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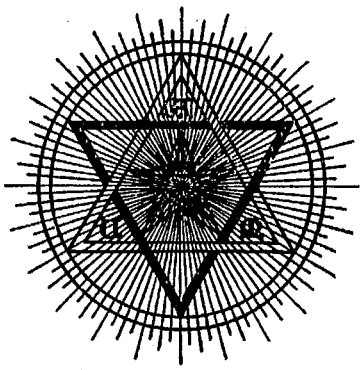
THE REAL H. P. BLAVATSKY

A STUDY IN THEOSOPHY, AND A MEMOIR OF A GREAT SOUL

BY

WILLIAM KINGSLAND



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DEDICATION

This present Work is
Dedicated to the Memory of the Great Soul of

H. P. BLAVATSKY

Who lived a life of martyrdom that she
might give the following Message to
the World, and perchance direct
the footsteps of a few into
the PATH that leads
to liberation and
Adeptship.

"There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind—but yet a road; and it leads to the Heart of the Universe. I can tell you how to find Those who will show you the secret gateway that leads inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer. There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards, there is reward past all telling: the power to bless and save humanity. For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come."

H. P. B.

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A WARNING

" Four higher roadways be. Only those feet
May tread them which have done with earthly things,
Right Purity, Right Thought, Right Loneliness,
Right Rapture. Spread no wings

" For Sunward flight, thou soul with unplumed vans !
Sweet is the lower air, and safe and known
The homely levels ; only strong ones leave
The nest each makes his own.

" Dear is the love, I know, of Wife and Child ;
Pleasant the friends and pastimes of your years ;
Fruitful of good Life's gentle charities ;
Firm-set, though false, its fears.

" Live—ye who must—such lives as live on these ;
Make golden stairways of your weaknesses ; rise
By daily sojourn with those phantasies
To lovelier verities.

" So shall ye pass to clearer heights and find
Easier ascents and lighter loads of sins,
And larger will to burst the bonds of sense,
Entering the PATH."

The Light of Asia.

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PREFACE

MY object in this work is not so much to write a biography which shall record the incidents in the eventful life of that remarkable woman—" the Sphinx of the XIXth Century "—H. P. Blavatsky, as to endeavour in the first place to show from the existing records in connection with her history how the great modern Theosophical Movement originated, and what are the fundamental facts and principles on which it is based; and, in the second place, to disclose as far as may be possible the *soul* of the woman who was the central figure in the inception of that Movement.

The *personality* of H. P. Blavatsky was a very remarkable and complex one. It was in fact a perpetual enigma even to those who knew her most intimately, and were the most devoted to her. There have, however, been two works recently published which throw a flood of light on her character and actions, and on the early history and development of the Theosophical Movement. These two works are, *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, and *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett.* The former of these was published in 1923, and the latter in 1925. I shall draw largely from these sources in the present work.

The clue to the enigma of the *personality* of H. P. Blavatsky is not an easy one to find apart from, or even with, the occult teachings as to the constitution of man. By *personality* we commonly mean that complex of characteristics which is manifested to our normal senses and understanding in the actions of the individual human being. But how much of the real or complete *Self* do these outer characteristics and actions disclose? Even in the most ordinary person the subconscious motives or influences which prompt to any particular action are, to a large extent, hidden, and unknown to the individual himself. Which of us can follow our personality back to its first beginnings—if, indeed, it ever had any beginnings—analyse and duly assign the varying influences of that vast complex of cosmic forces which have contributed in the past to make us what we are to-day, and which play upon us at every moment of our lives, so that it is impossible for us to say what are *our* responsible actions, and what those in which we are more or less the irresponsible playthings of higher cosmic forces or intelligences? Witness the magnificent lines of Walt Whitman :—

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" Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know
I was even there. . . .
Immense have been the preparations for me. . . .
Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen.
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.
Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me,
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.
For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it with care.
All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and delight me,
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul."

There is a profoundly true saying that " to know all is to forgive all." There is also another saying—a statement of the inexorable law of Karma—" Judge not, that ye be not judged." There is probably no moral law which is so commonly transgressed as this ; and I think it may be said that of all those individuals whose work has come prominently before the world during the last fifty years, there is not one whose reputation has suffered so much from the superficial judgment, which is all that is commonly brought to bear upon such characters, than has been the case with H. P. Blavatsky.

She herself was so scornful of such superficial judgments that she took no pains to adapt herself to minor social conventions in such a manner as to avoid them. At the same time there is no doubt that she often deliberately presented to people a demeanour calculated to shock them, for the express purpose of testing their ability to rise superior to external appearances. This test still holds good, and the accusations levelled against her are rather condemnations of the accusers than of the accused. How often in history it has been proved to be so in the case of great reformers. Thus, as will presently appear, she brought these judgments upon herself : and ultimately came to realise that in doing so she had to some extent injured the cause she had so much at heart.

Behind the rough, somewhat uncouth, stormy and certainly most unconventional *personality* of H. P. Blavatsky there lay, for those who could put aside superficial judgments, a nobility and force of character of the highest quality : whilst in addition to that there were the special qualities which the occultist must

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possess before he can become the *impersonal* agent of those who, from heights of knowledge and wisdom, watch over and guide the destinies of the Race.

In the present work I seek, therefore, as far as may be possible to penetrate beneath the outer personality by which H. P. Blavatsky has been so often and so hastily misjudged and condemned.

In speaking of the *Real* H. P. Blavatsky I use the term first of all as correcting the false representations and misconceptions which have been so commonly and so lightly accepted by the world at large; and, secondly, as signifying—what in fact each of us possesses—an inner *Self*, a *real* Self as distinguished from the fluctuating, changing personality; a Self which, in the majority of us, is only very feebly active in or through the temporary personality.

This distinction between the higher and the lower Self is a fundamental one, not merely in Theosophy but also in all Mysticism, both philosophical and devotional.

In one of the Mahatma letters to H. S. Olcott,[1] Mme. Blavatsky is spoken of as " the personality known as H. P. B. to the world (but otherwise to us)." It will not be possible for us to penetrate to the great occult secret of her (or his) higher Self. Could that be reached, both personality and individuality would vanish, and no ' explanations ' would be necessary or possible. But we may hope at least to discard the superficial non-essentials of the outer personality.

Yet, even when we have done this, the fact remains that it is not the *personality* of H. P. Blavatsky that matters at all, either in its outer or its inner aspects. What really matters is the message which she gave to the world. And perhaps the giver of that message can only be appreciated in proportion as the message itself is received. Where it is not received: where it runs counter to hard and fast conventions, prejudices, beliefs or dogmas, one can hardly expect in the present state of society, or the present characteristics of human nature, that the moral law " Judge not, that ye be not judged " will be respected any more in the case of H. P. Blavatsky than it is in other cases.

Nevertheless, I may possibly hope in the following pages to do something towards correcting many of the misrepresentations and slanders to which the detractors of Theosophy have so freely lent themselves.

