty and privilege to do all that lies in our power, whatever may be the difficulties in the way, to bring the ideal of Brotherhood a little nearer practical realisation; and we, as Theosophists in India, feel sure that you, as Theosophists in South Africa, will stand fast and true to the cause of Brotherhood in South and East Africa, and will play your part courageously in spreading peace and goodwill amongst men, and in helping the cause of human Brotherhood, for the glory of God and the good of men's estate."

Since her famous Madras lectures of October-November, 1913, on "Wake Up, India," Dr. Besant in her individual capacity began to take direct part in Indian politics. It is impossible to repeat here the services¹ that she has rendered and is rendering in that direction. But I cannot pass over the enthusiasm she infused in the hearts of Indians when she founded the Home Rule League and the great and ever memorable agitation that took place throughout the whole of India when she was interned on June 16, 1917, along with her faithful colleagues, G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia. The whole of India was stirred, and Bombay was not lagging behind. Prominent Bombay Theosophists, like Jamnadas Dwarkadas and his brother Kanji Dwarkadas, Mavji Govindji Seth, Ruttonsey D. Morarji and others took very active part in the politics of those exciting days.

A joint General Meeting of all the Bombay and suburban Lodges was called on July 17, 1917; where Mrs. Mithibai P. Wadia, the mother of B. P. Wadia, was one of the principal speakers; telegrams and protests were sent to the authorities; numerous meetings were held in Bombay, where even the lady members of the Theosophical Society thronged in large numbers, till the three were unconditionally released on September 17, 1917; and when all of them

¹ For Dr. Besant's political work in India *vide The Golden Book of the T.S.*, pp. 176-179, and *Fifty Years in Public Work*, published in London in 1924.

came down to Bombay a public reception was accorded to them on October 11, 1917. Dr. Besant was, for political reasons, forbidden in 1916 to enter or remain in C. P. and the Berar Territories and was prevented from delivering there even non-political lectures. Our religious rights and liberties were thus interfered with, and, therefore, a special General Meeting of the Theosophical Society was held at Bombay on November 16, 1916, to protest against the order of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces preventing Mrs. Besant, P.T.S., from attending and presiding over the T.S. Federation held at Amraoti, a quite harmless non-political meeting. A strong and dignified resolution was passed, which, of course, had its desired effect.

In the year 1919, it was found necessary by Dr. Annie Besant to lead the National Home Rule League Deputation to England in connection with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme. She selected her friends and colleagues, P. K. Telang, Jamnadas Dwarkadas and B. P. Wadia, all three belonging to the City of Bombay, to accompany her. They had a very successful mission in England and Scotland, where, besides political addresses, they also delivered Theosophical and Star lectures. In the same year, B. P. Wadia went alone to America, and we have seen in a previous chapter how he left the Parent Society and joined there the United Lodge of Theosophists. In 1923, Jamnadas Dwarkadas went once again to England, this time as a representative from the Legislative Assembly of India, to negotiate with the Secretaries of State for Colonies and India about the grievances of Indian settlers in Kenya and East Africa. This time also he delivered wherever he went a series of lectures on Theosophical and Star subjects and attended the Theosophical World Congress at Vienna as a delegate from Bombay. Dr. Annie Besant and her political followers among the Theosophists wish to see the dear land of India free, and,

therefore, along with the whole of India, they too demand immediate Dominion Status within the British Empire. As Theosophists, we are always loyal to the British Crown, and as a proof of our loyalty it may be recorded that the Blavatsky Lodge sent hearty greetings of welcome to the Prince of Wales on his arrival at Bombay for his Indian tour in 1921.

Thus the Blavatsky Lodge, the premier Lodge of India, is ever on the forefront in every sphere and in all kinds of human activities, religious, social, educational and political. May the Blessings of the Great Ones be upon the members of the Society and the Lodge to work more and more for the sake of humanity.

Another activity in Bombay with which the Theosophical Society is immensely concerned is the formation and foundation of the Theosophical Colony at Juhu. To some, it is the greatest achievement in the annals of the T. S. in Bombay. The population in the City of Bombay was ever growing and the dearth of houses amongst others was felt by many Bombay Theosophists. A happy idea occurred to Mavji Govindji Seth, a very prominent member of the Blavatsky Lodge, that an earnest attempt should be made to have a small Garden Colony where Theosophists could lead a Theosophical community life. He at once had an interview in this matter with Dr. Annie Besant, the President, who liked the idea immensely and advised him among other things to keep two things in mind: "Have the colony on the seashore and take clubable people."

Bombay Theosophists were pioneers in many things. They were in this too. Mavji Seth set the ball of the Juhu Colony rolling. With the necessary number of shareholders "The Vasanta Theosophical Co-operative Housing Society, Limited" was formed and duly registered under Act No. II of 1912; 45,000 sq. yards of land were acquired on the shores of Juhu, verily a miniature Adyar, about fifteen miles away from

the City of Bombay; a handsome loan of Rs. 1,80,000 was secured from the Government of Bombay for building purposes.

In the meantime, the following encouraging letter, dated Madras, August 26, 1923, was received from Dr. Annie Besant :

“DEAR FELLOW-WORKERS,

“I most heartily wish your venture success and I trust that the Blessings of the Masters may be given to it. Krishnaji takes much interest in all community efforts and I am sure that he will be glad to hear of it.”

And that was so. A tempting prospectus was issued, and the necessary preliminaries having been gone through, a working committee was formed with the indispensable Mavji Govindji Seth as the Honorary Secretary. The first meeting of the Theosophical Housing Society was held on March 23, 1924, with 48 members on the roll and 568 shares taken up. Among the first shareholders were our leaders, Dr. Annie Besant, Mr. J. Krishnamurti, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa and Dr. G. S. Arundale. At length, on Sunday, February 7, 1926, the foundation-stone in the Colony grounds was “well and truly laid” by Dr. Annie Besant with full Masonic rites of a Co-Masonic temple for the Lodge Concord No. 123, Bombay. Mr. J. Krishnamurti was also present. The idea is to provide the Colony with T. S. Headquarters, a Co-Masonic Temple, a hall, a school, a club, a community playground, a common kitchen, co-operative stores and all other necessary requisites of modern life. So far seventeen bungalows have been completed and among the adventurous pioneer plottolders and permanent residents are Mr. and Mrs. Munchershaw B. Minocherhomji, Mr. and Mrs. Homi M. Shroff, Mrs. P. K. Mehta, Miss Khorshed Framji Aria and Miss Piroja F. M. Banaji, Mr. and Mrs. Nadir F. M. Garda, Mrs. Sherbanoo Kapadia, Mr. and Mrs. Framroz H. Pavri, Mr. and

Mrs. Jehangir M. Jassawala, Mr. and Mrs. K. J. B. Wadia and their families. The Ananda Lodge, T.S., with forty members, an E. S. centre, a local group of the Round Table and a Recreation Club have already been organised. The Colony and its environments are not complete—they are in the making.

Dr. Annie Besant, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, Dr. and Mrs. G. S. Arundale, Dr. J. H. Cousins, Miss A. J. Willson, Mr. N. Sri Ram and our beloved Krishnaji have visited this Theosophical Colony at Juhu, the first of its kind in the whole of India; they have not only visited the Colony more than once but also remained with the Colonists to even dine with them. Among other very welcome visitors were Mr. and Mrs. Huidekoper, Miss M. W. Barrie, Mrs. Malati Patwardhan, Mr. C. V. Shah, Mr. and Mrs. J. Maclean, and Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Bake. They one and all have expressed their high appreciation of the structure so far raised, and its further growth, development and rise depend entirely on the goodwill of the shareholders, on the prosperity of the plholders and, beyond all, on the Unknown Future. May the blessings of the Lord be upon all!

Service has its own rewards—one: the Blessings from the High and Holy Lords; another: attacks from the foolish and ignorant people. In the next chapter we shall see how Theosophists in general, and Bombay members in particular, were harassed and even ridiculed from time to time and how such difficulties and attacks were met with and surmounted.

CHAPTER XII

ATTACKS AND RESIGNATIONS

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

It is well known that all public Institutions and Associations, from time immemorial, have met with some opposition, great or small, and are often mercilessly or ridiculously attacked. The Theosophical Society is no exception. Truthfully speaking from the very inception of its Constitution and framing of Aims and Objects, there was opposition of one kind or other; and it seems in its wonderful existence of over fifty years, there were regular periods of excitement within, and attacks against, the Theosophical Society. Many a time its very foundation shook, but like a great banyan tree, the Society withstood the storm with its inner strength, at the same time outpouring and spreading Love, Wisdom and Truth like the evergreen branches and leaves of the banyan tree, giving relief and peace to many a weary soul who come underneath its soothing shelter. Such shakings are, however, necessary to give us strength, wisdom, and truth for ourselves, and even love and tolerance for those who attack us.

In the case of the Theosophical Society there are two kinds of attacks or oppositions. One from within our own ranks, the other from the public and the Press.

With the Parent Society the Bombay Branch was also from time to time shaken from such attacks, founded and unfounded, truthful and untruthful; and as a result, the unsatisfied members usually resigned of their own accord. One or two cases of expulsion are recorded in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 79. Certain facts must be related, though reluctantly, in the history of the Society in general and the Blavatsky Lodge in particular.

The first attack which the Founders had to encounter in Bombay was what is known as the Coulomb Case in Bombay. Monsieur and Madame Coulomb arrived poverty-stricken at Bombay on June 20, 1880, and sought refuge with our Founders. "He was a clever mechanic and she a practical hard-working woman," writes Colonel Olcott in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 148, and they were therefore taken into the household of the Founders; but in their absence, the quartette, *viz.*, the Coulombs, Mr. Wimbridge and Miss Bates, did not get on well, they quarrelled on account of "petty rivalries and jealousies". "One bad result of it was that the seceders managed to gain the favor of one of the leading vernacular papers of Bombay, never very cordial to us, and it used its columns to abuse the Society and Theosophy in general with a bitterness which, so far as I know, has been exhibited down to the present day."¹ Owing to the continuous attacks from the public and the Press, on January 15, 1882, the Bombay Branch had to pass a resolution² expressing the indignation of the members at the shameful and libellous attacks made in the *Indian Statesman* upon the Founders of the T. S. as also upon the Society in general. After the departure of Mr. Wimbridge and Miss Bates from the T. S. in Bombay, the Coulombs went to the Adyar Headquarters, but there too they did not behave well, and the subsequent history of

¹ *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 97, 147 and 269.

² This resolution was published in *The Theosophist* for February, 1882, p. 13.

their misbehavior, their conspiracy with the Christian Missionaries of Madras and their final failure and fate, all these incidents need no long repetition here. With the help of the Coulombs¹ the notorious Madras Missionary Plot was hatched on September 10, 1884, which led the Psychical Research Society of London to send to India their representative, a young Australian gentleman, Richard Hodgson, to investigate the matter, who in the course of time issued on March 19, 1885, his blasphemous report in which H. P. B. was "cruelly accused and trampled upon" and malignantly attacked² thus damaging, at least for the time being, the reputation of the Founders and their Society.

In 1884 when the Coulombs' attack became public the Bombay Lodge was in a very tottering state, and it was owing to N. D. Khandalawala and a few other devoted members that the Lodge was revived. The Coulomb Conspiracy and the Hodgson Report naturally had a very bad effect upon some of the members of the Bombay Lodge; for instance, in the words of a most prominent and devoted member, "the Coulomb and the Missionary Plot (1884) was fresh in the minds of the people, the newspapers were full of wild stories concocted by irresponsible persons; and the few who were staunch members were considered either as cranks or credulous; many of the members, therefore, had dropped and newcomers were shy and ashamed to join us."³

A little incident happened in 1893. A member of our Society, for personal reasons, committed suicide. Thereupon, a strong controversy was raised in the Bombay papers, who threw the whole blame on the teachings of the Society for the

¹ See *The Golden Book of the T. S.*, pp. 82-92.

² See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 99.

³ *Reminiscences of the Blavatsky Lodge*, by N. F. Bilimoria, written in 1921 but unpublished.

unfortunate action, which was of course refuted by the Bombay members.¹

Then there arose in 1882 a dispute between Swami Dayanand Saraswati of the Arya Samaj of Aryawart² and the President of the Theosophical Society. In the beginning, Colonel Olcott found the aims and objects of the Arya Samaj very similar to those of the Theosophical Society, and therefore he agreed with the Swamiji to form a combined Society called the "Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of Aryawart,"² but it was for a short time only, for soon it was found more or less impracticable to continue and the compact was, therefore, broken. Bombay members like Atmaram Bapoo Dalvi, Calianji Naranji, Hirji Pooja, Panachand Anandji, Sevak Karsondas and Harichand Chintaman, who were Arya Samajists, were affected and, as a result, Harichand Chintaman, an old member of the Theosophical Society, had to go away.

Those were troublous times indeed not only for the Bombay Branch, but for the whole Society and none suffered more than poor H. P. Blavatsky. "I can never forget those days of agony for H. P. B.," writes Countess Constance Wachtmeister, "and how she felt herself deserted by all those who had professed such devotion to her. . . . H. P. B. also seemed to have a presentiment that a crisis was coming upon the Society. She often told me that troublesome times were in store for us, and that there would probably be a general upheaval of the whole Theosophical Society not long after her death—and her prediction has unfortunately come true."³

Madame Blavatsky passed away on May 8, 1891, and "the shock which this Lodge experienced by the news of her

¹ See *Rast Goftar* of 1893.

² See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 213 *et seq.*, and p. 364; also *The Golden Book of the T.S.*, pp. 31, 36, 37.

