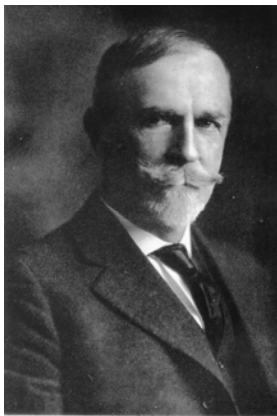


THE EARLIEST DAYS OF ANTHROPOSOPHY IN AMERICA

The following account by Hilda Deighton was originally presented as a lecture at the Center in New York City, on February 14, 1958:

It is with the greatest pleasure that I accept the Society's invitation to bring to you some of my memories of the personalities who were instrumental in sowing the first seeds of anthroposophy in America. These people epitomize the qualities shared by all anthroposophists in that they turned aside from the ordinary highroad of civilization, along which mankind travels, and sought out paths of their own. I was closely involved with these early members and should be able to give a clear impersonal picture of them, but I find I cannot do this. To speak impersonally of them is asking too much of myself, because they made up the intimate circle of my youth and stamped a lasting impression on me in my formative years. My delineation of the people I wish to characterize is quite subjective, colored by my affection for them. In preparing this lecture I seemed to be living again in the times I shall try to describe. This account must, of necessity, consist of many names and dates, but I shall try to make the names come to life for you as human beings whom it was my good fortune to know. I shall describe only those who have died and not those who were active in the early years and are still working among us. I will tell you something of the appearance and temperament of those forerunners. Though they have nearly all passed through the portal of death, they are living and helping in the work of the Society and we are all connected with those who helped prepare our path.

Rudolf Steiner says that people enter the Society in three different ways. One may be brought to anthroposophy by an inner compulsion of the heart, another, perhaps, by reasons based on the understanding, the third through some exterior occasion. He calls them all "homeless souls." The early members of whom I speak came into the movement for the most part from the first two categories. In the first decade of the twentieth century there were very few



HERBERT WILBER GREENE

outward occasions. Nowadays one can become interested in anthroposophy through its many activities. For example, a eurythmy performance may lead a spectator into deeper study. In 1909 there was no eurythmy. An actor today searching for vocal freedom, may meet the liberating art of speech-formation (*Sprachgestaltung*). An invalid restored to health through anthroposophical medicine, a parent seeing his child transformed through the pedagogy, a farmer



GRACIA RICARDO

whose land is saved by Biodynamic agriculture, those in despair over the state of the world who find their answers in the threefold commonwealth of Rudolf Steiner, are all likely to become members of the Society. None of these outer revelations had been given to the world in the years of which I first speak. Those who came into anthroposophy at that time came through an inner revelation, either of the mind or of the heart, and both sorts of people were represented in the handful of members who first read together in New York City. They became interested either through a line in a book or by a conversation – the written or the spoken word.

At this time Rudolf Steiner, living and lecturing in Berlin, was general secretary of the German Section of the General Theosophical Society of which Mrs. Annie Besant was president. Berlin was a very long way from New York. One could not reach there by an overnight flight, and a letter took a long time.

In the early 1890's the best music conservatory in New York City was the Metropolitan College of Music located on 14th Street which was then the fashionable part of town. This school was founded and directed by an eminent tenor from New England, Herbert Wilber Greene, a pupil of Sbriglia in Paris and of William Shakespeare in London. Mr. Greene was a well-known figure of his time, president of the National Singing Teachers' Association, associate editor of the magazine *Etude* and frequent contributor to *Musical America* on the subject of singing. The Conservatory maintained a residence for his students nearby, among whom was an 18-year old soprano from Montclair, New Jersey, Grace Richards, daughter of the publisher of the *New York Tribune*. The only girl in a family of boys, she was allowed almost anything she

wanted, and what she wanted most was to sing. Early pictures of her show a tall, handsome young girl, and I am told that she was absolutely carefree and full of fun.