[1] *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*, First Series, Transcribed and compiled by C. Jinarájadása, p. 52.

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This work is, therefore, as much a study of Theosophy as a Memoir of H. P. Blavatsky. I am not concerned to convince sceptics as to the genuineness of the phenomena which she exhibited, nor as to the existence of the Mahatmas from whom she claimed to derive the teachings which she gave to the world. I shall simply endeavour to present the matter as it stands in the records which we possess, and leave the reader to form his own conclusions therefrom.

Setting aside all carping criticism, let the reader try to look into the great Heart of the woman whose clear gaze was fixed on the great goal of Humanity, the attainment by each individual of a divine degree of knowledge and wisdom, and who worked with iron will, and unswerving purpose, and utter self-sacrifice, if perchance *a few* might receive the great message entrusted to her by those custodians of the ancient Wisdom Religion whom she herself had found after years of ceaseless search.

W. K.

Ryde, I.W.
October, 1928.

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NOTE ON THE USE OF THE WORD THEOSOPHY

H. P. BLAVATSKY defined Theosophy as follows :—

"Theosophy is Divine Knowledge or Science, Divine Wisdom, Θεοσοφία (Theosophia) or Wisdom of the gods, as Θεογονία (Theogonia), genealogy of the gods. The word Θεος means a god in Greek, one of the divine beings, certainly not 'God' in the sense attached in our day to the term. Therefore it is not 'Wisdom of God' as translated by some, but *Divine Wisdom* such as that possessed by the gods. The term is many thousand years old."[1]

She also speaks of it as, "The shoreless ocean of universal truth, love, and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth."[2]

The late Professor Max Müller in his work *Theosophy or Psychological Religion* speaks of Theosophy as, "This venerable name, so well known among early Christian thinkers, as expressing the highest knowledge of God within the reach of the Human mind."[3]

Unfortunately the Professor shared a common and unenlightened view of the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, and identified them with "spirit-rappings, table-turnings, and other occult sciences and black arts." This is simply and laughably absurd to anyone familiar with those teachings, not to mention the fact that these "black arts" were the very things which she denounced most strenuously, thereby calling down upon herself the special wrath of the Spiritualists of her time, and for which modern Spiritualists have never forgiven her.

Professor Max Müller's work is in fact a fine contribution to the modern theosophical literature which H. P. Blavatsky initiated ; and what is set forth therein is abundant confirmation in many directions of her great work *The Secret Doctrine.*

But to-day we have with regret to record the fact that since the death of H. P. Blavatsky in 1891, the word *Theosophy* has not merely become associated in the original Theosophical Society with very many things of a most undesirable nature, but also with teachings which are diametrically opposed to those which are contained in her writings. In some cases these writings have themselves been altered and perverted.

In consequence of this one feels it necessary to use the term very guardedly ; and, indeed, almost compelled to discontinue

[1] Key to Theosophy, p. 1. [2] Ibid., p. 57. [3] p. xvi.

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its use altogether. However, since it is the term used by H. P. Blavatsky herself to signify the Ancient Wisdom Religion, I shall use it in this work with the preliminary statement that I do so only in connection with her own writings and teachings, and not as being in any way associated with what is put forward to-day as Theosophy apart from those teachings.

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The Real H. P. Blavatsky

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY, the originator of the Modern World-wide Theosophical Movement, was beyond all question, and whatever view may be taken of her teachings, the most remarkable as well as the most notable woman of her age.

Whilst on the one hand she was regarded as having "achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history,"[1] she has on the other hand left a great literary record which finds more and more acceptance as time goes on, and discoveries in physical science, in psychical research, and in scholarly investigation of ancient records confirm the theories which she advanced.[2]

If her great work, *The Secret Doctrine*, is an 'imposture,' it can be so only in respect of the source from which she claimed to have received her information; and in that case it enhances the wonderful nature of her own personal knowledge and literary genius. Of this work she says in the Introduction thereto (Vol. I, p. XXXVII):—[3]

"These teachings will be derided and rejected *a priori* in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognise that the *Secret Doctrine* has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas."

That prophecy is rapidly coming true, and I shall have occasion to refer in the following pages to some of the confirmations of the teachings. Her works to-day are in greater demand than ever before. She did more than any other single individual to bring to the West a knowledge of Eastern Religious Philosophy; but she did not do this in any mere scholastic or literary sense, remarkable as was the knowledge in this respect which she exhibited. She infused into that Philosophy a new life and a new meaning.

[1] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Part IX, December, 1885, p. 297.

[2] For a list of her published works see the Bibliography at the end of this Volume.

[3] All the quotations in this book are made from the original first editions of her works. Subsequent editions have been mutilated.

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She claimed for it in the first instance a vast antiquity, as yet, in her time, unrecognised by scholars. She claimed that it was originally derived from a very ancient *Wisdom-Religion* taught to the earlier races of mankind—who were neither savages nor anthropoids, but had reached a very high degree of civilisation—by divine Instructors; and that in fact this ancient Wisdom-Religion was the root and source of all and every religious philosophy or formulated religion the world has ever known.

Many writers to-day are beginning to recognise this. Thus Edward Carpenter says in his *Pagan and Christian Creeds* (p. 258) :—

> "The very thorough and careful investigation of religious origins which has been made during late years by a great number of students and observers undoubtedly tends to show that there has been something like a great World-religion coming down the centuries from the remotest times and gradually expanding and branching as it has come."

Maurice Maeterlinck also, in *The Great Secret*, deals in some detail with the degeneration of the original pure and lofty religious philosophy of the Ancients. He attributes this degeneration to "corruption for the benefit of priests and kings." (p. 135). Certainly what the world has suffered at the hands of priestcraft is indelibly written in blood and fire in the history of the world; and what it still suffers in the obscuration of truth is only known to those who have freed themselves from servitude to forms and formulas of dogmatic religion.

Maeterlinck also says :—

> "The intuition and intelligence of mankind have never again reached the height which they attained when they conceived the ideal of divinity of which we find the most authentic traces in the Vedic traditions." (*Ibid.*)

Madame Blavatsky taught that this Ancient Wisdom has been overlaid and obscured during untold centuries in which Humanity has fallen more and more into a materialism which has utterly unfitted the world at large to receive or to understand it in its original spiritual purity, or to be entrusted with the profound scientific knowledge and command of the forces of nature which was conferred by initiation into the *Mysteries*. All that the outer world has now of these original teachings are myths, fables, and allegories, the meanings of which have been lost, obscured, or materialised; and a large part of her work was an endeavour to "lift a corner of the veil" in which these Ancient Mysteries

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have been shrouded in consequence of the disabilities of mankind in general. Thus she says of *The Secret Doctrine* :—[1]

"The aim of this work may be thus stated: to show that Nature is not 'a fortuitous concurrence of atoms', and to assign to man his rightful place in the scheme of the Universe; to rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; and to uncover, to some extent, the fundamental unity from which they all spring; finally, to show that the occult side of Nature has never been approached by the Science of modern civilization."