³ See *H. P. B. and the Present Crisis in the Theosophical Society*, by Countess Wachtmeister, privately printed and published in London during the Judge controversy.

departure was greatly intensified by the fact that among other newspapers, the *Times of India* published on May 11, 1891, a most scandalous, base and unfounded lampoon on her sacred and exalted character." Some members were dissatisfied at this stage and they were criticising in the *Times of India* and other papers. A long letter in suitable terms protesting against and repudiating the charges laid by the *Times of India* against Madame Blavatsky "who was dead and gone," signed by Tukaram Tatya, K. M. Shroff, C. L. Peacock, W. Beale, N. F. Bilimoria and thirty other members was at once sent to the paper in question which had to publish it. Attacks and criticisms continued both at Madras and Bombay which had a very bad effect on even some of the devoted members of the Bombay Lodge. During this period a few more members in Bombay were dissatisfied; for one reason or another, they lost faith in their leaders and even in the Masters behind them. They changed their attitude towards the Society in general and the Lodge in particular, because they could not withstand the stormy attacks and probably did not understand the phases and the "psychic whirlwind" through which the Society was passing and had to pass.¹

Several derogatory articles appeared in the *Pauses* in 1892. Complaints came from the Headquarters, and the local Committee had to write explanatory letters. Dr. J. K. Daji² and several members, like Munchershaw Manekji Shroff, Hasan M. Khatsey, Chhagan Kheraj, Madhavji Dharsey, Jehangir Pestonji Vakil, Jamshedji Dosabhoj

¹ "Madame Blavatsky then proceeded to say that Master had explained to her that the Theosophical Society had passed through the physical phase—that of its foundation; and through the psychical phase—that of occult phenomena; and was now entering into the intellectual phase, before reaching the spiritual."—*H. P. B. and the Present Crisis in the Theosophical Society.*

² Dr. J. K. Daji joined the Society in 1883, and was a Committee Member in 1885. He delivered several lectures between 1885 and 1891, was the Editor of the *Pauses* in 1891-2, but resigned on January 1, 1893.

Karani, Fardunji Bomanji Madon and others having resigned *en masse* on January 1, 1893, enquiry was made by the General Secretary of the Indian Section. The Blavatsky Lodge Managing Committee in their meeting of July 1, 1893, passed the following resolution and reported it to the General Secretary :

“That the Committee is of opinion that the resignations of some of the members are consequent upon disaffection and discontent on the part of some of them and the effects of their mischievous misrepresentations on the minds of others. The Committee regards with satisfaction that the disaffected members have no more power to do any further harm to the Branch, which is now in as prosperous a state as ever and has no cause to regret the loss of those who have resigned.”

After having tided over the troublous times of Coulombs' Conspiracy and surmounting obstacles caused by Dayanand Saraswati's Arya Samaj and Subba Rao-Blavatsky quarrels, Colonel Olcott had to face another difficulty, yet greater and sadder than before—this time alone, for Madame Blavatsky was no more—that from William Q. Judge. The events of 1892 in connection with the Judge¹ affair shook the Society to its very foundations, and as a result, had some regrettable effect on some of the Bombay members also, but anyhow the Lodge pulled on; and presently another crisis appeared. Strong attacks were levelled against the local members, especially the Parsis, by the orthodox priests of that community and by the Gujarati newspapers like the *Bombay Samachar*, *Rast Goftar*, *Kaiser-i-Hind*. Especially in

¹ “I met W. Q. Judge in New York on his return to America from the European Convention,” writes Countess Constance Wachtmeister, “and was shocked to see the change in his personal appearance; insomnia and suffering had left their mark on him, and he looked terribly dejected. It seemed to me that the lesson had been such a severe one to him that spurious messages would be a thing of the past.” Dejected and downhearted, Mr. Judge died on March 21, 1896, and his followers, now few in number, carry on in his name the work he left behind. For further details see *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. IV, p. 507, and *The Golden Book of the T.S.*

the weekly paper called the *Parsi*,¹ columns of rubbish were written against the Bombay members, particularly the Parsis.

Colonel Olcott passed away on February 17, 1907, leaving behind him as his Presidential successor, Mrs. Annie Besant.

The period that followed, 1907-14, was very exciting and troublesome for the Bombay Lodge, for it was during this period that the internal quarrels *re* the Zoroastrian Jashan Committee and the Lotus Circle Committee were raised ; and it was also during this period that the great questions of principles and policies were involved in what was known as the Leadbeater case and later on also Krishnamurti-Naraniah legal affairs. All these had undoubtedly a very bad effect on some of the members, which led to the increase of parties amongst them, and to parting of the ways.

In 1906-07 very scandalous and shocking charges were gradually but groundlessly levelled against Mr. C. W. Leadbeater² and heaps of dirty and vituperative literature were poured in on Bombay from Australia and America which created mischief to a great extent.

Then there was an attack in 1914 from the Zoroastrian Jashan Committee consisting mainly of the T. S. Parsi members, but it was very insignificant and not worth mentioning.

Resignations from devoted and trusted members like B. P. Wadia in India, and G. R. S. Mead in England, the Leadbeater affair and all other incidents and events, general and particular, combined or single, great or small, coupled with ludicrous literature from carping critics, undoubtedly

¹ This was in 1907-8. These attacks were ably refuted by P. D. Mahaluxmiwala in Bombay newspapers and by Nusserwanji Framji Bilimoria, who published his reply in a book entitled *Don Quixote*.

² *Re* the Leadbeater case and his great services to the Society, see *The Golden Book of the T.S.*

prejudiced and perturbed the minds of many enthusiastic Bombay members. Jehangir J. Vimadalal, Faredun K. Dadachanji, Pestonji D. Mahaluxmiwala and many others resigned for one reason or another in 1914-15.

Mr. Leadbeater was bitterly attacked by a member who was then the President of the Lodge, and since his resignation he has been, in the Bombay Gujarati papers, continuously attacking Krishnaji also. Well, the cause of the Society can never be hampered by the failings or faults of individual members. "Many men claim to be firm in their principles when really they are only obstinate in their prejudices." Since the inception of the Society till now many members who were regarded as true and faithful have resigned for very small reasons. By their resignations, the Society in general and the Lodge in particular have sustained a loss of some intellectual members and some devoted propagandists in the cause of Theosophy. But what was said by K. M. Shroff in a public Theosophical meeting so far back as on October 18, 1886, is as true to-day as it was then :

"The nature of the Theosophical work being peculiar, it has raised a class of men whose business in life it is to draw away young educated men from the faith of their fathers, and to lead them to their own belief; having found that the Theosophical Movement was a stumbling block in their way, they formed a very clever and well-conceived conspiracy about two years and a half ago with a view to tumbling down the whole fabric of Theosophy. Time has shown conclusively that their diabolical attempt has failed and failed most ignominiously. The attempt against the Society has not succeeded in drawing away from the body even a couple of dozen fellows and the principal actors—a set of miserable individuals—in that ludicrous drama have met with their due reward in as much as they have been disregarded by all sensible persons."

The structure of the Society and its various Branches is so very strongly based on the stable rock of Truth that—God willing—there is nothing to be feared even if a few refined and intellectual members like those named above resign. Along with the Parent Society, its premier and popular Branch in India, the Blavatsky Lodge, rolls on.

A good instance of the Theosophist's way of meeting trouble may be given. M. T. Vyas, of the Fellowship School, (mentioned on p. 77), being unable to get on there, went away and started another school on the same lines called the New Era School. His attitude towards his old school is friendly. So Bombay has now two very fine schools where co-education is given based on Theosophical ideals.

It seems however that crises are not over and the Society as a whole, and individual members of the Lodge singly, have yet to pass through many shakings. Already the signs are visible, especially in view of Krishnaji's Modern Teachings, which in fact overthrow the old cherished ideas and ideals of many trusted Theosophists. Already two sections have been formed; one upholds ceremonies of every kind, the other denounces them in the light of Krishnaji's Message; and in fact it seems that everybody is passing through trials and tribulations and the final triumph, I believe, rests with those who wait and watch. The Theosophical Society is a weather-beaten body. Storms may come and storms may go, but it will go on for ever.

CHAPTER XIII

PUBLIC RECEPTIONS AND ADDRESSES

How good is man's life, the mere living ; how fit to employ,
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy.

ROBERT BROWNING

He best serves the state who raises not the roofs of its houses,
but the souls of its citizens.

EPICTETUS

In the last chapter we have seen how foul and futile conspiracies were hatched against our Founders ; how not only the outsiders but those amongst our own ranks who were once considered true, faithful and loyal members betrayed the Society or the Lodge in the short or the long run of their careers ; and yet how few and far between were they who agitated either against the Founders or the Society or the Lodge.

It is, therefore, very pleasing to note here that in spite of babbles and bickerings from a few, there was indeed a very big class of members of the Society, and even the outside public, who appreciated the doings of our Founders and other respected Theosophical Leaders by presenting them on suitable occasions addresses, purses and costly gifts in token of their love and regard for them. We have seen in Chapter I how on the very next day of the Founders' arrival in Bombay, on February 17, 1879, a big reception was held in

their honor and greetings were exchanged. This was the forerunner of many such gatherings later on.

On December 16, 1882, the members of the Bombay Branch of the Theosophical Society gave an evening party in honor of the Founders of the Society before their departure to Madras. The bungalow of Hormusji Pestonji Batliwala, at Khetwadi, where the party was held, was brilliantly lighted for the occasion and the hall was overcrowded before 8.30 p.m. when Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott arrived. The address which was read by Dr. Pandurang Gopal, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Branch, is a document of such historical importance and interest, being the first of its kind, that it is given below in full :

“BOMBAY BRANCH : THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

Bombay, 16th December, 1882.

“MADAME H. P. BLAVATSKY, }
“COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT, } *Founders, Theosophical Society.*

“DEAR SISTER AND BROTHER,

“On the eve of your departure to Madras, we, the members of the Bombay Branch, beg most respectfully to convey to you our heartfelt and sincere acknowledgment for the benefit which the people of this Presidency in general and we in particular have derived from your exposition of the Eastern philosophies and religions during the past four years. Although the exigencies of the Society's growing business make it necessary to remove the Headquarters to Madras, we assure you that the enthusiasm for Theosophical studies and Universal Brotherhood which you have awakened in us will not die out, but will be productive of much good in future. By your editorial efforts and public lectures, you have done much to awaken in the hearts

of educated sons of India a fervent desire for the study of their ancient literature, which has so long been neglected; and though you have never undervalued the system of Western education for the people of India, which to a certain extent is necessary for the material and political advancement of the country, you have often justly impressed upon the minds of young men the necessity of making investigations into the boundless treasures of Eastern learning as the only means of checking that materialistic and atheistic tendency engendered by an educational system unaccompanied by any moral or religious instruction.

“You have preached throughout the country temperance and Universal Brotherhood, and how far your attempts in that direction have been successful during the brief period of four years was perfectly manifest at the last anniversary of the Parent Society, just held in Bombay, when on one common platform brave hearts from Lahore and Simla to Ceylon, from Calcutta to Kathiawar, from Gujarat and Allahabad—Parsis, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Muhammadans and Europeans—assembled under the banner of Theosophy, and advocated the regeneration of India, under the benign influence of British rule. Such a union of different communities, with all prejudices of sects, castes and creeds set aside, the formation of one harmonious whole, and the combining together for any national object, in short, a grand national union, are indispensable for the moral resuscitation of Hindustan.

“Your endeavors have been purely unselfish and disinterested, and they therefore entitle you to our warmest sympathy and best respects. We shall most anxiously watch your successful progress and take an earnest delight in the accomplishment of the objects of your mission, throughout Aryawart.

“As a humble token of our sense of appreciation of your labors of love, and as keepsake from us, we beg most

respectfully to offer for your acceptance on behalf of our Branch, an article of Indian make with a suitable inscription.

"In conclusion, with a sincere desire for the success of the Theosophical Society,

"We beg to subscribe ourselves. . ."

Signed by K. M. Shroff and several others.

A silver vase and plate were then presented to Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott respectively. "Colonel Olcott on behalf of himself and Madame Blavatsky gave an appropriate and touching reply," reports a Bombay newspaper, "his polished sentences, full of admonition and warning, were listened to by those assembled with delight and admiration. Colonel Olcott has the rare gift of a happy and impressive delivery, and he unquestionably wins the hearts of his hearers when he talks on his favorite subject of Theosophy and when his feelings are aroused for the welfare of the people of Hindustan. He particularly impressed upon his hearers—the members of the Bombay Branch—the necessity of a combined action, and concluded his observation with a wish that the Bombay Branch would show activity during his absence." Amongst the speakers were K. M. Shroff, S. St. Lawrence, Martandrao Babaji Nagnath, and Atmaram Bapoo Dalvi.

After Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky the next name that comes uppermost in many minds is that of Dr. Annie Besant. Her first arrival in Bombay on March 15, 1894, was a signal of coming growth to the Bombay Lodge in every respect. She did not come like a stranger, but she came with a heart full of love and devotion, and a head replete with knowledge and wisdom. On the morning of her arrival, she was accorded a most hearty welcome, and we have seen in a previous chapter, a portion of her reply to an address presented to her on that memorable occasion.

She was the founder of the Central Hindu College at Benares, and as such she moved from City to City to collect

funds. In 1898 she came down to Bombay for that purpose. In honor of her visit, a very aristocratic garden party was held by a member of the Blavatsky Lodge, Narotam Morarji Gokuldas, in his bungalow at Cumballa Hill. On this occasion, Dr. Besant in a very short speech appealed to her hearers to help her pet child, the Central Hindu College, and she was successful in her mission to collect a very large sum from her Bombay friends.

Another reception was held at China Baug, Girgaum, in honor of Dr. Besant, when Damodar Master, musician and Theosophist, sang specially composed songs. On April 30, 1907, still another reception in her honor was held at the Lodge.

The Life-President, Colonel Olcott, passed away in 1907, when Dr. Besant was nominated in his place and a constitutional election became necessary. There was some insignificant opposition in this matter, but she was elected as the President by an overwhelming majority.

On the morning of March 2, 1909, an address was presented to Dr. Annie Besant on her first visit to Bombay from Adyar after her first Presidential Election. Amongst other things it was stated therein that "during less than two years, since you took up the high office, you have spared no pains to master all details and put each department on a sound and practical footing. You have inspired confidence and enthusiasm in the hearts of your fellow-workers, and have thought out plans for widening the sphere of usefulness of the Society, making hopeful beginnings". The long address closed with sentiments of deep gratitude and sincere good wishes and was signed by Dharamsey Morarji Gokuldas and Ramchandra Purshotam Kamat, Presidents respectively of the Blavatsky and Dharmalaya Lodges.