After her graduation she went to Europe to continue her vocal studies in Paris and later in Berlin, and by the time she was in her late 20's she had toured the British isles with the great violinist Jan Kubelik and sung in many of the countries of Europe. She had Italianized her name to Gracia Ricardo. Although she went to Germany to find a singing teacher, the teacher she found was not a German, but an American woman, Lilla van Dyck Harris, born in Louisville, Kentucky, who had spent most of her lifetime in Germany. Miss Harris was assistant teacher in the studios of the world-renowned soprano, Lilli Lehmann. By 1908 Miss Harris and Madame Ricardo were both teaching together in Berlin. Among Mme. Ricardo's pupils was a young lady, Merwin Roe, daughter of the popular American novelist E. P. Roe. Miss Roe had become acquainted with the book Theosophy by Rudolf Steiner, which she lent to the two musicians who became interested and went, in the fall of 1909, to the Berlin Architektenhaus to hear Dr. Steiner lecture. They met him and Fraulein Marie von Siviers who later became his wife. They continued to attend his lectures until 1910, when they left for a trip to America, Mme. Ricardo to make a

concert tour, and Miss Harris to take up residence in New York for a year. On arriving, Mme. Ricardo looked up her first singing teacher.

In the intervening years musical New York had moved uptown to 57th Street. Herbert Greene was the first tenant to take studios in the newly built Carnegie Hall. He also had a thriving Summer School of Singing in Brookfield Center, Connecticut, which he had established with his second wife, Caia Aarup, the Danish pianiste whom he had married in 1902. Mr. Greene invited Mme. Ricardo to his summer school and she gave a concert there. Because Mrs. Greene's room was the most comfortable in the old New England homestead, this was allotted to Mme. Ricardo for her stay. On the bookshelves in her room she found the works of the theosophists H. P. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, Mr. Sinnett,



LILLA VAN DYCK HARRIS

and Colonel Olcott. The next morning at breakfast Mme. Ricardo said, "If you are interested in theosophical literature, I have some books for you to read." Thus the pupil of Mr. Greene's early years brought to him toward the close of her brilliant, but rather short career as a singer, the works of Rudolf Steiner, which were to completely change his life.



CAIA AARUP GREENE

But was this the beginning of anthroposophy in New York? No! Two members had been reading Dr. Steiner's lectures together there for a year. This brings us to the story of Ethel Parks Brownrigg, whom many of you must have known, as she lived until 1953. Strangely enough Ethel Parks too was a singer. She was studying in Germany and went with a young American friend, Helen Hecker, to hear the lectures of Rudolf Steiner in Berlin. When, in 1906, Miss Parks applied for membership in the Theosophical Society, it already showed signs of decline. She joined it at a crucial moment in its history. Dr. Steiner himself says, "Even as early as 1906 things were already beginning to be manifest in the Theosophical Society which indicated in a terrible measure its deterioration." You are all familiar with the events of the following years which concerned the Indian boy, Krishnamurti, and resulted in the forming of the Anthroposophical Union during the Christmas Conference of 1912 at Cologne by those theosophists who, from the beginning, had been interested in Rudolf Steiner. Ethel Parks was one of those who, as early as 1906, recognized Dr. Steiner's form of spiritual knowledge, so different from theosophical dogma. She returned to America in 1909 to be married to John Brownrigg, and at that time only two followers of Rudolf Steiner were living in the United States. One was her friend Helen Hecker who had preceded her home and had returned to California, where she later founded the group which now bears her name. The other was Dr. Alma von Brandis of Los Angeles, a member of long standing from Europe. Ethel Brownrigg's brother, Richard Parks, another singer, joined the German Section of the Theosophical Society in October 1909. He became interested when his sister visited him that year in the Middle west.