But beyond this she claimed that, though lost to the world in general, this ancient teaching has never been without its living representatives in the world; these representatives being Adepts, Initiates, Masters, 'Mahatmas'[2]: unknown to the world at large, but accessible in certain ways of which I shall have more to say hereafter. She claimed that it was from these teachers that she had herself received her instructions, and had been sent out into the world with permission to disclose to some extent the nature of the knowledge in their possession.

Such, very briefly, are the claims which H. P. Blavatsky made; and it is my purpose in this book to deal with them in connection with her own life and work rather than to present any mere personal record of incidents. In this manner we may possibly be able to view in a somewhat different light the incidents with which other biographers have dealt more in detail.[3] Madame Blavatsky called the Ancient Wisdom *Theosophy*. She explained Theosophy, and Theosophy explains her. There is no explanation of her character, and her life of self-sacrifice and utter devotion to those whom she called the *Masters*, apart from the teachings of Theosophy. Theosophy explains not merely the motive and incentive of her life-work and mission, but it explains also much in her character, and many incidents in her life which, without a knowledge of its teachings, are not merely inexplicable but are liable to harsh criticism and judgment on the part of those who can see no deeper than the surface of things. As a matter of fact, even to-day, 35 years after her death, there are two diametrically opposed estimates of her character and her work. On the one hand she is regarded as a trickster and a charlatan; on the other as one of the world's greatest pioneers in the cause of

[1] Preface, Vol. I, p. VIII.

[2] "*Mahatma*. Lit., 'great soul'. An Adept of the highest order. Exalted beings who having attained to the mastery over their lower principles are thus living unimpeded by the 'man of flesh,' and are in possession of knowledge and power commensurate with the stage they have reached in their spiritual evolution."—*Theosophical Glossary*.

[3] See the Bibliography hereto, p. 253.

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Truth. I need hardly say that it is with this latter estimate that I identify myself, for I owe to her personal influence and teachings whatever power I may have since possessed to deal with the problems of human life and destiny: besides much else of a personal nature which it would be out of place to touch upon here. In this respect I am only one of many thousands.

The great Theosophical Movement which H. P. Blavatsky originated in 1875 and which at her death in 1891 numbered 164 branches in various parts of the world, and many thousands of adherents, has, since that event, diverged in many ways and in various directions from her original intention and teachings. There is no longer one united Theosophical Society, presenting to the world, as she had intended, one great undivided and practical example of Universal Brotherhood. The originally united Society has split up into numerous independent Sections, some following one self-appointed leader, others another. How this has come about it is no part of my business now to explain; but perhaps it is worth noting that in almost every case the divergence has centred round the claims made by or for some particular individual to be the direct successor of Madame Blavatsky. We may mention here, however, that to-day there is, all over the world, a strong reactionary tendency known as the 'Back to Blavatsky' Movement; and it seems more than likely that when the present dominating personalities in the original Theosophical Society have passed away, this movement will carry the teachings forward in their original form and intention, until—as she herself predicted—another teacher appears in the last quarter of the present century.[1]

The appeal which H. P. Blavatsky's teachings make to the individual would appear to be to a very considerable extent a matter of inner experience and intuition. Whether derived from a knowledge of the teachings and an effort to put them into practice in a previous incarnation, or whether the appeal is a totally new one may perhaps best be left to the individual judgment. One may say in general, however, that it has been the experience of many thousands who have come into contact with theosophical teachings, that the fundamental principles which these embody make an immediate appeal not merely to the intellect but also to the deepest intuitions. They are a great

[1] "During the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those 'Masters' of whom I have spoken, to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way. . . . If the present attempt, in the form of our Society, succeeds better than its predecessors have done, then it will be in existence as an organized, living and healthy body when the time comes for the effort of the XXth century."—*Key to Theosophy*, p. 306.

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revelation ; they stir our nature to its depths ; they awaken the dormant inner self, that which Theosophy recognises as the *Higher Self*, the real man, the immortal divine Ego : the manifestation and operation of which in and through the lower personality with its physical and psychic heredity—in Christian phraseology, its *fallen* nature—is so sadly overlaid and obscured by " the things of this world." Robert Browning has stated this principle of the inner and the outer self in the following lines from his *Paracelsus* :—

> " There is an inmost centre in us all,
> Where truth abides in fulness, and around,
> Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
> This perfect clear conception—which is truth.
> A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
> Binds it, and makes all error : and to KNOW
> Rather consists in opening out a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
> Than in effecting entry for a light
> Supposed to be without."

Further on I shall endeavour to show how this distinction between the higher and the lower self is the key to many of the seeming enigmas and contradictions in H. P. B.'s own life.

Nothing in a man's lower life can stand in the way of the Higher Self once that real Self has been awakened and has taken possession ; but the manner in which the man will express this in his outer life will vary very widely according to circumstances ; and, unless balanced by a well-developed rational faculty, it is apt to take strange forms of fanaticism and superstition.

Madame Blavatsky speaks of this awakening in her own case in one of her Letters to Mr. Sinnett as being due to the particular Master or ' Mahatma ' who instructed her in the first instance, and to whose service her whole life was subsequently devoted. She says : " MY MASTER—the sole creator of my inner Self which but for His calling it out, awakening it from its slumber, would have never come to conscious being—not in *this* life, at all events."[1]

There are many stand-points and prejudices from and by which we form our estimates of those who come prominently before the world, more particularly when we have not come into personal contact with them. Individual politicians, for example, are largely judged by our own particular political opinions or prejudices ; they are hated by some and extolled by others.

[1] Letter XLV, p. 104.

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Nothing is bad enough to say of some whom others regard as heroes to be worshipped. But a great religious teacher or reformer challenges judgments and prejudices which lie much deeper than those of our social or communal life.

The message which H. P. Blavatsky had to give to the world was a direct challenge to the representatives of traditional ecclesiastical Christianity. Much that she put forward in this connection has since become widely accepted, but in her time Liberal Christianity, or Modernism, had not acquired the standing which it possesses to-day. The consequence was that the representatives of the traditional doctrines—associated as these representatives always have been historically with intolerance and persecution, and an arrogant assumption of the monopoly of spiritual teaching—brought to bear upon Madame Blavatsky personally, and upon everything connected with theosophical activities, every available weapon of invective, slander, and discredit which they could lay hold of.

But in addition to these antagonists, H. P. Blavatsky challenged the social superficialities and shams of her day, and also the materialistic science so prominent in the latter part of the last century. It is little wonder, then, that whilst she was personally beloved and supported on the one hand by those who sympathised with and understood the value of her teachings, she laid herself open on the other hand to furious attacks from vested interests and conventional opinions in many directions, and to the superficial judgments of the world at large dealing only with outer appearances. In her own racy way of writing she says of this: "We cannot expect to be ever waving a scarlet rag before the bull and then complain of his goading us. And, as in this case it is the worst kind of a bull—your 'John Bull'—of course we came out of it second best."[1]

But besides these opponents, H. P. B. was the focus of attacks from other quarters of which the world at large knew nothing in her time, and, notwithstanding our progress in psychical research, knows very little indeed to-day. She was from her earliest days peculiarly gifted with psychic faculties and powers. The dangers to which these expose their possessors are now understood to a certain extent by special students of the subject, but this was by no means the case fifty years ago. There are evil forces and intelligences, both human and non-human, on the invisible—to normal sight—planes of the universe, but of these the ordinary individual—fortunately for himself—is quite unaware; though

[1] *Letters*, p. 148.