After a long and successful tour in Europe, Dr. Besant returned to India on September 6, 1912. She was caught between the arrival of the mail steamer and the departure of

the special train to Calcutta, and taken to the Gaiety Theatre, Fort, where a big reception was held in her honor. Dr. V. S. Trilokekar, one of the oldest and respected members of the Society, was in the chair. Many addresses were read and presented in beautiful and rich caskets from the Lodges of the City and the Presidency, and one from the Order of the Star to their worthy Protector, and also one from the "Order of the Sons of India". The Blavatsky Lodge's special address, which was signed by the then President, Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadalal, was engraved on parchment and enclosed in a rich silver casket beautifully carved, depicting typical Indian scenery and suitably inscribed. In the address itself, sentiments of loyalty, devotion, progress and success, and complete confidence and support in her great work, were copiously expressed. In her very long and stately reply, fortunately preserved in a separate pamphlet, she touched purposely upon the question of the existence of the Masters and our relationship to Them, and dwelt upon the necessity to have belief in Them and to serve humanity in Their names; and referring to Bombay, she concluded in most touching words as under :

"And so, brothers, I will bid you farewell, but not for very long, for I hope to come down to Bombay (loud applause) and do something, not for the Theosophical Brotherhood only but for the town which has ever been so kindly in its welcome to myself. And so instead of saying 'goodbye,' I will say what our French brothers say to us *Au revoir*—'to see again'—pleasanter far than the other phrase for it speaks of a future meeting. And so not goodbye, friends, but 'to see again,' when we will meet for longer and fuller converse, and may be able to come more closely into touch in the work which we have so much at heart."

On another occasion in the city of Bombay, in the old Gaiety Theatre, an All-India address in a silver casket was

presented to her on the morning of July 10, 1914, when she visited Bombay after her second Presidential Election. Rai Iqbal Narain Gurtu, the then General Secretary of the Indian Section, came down specially from Benares to read the address. Welcoming her as "Our President for a second term of seven years," her great services as teacher and leader were eulogised in appreciative terms. Amongst other things it was stated in the address :

"Since the mantle of our great H. P. B. fell on your shoulders twenty-three years ago, what you have done for Theosophy is public record. You have made thinking men and women the world over realise that Theosophy is a living power in the daily life. What too you have done for our beloved Society, during the seven years just over of your first term as President, we all know—how as a result of your work the Society is now stronger by some eight thousand additional members, four hundred new Lodges, and twelve more National Societies. But all this splendid achievement is ours because you have been our leader, by right of Service."

It was from the year 1916, that the Bombay and suburban Lodges began jointly to celebrate Dr. Annie Besant's birthday, falling on October 1, and on occasions liberal sums were raised for her T. S. Public Purposes Fund.

We have seen in Chapter XI how, for political reasons, Dr. Besant was interned by the Government in 1917, with her colleagues G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia, and how by a very powerful and unprecedented agitation the Government were forced to release them within three months. When they came down to Bombay after their release, October 11, 1917, they were given a warm welcome. On May 11, 1919, when Dr. Besant went to England on her political mission with her colleagues P. K. Telang and John Scurr, a hearty public send-off was arranged for them on behalf of the Bombay

Lodges and the following are extracts from an address presented to her on that occasion :

"We, the members of the Blavatsky, Dharmalaya and Shri Krishna Lodges of the Theosophical Society, Bombay, offer you our regards of deepest reverence and heartiest good wishes on the occasion of your departure to England on an important mission. Your absence will be keenly felt by us, but although great oceans may separate you from us, we trust that our loving thoughts will constantly reach you and our actions prove worthy of the guidance you have given us. During the past few months events have occurred in the tense atmosphere of India, giving you cause for much pain, suffering and worry.

"We, therefore, beg to take this opportunity to express to you, our Leader, our utmost trust and confidence and our steadfast loyalty and devotion to you personally and as leader in the manifold activities inspired by and based on Theosophy. Ever since your arrival in India, you have unflaggingly worked for the uplift and amelioration of her children and for the revival of her ancient Dharmic ideals, and guided our steps on the varied and intricate paths of service to humanity.

"We are deeply grateful to you for your teachings and work, so firmly rooted in the principle of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity.

"With most loving greetings we bid you farewell on your appointed mission and wish you an early, happy and joyous return to our Motherland, after its fulfilment."

Dr. Besant's third Presidential Election took place in 1921 and, in spite of slight opposition from certain quarters, it was such a grand success that once again in Bombay a rousing welcome was given to the revered Chief and the enthusiasm evinced this time was even greater than on former occasions. On the morning of Sunday, August 28, 1921, a big reception was held at the spacious Empress Theatre,

Grant Road, Bombay. An address from All-India Theosophical Lodges signed by Purnendu Narayan Sinha, the then General Secretary of the Indian Section, was, in his absence, read by Ruttonsey D. Morarji, then President of the Lodge. A purse of Rs. 5,001 was offered to her on behalf of the All-India Society. Sentiments touching upon the then social and political aspects of India were expressed in the address presented to her, extracts from which are given below :

“MRS. ANNIE BESANT,

President, Theosophical Society.

“REVERED PRESIDENT,

“On behalf of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, it is our privilege to offer you a most loving and hearty welcome to the land so dear and sacred to you and to the hearts of a people whom you have placed under a deep and abiding debt of gratitude by the magnificent services which you have rendered to our country. We, the members of the Theosophical Society in India, have had the privilege of watching, with perhaps a more intimate understanding than that which is vouched to men outside the Society, the part that you have had to play in the destinies of our country.

“We believe that it is not without significance that your re-election to the Presidency of the Theosophical Society should synchronise with the opening of a new chapter in the progress of India. Looking back over the history of the last seven years, one cannot help realising how closely your tireless efforts on behalf of the people of India have been linked with the progress of the country. The year that marked the beginning of your third term of office as President of the Theosophical Society witnessed the birth of a new National Consciousness not only amongst the educated Indians but also among the masses.

Your internment and all the sacrifice that it meant laid the foundation of a New India, full of hopes and aspiration, with an eye enthusiastically fixed upon a noble goal intimately connected with the future destiny of humanity itself.

"It will be out of place to dwell in this address upon the events that followed your internment in rapid succession to make a new chapter in the history of India, and the part you took in the shaping of that chapter.

"Through your work and life we caught the glimpses of a life of perfect dedication to the will of the Master, of the application of that Divine Wisdom which 'mightily and sweetly ordereth all things'.

"What can we offer to you, our beloved and revered President, who have been chosen for a task so mighty, so glorious but so full of suffering! You found us asleep, almost dying, you awakened us and brought us the living Wisdom of our Ancient Rishis. You found us lacking in faith in ourselves, in our country, in our future. You taught us that we had a past more glorious, a tradition more precious than that of any nation of the past or the present. You placed before us a vision of a future even more splendid than our mighty past. In this hope and belief you reared a generation of young men who learnt to revere and cherish the priceless teachings of the Ancient Rishis, and to-day we have Young India, vigorous and assertive, claiming with all the arrogance of Youth the heritage of Manhood.

"You have helped, as no one else has perhaps done, to open the gateway of India's freedom. Standing sentinel over that gateway, you are guarding that precious and hard-won liberty. There is yet another chapter to be written in the history of India's long struggle. It is the gaining and recognition of her place among the nations of the world; the giving to a world at war the Wisdom that India alone can give, the soothing balm which alone can heal the wounded heart of

humanity. When that final triumph shall come, when India shall be hailed as the bringer of Light, then shall the Motherland crown her faithful and devoted servant who wrought so nobly, so bravely; and we who love you, honor you and follow you, no matter where you lead us, we too shall have our share of that benediction and of that triumph. Lead us then, dear and revered President, to that final victory, and may the blessings of the Rishis be upon you and all of us."

Her reply was stirring, full of wisdom and sagacity bearing on India's destiny :

"FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY :

"With all my heart I thank you for the welcome which you—members of the Society—have extended to me on my coming home once more. Since I left you, as you may know from the address just read, the Society has elected me for the third time as the President of that Great Movement. When the request for my second candidature for this high office came to me, it was suggested then that the election should be for life. I asked the Society not to elect me for life, because I hoped that it was better for a democratic society like ours, in fact, to have the right, at the end of the term of this office, to signify its approval or disapproval by a new election. As, however, you have expressed your approval by re-electing me as your President, it makes me stronger in your service, and emboldens me to make a definite pronouncement at the end of the term of office that as you desire my leadership to be continued, it shows to the world that you are quite content with what little I was able to do in the Service of the Society; and I feel sure that in days to come someone stronger and greater than myself will hold this high office of your Presidentship; meanwhile, I shall be glad to prepare the ground for my successor, so that you may all work together for the helping of the world.

“Now, in the address to which you have just listened, the true note is struck that on religion depends the future happiness and peace of the world. It is true, when I first came among you it was to the revival of religion in this land that I turned all my efforts, following closely the admirable example set forth by the President-Founder of the Society. I have since then ever preached and believed that in religion and religion alone is the foundation not only of national education, but also of national prosperity. This one great lesson India holds before the world, since the day when many thousand years ago, from their cradle land in the north of Central Asia the first members of the Aryan root stock race, which also migrated in great numbers to the Western world, came down across the Himalayas and settled their home in India. It was that broad principle of Dharma of the Aryan race which gave India all the great possibilities which history has entered in its records. In that long record of the Indian Nation dominated by a spiritual ideal, we have been promised the glories of the future. In the light of history, when we look over that long long record of many thousand years, we are convinced and find that India to-day preserves intact the heritage of her spiritual life; in her to-day we see the promises of the future never to be forgotten by us—the heritage of perfect humanity. In the youth of the country are stored up the promises of this heritage and the triumph of a mighty Indian Nation of to-morrow. We cannot overlook that the Aryans of yore had given us a splendid heritage of wisdom and luminant ideals of Duty—Dharma—which was unfortunately in a slavish condition when our Society was being inaugurated. Fortunately, the Ancient Rishis sent their messengers to revive and awaken the spiritual lethargy of the East in consonance with the divine promise of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Unless the youths of the country are inspired with the spirit

of the *Gita*, unless they are guided on a spiritual path, there is little hope for Hinduism to be a truly free and democratic mainstay of the Nation. Spirituality manifesting itself in various garbs is the true life of the Nation. The youths of the country must all feel and agree in the hope and passionate aspirations of a mighty Nation and I am sure and certain that in the present and in the future India preserves that righteous heritage of a spiritual mission ultimately helping the evolution of a new civilisation. There lies India's real strength and her real heritage.

"During the time I was absent from you in the West, I had made it a chief factor of my programme to deliver lectures on the reconstruction problems of shattered Europe. I pointed out to them the great ideal India holds for them and which Mazzini, the patriot of Italy, so strongly upheld. The ideal of Europe is based upon "Right," while that of India on "Duty". India carried her ideal too far making herself too submissive. Both did exaggerate their ideals. These are to be blended. The evolution of mankind as a whole is to be planned and made a real deal of the future. A new civilisation should consist in the duty and the obligation of man to man as a part of the fabric erected on the right of individual strength. On that glorious ideal of Duty, of Rights, of Service, depends the new civilisation, and it is the glorious heritage of India to give away for the regulating of the world.

"The Theosophical Society, standing on the ancient foundations of Wisdom of the great Aryans through the medium of one of her great Rishis, proclaimed that the Theosophical Society in India has its duty to hold up the Ancient Wisdom for the healthy guidance of the world. Herein stands the heritage of the Ancient Wisdom. Only in that Wisdom, can, it is presumed, different problems of the present jeopardised world be solved, and it is your privilege as the true and faithful sons and daughters of India to become,

as it were, the very backbone of that right body of the Wisdom, which has never been lost in this aged ancient land of Aryans. By this one passage in your history you have earned the right to give this message to humanity. It is for not putting the world on the spiritual basis that humanity suffers so much, and it is for the cessation of those sufferings of the world that we have been privileged to undertake this humane and immortal work. It is because India has suffered that she has learnt the noblest lessons of wisdom ; because she has been crucified that she has maintained her spiritual glory. You are the deputed harbingers of this great message to the whole world, and for this, the Theosophical Society has come into existence. It was founded when India was in danger of losing her ancient heritage dazzled by the material splendor of the West, dazzled by the triumphs of sufferings for the material welfare which is the ideal of the West. Dazzled by that—the prosperity of science—the youth of India in the latter part of the nineteenth century had turned their backs on the Ancient Wisdom and consequently forgot the inherent glory which it promises for all time to come to the whole world. It was, therefore, quite in tune with the sacred traditions that the Ancient Rishis—the Guardian Angels of this Aryan land—sent out their messengers to recall the straying Indians and make them firm on the pedestal of their Ancient Wisdom. It is in the following of this Ancient Wisdom and perfect spiritual life that the glory of Hinduism stands.”

After describing in detail the advent of Zarathushtra of the Parsis, Muhammad of Islam, Buddha of the Hindus and Christ of the Christians, Dr. Besant continued :

“It is thus by realising the experiences of the past and adjusting ourselves for the future, by spiritualising our present life, that we have to conquer the whole world, not by the force of arms—it is a brute force—but by pure spiritual love which is the inherited treasure of India. India was

never averse to material prosperity, but she knows full well how to adjust things in their rightful and fruitful order, aiming at perfect unity and harmony without the least affectation to the soul of spirituality upon which depends her glorious part which she has been destined to play in the great commonwealth of humanity of to-morrow. India claims in her spiritual mission the intellectual supremacy, her scientific and material powers, as a part of the perfect life of the Nation, and it is on this inherent strength that she stands to-day full of vigor of youthful, ever new, spirit. Let us not forget, during the current political excitement, the struggle for commercial prosperity, the grand efforts of science as shown by our great scientists, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose and P. C. Roy. Let us not forget that our dear India has not only borne great patriots, great scientists, but also teachers of spirituality like Rabindranath Tagore—the master poet of India. It shows that India is quite awake in the morning of her reborn glory. I insist upon all patriots that, to uplift India, they should one and all struggle for higher education, because through the medium of that education, and that education alone, that India would achieve material prosperity, political freedom and spiritual splendor. I bid you greeting and welcome you to this new heritage, for yours is the labor, yours is the duty and yours is the triumph for the coming future. I thank you.”¹

In the year 1924 Dr. Besant completed fifty years of hard honest world-wide service in the public cause in all respects. Bombay had the privilege—a very proud privilege—on October 1, 1924, Dr. Besant's seventy-seventh birthday, to organise a grand reception from the Theosophical Society, with which thirty other public associations joined, to eulogise the noble services of this noble personality. This great and memorable meeting was held in the Sir Cawasji Jehangir

¹ See the *Times of India*, August 30, 1921; and *Theosophy in India*, October, 1921.