I would like to make a few personal remarks about Ethel Brownrigg. In her youth she had marked physical beauty of a delicate, fragile kind. She was a blue-eyed, goldenhaired girl with a coloratura soprano voice and had sung in opera in Sicily. She later sang the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Magic Flute* at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Her career was interrupted by illness and the birth of two sons, but her interest in and devotion to the work of Rudolf Steiner was uninterrupted throughout her life. Although very feminine, she was choleric by nature and capable of great initiative and determination, which was invaluable to the work. During a conversation I had with Dr. Steiner in 1920, he inquired for her.



ETHEL PARKS BROWNRIGG

Mrs. Brownrigg had deep affection for her brother, Richard Parks, and they were very proud of each other. It was a source of happiness to her that she could share anthroposophy with him. He was a dignified, handsome man and had by nature many of the attributes we all try to cultivate. He was equable and created harmony around him. Although he had one of the finest bass voices imaginable, he was not vain. A true gentleman, he possessed a quality one can only call chivalrous. Tolerant and open-minded, he was fertile ground for the seeds of anthroposophy. He was much beloved by his pupils.

When Mme. Ricardo and Miss Harris arrived in New York in the spring of 1910, they sought out Mrs. Brownrigg and arranged to meet for the reading of a lecture by Rudolf Steiner – the first meeting of the group that was later to become the St. Mark Group. The meeting was held in the Masonic Publishing Company Auditorium, a small room placed at their disposal by the publisher, Mr. Robertson. Six people attended. Besides the publisher and a painter, a Mr. Saunders who later lost interest, they were Mrs. Brownrigg, Mr. Parks, Miss Harris, and Mme. Ricardo, with Mrs. Brownrigg as leader. Afterwards the meetings were held in Mrs. Brownrigg's apartment. In the winter of 1910 Mr. and Mrs. Greene joined the Group. This was the year in which the St. Mark

Group received its name, and there is some doubt as to how it originated. That was just before my time, so I refer to notes left by Mrs. Brownrigg. She wrote:

Letters sent to Dr. Steiner from me asking for a name for the Group and replies from the Headquarters in Berlin crossed in the mails, creating a confusion. One reply to my letter stated that "St. Mark" would be a good name, because his concise, analytical writing was peculiarly adapted to the American mind. Dr. Steiner later stated that "New York was a very good place to found the St. Mark Group."

It was in the fall of 1910 that I came as a schoolgirl from the West Coast in search of a singing teacher. I first went to Chicago and Boston and could have decided to stay in either of these cities, but I met a clergyman in Boston who was preaching in a church in Brookfield Center, and he told me of Mr. Greene. Out of the hundreds of vocal studios into which I might have walked, my legs karmically carried me to Mr. Greene's in Carnegie Hall, just as he had heard about anthroposophy, and I knew that that was where I wanted to stay. A photograph of Rudolf Steiner occupied a place of prominence. When I asked whose that wonderful face was, Mr. Greene told me, and this was the first time I heard the name Rudolf Steiner. When I inquired further, he said I was too young to be interested, and he was right. I was very ambitious and, with beginner's luck, had a busy and absorbing season. After the first winter's vocal study with Mr. Greene, I made a concert tour of the United States, so it was some time before I read *The Way of Initiation*, which Mrs. Greene had given me.

In 1913, a year after the Anthroposophical Society was formed in Europe, Caia Greene became the leader of the St. Mark Group and remained its leader until 1924, when the Society was reorganized. Her leadership came about through the illness of Mrs. Brownrigg. Mrs. Greene took up the leadership reluctantly. She never wanted to occupy any position of prominence, as she was reticent and unassuming. I had to look her up in the music biographies at the public library before I could learn the extent of her career as a concert pianist in Scandinavia. Such was her innate modesty. Caia Greene was not easy to know. Although she never spoke against anyone, she was truthful rather than tactful if asked for her opinion. Externally she showed a cool reserve, but within she possessed spiritual warmth and the ability to understand and comfort. She appreciated all kinds of people. Typically Nordic in appearance and

temperament, her national qualities were marked. She was a true Dane. As she spoke both German and English fluently, she was able to provide translations for her Group. Rudolf Steiner later said that the possibility of fostering anthroposophy in New York in those early times “was due to her virtue.” I heard Dr. Steiner say to her as we parted from him in Dornach in 1920, “Wir sind im Gedanken eins.” (“We are one in thought.”)

