

February-March 1960

Adyar, Madras 20, India

My dear friends,

Convention is just over and we had a splendid time. I must try to describe it all to you. It was the 84th International Convention of the Theosophical Society, and over 870 delegates from all parts of the world, but mostly from India of course, came. A few days before it began, palm leaf huts ran up like lightning all over the compound. A big refreshment hut was also erected beside the Bhojanasala, the Indian restaurant. Many Europeans go to the Bhojanasala because Indian food is much more tasty than ours. Also the Adyar open-air theatre under a huge tree was covered in, in case of rain. There were five public lectures to be given under the great banyan tree, but as it rained three were given in the Adyar theatre. Mine, on "World Events in the Light of Occultism", was given there. Geoffrey Hodson led off with a lecture on "A Study in Causal Consciousness." The President closed with a lecture under the banyan tree on "Awakening to Truth." Rukmini spoke on "Spiritual Life in the Modern World", and Dr. Bendit on "Man the Transformer." There were some shorter lectures. Mrs. Bendit spoke on "The Difference between Spiritual and Psychic Vision," Mr. Felix Layton on "The Earth on Which We Live," and Mrs. Eunice Layton on "Spirituality in Daily Living." An interesting lantern lecture was given by Mr. Subramaniam on "The Mahatma Letters." There were ever so many other things of interest in between but I will never be able to describe them all.

We began every morning at 8 a.m. with "The Prayers of the Religions". And every morning at the little Hindu Temple the reformed Hindu ritual called Bharata Samaj Puja was performed. And of course on Christmas Eve a midnight mass was held in the very pretty little Liberal Catholic Church. The midnight service always attracts a large number of Indian members. I sometimes wonder why? We began on Saturday, Dec. 26th and in the evening we had a reception for the delegates under the banyan tree. The Ritual of the Mystic Star was performed in the Headquarters Hall on the Sunday evening, and the Round Table held a meeting on the Monday. Mr. Rohit Mehta spoke to the members about "The Mystery of Karma," and I spoke on "The Path of the Secret Science." There was a Youth Symposium and an address to new members by the President. All during Convention Dr. Besant's rooms and the museum of the Society which preserves the objects miraculously created by Madame Blavatsky, were open to the members at certain hours.

Now most of the delegates have departed, and we keep on saying goodbye to stragglers left behind. Mr. Hodson and Miss Sandra Chase have flown up to Benares on the way to Burma and Malaya, after which Miss Chase will go back to New Zealand and Mr. Hodson to S. Africa. I do not yet know what I shall be doing. I await orders, so to say, but they are arranging a short tour in the North of India as soon as the School of the Wisdom closes in March. I feel it was a very happy and successful convention. I met old friends, among them Mr. Sassi from Switzerland.

One wonderful thing happened just before Convention. We had a visit from the Dalai Lama. He laid the foundation stone of a little temple to be built in the grounds of the new Besant School when it comes. Afterwards he addressed us at a meeting, through an interpreter, of course. He is so young and so smiling and so happy looking. In fact he is altogether charming. You should have seen him when all the children mobbed him, he was so sweet with them and said he wished he could speak their language. In the afternoon there was a tea-party under the Banyan tree for all the Tibetans. The Dalai Lama was the chief guest and with him came about a dozen Lamas who seemed to be much older than he was for the most part. At tea time I sat with the Tibetan monks. Only one could speak English, the Dalai Lama's older brother who had been in America. But what with a few words and many smiles and signs we got along famously! When they went away in cars, they

waved a smiling goodbye to us all. That is one thing that I will never forget: the beautiful, smiling face of the young Dalai Lama. He was so modest and sincere. He never behaved as if he felt he was somebody, and radiated such an atmosphere of kindness and humility and lovely spirituality. I am eternally grateful that I met him.

Another thing that happened just before Convention was lectures near by, by Mr. Krishnamurti. I went to all of them and some of them moved me greatly. I can never say that I understand him but I am always conscious that I am in the presence of a God-conscious man. Every now and then he uses such poetic phrases, as when he closed one lecture with the words: "It is only the mind which has understood itself, which is capable of receiving the benediction that has no end." And in his last lecture he said: "I think Love walks with Death and Love is Life." It may well be that in some way which we do not understand he is the World Teacher. I think that what he says is in line with the way in which modern psychology is going, such as the events described in that wonderful book by P.W. Martin, "Experiment in Depth." Mr. Martin tells us how he, a friend and pupil of Carl Jung, plunged into the depths of himself and discovered there the Eternal Life. To do this demands a clear mind and a strong character. I feel it is not a way to be attempted by the rather weak and nervous temperaments. For them the orthodox ways of the various religions are safer. Reality is one and the same everywhere and can be found by many roads. It is eternally, and is ever beyond time and space, and both good and evil.

1960 is prophesied to be a glorious year by many astrologers. We all hope so. Perhaps this year the peace of the world will become assured, and mankind will then be able to turn its whole attention to the disappearance of the awful poverty of so many parts of the world. Here in India it breaks one's heart. I wish President Eisenhower's peace mission every success. I remember when he said that the cost of one heavy bomber would build modern brick schools in more than twenty cities, build two electric plants serving 60,000 inhabitants, fully equip two hospitals, and make some fifty miles of concrete highway. "We pay," he said, "for a single fighter plane with half a million bushels of wheat." Isn't it awful, my friends? And aren't we fools?

Well, I am full of hope. I truly believe that before this cycle is out we shall have world peace and the doing away for ever of both armies and hideous poverty. If we had not such a strenuous burden of huge national debts -- which to my mind is immoral -- we could spend that money on schools and hospitals and asylums, all of which at present are under-paid and under-staffed. Yes, we are fools, aren't we? I remember the words of the Christ when He mourned over the coming awful fate of Jerusalem: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." I do hope the world's way to happiness is not hid from its eyes. I just have a slight fear that it might be.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

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