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even he, to a certain extent, is open to their influences. But anyone who is psychically sensitive or 'mediumistic', or who renders himself or herself so by promiscuous dabbling in so-called 'Spiritualism,' or the 'Occult,' is open to influences which are exceedingly potent either for good or for evil; and whether he will be influenced for the one or for the other will depend on the extent to which his lower or his higher self predominates in his personality. This may to a certain degree be estimated by the extent to which his aims and desires are tinged on the one hand by pure altruism or on the other by self-interest. I shall show later on how largely altruism was the dominant motive of all Madame Blavatsky's public life. The powerful *intelligent* forces, both human and non-human, who are inimical to all that we call *good*, are attracted in proportion as the individual becomes a factor to be reckoned with in the spiritual progress of humanity.

The world at large has little realised that the conflict of what we call good and evil is not merely one of this world but extends to the psychic and even to the 'spiritual' plane. St. Paul speaks of "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"—whatever he may have meant by that. There is a profound philosophical explanation of this apparent conflict; but the popular imagination, built upon centuries of traditional superstition, commonly conceives of it as a conflict between a personal God and a personal Devil; and, although belief in such a Devil is now widely rejected—and perhaps we might also say that with the fear of the Devil the fear of God has also largely disappeared—it cannot be said that anything more philosophical has taken its place in the general mind to account for the existence of so-called Evil. This problem, however, is one which it would be out of place to deal with here. I shall have something more to say about it later on. What it is necessary to recognise in this connection is, that there are invisible forces and intelligences which are antagonistic to mankind in general, and that individuals who are at all psychic in their constitution are peculiarly open to these influences, whilst the trained occultist, or anyone who attempts to deal with the forces and powers of the great interior worlds, comes into much more direct contact with these antagonistic intelligences.

Madam Blavatsky possessed from her childhood a very extraordinary psychic nature, and later on became a highly trained practical occultist. I shall recur to this more fully in a subsequent chapter dealing with the occult phenomena which she

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exhibited in connection with her mission; but I may note here that on account of that mission she became the natural centre of attack from certain malignant intelligences, and also had to bear the burden of much psychic *Karma* to which the ordinary individual is not exposed.[1]

Incidentally, on account of her teachings, she also called down upon herself the wrath of the Spiritualists of her day. She taught that the 'spirits' who mostly frequent the seance room were nothing but astral 'shells,' galvanised into the semblance of a deceased personality by the psychic forces of the medium; and she very irreverently, in the eyes of the Spiritualists, called them *spooks*. There were and are of course exceptions, and these were fully admitted by her;[2] but in general and in reference to the promiscuous so-called *Spiritualism* so much in vogue both then and now, she was unsparing in her condemnation.

It is very generally agreed that *genius* cannot be judged by ordinary standards; and further, that great geniuses have often exhibited, apart from their special faculties, some very human, and often very undesirable characteristics. Those who have criticised and condemned H. P. Blavatsky have in all cases been those who have utterly failed to recognise her great and peculiar genius, and who, having thus failed, have fastened upon certain external characteristics of temperament which have really no bearing upon her life-work. We do not reject Byron's poetry or Wagner's music because of what is commonly regarded as the moral obliquity of these geniuses. In H. P. Blavatsky's case, however, it was not a matter of moral obliquity—though her enemies have tried very hard, though unsuccessfully, to fasten this stigma upon her—but rather certain exaggerated—one might almost say violent—temperamental characteristics, due largely perhaps to her Russian or Slavonic heredity.

Like so many geniuses who have early felt within themselves the call of a great mission or talent, only at first dimly and vaguely realised, Madame Blavatsky had her *Wanderjahre*, which for her involved an actual physical wandering as well as a mental and spiritual one. After marrying at the age of seventeen a man, General Blavatsky, very greatly older than herself, and from whom she was speedily separated, she set out to roam the world in a restless

[1] "I have what I deserve, not for the sins *I am charged with* but for those which *no one*—save Master and myself know of."—*Letters*, XLVI, p. 110.

[2] "'We assert that the spirits of the dead cannot return to earth—save in rare and exceptional cases—nor do they communicate with men except by *entirely subjective means*. That which does appear objectively, is only the phantom of the ex-physical man. But in *psychic*, and so to say, 'Spiritual' Spiritualism, we do believe, most decidedly."—*Key to Theosophy*, p. 27.

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search to find—what ? Those who have in any way experienced this *Wanderjahre* know that at the time they did not rightly understand what it was that they sought. They only knew that they were following promptings from some deep source within themselves. It is only gradually that the meaning of it all is unfolded in their consciousness ; or perhaps after many years of uncertainty and restless search there is a sudden illumination, and henceforward the goal is discerned, and the will to reach it is fixed. It is the discovery by the man of *himself*, of his own Higher Self and his purpose in life. The struggle and uncertainty in the first instance are due to the fact that the lower personality with its psychic and karmic heredity, and also its physical heredity in brain and nervous system, cannot in the nature of the case be responsive in the first stage of life to the promptings of the Higher Self. The consciousness of the individual is at first turned outwards ; the material objective world impresses itself upon brain and brain memory ; and though, as Wordsworth tells us, the child comes into the world " trailing clouds of glory," yet soon this " fades into the light of common day," and in only too many cases is never recovered.

But the great geniuses, those who have been born to give to the world some message from the region of spiritual realities, from the inner spiritual (not '*spirit*') world—a message which in some form or another has always been the same, however different the outer form, and which at root is the call for all men to awaken to a realisation of their own spiritual nature—these have continuously felt and followed the promptings of their Higher Self, vague and mysterious and little understood as they may at first have been. Many instances might be given of this from the lives of saints and reformers,[1] but there are two which stand out pre-eminently : Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ.

Gautama Buddha, born a Prince of India, and surrounded with every princely luxury, abandoned all and set out on his *Wanderjahre* to discover the meaning of the great mystery of life, if thereby he might haply discover the cause of human suffering, and bring hope and relief to his fellow men. He spent many years in this great quest, first of all in the most severe asceticism, so that he nearly died, but afterwards discovering that this in itself did not lead to the goal. What he had really to discover, and ultimately did discover was *Himself*, and that was his great message to Humanity.

[1] See Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*.