Although the St. Mark Group was small, Mrs. Greene considered the position of leader one of great responsibility. She had an enormous capacity for work and study, and from that moment on gave the major portion of her time to anthroposophy. She bought every lecture or book available in German or English and set up a lending library for their distribution. We mailed books to interested persons all over the country and as far away as Honolulu and carried on a correspondence with these distant friends. I became secretary of the St. Mark Group in 1913, a position I filled, except when I was away on tour, until the spring of 1953, when I moved to the country. I refer to the secretary’s notebook of 1914 which states:

There is at present in the St. Mark library or in circulation, available for the use of the members, all of Dr. Steiner’s printed works in German and English, nearly all of his cycles in German and all of the translations that have so far been placed at the disposal of the group by the translator, Mr. Collison. The library is the personal property of Mrs. Greene.

Mrs. Greene placed copies of Dr. Steiner’s fundamental books in the New York Public Library through the head librarian, Mr. Bjerregaard, a countryman of hers, who distributed them among the neighborhood branches. Later we were able to obtain translations by exchange. Dorothy Pethick of the London Fellowship wrote offering to send us *The Apocalypse* in return for *Theosophy of the Rosicrucians* and Mrs. Richmond in New Zealand offered for sale copies of the lecture *Christ and the Human Soul*, 25 of which we purchased.

Expansion of the Group or calling the work to public notice in New York was not considered desirable at that time. Mrs. Greene was repeatedly advised to proceed with extreme caution. This was the stage in the development of anthroposophy in America which could be characterized as the “Catacomb

Period.” Mrs. Greene was made to feel that she was not the ambassador of anthroposophy in America, but rather its guardian. There was a great urge throughout the Society in Europe to spread the teachings far and wide and group leaders tried to increase their membership, but Rudolf Steiner did not approve of this. He knew the movement must grow, but said it should be in a slow and healthy way. He was against any sort of propaganda. Dr. Steiner stressed the importance of group work. A group is composed of all kinds of people and is affected and changed by the quality of every new member who joins it. The group must be a living community and this can be brought about through the substance of anthroposophy worked over together as a group. This, he felt, was the group leader’s responsibility. He said, “The structure of the group should be organized around the personality of the group leader. This is often taken far too lightly.” The St. Mark Group, working together as a small community, experienced a progressive development of consciousness and grew of itself without forcing. During the very first year of Mrs. Greene’s leadership, eight new members joined us. Later, at the proper time, she was able to bring the work before the public in a larger way.



RICHARD PARKS

In 1913 Mr. Greene’s studio was our ark, or perhaps I should say our eyrie, as it was on the 7th floor of Carnegie Hall. The Group was invited to meet there and was his guest for the next 11 years. It would have been inconceivable that the St. Mark Group pay rent. The Greens were proud to be able to provide its home. Those who met together were nearly all musicians, mostly singers, as you must have noticed. Dr. Steiner says that artistic activities were scarcely fostered in the Theosophical Society. Artists did not feel at home there. He thought it was important to make the artistic alive among us, and that, because the anthroposophically-minded members in Germany were able to unfold art along with spiritual knowledge, they grew more and more into the truth of the modern experience of the spirit.

Mr. Harry Collison came from England in 1913 and gave public lectures in the Carnegie Hall Studios. When we went to call at his hotel we found him literally snowed under with pages of new translations. He put us to work assembling the mimeographed sheets. By the time he left for home we were supplied with reading material for the group evenings for some time to come. A yearly fee from each member was paid Mr. Collison for the use of his translations.