Public Hall of Bombay which was overcrowded from top-most gallery to floor. M. A. Jinnah, M.L.A., presided. Amongst the speakers were Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, the Hon. Sir Lalloobhai Samaldas, J. J. Vimadalal, W. H. Bryant, Miss Mithan Tata and Jamnadas Dwarkadas.

She was profusely garlanded. At the end of the proceedings, Dr. Besant graciously asked the writer of these notes to distribute the cartload of flowers presented to her, to different hospitals in the City of Bombay which was of course done and which thoughtful action of hers remained a beautiful memory in the minds of many suffering souls.

Messages were read from Mahatma Gandhi, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Pandit Motilal Nehru, V. J. Patel and others.

Dr. Besant then replied amidst enthusiastic and loud cheers. She thanked the various Institutions for honoring her that evening. She said she did not work looking towards India as a great dependency of the British Crown, but from the beginning of her career, she had felt for India, Egypt and Afghanistan and striven all these years for their liberation. From that day till now, very much more during the past thirty years, she had been fortunate enough to live in this ancient land and to work for her mighty religions, for the restoration of her national education, for the recall of her sons to ancient powers and for giving back to her women the power that in the days of glory they enjoyed. She appealed to all to forget the past and go forward in the future and then, and then only, India would be free.¹

On four other occasions she was jointly honored with J. Krishnamurti. The first was at a garden party given to both the distinguished personages at China Baug, Girgaum, on November 22, 1924, on their return after a successful tour in Europe. Again at China Baug on April 30, 1926, at the

¹ See the *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Times of India* of October 2, 1924.

celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Dharmalaya Lodge, both Dr. Besant and Krishnaji were present. The third occasion was in the Fellowship School compound at Chowpatty, on November 2, 1927, when Mr. C. Jinarajadasa was also present. Then a reception was held at the new Hall of the Blavatsky Lodge Building on November 6, 1929. It is an interesting fact, in contrast with conditions fifty years ago, to note at this place that the last-named meeting was arranged by wireless messages between Bombay and the party at a two days' distance on the steamer, by which they were returning from England. Fifty years ago, science was not so much advanced, and there being no wireless apparatus then on board the steamers, no one dreamed of such marvellous facilities as we have in these modern days. Both Mr. Krishnamurti and Dr. Besant gave as usual kind replies on all these occasions.

Turning back to the year 1902, on December 12, a reception was held in honor of Miss A. J. Willson, a devoted lady worker in the higher cause of Theosophy, and likewise in 1902, Mr. Stuart was honored. On November 19, 1905, H. H. the Maharajah of Cashmere, a member of our Society, was welcomed in our Lodge; and likewise H. H. Sir Waghji Ravji Bahadur, Thakoresaheb of Morbi, also a member of our Society, was honored at our Lodge on October 13, 1907. Miss Maud MacCarthy, the world-renowned violinist and a member of our Society, who introduced Indian music on the London stage, visited our Lodge on January 3, 1908. Countess Schack and Mrs. Helen Lubke were honored on February 26, 1911. The well-known American poetess, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and the world famous astrologers Mr. and Mrs. Alan Leo, honored our Lodge by their gracious presence on March 11, 1911. B. P. Wadia, on his return from America, was given a public reception in Bombay at the Marwadi Vidyalaya Hall on August 2, 1920, when the great well-known

patriot, the late Lala Lajpatrai, presided. On January 6, 1923, a reception was held at the Adenwala Baug, Tardeo, in honor of the famous American musicians, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Henry Eicheim who entertained their hearers with exquisite pieces of music on the piano and the violin.

On January 31, 1923, a public meeting was held in honor of Mr. C. Jinarajadasa at the Sir Cawasji Jehangir Hall, and an address in a silver casket was presented to him in appreciation of his innumerable services to the Society and its literature. In it it was said :

"Your valuable contribution to the Theosophical literature has a charm and an originality, all its own. Your silent but strenuous work in the cause of Theosophy in other spheres of life, has not been less valuable ; and your upholding the cause of Mother India in all parts of the world has always claimed our best gratitude and admiration."

This was followed by a very interesting lecture by Mr. Jinarajadasa on "The Spiritual Basis Underlying Politics," and on the day following he spoke on "Child-Education".

Mr. C. Jinarajadasa was also the recipient of an address on November 2, 1927, along with Krishnaji and Dr. Annie Besant.

Mrs. Hiranbai A. Tata, an earnest and enthusiastic member of the Blavatsky Lodge and her daughter, Miss Mithan Tata, Bar-at Law, returned to Bombay in January, 1924, after nearly five years' sojourn in England. They went in 1919 as representatives of the Women of Bombay and worked there in connection with the educational, social and political advancement of the women of India. Mrs. and Miss Tata were also delegates to the Women's International Congresses at Geneva, Rome and Paris, and submitted a memorandum to the Southborough Committee in England. They were, therefore, welcomed back and honored at the Lodge on January 29, 1924. Miss Navazbai Dorabji Contractor,

B.A., a lady educationist, presided. Mrs. Goolbanoo K. Wadia, in whose hands Mrs. Tata had left her work of the local branch of the Women's Indian Association during her five years' absence, was also honored on this occasion.

On November 22, 1924, a reception was held in honor of Lady Emily Lutyens at our Lodge.

The most fitting of all these receptions, entertainments and parties was the one spontaneously given to Dr. George S. Arundale on December 1, 1928. It was his fiftieth birthday—his Golden Jubilee day! Dr. Arundale happened to be in Bombay on this occasion. Since the inception of the Lodge, with the exception of the Founders, no distinguished leader of the Theosophical Society of the calibre and standard of Dr. Arundale had resided in Bombay for the period of a month. This was accomplished by Dr. Arundale, who, we Bombayites know, possesses in his heart a peculiar fascination for Bombay, though he may rightly claim to call himself, in the famous words of Colonel Olcott, "a citizen of the world". Celebrating his fiftieth birthday on the terrace of the new Lodge building, Dr. Arundale was heartily cheered and was presented with rich Indian silk shawls and other valuable gifts as mementoes of his cherished stay in Bombay. This account will be fittingly closed with a message of Dr. G. S. Arundale's which was issued on the morning of his above-mentioned memorable birthday in Bombay :

"Not selfish pride of thought or of feeling, or of speech or of deed, not self-satisfaction neither self-complacency. But tremendous, fiery, happy, uncalculating keenness about everything we think and feel and say and do : tremendous sincerity, tremendous loyalty. And it may hearten us to remember that keenness is the sure seed of capacity and genius.

"We shall continually change, for we need to change—often radically. Thank God for change, however revolutionary, since change alone saves us from petrifying futility. We

look forward to change. We invite change. We are utterly unashamed of change. But whatever changes come in our thought, feeling, word or deed, each change, however much it may savor to the undiscerning of so-called inconsistency—the ‘hobgoblin of little minds’—will be change for the better, provided that in each change we find occasion to remain splendidly, unswervingly constant to that fiery, pointed keenness which makes each expression of ourselves worthy and happy, be it what it may. And let us always be absolutely sincere about ourselves, absolutely loyal to ourselves.”

Dr. Annie Besant was elected President of the Theosophical Society for the fourth time in 1928. Her great work in connection with the freedom of India is now coming to a successful end. For which we hope to receive and honor her greatly in Bombay in the near future.

CHAPTER XIV

OFFICE-BEARERS, PAST AND PRESENT

New times demand new measures and new men,
 The world advances, and in time outgrows
 The laws that in our father's day were best ;
 And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
 Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
 Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.

James R. Lowell

Presidents

1. Keshav Narsingh Mavlankar, 1880 (father of Damodar).
2. Dr. D. E. Dudley, 1881.
3. Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh, 1882-91.
4. Kawasji Merwanji Shroff, 1892-95.
5. David Gostling, 1896-1908.
6. Dharamsey Morarji Gokuldas, 1909.
7. Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadalal, 1909-12.
8. Mrs. Hilda M. Powell, 1913.
9. Jehangir Sorabji, 1914—May, 1916.
10. Jamshedji Fardunji Madon, 1916.
11. Pandarinath Kashinath Telang, 1917-20.
12. Ruttonsey Dharamsey Morarji, 1921.
13. Framji Jamshedji Bilia, 1922 (*Continues*).

Honorary Secretaries

1. Framroze Rustomji Joshi, 1880.
2. Fardunji Merwanji Banaji, 1881.

3. Bal Nilaji Pitale, 1882-84.
4. Rustomji Ardeshir Master (or Daruwala), 1885-88.
5. Hormusji Dadabhoy Suntoke, 1889.
6. Rustomji Ardeshir Master, 1890.
7. Muncherji Manekji Shroff, 1891-92.
8. Sunder Raghvendra Rao, 1892-98.
9. Ramchandra Purshotam Kamat, 1899-1901.
10. S. Sunder, 1902.
11. Nusserwanji Pestonji Munshi, 1903-12.
12. Vicaji Edulji Vakharia (Jt. with N. P. Munshi), 1909-11.
13. Navroji Aderji (Jt. with N. P. Munshi), 1912.
14. Vicaji Edulji Vakharia (Jt. with Wadia), 1913.
15. Khurshedji J. B. Wadia, 1913-16.
16. Dossabhai Hormusji Dastur } (jointly) 1917.
17. Rustomji Merwanji Alpaiwala } (jointly) 1918-19.
18. Rustomji Merwanji Alpaiwala } (jointly) 1920.
19. Phirozshaw Ruttonji Green } (jointly) 1920.
20. Khurshedji J. B. Wadia } (jointly) 1920.
21. Bhagwandas Vithaldas } (jointly) 1920.
22. Khurshedji J. B. Wadia, 1921-30.

Honorary Treasurers

1. Martandrao Babaji Nagnath, 1880-81.
2. Dorabji Hormusji Bharucha, 1882.
3. Bal Nilaji Pitale, 1883-84.
4. Rustomji Ardeshir Master (or Daruwala), 1885-88.
5. Rustomji Kiasji Mody, 1889-90.
6. Jamshedji Fardunji Madon, 1891-92.
7. Munchersshaw Kawasji Doctor, 1893-94.
8. Manmohundas Dayaldas Shroff, 1895-1902.
9. Jal Rustomji Aria, 1903-06.

10. Munchershaw Framji Aria, 1907-12.
11. Peshotan Byramji Kabraji, 1912.
12. Kuverji Ruttonji Jassawala, 1913-16.
13. Jehangir Ruttonji Gilder, 1916-22.
14. Bhagwandas Vithaldas, 1923-1929.
15. Nadir F. M. Garda, 1930.

Honorary Librarians

1. Sorabji A. Bombotewala, 1884-88.
2. Munchershaw Kawasji Doctor, 1889-90.
3. Rustomji Kiasji Mody, 1891-92.
4. Dhunjibhoy Navroji Kurlawala, 1893.
5. Rustomji Kiasji Mody, 1894.
6. Pestonji Muncherji Ghadiali, 1895.
7. Manekji Dadabhoy Panday, 1896.
8. Navroji Aderji Deputy, 1898.
9. Rustomji Kiasji Mody, 1899-1900.
10. Burjorji Edulji Unwala, 1900.
11. Jal Rustomji Aria, 1901-1902.
12. Fardunji Shapurji Madon, 1903.
13. Munchershaw Bomanji Master, 1904-1908.
14. Peshotan Byramji Kabraji, 1908.
15. Dossabhoy Hormusji Dastur, 1909-11.
16. Phirozshaw Ruttonji Green, 1912.
17. Nusserwanji Rustomji Mistry, 1913-1916.
18. Minocher Phirozshaw Mullan (jointly with N. R. Mistry), 1916.
19. Phirozshaw Ruttonji Green (jointly with M. P. Mullan), 1917-18.
20. Siavax Hormusji Jhabwala, 1918.
21. Jalejar Phirozshaw Mullan, 1919.
22. Burjorji Dadabhoy Mehta, 1920-28.
23. Ardeshir Manekji Mody, 1929 (*Continues*).

Lodge Trustees

All the Lodge Funds from 1880 were lodged as safe deposits in the firm of Messrs. Narayan & Co. (where Tukaram Tatya was a partner); but, by a special resolution passed by the General Body on September 16, 1903, the funds were transferred for safe custody in a bank, and the Government loans belonging to the Lodge stood in the joint names of

Manmohundas Dayaldas Shroff	}	1903-12.
David Gostling		
Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadalal		
Jehangir Jamshedji Vimadalal	}	1912-14.
Narotam Morarji Gokuldas		
Faredun Kersaspji Dadachanji		
Rao Saheb Purshotam Odhawji		
Manmohundas Dayaldas Shroff		
Toolsidas Keshavdas Merchant	}	1914-1919.
Framji Jamshedji Bilia		
Cooverji Hormusji Plumber		
Framji Jamshedji Bilia	}	1919-1928.
Cooverji Hormusji Plumber		
Jehangir Ruttonji Gilder		
Jalejar Hormusji Bilimoria		
Framji Jamshedji Bilia	}	1929 (<i>Continues</i>).
Framroz Jamshedji Ginwala		
Dorabji Rustomji Todywala		
Mavji Govindji Seth		
Phirozshaw Ruttonji Green		

Lodge Officers

From 1880 to 1892 the clerical work of the Lodge was done by the Honorary Secretary, Treasurer or Librarian, but

from 1893, owing to the increase of the Lodge work paid officials were engaged as under :

1. S. Ganpat Iyer, 1893.
2. Gajanan Bhaskar Vaidya, 1894.
3. Kondapanath Balwant, 1895.
4. Shankar Rao, 1898-1902.
5. Harjiwan Kalidas Mehta, 1903-1906.
6. Dattatrya Mahadeo, 1907-1908.
7. Sakerlal Chotalal Dharia, 1908-18.
8. D. R. Murdeshwar, 1918.
9. G. K. Vaidya, 1919.
10. M. M. Botola, 1920.
11. Dinshaw Nusserwanji Bhesania, 1920-1922.
12. Narayan Pandurang Oka, 1922-1926.
13. Keshav L. B. Raje, 1926-1927.
14. Dhunjishaw Shapurji Bhura, 1927-30.