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" I, Buddh, who wept with all my brother's tears,
Whose heart was broken by a whole world's woe,
Laugh and am glad, for there is liberty !
Ho ! ye who suffer ! know

" Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,
None other holds you that ye live and die,
And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss
Its spokes of agony."[1]

Within each human personality—or perhaps it would be better to say, overshadowing each human personality—is the real immortal spiritual Ego, seeking to manifest its inherent divine nature through the lower personality. But this can only be done by what appears to us from the lower standpoint to be a process of evolution of the lower nature ; and in the meanwhile the Higher Self, perfect and abiding in its own intrinsic and pure spiritual nature, is the sacrificial victim of the lower self. It is, in Christian terminology, the indwelling *Christ*, crucified on the cross of matter, crucified in each one of us ; the *Christ* into whose image and likeness the lower self, the normal personal self, must in the end be brought, or with whom it must be at-oned.

Of Jesus of Nazareth it is also recorded—if we are to take the Gospels as being in any respect historical—that he very early realised that he had a mission. He left his parents at the age of twelve and went into the Temple to question the learned doctors, and when found by his parents he said, " wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? " Nevertheless he returned home with them, and was " subject unto them " until he commenced his public mission at the supposed age of thirty. Perhaps allegorically we may understand by " parents " the physical and psychical heredity which each individual has to overcome and subjugate and train to the service of the Higher Self, the " Father in Heaven." Thus it was only after this period that he received his illumination—represented by the Baptism in Jordan.[2] The mission of Jesus like that of Gautama was to disclose to men their own inherent divine nature. What if the outer form of the teaching was different in the case of these two great teachers, so as to suit their own time and people and the religious beliefs of their day ? The inner doctrine, the great message, is the same in each case for those who can discern it ; and it has been so, and will be so with all great spiritual teachers,

[1] *The Light of Asia*, Book VIII.
[2] Some Occult Schools teach that at that time a great Initiate and World Saviour took possession of the body of the personality Jesus of Nazareth.

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until all mankind has realised it and made it an actuality in this lower world. It is the teaching of the *Divine Nature of Man.* Then, and then only, and in that manner shall come to pass that which is recorded in the *Book of Revelation* [1] when " the seventh Angel sounded ; and there followed great voices in Heaven, and they said, the Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ : and he shall reign for ever and ever." Exoteric interpretation presents this as the reign of the personal Jesus Christ, and is always looking for that " second coming " as a physical happening. The esoteric interpretation is that all men having then realised and brought into manifestation in the personality or lower nature the fulness of their own indwelling Christ principle—all men having become Christs or Buddhas—the Kingdom of the world has naturally been transformed into its original paradisical nature, before Man ' fell ' into matter and thereby lost, in his outer form or earthly personality, his original divine likeness.

" What is the reason that souls become oblivious of divinity being ignorant both of themselves and him, though their allotment is from thence, and they in short partake of God ? The principle therefore of evil to them is audacity, generation, the first difference, and the wish to exercise an unrestrained freedom of the will. When, therefore, they began to be delighted with this unbounded liberty, abundantly employing the power of being moved from themselves, they ran in a direction contrary (to their first course,) and thus becoming most distant from their source, they were at length ignorant that they were thence derived."—Plotinus. Enn. V, 1.1.

" Such a man as Adam was before his Eve, shall arise again,
Enter into, and eternally possess, Paradise."
Jacob Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum,* xviii, 3.

Gautama Buddha adapted his teachings to the metaphysical religious philosophy of his day and race : this philosophy being embodied in the Vedas and Upanishads. Jesus Christ adapted his to the Jewish Scriptures and the conception of an anthropomorphic personal God whom he called the *Father* : and he claimed his own and our ' Sonship ' therewith. No other form of teaching would have been understood by his hearers, or possibly another form would not have served the purpose which this has served as an occidental world-religion, even defective and perverted from its original spiritual purity as it has been at the hands of its priestly representatives in subsequent ages.

But to-day this ancient teaching respecting the immortal

[1] XI, 15.

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spiritual man and his relation to the lower temporal personality, and the evolution of the Race in general towards a realisation of this perfected Humanity, is once more coming to its own. The doctrine of the divine nature of man—the "Christ in you" of St. Paul—still a 'heresy' in the Christian Church, finds acceptance with thousands who have otherwise recognised no 'Gospel' in the orthodox teachings of that Church; and at the same time its acceptance has enabled them to appreciate the underlying meaning, implications and unity of other religions which, in their mere outward or exoteric forms, have hitherto been set in opposition the one against the other.

It is to H. P. Blavatsky's mission and work that we owe to the largest extent this great revival of the ancient unifying teachings—and much else besides which I shall endeavour to set forth to some extent in the subsequent Chapters of this book.

It will be convenient to divide her life into three periods, (1) Her childhood and early life up to the time when she set forth on what I am here calling (2) her *Wanderjahre*; and (3) the period of her public work and mission. The first of these embraces a period of 17 years, from 1831 to 1848; the second a period of 25 years, from 1848 to 1873; and the third a period of 18 years, from 1873 to 1891.

I shall deal very briefly with the first two periods; only in fact in so far as they serve to throw some light upon the last and really important portion of her life. In a very bitter letter to Mr. A. P. Sinnett at the time that he was writing his *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, and was pressing her for information, she protests vehemently against any incidents prior to her taking up her public mission being dealt with in these Memoirs, notwithstanding that her enemies had tried in every way to blacken her character in reference to that time. Thus she says in Letter No. LX (p. 145):—

"I am repeatedly reminded of the fact, that, as a public character a woman, who, instead of pursuing her womanly duties, sleeping with her husband, breeding children, wiping their noses, minding her kitchen and consoling herself with matrimonial assistants on the sly and behind her husband's back, I have chosen a path that has led me to notoriety and fame; and that therefore I had to expect all that befell me. Very well, I admit it, and agree. But I say at the same time to the world: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am in your hands and subject and subordinate to the world's jury, *only since I founded the T. S.* Between H. P. Blavatsky from 1875 and H. P. Blavatsky from 1831 to that date, is a veil drawn, and you are in no way concerned

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with what took place behind it, before I appeared as a public character. It was my PRIVATE LIFE holy and sacred, to all but the slanderous and venomous mad-dogs who poke their noses under cover of the night into every fam y's and every individual's private lives. . . . Had I even been all they accuse me of ; had I had lovers and children by the bushels ; who among all that lot is *pure enough to throw at me openly and publicly* the first stone ? . . . No Sir, I die rather than do it ! As Hartmann truly remarked, it is far more important what I myself think of me, than what the world does. It is that which I *know* of myself that will be my judge hereafter. . . . If I had daughters whose reputations I might damage by failing to justify my behaviour I would perhaps resort to such an indignity. As I have none and that three days after my death all the world save a few theosophists and friends will have forgotten my name—let all go, I say."

The general principle which she here lays down that the public are in no way concerned with what took place in her life prior to her appearance as a public character is a sound one which I shall respect as fully as is possible considering that some reference to the earlier periods is necessary for a proper understanding of the later period, and also for the purpose of correcting certain false statements and accusations which have been put forward by her detractors.