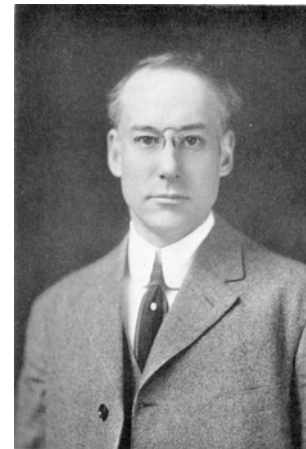
Every spring we moved trunks full of Dr. Steiner's books and lectures to the Brookfield School for safekeeping and study. Automobile rides were a special pleasure in the Connecticut countryside in those days, and Mr. Greene had a large Haines touring car which he filled with a different group of students every afternoon for a long drive. At lunch he would sometimes say, "We'll have our ride this afternoon, but first I would like to spend an hour on the fourth chapter of *Occult Science*. You are welcome if you wish to join me." Many accepted the unique invitation. Several anthroposophists spent whole summers in Brookfield, among the young music students, to study the lecture cycles together. The years from 1915 to 1920 were a time of growth. Mr. Greene's accompaniste, Gladys Barnett (now Mrs. William Hahn); and later her sister Ruth (now Mrs. Hans Pusch), who was then a child; his assistant Sarah Mesick; his tenor pupil William Hahn, with his wife Violet and her daughter Frances Williams; and Mrs. Greene's piano student Herbert Chaudiere, all later became active members of the Society. In the winter Mr. Greene taught singing three days a week in Philadelphia, and as some of these young people lived there, they formed the nucleus of a circle which read anthroposophy with him after the day's work was over.

Although in 1918 anti-German feeling was very strong, we continued to hold our group meetings in New York. The studio was full of the precious German lecture cycles. One afternoon as Mr. Greene was teaching, three secret service men knocked on the door, took suitcases of lectures for examination, and coldly insisted that he go with them for questioning. But before the taxi



MERWIN ROE STOUGHTON

reached police headquarters, they were so impressed with his perspicacity, candor, and charm, that they asked him if he had ever seriously considered joining the United States Secret Service himself. Possessing, as he did, the best American traits, he saved the situation by the strength of his personality. His was an outstreaming, irresistible nature, which made friends at every turn. He was an unusually handsome man, and one never forgot the depth of the penetrating glance of the blue eyes, choleric yet kind, which he turned upon the world. Adversity never darkened his sunny spirits. He was once described to me as a combination of a shrewd yankee businessman and a tender-hearted girl. Personally, I could never see the "shrewd Yankee," because he was unselfish and generous to a fault. He financed everyone he met who, in his opinion had "never had a chance." When he died in 1924, he had given away his huge earnings. There was something glorious about it! He left only the Brookfield School.



DR. BRADLEY STOUGHTON

Brookfield Center was not the only place in Connecticut where anthroposophy was fostered in the summers. Mme. Ricardo and Miss Harris spent the summer of 1912 in Pomfret at the guest house of Elinor Matheson, and here we meet for the first time Irene Brown, who later became a benefactress to the Society in many branches of its work, as well as Katherine Jewell Everts, a dramatic reader with whom Mme. Ricardo later gave recitals. With several others, active in the arts, Mme. Ricardo formed a group there. As most of the members of the Pomfret Group lived in or near New York City in the winter, they attended the St. Mark group, into which, in the course of time, the Pomfret Group was absorbed. Later it was from Katherine Everts that Maud and Henry Monges first heard the name of Rudolf Steiner. Katherine Wannamaker, who took her daughter Margaret to Miss Everts' camp in 1922, first heard of anthroposophy from her.

