

# The Lamp

Vol. III.  
No. 6.

TORONTO, JANUARY 15, 1897.

No. 30.

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## A TRIAL YEAR.

A long chain lay before me. Considering it link by link, I saw that the strain was greatest wherever one link overlapped another; the point of junction was the point of trial. No two links were precisely similar in molecular structure and each must feel from this an added friction in their inter-connection. Yet the whole chain could only be strong with the strength of the weakest link and the uniformity of the pull increased the power of the whole by modifying the pressure upon any one single link.

So I fell to thinking of the cyclic chain. The memory of our teachings came before my mind, enhanced by the experience of all comrades and myself in and with them. Well we know that 1896-97 is that period which sees the overlapping of two cycles, but did we also consider that, because of this, it must be a period of intense interior strain, intense surface friction? Did we remember this? Or did we think that the dawn of a new cycle had made all things easy; that we should slip onward into a smooth way? Did we forget that the hour of dawning is chill, is a contested point, where the darkness battles fiercely ere it passes; where forces of light and warmth draw tensely to a point of culmination before they can expand with blessing into the waiting, the still dim world? Did we ignore that the opening moment of a new cycle did not witness the closing hour of the old, that this was relegated to a period further on, just as one link overlaps another and finds within its own circle the outer, the closing side of its fellow-link? Doubtless we remembered these things. Doubtless we foresaw a trial year for Humanity.

The expanding force of the new cycle meets, at a given point, the indrawing forces of the old cycle; this creates a point of struggle, of friction, which may be called a trial year. It is not a year according to human subdivisions of time, does not begin and end with our dates. Yet it has a definite beginning and ending according to real and occult time divisions. Also, its effects will come to an end earlier in the lives of some individuals than with others. For the world at large the time is precisely fixed. Call it the period within which the dark forces have most power over human nature, and this may be said, roughly speaking, to end with the century, with the last ripple of *effect* of the expiring energy of the old cycle. Effects outlast the latest indrawn breath, be it remembered, outliving for a short time the force which produced them. Finally, upon the energy with which the new force overcomes the old, upon the elasticity of its spring forward, much depends. The maintenance of that energetic propulsion depends upon ourselves, *in this case*. We shall bound joyously forward with Nature, shall we not? The great Mother, unimpeded by us, shall carry us on.

So, standing where the strain is most intense, facing the dawn indeed, but with the sights and sounds of night and storm still assailing us, how is it with us who entered with foreknowledge this trial year?

Is it not strangely well with us in the vortex of force where we stand, breasting the world stream, enduring the friction of the waters, the assault of the under tow? Strangely, I say, for here and there one has been sucked below by the under tow, and white faces, de-