For the rest, and for those to whom the teachings appeal by their own inherent truth, and would thus appeal even if the author were utterly unknown : I may say that even the incidents of Madame Blavatsky's public career are of secondary importance, let them be what they may, and open to praise or to blame. The teachings, not the author, are the centre of interest. It is those teachings, the life-work of the woman that matter, and by which posterity will estimate her character and her worth. Many of the fundamental principles of her teachings, rejected by the orthodox science and religion of her day, have already, by the discoveries of science and the researches of scholars, become recognised and accepted ; but time alone can and will enable the whole body of the teachings to be rightly appreciated to that extent which will place the name of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky among those of the greatest teachers and reformers of their age.

One might draw many analogies between the life of H. P. Blavatsky, and the reception of her message in *orthodox* circles, and that of other great pioneers in previous ages. There are two respects in which we might compare her, for example, with Jacob Böhme. In the first place, like Böhme, her ordinary knowledge was utterly inadequate to account for the works which she wrote ;

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and in the second place, posterity has accorded to Böhme a recognition of his faculty and work which was denied to him by the orthodox authorities of his own time. It is too soon to say without entering the realm of prophecy what recognition posterity will give to H. P. Blavatsky; but many of us who are better acquainted with her work than her present detractors, have little doubt that she will obtain a place among the most illustrious names of those who have given to the world a new impulse in its spiritual life.

The contrast between the outer personality of Jacob Böhme and that of H. P. Blavatsky is one of extremes; yet when it comes to dealing with the inner nature, and with the great fundamental principles with which each of these two gifted teachers dealt in their own special manner, we find an agreement which goes very far to confirm our grasp of these principles derived from still earlier sources. It is these principles which count; and if Madame Blavatsky's detractors would turn their attention to them, and make a comparative study of them—even if it were only to criticise and condemn them—they would be doing both themselves and others a far greater service than by attacking the personality of Madame Blavatsky with a repetition of ignorant and vulgar slanders. The very contrast between the personalities of Jacob Böhme and of H. P. Blavatsky might teach us a lesson in ignoring personalities altogether where genius is concerned. In one respect, however, the two personalities show a very marked similarity; both showed an utter self-sacrificing devotion to the source of their knowledge and inspiration: Böhme to the Divine Spirit, *within himself*,[1] H. P. Blavatsky to the Master who, as she says in the quotation I have already given (p. 5), was "the sole creator of my (her) inner Self which but for His calling it out, awakening it from its slumber, would have never come to conscious being—not in *this* life at all events."

Jacob Böhme was a poor ignorant shoe-maker of Görlitz in Saxony; greatly persecuted by the Lutheran Primate Gregory Richter, and forbidden to publish his writings. To-day he has a special 13 page Catalogue in the British Museum Library.

[1] "For the book in which all mysteries lie is man himself; he himself is the book of the Being of all beings; seeing he is the likeness (or similitude) of God; the great *Arcanum* lieth *in* him, the revealing of it belongeth only unto God's spirit."—Jacob Böhme, *Epistles*, IX, 3.

"Behold! thou hast become the light, thou hast become the Sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search: the VOICE unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities."—H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 21.

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H. P. Blavatsky was more fortunate than Böhme in finding a world-wide acceptance of her writings; but she suffered even more than Böhme from the malignant attacks of numerous enemies who, from personal motives, or from dislike of her teachings, did their utmost to ruin her reputation. Human nature to-day appears to be little different in this respect from what it was 300 years ago. Those who profess to teach more in science or in religion than contemporary scientific or religious professors know or recognise, and to understand what these deem to be beyond the reach of their own faculties, and therefore of any others, are as certain now to be denounced as impostors and charlatans—or possibly as having dealings with the Devil—as they were in those less enlightened ages.

Speaking of his own incapacity to have known what he wrote about, Jacob Böhme says:

"I myself know not how it comes to pass with me, save only that I have a fiery incitement, or strong driving and instigation in my will. I know not also what I shall write, for when I write the Spirit dictates to me in great and wonderful knowledge. . . . I am, verily, a simple man, and have neither learned, nor after this manner sought after, this high mystery, nor knew I anything of it: I only sought the heart of love in Jesus Christ, and when I had obtained that with great joy of my soul, then was this treasure of natural and Divine knowledge opened and given unto me."[1]

Thus Böhme attributes his knowledge to the direct inspiration of the Divine Spirit, as he naturally would, being a devout Lutheran Christian and not an Occultist. H. P. Blavatsky, on the other hand, claimed to derive her knowledge from living teachers, Adepts, or Masters, or Mahatmas. This is what she herself says about her own personal knowledge of the subjects she wrote about. It is contained in a letter to one of the members of her family:—

"Whenever I am *told* to write, I sit down and obey and then I can write easily upon almost anything—metaphysics, psychology, philosophy, ancient religions, zoology, natural sciences, or what not. I never put myself the question: '*Can* I write on this subject?' . . . or, 'Am I equal to the task?' but I simply sit down and *write*. Why? Because *somebody who knows all* dictates to me . . . My MASTER and occasionally others whom I knew in my travels years ago. . . . I tell you candidly, that whenever I write upon a subject I know little or nothing of, I address myself to *Them*, and one of Them inspires me, *i.e.*, he allows me to simply copy what I write from manuscripts, and

[1] A. J. Penny, *Studies in Jacob Böhme*, p. 22.

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even printed matter that pass before my eyes, in the air, during which process I have never been *unconscious* one single instant. . . . It is that knowledge of His protection and faith in His power that have enabled me to become mentally and spiritually so strong . . . and even He (the Master) is not always required ; for during His absence on some other occupation, He awakens in me His substitute in knowledge. . . . At such times it is no more *I* who write, but my *inner Ego*, my '*luminous self*,' who thinks and writes for me. Only see . . . you who know me. When was I ever so learned as to write such things ? . . . Whence all this knowledge ? "

It is just possible that Jacob Böhme was inspired in the same manner by living Adepts without knowing the source of his inspiration. There is, indeed, a record of a visit to him by a mysterious stranger, who told him of his destined work and greatness, and of the sufferings he would have to undergo, and who gave him certain advice and warnings.

Writing in the *Athenæum*, January 26, 1867, Mr. C. W. Heckethorn says of Jacob Böhme :—

" Böhme's metaphysical system—the most perfect and only true one—still awaits a qualified commentator. . . . In Böhme is to be found, not only the true ground of all theology, but also that of all physical science. He demonstrated with a fulness, accuracy, completeness and certainty that leave nothing to be desired, the innermost ground of Deity and Nature ; and, confining myself to the latter, I can from my own knowledge assert, that in Böhme's writings is to be found the true and clear demonstration of every physical fact that has been discovered since his day. Thus, the science of electricity, which was not yet in existence when he wrote, is there anticipated ; and not only does he describe the now known phenomena of that force, but he even gives us the origin, generation and birth of electricity itself. Again, positive evidence can be adduced that Newton derived all his knowledge of gravitation and its laws from Böhme. . . . Every new scientific discovery goes to prove his profound and intuitive insight into the most secret workings of Nature ; and if scientific men, instead of sharing the prejudice arising from ignorance of Böhme's system, would place themselves on the vantage ground it affords, they would at once find themselves on an eminence whence they could behold all the arcana of Nature. Böhme's system, in fact, shews us the *inside* of things while modern physical science is content with looking at the *outside*. Böhme traces every outward manifestation or development to its one central root—to that one central energy which, as yet, is only suspected ; every link in the chain of his demonstration is perfect, and there is not one link wanting. He carries us from the outbirths

[1] A. P. Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 205.

