

THE STOCKHOLM CONGRESS

By THE PRESIDENT, T. S.

"A wonderful Congress" was the phrase heard from all sides at the International Theosophical Congress at Stockholm, held from June 14th to June 18th, 1913. And it was a true verdict, for not only was it remarkable for numbers and for good feeling, but there were throughout a joyousness and a power which were experienced at no preceding Congress. One noteworthy feature was the presence of all the fourteen General Secretaries of the National Societies in Europe: England and Wales, Scotland, France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Bohemia, Scandinavia, Finland, Russia; the General Secretaries-elect of the new Sections of Norway and Varsovie (Russian Poland) were also there, and the General Secretary-elect of England and Wales; and the Presidential Agent for Spain had sent his proxy to France. No such gathering of General Secretaries has ever been held during the life of the T. S., and when we remember that all have been elected or re-elected since the present storm began, we have a fairly good proof of the solidarity of the European Societies, for they presented a unanimous address of love and loyalty to their President. It seems as though the attacks in India had intensified to an extraordinary degree the personal devotion to myself; I can only say that I will try to prove myself worthy of it. Cablegrams from the General Secretaries of India and America added the voices of these powerful National Societies, and America sent a delegate to speak her love in the person of her brilliant and devoted daughter, Mrs. Marie Russak, supported by Mrs. Shaw Duff and Mr. Henry Hotchner. There were cables also from Algiers, Russia, Finland, Italy, and other places.

Fifty-seven members came from Russia—a sight that would have gladdened our H. P. B.—and they gathered at the railway station at Stockholm on the morning of June 14th, to greet the incoming members from other lands. Madame Pogosky, the well-known worker for peasant industries, made a charming speech of welcome and presented a lovely bouquet, and we drove away under a shower of roses, recalling India. It was pleasant to greet our old friend Arvid

Knos as General Secretary for Scandinavia, and to meet again his charming wife, his helper in all his work. Dr. Zander jun. with his wife and his mother—Dr. Zander sen. follows Mrs. Tingley—Miss Westerlund, Mr. Thaning, Dr. Alrutz, and many others of the oldest members were there, while Captain and Mrs. Kuylenstierna were of a later and very numerous group, and crowds of younger faces were seen—it is impossible to mention all. It was pleasant to meet one with happy memories of Benares—Mr. Harold de Bildt, who had accompanied the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden on their visit there.

June 14th did not really belong to the Congress, but was the day of the Annual Scandinavian Convention, over the opening of which I was invited to preside; there was an O. S. E. meeting in the afternoon for an address by myself, and then a General Secretaries' meeting; in the evening the National Society had a big reception at the Grand Hotel, where I spoke to some hundreds of members on the 'Restoration of the Mysteries'. The Congress proper, with a meeting of the Federation Committee at 9 A. M., opened on the following day in the Musical Academy, where a remarkably fine cantata by Merikanto, F. T. S., with words by Pekka Ervast, F. T. S. and General Secretary of Finland, was admirably rendered and produced a profound effect. It was repeated to the public before my lecture on June 17th. Then came the greetings of the Scandinavian Secretary, who went on to deliver a very good speech on Scandinavian thought; then speeches from myself and the General Secretaries, each in his own language—a dramatic testimony to the spread of the Society in Europe; the sitting closed with a lecture by myself on 'The Conditions of Intellectual and Spiritual Growth,' after which Scandinavia welcomed all its guests to lunch. We met in the afternoon for business, and the General Secretaries gathered in Council immediately after the close of the sitting, a procedure adopted also on the following days. It was a rare opportunity for discussing questions affecting the welfare of the Society, and was eagerly welcomed by all. The Congress Committee met daily at 9 A.M., and as the General Secretaries had decided that a Theosophical World Congress should meet in 1915—and had expressed the wish that the European Federation meeting should be held with it, leaving the choice of place and time to the Federation—it selected Paris as the place and late spring or early summer as the time. The day closed with my first public lecture on 'World-Saviours'.

It will be seen that the 15th June was well filled, and the other days were similarly crowded, beginning at 9 A. M. with the Congress Committee and ending at night with my public

lectures, on the 16th 'The Christ in History,' and on the 17th 'The Christ in Man'. A Congress lecture that raised great enthusiasm was on 'The Deva of Finland,' by Mr. Pekka Ervast, the whole audience applauding vigorously for some time at its conclusion. It was in Swedish, so I could not follow it, but its effect was unmistakable. We shall print the papers, as far as possible, in the THEOSOPHIST, as the series of *Transactions* was broken by the non-issue of those of the fourth Congress at Munich, by the default of the German Section, and Hungary failed to issue its volume in consequence of the death of its General Secretary, and the loss of his papers. Mrs. Russak, Captain Kuylenstierna, Madame Kamensky, Madame Poushkin, Miss Blytt, Madame Ounkowsky, all contributed interesting papers, in addition to that of Mr. Pekka Ervast, mentioned above, and a paper by the late Mr. Sven-Nilsson was read by Mr. de Bildt. A pleasant interlude on June 16th, after the business of the day was over at 9 P. M., was a visit to some charming gardens in which memorials of old Sweden are preserved. Here some Swedish peasant dances were performed for our benefit, a remarkably pretty and quaint exhibition, and we had tea together in a big hall.

No one who was present at the Congress will ever forget it, nor will the delightful kindness and courtesy of our Swedish hosts pass away from the memory of those who were happy enough to enjoy it. The organisation was perfect, but better than the organisation was the love that cared for each, and the slight stateliness of Swedish manners lent an added charm to all. In other countries these are preserved only in Courts.

Seven of us left Stockholm on the night of the 17th, laden with lovely flowers, and the platform was a sea of loving faces as our train steamed off. The night of the 19th saw us in London, where I had to meet my solicitor on the 20th to conclude the legal business connected with the Indian suit. That night saw me in the train for Brindisi, with Mr. Graham Pole, who is most kindly accompanying me to Madras to give me any help in his power; and these lines are written in the Red Sea on the way back to our modern Coliseum, where the old cry of the persecutors fills the air: *Ad leones*—"To the lions" with the Theosophists.