Mrs. Wannamaker was born the daughter of missionaries in India. She always had a deep longing for the spiritual world and was never happy in the atmosphere of foreign missions. Orthodox Protestantism did not satisfy her. She found in Rudolf Steiner what she had so long sought and shared this with

her husband Olin Wannamaker, whose continued contribution to the work as translator, lecturer, and teacher is well known to you all. In 1923 Mr. Wannamaker was searching for an apartment for Lucy and Leo Neuscheller and their two little girls, who were expected from Dornach. Mme. Neuscheller, as you know, is the pioneer who brought eurythmy to New York, holding her first eurythmy classes in the Carnegie Hall Studio. Her long and untiring efforts for the advancement of eurythmy continue to the present day. Mr. and Mrs. Neuscheller arrived only a few months before the end of the period I report. Their lively interest in anthroposophy and the experience of their years in Dornach brought a new surge of vitality into the life of the St. Mark Group.

We had seen one demonstration of eurythmy the previous season, when Miriam Wallace returned from her studies in Dornach and gave an informal performance at the Seymour School. Caia Greene played the accompaniments and I recited the poems for her.

You can see how the small circle started by Ethel Brownrigg, Richard Parks, Gracia Ricardo and Lilla Harris continues to widen. Although there were only about 30 members, the Group was full of life and vitality. We also took our practical responsibilities seriously, and when the Goetheanum expressed a need for money in 1921, we were able to send a contribution of \$1,157.00 to Dornach.

Many of you knew Mme. Ricardo in her later years, as she was active in the American Society in the 1920's and again in the 1940's. When I first met her, she was a majestic and commanding figure, a cosmopolitan personality, in the spiritual sense of the word. She had a warrior's bravery, a strong will, and a warm heart. When she took a firm stand, she was not easily swayed. She spoke her mind freely and expected others to do the same. If her anger was aroused, it rarely lasted overnight, as she had a forgiving nature and suffered over not always meeting this in others. She tried to begin each day like a clean slate, harboring no ill will. Feeling a deep need for affection herself, she gave it unstintingly to her friends. Her last appearance as a public singer was in 1913 with the pianist Walter Morse Rummel in Berlin, characteristically to raise funds for the building of the first Goetheanum. In the following years she worked toward the development of a new art of tone production fructified by anthroposophy. She returned to New York in 1922 with a special task, that of introducing the anthroposophical medical work to America, an activity she continued long

after the organization of the American Society. Mme. Ricardo spent the rest of her long life interesting people in the works of Rudolf Steiner and teaching singing to a limited number of singers, among whom were Marion Szekely-Freschl, Berty Jenny, Gina Palermo, Mary Theodora Richards, and I, all members of the Society. She divided her time between America and Dornach where she died in 1955.

Few of you, however, knew Miss Harris, as she was never in America after 1912. She was a complex and interesting personality. Of medium height and figure, she had the graceful, upright carriage of the trained singer. In 1904 she was engaged by Cosima Wagner for Bayreuth, but had the tragic experience of permanently losing her singing voice, and her career abruptly ended. At her funeral in 1937, Albert Steffen spoke of "her beautiful and difficult life." He described her connection with Lilli Lehmann as that of mother and daughter, and pointed out that although destiny did not allow her to fulfill her promise as a Wagnerian singer, it set her in the midst of the artistic culture of her time. Among her friends were many of the celebrities of the European world of music and the theater, and she acquired a high degree of artistic development, which she later brought to the understanding of anthroposophy. Herr Steffen said that one saw the sacrifice of her hopes on her courageous, perceptive face, as a gentle pain shining through. One heard it in the resignation of her voice. It was not a passive renunciation one felt in her, but rather that life had proved a complete compensation for all she had forfeited. Miss Harris was an entertaining and brilliant conversationalist with a subtle sense of humor. She made her home in Dornach with Mme. Ricardo and Fr. Mathilde Scholl. Fr. Scholl was one of the earliest pupils of Rudolf Steiner and took part in the first Foundation Meeting in Berlin in 1902 with those who found in Rudolf Steiner the guide they felt could lead them along the right paths. The Dornach home of the three friends, so different in temperament, became a gathering place for English-speaking visitors who, without the German language, might otherwise have been quite at a loss in Dornach at that time. Miss Harris was sponsor for our Group and her inspired letters of information were of inestimable value. When Dr. Steiner began the carving of the Christ statue, she wrote us about it, giving us the privilege of contributing toward the purchase of the wood. She was our bridge to Dornach, our link with the Goetheanum.

