

should be carried out with all possible promptness and Mrs. Besant's decision to be made known to them.

(Sd.) ALEXANDAR FULLERTON,

*General Secretary,
American Section,
Theosophical Society.*

FRANK F. KNOTHE.

Asst. General Secretary.

HELEN. I. DENNIS.

*Corresponding General Secretary,
American Section, Esoteric Section.*

ELIZABETH. M. CHIDESTER,

*Asst. Corresponding Secretary,
American Section, Esoteric Section.*

To this Mr. Leadbeater at once replied in the following terms :—

Shanti Kunja, Benares, India,
February 27th 1906.

MY DEAR FULLERTON,

I have received the document signed by you, Knothe, Mrs. Dennis and Mrs. Chidester. Fortunately it arrived while I was staying with Mrs. Besant, and I at once took into her room and discussed it with her as my copy came before hers. She concurs with me in thinking it best for me to answer it by explaining to you the principle underlying my action and then commenting upon the particular cases adduced. I hoped that my friends in America know me well enough not to attribute to an immoral motive anything that I do, but since this is apparently not yet so I must write with entire frankness about some subjects which are not usually discussed at the present day.

The business of discovering and training specially hopeful and younger members and preparing them for Theosophical work has been put into my charge. Possibly the fact that I have been associated with the training of young men and boys all my life (originally of course on Christian lines) is one reason for this because of the experience it has given me. As a result of that experience, I know that the whole question of sex feeling is the principal difficulty in the path for boys and girls, and very much harm is done by the prevalent habit of ignoring the subject and fearing to speak of it to young people. The first information about it should come from parents or friends, not from servants or bad companions. Therefore, always I speak of it quite frankly and naturally to those whom I am trying to help, when they become sufficiently familiar with me to make it possible. The methods of dealing with the difficulty are two. A certain type of boy can be carried through his youth absolutely virgin and can pass through the stages of puberty without being troubled at all by sensual emotions ; but such boys are few. The majority pass through the stage when their minds are filled with such matters and consequently surround themselves with huge masses of most undesirable thought-forms which perpetually react upon them and keep them in a condition of emotional ferment. These thought-forms are the vehicles of appalling mischief since through them disembodied entities can and constantly do act upon the child. The conventional idea that such thoughts do not matter so long as they do not issue in overt acts is not only untrue, it is absolutely the reverse of the truth. I have seen literally hundreds of cases of this horrible condition, and have traced the effect which it produces in after-life. In this country of

India the much-abused custom of early marriages prevents all difficulty on this score.

(Mr. Leadbeter here enters into details of "This trouble" and of his remedy for it which are not fit for publication)

Proceeding he says :—I know this is not the conventional view but it is quite true for all that and there is no comparison in the harm done in the two cases even at the time quite apart from the fact that the latter plan avoids the danger of entanglement with women or bad boys later on. You may remember how St. Paul remarked that while it was best of all to remain a celibate, in the rare cases where that was possible, for the rest it was distinctly better to marry than to burn with lust. Brought down to the level of the boy, that is practically what I mean and although I know that many people do not agree with the view, I am at a loss to understand how any one can consider it criminal especially when it is remembered that it is based upon the clearly visible results of the two lines of action. A doctor might advise against it, principally on the ground that the habit might degenerate into unrestrained. . . but this danger can be readily avoided by full explanation and it must be remembered that the average doctor cannot see the horrible astral effects of perpetual desire. Having thus explained the general position, let me turn to the particular cases cited.

Particulars concerning the two boys who had confessed certain things to their mothers that they alleged to have taken place while they were in the charge of Mr. Leadbeter, are here given and these particulars are unfit for publication. In speaking of the first boy Mr. Leadbeter

admitted that he tried one experiment and only one and that he did mention to the boy that physical growth is frequently promoted by the setting in motion of those currents, but that they needed regulation. The second boy, he stated, had entered into undesirable relation with a person designated "Z" before coming under his care, and the boy had promised to try to drop these relations and to lead the life of an ascetic. Later on this boy wrote to him and said that he could not lead the ascetic life, and asked for advice; and then Mr. Leadbeater gave him certain advice which he considered under the circumstances the best to meet the case.

Concluding Mr. Leadbeater says:—I write this to you as the first signatory of the document; how much of it you can repeat to the ladies concerned is for you to decide. I have shown it to Mrs. Besant as I shall do any other correspondence that may ensue, for I have no secrets from her. I am very sorry indeed that this trouble has arisen and that any act of mine, however well intentioned, should have been the cause of it. I can only trust that when my friends have read this perfectly frank statement they will at least acquit me of the criminality which their letter seems to suggest, even though they may still think me guilty of an error in judgment.

Mr. Dennis announces his intention of returning unopened any letter from me, which seems scarcely fair, as I believe even a criminal is usually allowed to state his cases. But since he prefers to close all communication with me, it is not for me to ask him to reconsider his decision. If he later becomes willing to allow correspondence with his family to be resumed I am always ready on

my side, for nothing will change my affectionate feeling towards all its members.

Yours ever most cordially,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

P. S.—I see that there is one point in Mrs. Dennis' letter on which I have not commented—her reference to a conversation on the necessity of {purity for aspirants for occult development and to the fact that (for a certain stage of it) one life without even a single lapse is required. It is of course obvious that the lapse mentioned meant connection with a woman or criminal relations with a man and did not at all include such advice as is suggested in the body of my letter, but {since there has been so much misunderstanding it is better for me to say this in so many words, so please paste this slip at the foot of my letter on the subject.

Mrs. Besant sent the following reply to Mrs. Dennis :—

SHANTY KUNJA, BENARES CITY.

Feb. 26th, 1906.

MY DEAR MRS. DENNIS,

Your letter causes me some grief and anxiety, and I think I shall serve you, Mr. Leadbeater and the Society best by perfect plainness of speech.

Mr. Leadbeater is very intimately known to you, and you have had definite experiences in connection with him on super-physical planes ; you know something of his relations there, and the impossibility of the existence of such relations with deliberate wrong doing. All this must not be forgotten in the midst of the terrible trial to which you are subjected.