

FRANZ HARTMANN, M.D.  
 VILLA MERCEDES, BELLO SGUARDO  
 FIRENZE

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Happy New Year!

My dear Dr. Buck!

Many thanks for your kind and interesting letter. I do not understand why your letter to Hallein has not reached unless you addressed it to Hullein which is another place. There are however two Halleins in Austria.

I have been very much interested in what you wrote me about Hilarion and the Lodge in Syracuse, and I should, as a matter of course, be very glad to participate in it, but as I am here in Europe, this would perhaps be somewhat difficult and I suppose that my participation will have to be a spiritual one and consist in harmonious thought and sympathy. Any paper that you will send, will however be welcome and kept secret.

I have heard nothing more of the E.S. of which Charles Johnstone seems to be the "outer head", and I do not know whether I belong to any "esoteric section" except my own, which is presided over by my inner consciousness. It always seems to me that each "esoteric Society", as soon as it steps on the external plane, become exoteric, and then follows sectarianism and intolerance, such as is exhibited by the members of the Tingley and Besant persuasion. The latter have gone so far as to warn my own most intimate friends against me and prohibit them from reading my books. There is only one all saving T.S., whose president is Capt. Bumptious, and whose oracle is Mrs. Besant.

Last year I gave a lecture at Nice (France) with great success, but none of the Besant people were permitted to attend, the Countess Wachtmeister would not allow it, although I and my friends have come to her lecture (which was a very poor one). Last night I gave a lecture in Italian language in Florence, and had a very nice audience; but Mrs. Cooper-Oakley warned her adherents to attend, and thereby she disgusted her own best followers, who thereupon left her society.

Is it to be wondered, when under such circumstances I am disgusted with all this childish nonsense and "Theosophical Society business"? I prefer to deal with sensible people, who do not belong to anything except to themselves, to fooling with society fanatics, who consider everyone their enemy, if he does not cling to the coat tails of the same person as they. There is not one person in a hundred ripe for entering a real esoteric society, nevertheless we have now a lot of such bodies assuming that name, and consisting of curiosity hunters each of which desires to usurp the leadership in the T.S., while in fact the T.S. requires no other leader, but the light of truth, and ought to remain, what it always was intended to be, a body for free investigation of the laws which govern the universe.

Practically the efforts of Mrs. Besant and Mrs. Tingley have been to turn the whole T.S. into an "esoteric Society", each under her sole leadership, and thus they have succeeded in turning it into one great insane asylum, where the brothers and sisters heartily hate and despise each other if they do not belong to the same party.

I have succeeded to form quite a number of theosophical societies on the original plan in Germany, Austria and Hungaria, but I am adverse to bringing them under one hat, because I wish to avoid all tendency to sectarianism and prefer that each society should be independent and stand on its own legs. For the same reason I have refused all offers to be elected president.

I agree that each esoteric society must have as leader a spiritually elevated person, with whom all the members ought to be as one in thought and aspiration, so that he may carry them up with him into the regions of knowledge, and for this reason a disciple cannot have more than one master. No one can at the same time go two different ways. But all this has nothing to do with the T.S. because the T.S. is no esoteric society and not a school for occultism, but a preparatory school in which each member should first of all try to learn to find his own real self. If he has found himself, he will not have far to go to for a master for aid and instruction.

With all this, I cannot say that I regret or deplore all this strive and discension in the T.S. I do not pretend to be wiser than the law of Karma, which has ordered it and which leads everything to the best end. Nothing has done so much to call the attention to the theosophical handicap as the opposition of the missionaries and the slader of the S. Psychic. Res. From opposition grows strength. Let the members of the T. S. become so much sectarian as they please; there are always some who will get experience and outgrow their sectarianism in time, and they are the only ones which are worth having. I should be glad if these views should become known.

Please give my love and regards to your family and to our friends in Syracuse. I shall always be glad to hear from you.

Yours very sincerely,

F. Hartmann

I have not received the "Forum" last month.