CHAPTER XV

DEAR DEPARTED ONES

God and I in space alone
And nobody else in view,
“And where are the people, O Lord!” I said,
“The earth below and the sky o’erhead
And the dead whom once I knew?”

“That was a dream,” God smiled and said—
“A dream that seemed to be true.
There were no people living or dead,
There was no earth and no sky o’erhead;
There was only Myself—in you.”

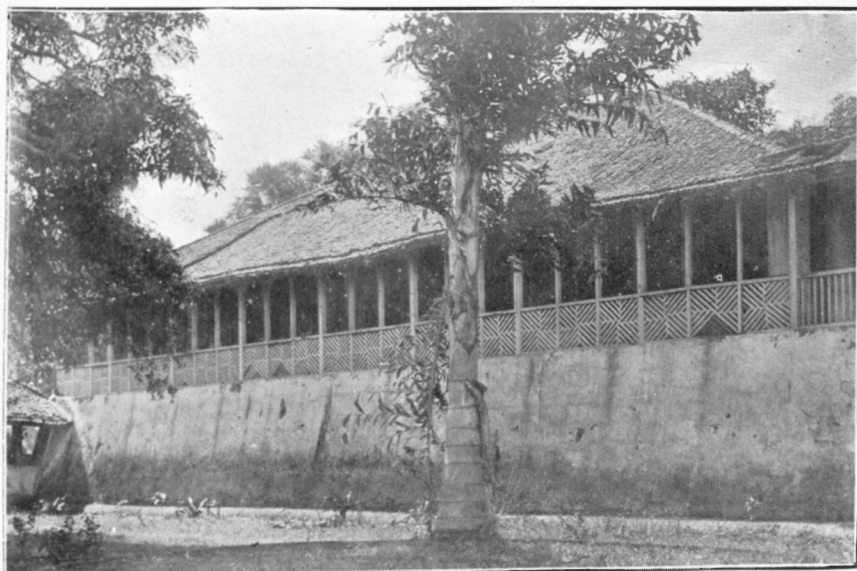
ELLA WHEELER WILCOX, in *Poems of Power*

AFTER a lapse of fifty years, when one sits down to read the old records, naturally there comes uppermost in one’s mind those departed ones who once toiled for the sake of their dear Lodge, who, bearing always in mind the noble precepts of Theosophy and inspired always by its noble teachings, worked with heart and soul for its betterment and devoted their hours, days and years in its service. It was Wordsworth who said that “there is but one Society, that of the living and the dead,” and in the light of Theosophy, “whom we consider dead are not dead but gone before”. It is, however, with gratitude and love that they are remembered here in this history, especially written for the occasion of the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Lodge.

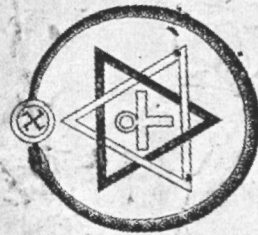
The following notes give those whose services were varied and prominent in connection with Bombay, in the chronological order of their passing away:



Crow's Nest : Entrance



Crow's Nest, upper part with H. P. B.'s room



RECEIVED, this

30th

day of

April

1880

of Avabai Herzoghan Oshoff the sum of
10 Rupees
~~Five Dollars~~, Initiation Fee, payable upon application for Fellowship with

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, subject to the provisions of the By-Laws.

H. P. B. Starobin
Treasurer.

Receipt signed by H. P. B. and issued to the first Indian lady who joined the T. S.

Mrs. Avanbai Phirozshaw D. Shroff—d. 1-4-1881. She was the first Parsi lady member who was duly admitted to the Theosophical Society. She and her husband, the late P. D. Shroff, were close friends of Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. Touching upon her death the following extract from a letter¹ from Colonel Olcott to her husband is interesting: "In looking over my Diary for 1881, I read on the page for April 2 thus: 'Jabouli notified me of the death last night of Avanbai, wife of Phirozshah D. Shroff, and our first and only Parsi lady Theosophist. A winsome young woman, devotedly loved by her husband. She died in child-bed. With Padshah I went to the house and sat as a mourner in the Parsi fashion.' The entry for April 3 says: 'This morning H. P. B., Mr. Bruce, Padshah and I went to sit as mourners for dear Mrs. Phiroz. Afterward I took Dr. Dudley around there to see the baby left by Avanbai.' Now I want to know whether that baby² of 1881 is the strong young chap and son I admitted into the Society last week."

Charles Francis Powell—d. 8-2-1890. He endeared himself to all by his simplicity of life and self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of the Society. A valuable and most serviceable member.

T. Subba Rao.—d. 24-2-1890. An erudite scholar, author and occultist, whose passing away was deeply regretted by the Bombay members.

Madame H. P. Blavatsky—d. 8-5-1891. Founder of the Theosophical Society and the Messenger of the Masters. Author and a true Theosophist.

Dr. Vithal Pandurang Mahtre—d. 1891. A prominent member of his time.

¹ This letter dated Adyar, 28-3-1905 was kindly shown to me by Dhunjishaw Shroff, the son of Phirozshaw Shroff.

² This "baby of 1881" was subsequently initiated by Colonel Olcott during his memorable visit in March, 1905.

Munchershaw Manekji Shroff (Master)—d. 3-12-1892. Once the Hon. Secretary of the Lodge, a most enthusiastic, hardworking and devoted member who bestowed his services on the Lodge ungrudgingly, but who subsequently drifted away from it.

Nusserwanji Byramji Secretary—d. 29-5-1893. A studious member of Colonel Olcott's time.

William Q. Judge—d. 21-3-1896. He visited the Bombay Lodge in July, 1884, and kept correspondence with it.

Phirozshaw Rustomji Mehta—d. 9-2-1897. A scholar, a lecturer and a propagandist. A most earnest and cultured student. As Vice-President, he took an active part in the management of the Lodge.

Pestonji Muncherji Ghadiali—d. 4-5-1898. A quiet conscientious worker. A sincere student of Theosophy.

Tukaram Tatyā—d. 2-6-1898. A public citizen and a Municipal Corporator. A most devoted Theosophist. Father of the Bombay Branch. Homeopathic healer, and founder of the Theosophical Charitable Dispensary.

Dhunjibhai Jamshedji Medhora—d. 11-5-1899. A most devoted member. Author of many Gujarati books on Zoroastrianism written in the light of Theosophy.

Nusserwanji Dorabji Bahadurji—d. 18-2-1902. A very devoted member of Colonel Olcott's time. Father of the well-known Dr. K. N. Bahadurji.

Kawasji Merwanji Shroff—d. 26-4-1903. A public spirited citizen, a journalist and a Municipal Corporator. The first Indian Theosophist who was initiated in America. Founder of the Bai Sakerbai Hospital for Animals, in Bombay, which Colonel Olcott thought "one of the worthiest charities in all India . . . For infinitely smaller services than his, hosts of men have been decorated by the Government of India".¹

¹ *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 420.

Jamshedji Phirozshaw Naladaru—d. 5-11-1904. A Parsi priest and a student and exponent of Zoroastrianism in the light of Theosophy.

Munchershaw Kawasji Doctor—d. 6-1-1907. A man of ideal character. By nature sweet and composed in Theosophical mental attitude. Very calm-minded in times of stress and sorrow.

Colonel H. S. Olcott—d. 17-2-1907. Founder of the Theosophical Society. A lover of Bombay and Founder of the Premier Lodge of India. Author and exponent of Theosophy.

David Gostling—d. 10-9-1908. A public spirited citizen. A member of the Municipal Corporation. A devoted Christian and a staunch Theosophist.

Khurshedji Rustomji Camaji.—d. 20-8-1909. A very great Oriental scholar and a renowned reformer. A deep student of Zoroastrianism. A great Mason. Studied Theosophy from Colonel Olcott's times and joined the Society later.

Dwarkadas Dharamsey—d. 28-8-1909. A public citizen and a great merchant.

Dadabhoy Dhanjibhoy Jassawala—d. 27-2-1910. A deep student of Theosophy. A great pioneer in spreading the cause of vegetarianism, especially among the Parsis.

Hirji Pestonji Wadia—d. 18-4-1911. A great scholar and an earnest student of Theosophy. He was a Judge in the Court of Baroda, and in all his judgments he kept to the spirit of Theosophy.

Munchershaw Framji Aria—d. 15-5-1912. A quiet, conscientious worker in the cause and betterment of the Lodge. A physical culturist and an earnest Theosophist.

Dharamsey Morarji Gokuldas—d. 20-5-1912. A public citizen, a devout Hindu, wholeheartedly a Theosophist, a great helper and benefactor of the Lodge.

Dr. Pestonji Navroji Pavri—d. 30-5-1912. An old Mason. A most devoted and enthusiastic Theosophist. An author and a lecturer.

Dr. Arthur Richardson—d. 1-6-1912. A great scholar, lecturer and helper in the betterment of the Lodge. Subsequently went to Benares as the Principal of the Central Hindu College.

Pandurang Hari Bendu—d. 23-8-1912. A faithful and honest peon and bill collector of the Lodge who, of his own accord, was initiated as a member of the Lodge.

Miss Motibai Edulji Batliwala—d. 1-1-1913. A spirited lady lecturer and a reputed propagandist of Theosophy.

William Curtis—d. 3-5-1913. An enthusiastic member of his time.

Munchershaw Bomanji Master—d. 22-9-1913. A silent worker in the cause of Theosophy.

Manmohundas Dayaldas Shroff—d. 5-10-1913. A Gujarati scholar and a lecturer. A devout Hindu, but wholeheartedly a Theosophist. Founder of the Lodge Book Depot and Sanatan Dharma Examinations.

N. S. E. Nissim—d. 26-3-1915. A prominent member of his time.

Pritamlal Dhirajlal—d. 21-9-1915. A cultured Gujarati Hindu who took much interest in the Theosophical propaganda work.

Khorshedbanoo Cursetji Nanji—d. 2-10-1915. A devoted lady member who left a small legacy to the Lodge.

Rao Bahadur Vassanji Khimji—d. 28-5-1916. A public citizen. A devoted Theosophist and a silent financial helper.

Jehangir Sorabji—d. 31-5-1916. A much respected member. Very devoted and deeply cultured. Left the post of Treasury Officer in Nizam's Dominions and was the General Secretary of the Indian Section, 1908-12, and the President of the Lodge from 1914 to 1916. Writer and lecturer.

Shapurji Nusserwanji Bhedwar—d. 25-8-1916. Photographer, artist and poet. Writer of many articles based on Theosophical knowledge.

Dinshaw Dorabji Writer—d. 21-1-1917. An earnest and devoted member. A silent worker in the field of Theosophy.

Pranjivandas Kalidas Ghaswala—d. 11-2-1917. A merchant. An earnest member.

Hormusji Dadabhoy Suntoké—d. 20-5-1917. A devoted member who took keen interest in debates on Theosophical subjects. Was a constant writer and versifier in Gujarati magazines.

Rao Saheb Purshotam Odhawji—d. 13-11-1918. A public spirited citizen who did much in propagating Theosophical education among the youth of Bombay.

Tulsidas Keshavdas—d. 2-12-1919. A devoted member of the merchant class who silently helped the Lodge funds.

Dorabji N. Sachinwala—d. 23-6-1920. An actor by profession but a very devoted Theosophist, who tried to infuse Theosophy amongst his kith and kin.

Rustomji Muncherji Mobedjina—d. 30-9-1920. A very earnest and critical student of Theosophy. Very unassuming. Studied Samskrit and Avesta lore deeply. Author and lecturer and a very strict vegetarian.

Pestonji Dinshaw Khan—d. 4-11-1920. A great merchant (especially trading in Colombo), a globe trotter, a devoted Theosophist and "healer" to a certain extent. Helped at the Theosophical Charitable Dispensary in Bombay, and the cause of Theosophy in Ceylon.

Navroji Aderji (Deputy)—d. 26-1-1921. A very cultured gentleman of active temperament. Wholeheartedly devoted to Theosophy. Was staying in the Lodge rooms and was almost its custodian.

Rustomji Kiasji Mody—d. 20-2-1921. Once a very active and devoted member of Colonel Olcott's time.

Phirozshaw Dhunjishaw Shroff—d. 24-2-1921. One of the members of Colonel Olcott's time. An experienced and well travelled businessman. In the early eighties and nineties a staunch worker. He was one of those who accompanied Colonel Olcott on his first tour in Ceylon.

Gajanan Bhaskar Vaidya—d. 23-3-1921. A most prominent and sincere worker in the field of Education with Theosophical ideals. Worked as an honorary teacher in a Hindu Girls' School for nearly 18 years and single-handedly collected Rs. 40,000 for the School Building. He was also a great Hindu missionary and brought many untouchables and non-Hindus into the Hindu fold. He was one of the founders of the Dharmalaya Lodge, and also of the Ganesh Lodge. A Theosophical lecturer and propagandist.

Alfred Percy Sinnett—d. 25-6-1921. A journalist of very wide experience. Visited Bombay. Author and editor of many Theosophical works.

Mrs. Jilloobai Ruttonshaw Ghandi—d. 8-6-1922. A Parsi lady of orthodox views but interested in Theosophical studies and left behind her copious notes. Worked among the poor and destitute Parsi families.

Peshotan Byramji Kabraji—d. 20-7-1922. An earnest and hardworking Theosophist. Did his utmost to spread Zoroastrianism and Theosophy amongst the young people of his community.

Khurshedji Bhicaji Chinoy—d. 26-7-1922. An unassuming, devoted Theosophist, who kept for years a box in his pocket and thus collecting small coins helped the Dr. H. M. Massina Hospital by thousands of rupees. Visited hospitals regularly and spread Theosophy there.