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of the circumference, along the radius to the centre, or point, and beyond that even to the Zero, Nothing, with mathematical precision."[1]

If this were written to-day about H. P. Blavatsky it would be applicable in nearly every sentence and statement; and if so, then there must be innumerable parallelisms between Böhme's teachings and those of H. P. Blavatsky. That such is actually the case undoubtedly appears when a close study is made of both these writers, and Böhme's difficult terminology has been sufficiently mastered.[2] Böhme's Lutheran theology veils much which, if put into modern language, would be found to be in accord with the more philosophical and scientific terminology of *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky: but the fundamental principles are easily shown to be the same, though expressed in a different manner. These principles, indeed, are such as have been enunciated by seers and philosophers in all ages, and *The Secret Doctrine* is not merely an effort to re-state these principles, but also to show how they are embodied in literature, philosophy, Scriptures, myths and fables of all ages, and have their original source in an ancient WISDOM RELIGION "which antedates the Vedas."

Posterity alone, and new discoveries in anthropology and archaeology, can decide this matter: but meanwhile every new discovery in science, confirms the teachings of that great work, and year by year it finds an increasing number of those who can understand and appreciate its intrinsic value, and the light that it throws on every phase of human existence and destiny.

[1] A. J. Penny, *Studies in Jacob Böhme*, p. 43.

[2] Speaking of Böhme's teaching respecting the creation of all things by the Divine Idea or Imagination, Mrs. Penny—a life-long student of Böhme as well as of modern Theosophical literature—in her comprehensive work *Studies in Jacob Böhme*, says: "at this point one may chose either Böhme's or Madame Blavatsky's teaching, for they are identical as to this" (p. 393). Mrs. Penny calls attention to several other correspondences between the theosophy of Böhme and that of Madame Blavatsky.

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CHAPTER II

SOME PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

IT may be as well that I should here in the first instance give a brief account of what were my own relations with Madame Blavatsky, and my general attitude of mind towards her teachings and her personality.

I had the good fortune to meet her for the first time on the 2nd June, 1888, when she was living at No. 17, Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill, and had gathered round her a considerable number of devoted workers. This visit was not, however, my first introduction to Theosophy, for I had for some two months previously been attending Mr. A. P. Sinnett's weekly gatherings at his own house; I had read his *Occult World*, and *Esoteric Buddhism*, and the early numbers of *The Theosophist* published in India. This literature opened out for me a new world of thought and endeavour. Previous to this I had arrived at what was practically an agnostic state of mind. I had been through all the so-called 'evidences' for orthodox Christianity, and had found them entirely inadequate to satisfy either my reason or my intuitions as to what must be the nature of Truth; my turn of mind being scientific rather than religious. I had been through a good deal of so-called philosophy—metaphysics rather—and had decided that it was a blind alley, or rather a vicious circle, always leading back to "the door wherein I went." But Theosophy struck a chord to which my inmost nature immediately responded. Here was disclosed not merely the possibility of a positive knowledge where science and philosophy and religion were only making guesses, or living by so-called 'faith,' but the whole cosmology and anthropology of this "Ancient Wisdom" appeared to me to be the only rational explanation of what we actually do know scientifically and historically of the world we live in, of our own nature as human beings, and of the literary records which have come down to us from a remote past. Underneath all this appeal to my rational faculty was an indefinable feeling—which so very many others have also experienced—that I was not now contacting this knowledge for the first time; that I was only recovering in my outer consciousness what was already familiar to my inner self. This of course would be fully accounted for on the theory of reincarnation, and of my having been a student of Occultism in previous lives. Some might possibly

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bring in here Plato's doctrine of the reminiscence of the Soul in its own intrinsic nature ; but there is not really any fundamental difference between this doctrine and the theosophical teachings. This inherent knowledge, reawakened at this period of my life—I was then 33—would account for my intuitive rejection of Christianity in its traditional form, from the time when I first began to think about these matters at all ; and it would also account for the fact that Buddhism, when I came to study it, made a far greater appeal to my religious nature than was ever made by Christianity as presented to me at that time. Since then I have been able to see that the Christian Scriptures in their origin and inner spiritual interpretation are really derived from and teach the same doctrines as the Ancient Wisdom Religion or *Theosophia* ; and I have endeavoured to set this forth in my work *The Esoteric Basis of Christianity, or Theosophy and Christian Doctrine*, published in 1895.

It was, therefore, with a mind already eager for further enlightenment that I sought to know the remarkable woman who was the great pioneer of this Modern Movement for the revival of the old Occult teachings and traditions. It was, in fact the *teachings* and not the woman that attracted me. I desired to go to the fountain source ; but I held very much in reserve any opinion I might be inclined to form as to the personality of a woman at that time accused of being a fraud and a charlatan.

Among the many absurdities which were advanced then to account for the large and devoted following which Madame Blavatsky had attracted, was the theory that she " psychologised" those who came into personal contact with herself, and thus bent them to her will, and made dupes of them. Nothing could be further from the truth. I do not know of any single instance in which she exercised any occult power to attach anyone either to her person or her teachings. To have done so would have been contrary to all occult rules of discipleship ; of the relation between master and pupil, or *guru* and *chela* which she taught. That nevertheless she had a very great personal charm for some, if not for all, is undeniable ; for she could and did respond fully where love, and devotion, and sympathy were asked for or given.

The following Letter, written to her sister Madame Jelihovsky from Ostend in 1886, throws a vivid light on her own feelings in this matter. It is reproduced in the New York *Path*, Vol. X, p. 203, at that time edited by Mr. William Q. Judge

" I really do not know what to think ! What am I to them ?