Dr. Bradley Stoughton, whom many of you know, was secretary of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers in 1914 and was living in New York with his wife, Merwin Roe, who figured in the first sentences of this history. Merwin Stoughton had become a member in Germany years before. Not only did they attend the St. Mark Group meetings, but provided, over the years, suitable quarters for the weekly open meetings and public lectures, first in their house on East 76th Street and later in the Auditorium and rooms of the Engineering Society's Building, where Dr. Stoughton and others lectured on anthroposophy to the public.

At this point interest began to spread out in various directions. Mr. van Leer and Baron Walleen, lecturers from Europe, made the first of their visits to New York in 1916, speaking to the public. Another American singer, W. Henri Zay arrived after a stay in England where he was a member. An attractive, urbane personality, author of *Practical Psychology of Voice and of Life*, Mr. Zay soon had a circle of newly interested readers around him and his English bride. He formed an independent group, the Emerson Group, which later united with St. Mark's. At the time of his sudden death in 1927, he was a member of the St. Mark Directive Committee. Mrs. Emily Palmer Cape interested many of her friends and read with them. Small study circles sprang up all over the city, but met together at Carnegie Hall on Tuesday evenings.

After the war, Henry Hagens, a soldier in the United States Army, looked us up. He told us that he knew he would survive in battle as Dr. Steiner had bade him goodbye with the words "Auf Wiedersehen." Mistaken for a German, he had been a prisoner of the French in Africa, guarded by native troops, and had lost track of his fiancée in the postwar confusion of Germany. Lilla Harris succeeded in finding her. Emmy Hagens later became a teacher in the Rudolf Steiner School. In 1932, Mr. and Mrs. Hagens founded a group in Princeton, New Jersey, with Mr. Hagens as leader. After his death in 1951, his wife carried on the group work until her death in 1957, when their son Herbert became the leader of the Henry Hagens Group.



W. HENRI ZAY

Early in 1921 Ralph Courtney came from Europe as representative of the Futurum Company. A newspaperman, he had been European correspondent in Paris for the *New York Tribune*. When Futurum failed in Switzerland Mr. Courtney took a position on the *New York Herald*, which sent him to Washington, D.C., during the Washington Disarmament Conference to interview the leaders of the Western Powers. Deeply impressed by Dr. Steiner's concept of a new social order and filled with enthusiasm for the furtherance of these ideas, Mr. Courtney contributed richly to the life of the St. Mark Group by lectures and courses which he gave on this subject from his arrival in the spring of 1921 until the autumn of 1923. The Threefold Commonwealth Group was formed around him as leader in December 1923. Four members of the St. Mark Group joined the new group, Gladys Barnett, May Laird-Brown, Louise Bybee, and Charlotte Parker. The other independent groups in New York, the Pomfret and Emerson groups, had eventually been absorbed by the St. Mark Group, but the Threefold Commonwealth Group grew in strength and vitality. Today, as you all know, it provides a year-round center for the fostering and cultivation of anthroposophy.

As our meeting came to an end on New Year's Day, 1923, a cable from Dornach was delivered at the door. Mrs. Greene read us the news of the burning of the Goetheanum. A shocked silence fell upon us. In our mind's eye we saw again the beautiful building of wood, in whose forms everything in the universe was contained. The wooden pillars and architraves carved by hand, the colored windows of engraved glass on which endless time and labor had been lavished, rose before us in memory. We thought of the paintings on the inner surface of the two domes, and the roof of opalescent Norwegian slate reflecting the sun and moonlight. Rudolf Steiner had worked at the building with great self-sacrifice for 10 years: 1,500 members from 17 nations had carved and painted and toiled together to bring it to completion only 2 years earlier. Now it lay in ashes on the Dornach hill. Some of the older members among us never recovered from the shock. Mrs. Greene's forces began to fail from that time on. The rest of us carried in our hearts a kernel of perpetual mourning. But those who shared the experience were joined more closely together by it. Later we learned that Rudolf Steiner had watched all night while the building burned to the ground in spite of every effort to save it. In the morning he stood in the concrete basement testing the hot walls with his hand

to see if they were strong enough to support a new structure. As he surveyed the smoldering ashes he said, "We will continue to do our duty on the site that is still left to us."