Nusserwanji Framji Bilimoria—d. 15-8-1922. A writer, author, journalist and a lecturer. A very devoted and earnest student of Theosophy. Collaborated with Colonel Olcott in

spreading Zoroastrianism in the light of Theosophy. Was the first and only Honorary Life Member of the Lodge. The titles of his four Gujarati books mentioned on p. 56 are *Gems from the Avesta*, *Zoroastrian Guide*, *Life of the Holy Zarathustra*, and *Zoroastrianism and Reincarnation*. A great contribution of his to Zoroastrianism was a fine colored picture of Lord Zarathustra, of which he claimed to have had a psychic vision some time in 1892, about which he consulted one of our Theosophical leaders whose opinion was:

"You appear to have had a flash of clairvoyance and to have seen an Initiate of high grade (Zarathustra). Certainly keep the picture in mind, and if you are pure and loyal, and fix your thoughts on that picture with sincere devotion to the original, you will again succeed in seeing the Holy One."

Subsequently he got his vision reproduced on canvas by M. F. Pithawala, a Parsi artist of European fame. By 1908 the picture became so very popular that in fact it was demanded by devoted persons and institutions other than the Zoroastrian and was placed in shrine-rooms.¹

Dossabhai Hormusji Dastur—d. 20-10-1922. A Parsi priest. An earnest student of Theosophy who took general interest in the management of the Lodge.

Miss Mina Renda—d. 14-8-1923. She came to Bombay from England, as a school teacher in 1903. She took an active part as a Theosophical educationist. She married the prominent Hindu member, R. D. Morarji, in 1922.

Nadir Merwanji Nicholson—d. 6-8-1924. A young enthusiastic Theosophist. Tried to propagate Theosophy. Became a member two or three years before his death, and was very active and energetic at the Lodge work.

Dr. Fakirji Rustomji Hadvaid—d. 3-2-1925. A very old member of Colonel Olcott's time. Rarely attended the Lodge but was very devoted and a propagandist.

¹ See N. F. Bilimoria's *Autobiography*, published by his son in 1923, pp. 98-104.

Manekji Dadabhai Panday—d. 19-4-1925. A civil engineer by profession. Left his job and went to Benares. Author, travelling lecturer and inspector of Lodges.

Manekbai Jamshedji Sukhia—d. 11-3-1926 } Both passed
Miss Dinbai Byramji Kabraji—d. 11-3-1926 } away on the same day. Both were very devoted and pains-taking ladies who spread Theosophy by their lives wherever they went.

Mrs. Navazbai Hormusji Kavarana—d. 28-9-1926. Same type as above. Infused the spirit of Theosophy amongst the poor and the sick whom she visited.

Dorabji Framji Romer—d. 14-10-1926. A quiet worker in the interests of the Lodge. Very devoted and self-sacrificing. He left a small legacy to the Lodge.

Ardeshir Hormusji Printer—d. 11-1-1927. A devoted Theosophist. A clerk in a mill who spread Theosophy amongst the millhands.

Framroze Rustomji Joshi—d. 31-8-1927. A studious and devoted member of Colonel Olcott's time. The first Hon. Secretary of the Lodge. Latterly a public citizen connected with many Zoroastrian institutions.

Jal Rustomji Aria—d. 8-6-1928. He was an enthusiastic member of the Lodge for many years. Left Bombay and went to Adyar as the Recording Secretary in 1908. His familiar study was Astrology.

Nusserwanji S. Phediwala—d. 21-1-1929. A very poor customs clerk by profession but a very devoted Theosophist and a very unassuming, silent worker.

Jamshedji Fardunji Madon—d. 27-2-1929. An educationist by profession. A deep student of Theosophy, very gentle-natured, unassuming, hard worker in the interests of the Lodge and the father and founder of the Zoroastrian Home at Adyar.

Pandarinath Kashinath Telang—d. 5-6-1929. A very devoted and talented worker in the educational, social and political fields. A scholar and a lecturer.

Narotam Morarji Gokuldas—d. 5-11-1929. A public spirited citizen. A millionaire and millowner. Once Sheriff of Bombay, he was much devoted to the Theosophical leaders, especially to Dr. Annie Besant. A philanthropist who secretly helped the poor students.

Nusserwanji Pestonji Munshi—d. 30-12-1929. An unostentatious and devoted worker. A very good organiser who infused enthusiasm in other co-workers.

Edulji Framji Kolah—d. 2-7-1930. A most devoted and earnest member of the Lodge. Took keen interest in the management of the Lodge, and in fact was its custodian.

Dhunjibhai Dorabji Gilder—d. 13-7-1930. An enthusiastic member. By profession an ideal school-master. A well known Mason. Did yeoman's service in the cause of temperance and prohibition.

Byramji Phirozshaw Madon—d. 16-1-1931. An old and devoted member. Author and propagandist. He travelled in England and America, and introduced into Bombay the science of Physical Culture; also Nature Cure. He contributed liberally towards various T.S. funds.

Dr. Kaikhusro Ruttonji Divecha—d. 31-1-1930. He was a devout Theosophist and a deep student of Vedantic literature.

CHAPTER XVI

APPRECIATIONS AND TESTIMONIALS

From glory unto glory ! Be this our joyous song,
As on the King's own highway we bravely march along !
From glory unto glory ! O word of stirring cheer,
As dawns the solemn brightness of another glad New Year.

Now onward, ever onward, from strength to strength we go,
While grace for grace abundantly shall from His fulness flow,
To glory's full fruition, from glory's foretaste here,
Until His very Presence crown our happiest New Year.

Frances Ridley Havergal.

IT is always a pleasure to hear words of appreciation of particular work done, it is always a consolation to read lines of appreciation of one's duty performed. The Blavatsky Lodge in its existence of fifty years has done a lot of good not to hundreds but to thousands of human beings. In the span of fifty years, or half a century, it has spread light where there was darkness, wisdom where there was ignorance. It is but natural that all the members do not take active part in the management of an institution like this, but it is true that members, each and all, play their part consciously or unconsciously in the betterment of the Lodge.

While chronicling the deeds of well known members, it is only fair to add an appreciation of the silent but supreme deeds of many lesser known members. These have done a lot of good secretly, and helped silently towards the betterment and prosperity of the Lodge. Many of our members of the time of H. P. B. and H. S. O. "have already passed away

into the Region of Glory"; but fortunately we have still amongst us Khan Bahadur Navroji Dorabji Khandalawala, Sorabji Edulji Warden, Burjorji Jamaspji Padshah, Dr. Jehangir K. Daji, Rustomji Nusserwanji Koyaji and Dadabhoy Jivaji Soonawala who all worked with Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky.

From about fifty members in 1880 the Lodge has grown into the membership of 256 in 1930.¹ From its first Fund of Rs. 200, donated by Tukaram Tatya, its last balance sheet shows property and assets of Rs. 186,679-10-10. From its first Library, which hardly contained 50 books, the Lodge has now the proud privilege to possess 4,587 books, some of which are quite rare and out of print.

The Lodge has ever been active and alert from the very beginning up to now, and it is hoped that, looking to the Force it ever gets from above, it will continue its energetic and inspiring work as long as it exists in the present round of its life.

The following are a few extracts of opinions received from various sources during a busy year, appreciating the work of the Lodge :

(1) *Letter from Upendranath Basu, B.A., LL.B., General Secretary, Indian Section, Theosophical Society, dated Benares, July 24, 1899 :*

"I have no hesitation in declaring that the syllabus of work drawn up by the Branch gives every evidence of careful thought, and is fully calculated to wake up and sustain the life of the Branch and the interest in Theosophy."

(2) *"The Theosophist" of August, 1899 :*

"An Active Branch.—We have received from the Honorary Secretary of the Bombay Branch, Theosophical Society, a published syllabus of Branch work for the months

¹ The total strength of the Fellows of the Theosophical Society in Bombay (City and Suburban Lodges) comes to nearly 500.

of July, August and September, 1899, which is admirably designed and shows a very commendable degree of activity among the members. The Committee show rare good sense in requesting thorough study and preparation of matter by those who are to appear on the platform. Lectures are given weekly, both in English and Gujarati, in addition to the public and private classes for study."

(3) *Letter from Dr. Arthur Richardson, Ph.D., F.C.S., Principal, Central Hindu College, Benares, dated Simla, September 25, 1899:*

"I have read your programme of Branch lectures with interest, for everything connected with the Bombay Branch has a claim on my interest, and I think you have managed to concentrate in its pages about as much good advice, etc., as it is possible, considering the space available. Alas! that we read so carelessly and practise so little. Indeed, any one of the precepts there laid down would be enough for a lifetime, if conscientiously carried out."

(4) "*The Theosophical Review*," October, 1899:

"The Bombay Branch, despite all the gloom brought on its city by the plague, is setting an admirable example of vigor and energy. An English lecture is given every Sunday and a lecture in Gujarati each Thursday. Three classes are held weekly in addition to a private class for members."

(5) *Letter from Bertram Keightley, M.A., General Secretary, Indian Section, Theosophical Society, dated Benares, October 19, 1899:*

"Let me congratulate the Branch most heartily on the admirable and steadfast way in which they have carried on the work in spite of the severe losses they have sustained in the death of so many of our oldest and most devoted workers. The work done is admirable and with so little help, all the more worthy of admiration. Mrs. Besant

especially recognises this. With best wishes and warmest appreciation of the good work done."

(6) "*The Theosophical Review*," November, 1899:

"We have received from the Blavatsky Lodge of Bombay, which publishes the *Theosophic Gleaner*, a very extensive syllabus of work. . . . The Branch is evidently a model of energy and life."

(7) *Letter from Colonel H. S. Olcott*, President-Founder, Theosophical Society, dated November 18, 1899:

"Your Branch syllabus is so good that I see no call for my criticising it or suggesting changes. This opinion I expressed to Dr. English on first receiving the copy you kindly sent me, and if I remember aright, it was published in the *Theosophist* or communicated by him to you. At any rate, that is what I think of it, and I wish all our Branches would work as well and as intelligently as yours. The contrast between what the Bombay T.S. is now and what it was when the Headquarters was in your town, i.e., before Tukaram and Master settled down to work, is marvellous. My blessings be with you all, my sorely tried brethren, who amid the gloom of public calamity have kept up the fire ever burning on the altar of Theosophy."

(8) *Letter from Jamshedji Navroji Unwala, M.A.*, Principal, Samaldas College, Bhavnagar, dated November 19, 1899:

"As the Bombay Branch is doubtless an important centre of Theosophical activity, I have always taken a great deal of interest in its work. The good that it has already done and is capable of doing in the cause of Theosophy makes me proud of you all, my brethren of the Bombay Branch."

(9) *Letter from Miss Sarah E. Palmer*, dated Adyar, Madras, November 29, 1899:

"Your systematic arrangement of work is admirable. The gems of thought you have selected are an inspiration in themselves."

(10) *Letter from C. W. Sanders*, General Secretary, New Zealand Section, Theosophical Society, dated Auckland, New Zealand, December 24, 1899 :

"I am very thankful to find that there is an increased spirit of activity pervading the T.S. in all parts of the world, especially in Bombay."

(11) *Letter from Miss Lilian Edger, M.A.*, dated Sydney, N.S.W., received on February 4, 1900 :

"I am glad to see your Branch is working so actively and energetically. It is good for even a few of the members to meet daily, and I see you have some meeting for every day. It keeps so much nearer to each other and helps to keep alive and stimulate your enthusiasm. I like too the extracts you put in your syllabus and the various hints and suggestions to your workers. It is well for us all to remind ourselves from time to time of the ideal we have placed before us ; it keeps us from drifting into indifference, and your syllabus should be a help to your members in this respect also."

I now give below a series of Appreciations and Testimonials from well known and famous personages, who visited the Lodge on different occasions, which make inspiring reading. To begin, the American poetess, E. W. Wilcox, who visited the Lodge, March 11, 1911, has inscribed in the Visitor's Book in her own handwriting the following beautiful lines :

So many Gods, so many creeds,
So many ways, that wind and wind
While just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs.

Bombay, March Eleventh, 1911

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

(2) Love is the soil in which character is perfected!
like sunshine and the flowers, so is love and the human soul.
20-4-1911 *Bessie Leo*

(3) Many thanks for much kindness from all Bombay.
The wise man rules the stars, the fool obeys them.
20-4-1911 *Alan Leo*

(4) "Let each act
Assoil a fault or help a merit grow;
Like threads of silver seen through crystal beads,
Let love through good deeds show."
(The Light of Asia)

20-4-1911 *Hilda M. Powell*

(5) "There is so much good in the worst of us,
And so much bad in the best of us,
That it ill becomes any of us
To find fault with the rest of us."
20-4-1911 *Arthur E. Powell*

(6) "Aimer, c'est comprendre."
(To love is to understand).
20-4-1911 *Lucie Bayer*

(7) I am very pleased to have visited the Blavatsky Lodge and to have made the acquaintance of the many members, brothers and sisters, whose culture and refined manners cannot be spoken too highly of. It was a great delight to me to deliver an address to the Lodge, as it was listened to with sympathetic attention and followed with intelligent interest. The Blavatsky Lodge is the largest in India, consisting of about 220 members.

I hope it will expand still further, continue with greater zeal and vigor its work of spiritualising the life of the very sensuous City, and that it will be, in time to come, the nursery of many a soul who will play a distinguished part in

the momentous work of the future. May the benedictions of my Lord, the Blessed Bodhisatwa Maitreya, of ineffable grace and glory, rest on this Lodge for ever.

S. V. Subrahmanyam, F.T.S.,

(The wide world my home).

(8) Safe and secure are the positions of those who deal in the commodity of love which is evidently the key-note of this Lodge. May perpetual Light shine on this magnificent City!

23-5-1911

R. Rao

(Madanapalle)

(9) After 20 years of absence, my good karma has once again brought me as a visitor to the Blavatsky Lodge, of which in the old days of struggle, I had the honor of being a member. Great indeed is the change I find, and the labors of many and faithful workers, some of whom have left for work in superphysical realms, have been openly rewarded. The Lodge is destined, I feel sure, to be an important instrument in the hands of the Great Teacher when He comes.

12-1-1912

S. L. Peacock

(10) "Be noble! and the nobleness that lies in other men, sleeping,

But never dead, will rise in majesty to meet thine own :

Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,

Then will pure light around thy Path be shed,

And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone."

(*T. R. Seewell*)

Copied by *Leslee Hodgson Smith*

(Harrogate, England).

19-3-1912

(11) Our dear brothers here are so kind and helpful, really practising brotherhood. May the Great Ones give them their blessing and make their work for them prosperous in Bombay!

18-11-1912

Zelma Blech

(Paris)

(12) "Taking equally praise and reproach, silent, wholly content with what cometh, homeless, firm in mind, full of devotion, that man is dear to me."

(*Bhagavad-Gita*, 12th Discourse)

"God bless thee with blessings beyond hope or thought,

With Blessings which no words can find."

(*Alfred Tennyson*)

I would ask the above blessing upon each man and woman in this dear Lodge and may your work in the Masters' service steadily increase. With grateful thanks for the warm welcome and great kindness shown to me.

2-12-1912

Isabel Stead

(Edinburgh)

(13) After a very long time in India, visiting many Lodges of the Theosophical Society, (some dormant, as well as some more active Lodges,) it is with great pleasure I came to Bombay where Theosophy has a stronghold, and there to meet the many active members and to make many new friends, and I believe in many cases, to rediscover friends of the long ago. These days have been very happy ones for me and I shall ever remember them as times spent with dear friends, comrades and fellow wishers; may they prosper in the glorious work in which they are taking an active part and may they do much in preparing for, and helping in, the future which is coming!

22-4-1913

Thomas Prime

(14) After eighteen months in Persia and away from all Theosophical activities it is more than good to come into the energy and keenness shown here and to find such sympathy with the idea of spreading Theosophy in Persia.

Bombay, 11-2-1913

E. G. Hart

(15) I am glad to note how well this, the oldest Lodge in India, has worked these many years in the great cause of Theosophy. My warmest wishes will ever be with its members in their work.

Bombay, May 25 to June 1, 1914

C. Jinarajadasa

(16) I have received so many courtesies and kindnesses from the members of the Blavatsky Lodge, that I feel in parting from them I am parting from old friends.

May the good work they have done and are doing continue!

Bombay, June, 1915

Ernest S. Daniels

(17) Following on the steps of our great Russian leader, H. P. B., we have been thrown by Fate to her first Lodge in India and found in the Blavatsky Lodge a warm and hearty welcome. May the Master shed His light on it for ever and ever!

14-12-1916

A. L. Pogosky

(18) The seeking of God of Pravda (truth, justice, righteousness, the Path, Dharma) is the chief preoccupation of the Russian soul, and this seeking brings us close to India's heart, for both, Russia and India, are in love with the Eternal.

14-12-1916

Anna Kamensky

(19) Begin to apply Brotherhood and then comes pure and spiritual flow of life.

28-4-1917

T. Ramachandra Rao

(Benares)

(20) "For to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor."

(*R. L. Stevensen*)

April, 1919

T. L. Crombie

(21) Where love is, God is.

April, 1919

Muirson Blake

(22) Wherever I go in America or in Europe, Theosophists have been as brothers. So here in India there is a bond that passes understanding and analysis; it is the bond between all who truly search for the True in themselves and in others.

Bombay, October 10-15, 1920

Augustus T. Knudsen

(23) "However men approach me, so do I meet them, for the path that men take from every side is mine." (*Gita.*)

12-10-1920

George H. Wright, F.T.S.

(Forest Glen, Maryland, U.S.A.)

(24) The highest privilege is the service of our fellowmen.

3-12-1920

F. Frances Leevee

(Rotterdam, Holland)

(25) May His love inspire your work!

4-3-1922

L. H. Olderman

(Batavia, Java)

(26) "Wise men are light bringers."

Wise Lodges take care to shed the light on all around them; so that the dark places of the Earth may become radiant with life and light.

8-3-1922

A. J. Willson

(27) MY DEAR MR. WADIA,

I wish to thank you most warmly for your kindness in so quickly arranging the charming afternoon hour of Indian music for us. We enjoyed expressly the beautiful songs.

Will you not convey our warm thanks to our host and to the musicians for the charming occasion.

Yours very cordially,

8-1-1923

Henry Eicheim

(28) Try to realise the immensity of life, practise the presence of God in your daily life, do not try to find happiness in little things where you will never find it. But seek wisdom, seek happiness in infinity ; then you will realise the spirituality that knows no compromise.

J. Krishnamurti

(29) In memory of a very happy, though all too short a visit to Bombay. It is good to know that I leave behind friends, brothers who by their kindness have made me feel one of themselves.

Emily Lutyens

(30) Our aim is so big, our ideal so high, that we have to offer our whole lives if we wish to take real part in the work.

I. de Manziarly

(Paris)

(31) On my arrival at Bombay, I was struck, as with every other place visited, with the urgent necessity for more education of the masses, both spiritual and material.

I was also very pleased at the tolerant spirit displayed by the members of your Society at Bombay.

14-8-1923

Frank I. Highelt

(32)

VISION

When I, from life's unrest, had earned the grace

Of utter ease beside a quiet stream ;

When all I was had dwindled to a dream

In eyes awakened out of time and place ;

Then in the cup of one great moment's space

Was crushed the living wine from things that seem ;
I drank the joy of very beauty's gleam,
And saw God's glory, face to shining face.

Almost my brow was chastened to the ground,
But for an inner voice that said—" Arise !
Wisdom is Wisdom only to the wise :
Thou art thyself to the Royal thou hast crowned :
In Beauty thine own beauty thou hast found ;
And thou hast looked on God with God's own
eyes ! "

17-8-1923

James H. Cousins

(33) As remembrance of the Blavatsky Lodge and of the Towers of Silence which teaches us the wonderful *swifty* of the Eternal and the unity of life.

15-1-1926

H. Potulicke

(Poland)

(34) " Step forward bravely to the goal, brothers, fear not the obstacle, despair not in face of temporary defeat. Have confidence in yourselves, as we have in every one of you, for there is not one single member of the Society without a link with us or whose help we do not need. Have we not chosen each one of you because we need you ? You need each other, and we need you all. Be brave for Truth and Brotherhood, and we shall be with you throughout the ages."

(Extract from the letter of the Maha Chohan),

14-2-1926

Richard Collnutt

(35) " Give me nor ease nor goal
Only the way,
A bit of ballad and sleep
Where the white waters play,
The pines, the patient stars
And the new day."

This is my thought at the ideals of the new race. May we all attain! Affectionate greetings to the Bombay Lodges

25-3-1926 From *Max Wardall*

(U.S.A.)

(36)

Will

Wisdom

Bombay

21-12-1926

George S. Arundale

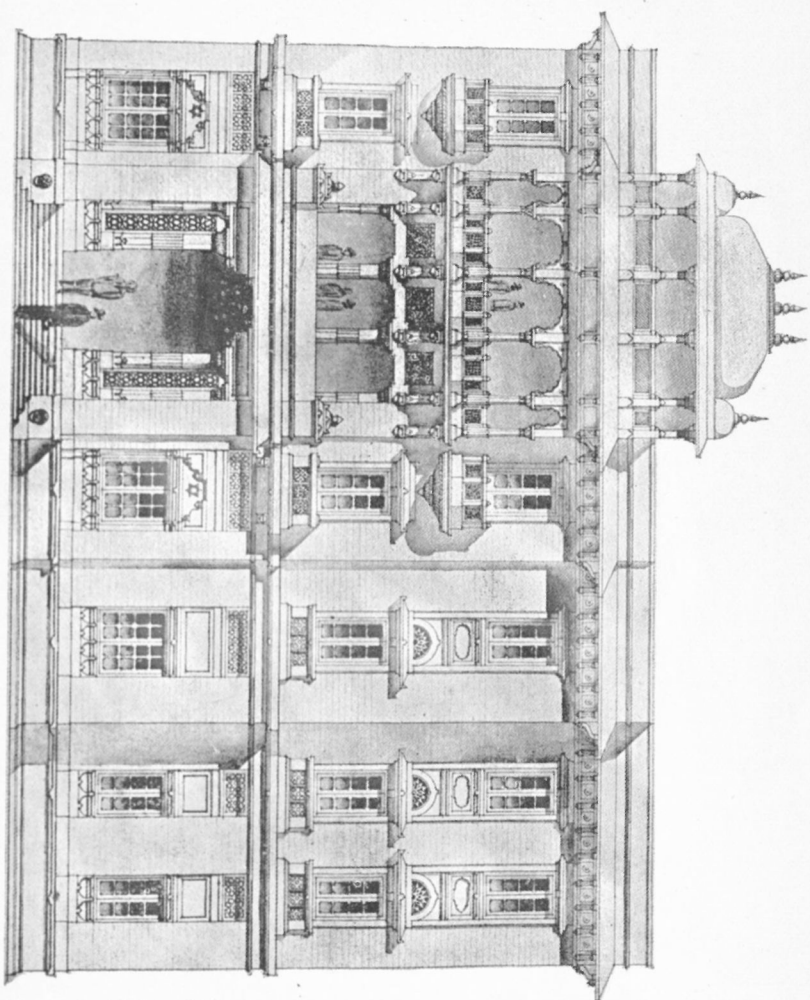
(37) "The whole in all its parts fulfils,

Our purpose runs through the warring wills."

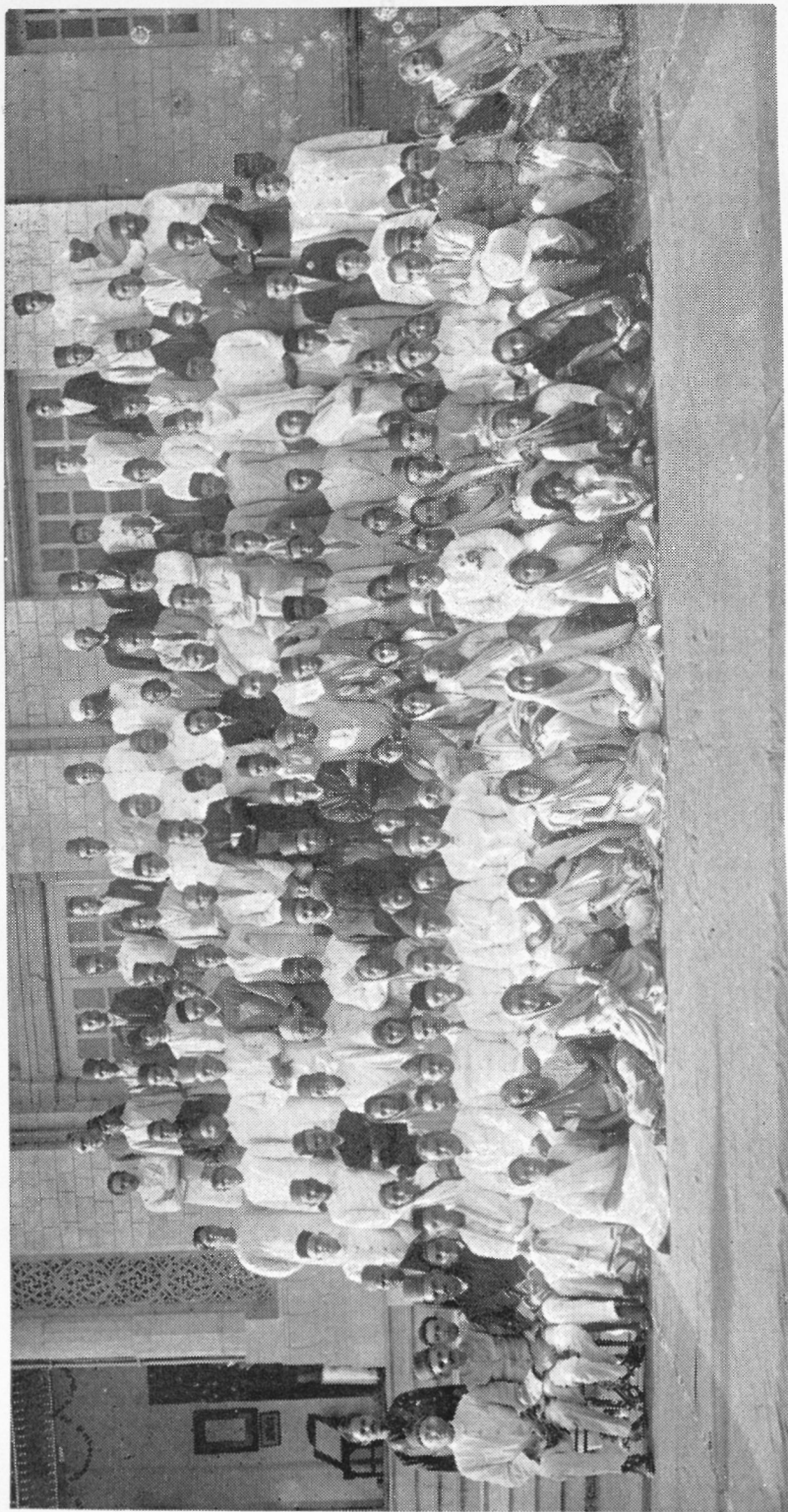
It is an intense pleasure to see such a spacious noble Dak-Bungalow of the Inner Government as is this Lodge Building which I visit for the first time. May it be an ever-increasing centre of happiness, illumination and service!

26-1-1930

Margaret Cousins



The Bhavalsky Lodge, Theosophical Society, Bombay, 1928
(Architects : Messrs. Kora and Bhatt)



Dr. Annie Besant at the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Blavatsky Lodge, T.S., Bombay, February 20, 1930.
(Photo by Rembrandt)

CHAPTER XVII

CELEBRATION OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

Dejected India, lift thy downcast eyes,
And mark the hour whose steadfast step for thee
From Time's pressed ranks brings on the Jubilee.

THE Blavatsky Lodge, T.S., Bombay, is the first and the oldest Lodge in India. With the coming of the Founders, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, to Bombay in 1879, this Branch was founded in that year, but the Charter, bearing the signatures of both Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky is dated February 20, 1880. So on February 20, 1930, the Lodge completed fifty years of its existence. It was fittingly decided by the Lodge members to invite our present revered President, Dr. Annie Besant, to Bombay and celebrate the great event with all the pomp and eclat possible.

Graciously accepting the invitation, Dr. Annie Besant arrived on the morning of February 19, 1930, accompanied by N. Sri Ram of Adyar. On the morning of the 20th of February, 1930, a group photograph was taken with her; and an Initiation Meeting was held where nearly twenty-five new members were admitted by her.