Although many English translations of Dr. Steiner's books were brought out in England, only four or five were published in America. McCoy & Co. published *The Way of Initiation* and *Initiation and Its Results*, which constitute a part of the book we know as *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*. Rand McNally published *An Outline of Occult Science, Theosophy*, and *The Occult Significance of Blood*. Putnam & Sons brought out *The Mystics of the Renaissance* and *The Gates of Knowledge*. The copyrights were owned by Mr. Max Gysi who decided to sell them in 1918. Mrs. Brownrigg raised the necessary \$1,500.00 from among the members, and the copyrights were purchased and placed in her name. In 1922, when Maud and Henry Monges began to publish books in Chicago, Mrs. Brownrigg gave these copyrights over to them.

I first met Maud and Henry Monges in 1916, when Mr. Monges had just found anthroposophy through seeing a book by Dr. Steiner in a bookstore window. He describes this so well in his farewell address of March 24, 1948, that I need add nothing to it. Although Mr. Monges joined our Group as early as 1917 and his wife a year later, they were seldom in New York, because their time was divided between Chicago and Dornach. Maud Breckenridge Monges, an essentially serious person, possessed a serene and gentle grace. Snowy hair crowned her pale, still-youthful face. Her interests were wide, but anthroposophy was her chief concern. Like her husband, she learned the German language in order to read Dr. Steiner's writings in the original and to translate them for others, a work she continued until a few days before her death in the Swiss Alps in 1936. Mr. Monges became general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America when Dr. Steiner reorganized the General and National Societies at the Christmas Meeting 1923-24. Up to this time, there had been no official connection between the groups. The reorganization of the Society was intended to correct, among many other



HILDA DEIGHTON

things, this lack of cohesion. Each country became a single united organism, electing a general secretary and maintaining a national headquarters which would perform certain functions in the world organization. During the summer of 1923, when plans were being made in Dornach for the Christmas Foundation Meeting, there were three groups in America, the Santa Barbara Group founded by Helen Hecker, the Los Angeles Group under the leadership of Dr. Mary Burns, and the St. Mark Group. These were represented in the preliminary meetings there by Dr. Alma von Brandis. At the Christmas meeting Mr. Monges represented them, and Mr. Collison represented the newly formed Threefold Commonwealth Group. It is not necessary for me to describe Mr. Monges and his years of devoted work as general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America, nor his many-sided contributions toward the development of the work in founding the Anthroposophic Press and serving on the boards of the Rudolf Steiner School and the Weleda Company, because most of you remember him and his unselfish zeal. His main activity in New York began at the end of the forgotten years of which I speak, the era which terminated in 1924 with the organization of the national society. The rest is known history.

At the founding of the American Society in 1924 there were only about 150 members in the United States. The effort to root anthroposophy in the Western World was not easy in the early days, nor has it been since. In the 34 intervening years the membership has increased by only 861. But Dr. Steiner says:

Reflect upon it my dear friends: a comparatively small body of people associated together, doing something in which they shall be followed by a large part of the human race. The anthroposophists of today must not suppose that they have merely the same obligations as those people will one day have, who believe in anthroposophy when anthroposophists are reckoned by millions and not by thousands.

How much greater was the responsibility of the small circle which first met together in 1910, that brave little band of pioneers who succeeded in planting the first seeds of anthroposophy in the Western hemisphere!

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