On the evening of the same day, the Golden Jubilee of the Bombay Branch of the Theosophical Society, now known as the Blavatsky Lodge, was celebrated, before a very large and distinguished gathering of ladies and gentlemen at the

Lodge's new spacious building, French Bridge, Chowpatty ; the Hall from floor to ceiling was decorated with flowers and buntings and illuminated with electric lights.¹

At the outset, the following telegrams and letters were read by the Honorary Secretary, K. J. B. Wadia :

From Mr. C. Jinarajadasa : " Rejoicing with you on past records of work. I send all warmest wishes for making Blavatsky Lodge in the future a more powerful centre still of Theosophy as applied to the life of the individual and of the nation."

From Bishop C. W. Leadbeater : " Congratulations and good wishes for Jubilee. Hope next fifty years will produce still finer record of work."

From the *Bharata Dharma* Office, Adyar : " I heartily congratulate the Blavatsky Lodge on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee on the 20th instant and rejoice with all Brothers and Sisters assembled there in person with our revered President. May it become a tower of strength to the T.S. in India and a powerful channel for the work of the World Teacher, now amongst us, and may it be ever guided in the service of the Great Ones who are the Guardians of Humanity!" (*L. B. Raje*).

From the Maharashtra Lodge, T.S., Poona : " I heartily wish the function a grand success and very useful work in future for your Lodge in the Service of the Hierarchy." (*G. S. Marathe*).

From the Atma Vidya Lodge, T.S., Broach : " We hereby send your Lodge our hearty good wishes and sincerely pray that the Blessings of the Holy Ones be ever poured on it." (*Motilal Chunilal*).

After a short welcome speech, an address was read by the President of the Lodge, Framji Jamshedji Bilia. It ran

¹ Fifty years ago, how different was the art of illumination, when there was neither electric nor incandescent light.

as under, giving a very short résumé of the past fifty years based on this book :

“DR. ANNIE BESANT, D.L.

President, Theosophical Society.

“DEAR AND REVERED MOTHER,

“We, the President and members of the Blavatsky Lodge, Bombay, beg leave to extend to you our most cordial welcome on this auspicious occasion in the life of our Lodge.

“This day, fifty years ago, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott constituted the Bombay Theosophical Society, later known as the Blavatsky Lodge, having, as the founding-members, Keshav Narsingh Mavlankar, Kawasji Merwanji Shroff, Gopal Rao Hari Deshmukh, Bal Nilaji Pitale and Pandurang Gopal. Among the first office-bearers are found also the names of K. N. Seervai, Framroze R. Joshi, E. Wimbridge, Moolji Thakersey, Sorabji E. Warden and Tukaram Tatya. Bombay was the first Headquarters of the Society in India, the first to welcome the Founders, when they landed on these shores, and also the scene of their activities for the first few years. The first few anniversary meetings, now styled ‘Conventions,’ were also held here.

“The beginnings of this Lodge, after the removal of the Headquarters to Adyar, were rather humble, a small room having been rented at Rs. 10 per month for the purpose, in Hornby Row, Fort. It had to be shifted to larger premises several times with the growth of the movement. The nucleus of the Lodge Building Fund was provided in 1898 with an anonymous donation of Rs. 500. New members in Bombay can have little idea of the strenuous endeavors and sacrifices made by their forerunners in bringing up the Fund to such a figure as to render possible the long-cherished idea of the Lodge having its own building, worthy of the great city in which the first seed of the Theosophical movement in India was sown.

“At the Silver Jubilee Celebration of this Lodge in 1905, Colonel Olcott presided. Another Lodge had just come into being—the Dharmālaya. Our membership then was about 150, to-day it stands over 250, and eleven other Lodges have sprung into existence, working in the City and the Suburbs. The total number of T. S. members now in Bombay exceeds 500.

“But apart from mere numbers, the work of individual members standing for Theosophical ideals in the various spheres of life during the last twenty-five years has not been negligible. There has been no slackening in the usual programme of lectures, study classes and celebrations. The very useful work of the Women’s Indian Association in this city stands as a testimony to the noble efforts of some prominent lady members of this Lodge. The efforts of the Youth Lodge in the domain of Music and Art are also full of promise. The Fellowship School has built up a good reputation in the realisation of Theosophical ideals in Education. The Colony at Juhu is another endeavor to form a centre for Service and Brotherhood.

“Bombay has also supplied some good workers to Adyar and Benares, and most of them were prominent members of this Lodge.

“While narrating these puny efforts, we are fully conscious of the fact that were it not for the ennobling influence, sympathy, inspiration, guidance and practical help that we have always received at your hands, we could not have achieved even what little we have been able to do so far. And, believe us, Revered Mother, when we say that we can never adequately express our profound love and deep gratitude to you—our Leader, Guide and Spiritual Benefactor.”

The address, printed on parchment and duly signed by Framji Jamshedji Bilia, Bhagwandas Vithaldas and K. J. B. Wadia, President, Treasurer and Secretary of the

Lodge, respectively, was presented to Dr. Besant in a very beautifully carved silver casket.

Dr. Annie Besant was then profusely garlanded; addressing the gathering with her silvery voice, she declared that it would be impossible to describe in words the enormous illumination afforded by Theosophy to those who had been puzzling over the problems of human life, human destiny and human conditions. The greatest achievement of Theosophy, she said, was that it had made materialistic philosophy impossible. The more one saw the sufferings of the poor, the more one felt the hopelessness crushing down life. The cheering thought was that if God could do nothing, man could do something for brother-man. In the course of her speech, Dr. Besant said that almost half her life had been spent in the Theosophical Society. That became a tremendous stimulus for activity. Half a century ago, scientific materialism was triumphant, but to-day things were changed for the better. Man was climbing upwards in his ideals, especially in respect of peace, and there was some hope that war by its own horror would destroy itself. She had one suggestion to offer with regard to this Lodge and that was that nothing must induce them to narrow down the principle which they had received from those who had gone before them. The Theosophical Society must remain open to every variety of thought.¹

On the evening of February 21, there was a musical entertainment given by the members, mostly of the Youth Lodge, followed by a short "Star" play.

On the evening of February 22 Mr. and Mrs. Framroz J. Ginwala were "At Home" in the Lodge Hall in honor of Dr. Besant's visit on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Lodge.

On February 23, the venerable President of the T.S., Dr. Annie Besant, proceeded to Delhi on her political mission

¹ See the *Bombay Chronicle* and *Times of India*, February 21, 1930.

carrying with her hearty good wishes from her followers and friends. Thus ended the memorable event.

While reading the foregoing hopeful and inspiring message in the year of grace 1930 from the lips of our beloved leader and teacher, Dr. Annie Besant, one's mind naturally turns once again to the high-minded Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and the large-hearted Henry Steel Olcott who set their feet on the sacred soil of India fifty years ago. Bombay was their gate-way to India where they labored immensely and were loved by many.

In the beginning of this book is given the graphic description of Colonel Olcott's as he found Bombay on his first arrival. At the end of this book I am tempted to revive the memory once again of those old days of half a century ago and bring before our mental vision how Madame Blavatsky looked at Bombay *then*. Here is what she says and that "very interesting and couched in very striking language":

"Late in the evening of the sixteenth of February, 1879, after a rough voyage which lasted thirty-two days, joyful exclamations were heard everywhere on deck. 'Have you seen the lighthouse?' 'There it is at last, the Bombay lighthouse'.

"Cards, books, music, everything was forgotten. Every one rushed on deck. The moon had not risen as yet, and, in spite of the starry tropical sky, it was quite dark. The stars were so bright that, at first, it seemed hardly possible to distinguish, far away amongst them, a small fiery point lit by earthly hands. The stars winked at us like so many huge eyes in the black sky, on one side of which shone the Southern Cross. At last we distinguished the lighthouse on the distant horizon. It was nothing but a tiny fiery point diving in the phosphorescent waves. The tired travellers greeted it warmly. The rejoicing was general.

"What a glorious daybreak followed this dark night! The sea no longer tossed our ship. Under the skilled guidance

of the pilot, who had just arrived, and whose bronze form was so sharply defined against the pale sky, our steamer, breathing heavily with its broken machinery, slipped over the quiet, transparent waters of the Indian Ocean straight to the harbor . . .

"We occupied three small bungalows, lost, like nests, in the garden, their roofs literally smothered in roses blossoming on bushes twenty feet high, and their windows covered only with muslin instead of the usual panes of glass. The bungalows were situated in the native part of the town, so that we were transported, all at once, into the real India. We were living in India, unlike English people, who are only surrounded by India at a certain distance. We were enabled to study her character and customs, her religion, superstitions and rites, to hear her legends, in fact, to live among Hindus."¹

My readers will pardon me for not giving in this book more of the absorbingly interesting lives and labors of our esteemed Founders; that is beyond the scope of this book. What they have achieved in the past is known to all. May they rest in Peace! May the Lodge founded by them in Bombay and its many sister Lodges in India and all over the world flourish, may they increase in Strength and Harmony and Wisdom. May the world become bright and beautiful by the radiance of Theosophy. May the Glory of God pour forth on Humanity and the world.

¹ *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan*, by H. P. Blavatsky, pp. 3 and 13. Later on she gives a very fascinating account of her first public meeting in Bombay, but it is too lengthy to quote here.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

PENSIONER of life, be wise, and heed a brother's counsel ;
I also am a beadsman, with scrip and staff as thou :
Wouldest thou be bold against the past, and all its evil memories,
Wouldest thou be safe amid the present, its dangers and
temptations,
Wouldest thou be hopeful of the future, vague though it be and
endless ?
Haste thee, repent, believe, obey ; thou standest in the courage
of a legion.
Commend the Past to God, with all its irrevocable harm,
Humbly but in cheerful trust, and banish vain regrets ;
Come to Him, continually come, casting all the Present, at His feet,
Boldly, but in prayerful love, and fling off selfish cares ;
Commit the Future to His will, the viewless fated future ;
Zealously go forward with integrity, and God will bless thy faith.
For that, feeble as thou art, there is with thee a mighty Conqueror,
Thy Friend, the same for ever, yesterday, to-day and to-morrow,
That Friend, changeless as eternity, Himself shall make thee
friends
Of those thy foes transformed, yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow.

MARTIN F. TUPPER in *Proverbial Philosophy*, p. 149.

APPENDIX I

THIS book covers the period from February, 1880 to February, 1930, so events that happened outside these dates are, strictly speaking, outside its scope. But as it is printed in 1931, small additions have appeared in several places of recent events.

Here, I wish specially to place on record the names of some Bombay Theosophists who served and suffered in the great Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930. As stated in the foregoing pages, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress was the well-known Theosophist A. O. Hume. Dr. Annie Besant's leadership and work in the cause of India's freedom is a matter of Indian political history on which I need not dwell at length here. It is also well known that many Theosophists have worked with her in this sphere. In connection with the recent non-violent non-co-operation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi, it is a matter of pride to note here that the Bombay Theosophists as a whole have splendidly supported the National Movement, a large number, specially of the Youth Lodge, volunteering their services in various ways. Jamnadas Dwarkadas, C. B. Kora, K. K. Menon, Byram H. Mehta and Prof. C. B. Jhori had the privilege of suffering imprisonment for their very patriotic activities.

APPENDIX II

After Chapter XV was printed I came across a few more names of the departed members, who owing to their prominent and devoted services deserve remembrance ; hence this Appendix.

Rustomji Ardeshir Master (or Daruwala)—d. 17-5-1892. A schoolmaster by profession, infused the spirit of Theosophy in his teachings. A well known public lecturer of his time, and was once the Hon. Secretary of the Blavatsky Lodge, and as such collaborated with Colonel Olcott in developing the Lodge.

Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh—d. 10-10-1892. He was a Jagirdar, and author of nearly thirty-two books in Marathi on Religion and Philosophy. He held many important posts in the service of the Bombay Government and in Indian States. He conducted a Library, a Printing Press, a School and a Free Dispensary. A social reformer. He was President of the Bombay Arya Samaj and also of the Blavatsky Lodge.

Rustomji Cawasji Jabouli—d. 10-11-1894. He was one of the members of the first T. S. Council formed by Colonel Olcott in Bombay. Author of many Gujarati books and some poems. He was the first (Parsi) Theosophist who went to Liverpool and opened a business firm there, but within three years he returned to Bombay owing to the failure of his firm, and was in service of the Bombay Municipality. He passed through many vicissitudes of life, always bearing them in a true Theosophical spirit.

Khurshedji Nusserwanji Seervai—d. 22-1-1897. A very eloquent speaker and a devoted Theosophist of his times. He was an Income-tax Collector of Bombay. He was the first Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society, and one of the Vice-Presidents of the first T.S. Council formed in Bombay in 1880.

Fardunji Merwanji Banaji—d. 15-11-1915. He was a devoted member of Colonel Olcott's time. A quiet and unostentatious worker. He was once the Hon. Secretary of the Blavatsky Lodge, and served many other public institutions.

Pochaji Nusserwanji Mehta—d. 20-6-1927. A share-broker by profession but a deep student of Eastern and Western philosophies. He was somewhat of an atheist, but believed in the existence of the Masters and sought solace in Theosophical books.

Ramchandra Purshotam Kamat—d. 23-12-1929. A most devoted Theosophist and a conscientious worker. He was well versed in the old writings of the Maharashtra Saints and was a very popular Marathi preacher, especially an exponent of *Dnyaneshwari*. He was once the Hon. Secretary of the Blavatsky Lodge for three years, and was for many years a pillar and preacher of the Dharmalaya Lodge.

Dr. Vinayak Sokarji Trilokekar—d. 9-3-1931. A medical practitioner by profession. One of the most devoted and prominent Bombay Theosophists, and an enthusiastic Mason. Visited England twice, once as delegate from Bombay to the Star Camp at Ommen. For many years the President, and the chief pillar and prop, of the Dharmalaya Lodge. He was also the organiser and director of the Order of the Star in Bombay.

ERRATA

- P. 6, line 28, (footnote), *for p. 166 read pp. 6, 7.*
- P. 14, line 26, *for Lady read Mrs.*
- P. 21, sub-title of chapter, *for Publications read Public Lectures.*
- P. 50, line 17, *after Gujarati, add and Marathi.*
- P. 65, line 7, *for 1880 read 1882.*
- P. 65, line 23, *for 1899 read 1889.*
- P. 105, line 15, *for Nazzini read Mazzini.*

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