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Why should the Countess (Wachtmeister) be so devoted to me, as to be ready to give her life for mine? What am I to Ellis [1] who never saw me before, that he should think nothing of the risk, when leaving the hospital without permission, for a whole week for my sake; now he has lost his place, his handsome pay, and his rooms at the Westminster Dispensary. He went home and returned here laughing: he does not care a bit, he says! 'He will have more time to spend on Theosophy.' . . . Well, what does all this mean? What do they find in me? Why should it be my fate to influence the destinies of other people? I tell you seriously, *I feel frightened!* I cease understanding causes, and feel lost. The only thing I know is that I have called forth an unknown power which ties the destinies of other people to my destiny, to my life. . . . I know also to my great relief, that many amongst those devoted to me look up to me as to their rescuer. Many were heartless egotists, faithless materialists, worldy, lightheaded sensualists, and many have become serious people, working indefatigably, sacrificing everything to the work: position, time, money, and thinking but of one thing: their spiritual and intellectual development. They have become in a way the victims of self-sacrifice, and live only for the good of others, seeing their salvation and light in me. And what am I? I am what I always was. At least so far as they are concerned, seriously. I am ready to give the last drop of my blood for Theosophy, but as for Theosophists I hardly love anyone amongst them personally. I cannot love anyone personally, but you of my own blood. . . . What a blind tool I am, I must own, in the hands of the one whom I call my Master! . . . I do not know, *I do not know, I do not know.* For me, as for anyone else, the phenomenal birth of our Society, on *my* initiative, its daily and hourly growth, its indestructibility, in spite of the many blows from its enemies—are an unsolved riddle. I do not know any logical cause for it, but I see, I know, that the Theosophical Society is preordained to have a world-wide importance. It will become one of the events of the world! It possesses a moral and psychical power the weight of which, like the ninth wave, will submerge, sweep away and drown all that the lesser waves of human thought have left on the shore; all foreign sediments, all shreds and patches of systems and philosophies. I am its blind motor, but a great power rests with it."

Looking back after a period of forty years to that remarkable time, so full of occult influences and potent thought currents which have since blossomed and borne fruit, both wholesome and poisonous, one can realise how accurate is this statement by the woman who was the centre and focus of these influences. One can realise fully that she certainly was their absolutely *impersonal agent*, the lens, so to speak, through which they were focused into the Group Soul of the Theosophical Society, from

[1] Doctor Ashton Ellis. See p. 117 *infra*.

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whatever source they may have originated. It was not a personal influence in any sense of the term that Madame Blavatsky exercised, either to 'psychologise' or otherwise attract those who came into contact with her. The forces themselves were impersonal; they were occult *natural* forces, and like all natural forces were utterly indifferent to the effect produced on those who came within their sphere of influence. Thus the result of their play upon the individual might be what we call *good* or it might be what we call *evil*—these being for us merely relative terms within the restricted and narrow limits of our knowledge. The result of the play of these forces upon the individual was to cause a powerful uprush from the sub-conscious self; and woe to that individual who was thereby thrown off his balance, or whose sub-conscious self-contained elements of moral obliquity, probably unrecognised and unguessed at even by the individual himself. The general principle of this uprush from the sub-conscious may perhaps be recognised in all so-called religious revivals.

In a Preliminary Paper issued to the Probationers of the Eastern School of Theosophy (sometime called the *Esoteric Section* of the T.S.) H. P. Blavatsky states this principle in the following words :—

"There is a strange law in Occultism which has been ascertained and proven by thousands of years of experience; nor has it failed to demonstrate itself, almost in every case, during the years that the Theosophical Society has been in existence. As soon as anyone pledges himself as a 'Probationer,' certain Occult effects ensue. Of these the first is the *throwing outward* of everything latent in the nature of the man; his faults, habits, qualities or subdued desires, whether good, bad, or indifferent.

For instance, if a man be vain or a sensualist, or ambitious, whether by atavism or by karmic heirloom, those vices are sure to break out, even if he has hitherto successfully concealed and repressed them. They will come to the front irrepressibly, and he will have to fight a hundred times harder than before, until he kills all such tendencies in himself.

On the other hand, if he be good, generous, chaste and abstemious, or has any virtue hitherto latent and concealed in him, it will work its way out as irrepressibly as the rest. Thus a civilized man who hates to be considered a saint, and therefore assumes a mask, will not be able to conceal his true nature, whether base or noble.

THIS IS AN IMMUTABLE LAW IN THE DOMAIN OF THE OCCULT.

Its action is the more marked, the more earnest and sincere the desire of the candidate, and the more deeply he has felt the reality and importance of his pledge."[1]

[1] *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. III, p. 435.

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Those who are well acquainted with the inner history of the Theosophical Society in those days, and the numerous personalities who figured prominently in its early history, can point to some very sad examples of the working of this "immutable law in the domain of the Occult." There are several mentioned in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* about which no mistake can be made; and Mr. Sinnett himself is an interesting study in this respect.

There is one striking case that might be mentioned here—one striking Judas case—that of the Russian author and journalist Vsevolod Solovyoff. Notwithstanding that this individual became violently attracted by Theosophy in the first instance, deeply attached to H. P. Blavatsky, and an enthusiastic advocate of the work of the Theosophical Society, and had further testified personally to the absolute genuineness of some of the phenomena which H. P. Blavatsky exhibited, he subsequently turned against her; repudiated or distorted for purposes of discredit all that he had witnessed, or had ever written or said in her favour; and one year after her death published a bitter, scandalous, and most obviously untruthful attack on her character and her work. This attack first appeared in the Russian journal *Russky Vyestnik*, but in 1895 it was translated into English and published in book form under the title of *A Modern Priestess of Isis*. This book has often been quoted by H. P. Blavatsky's detractors, and it received the blessing of the Society for Psychical Research, who saw in it a means of bolstering up their own celebrated "Report," already at that time riddled by criticism, and a dead failure so far as its influence on the spread of Theosophy or the discredit of H. P. Blavatsky was concerned. Solovyoff's book carries with it its own refutation when critically examined, and is most obviously written in a melodramatic style calculated to appeal to popular and uncritical judgment and prejudices. It does not stand for one moment with those who knew the *real* H. P. Blavatsky, or the facts which have been so shamelessly distorted in the work in question.

I have dealt further with M. Solovyoff's book in Chapter XIII, and in the Appendix hereto in connection with the 1885 Report of the Society for Psychical Research on "Phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society."

Whatever may have been the Occult influences of which H. P. B. was the channel, there is one factor in her character which is beyond dispute. It is that she allowed no personal considerations whatsoever to come in the way of her absolute obedience

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to the instructions and wishes of her own particular Master, the Mahatma Morya. There can be no question, indeed, when every fact is taken into account, that very far from having invented the Masters for purposes of deception, she lived a life of extreme self-sacrifice, of great suffering, and of personal renunciation in order to carry out the great mission with which she considered herself to have been entrusted by them. Looking at this fact, indeed, apart from any direct evidence, one is bound to conclude that—much as the existence of the Mahatmas has been disputed—these same Masters were, and are, actual living men who did at that time direct through H. P. Blavatsky a revival of that Arcane Knowledge—of which we have traditions from the very remotest ages—into which the individual may be initiated when, through experience in innumerable lives, he has at last reached that stage in his evolution when he is ready to take the forward step which leads from the merely human to the super-human. All that we know either scientifically, philosophically, or in religion, of the origin and destiny of the Race, points to this next step, both for the individual and for the Race as a whole ; but indeed it is only as the individuals attain that the Race can attain ; and at the present stage the individuals who can attain are few and far between. Nevertheless it was through H. P. Blavatsky that the *ideal* was once more openly presented for those who could lay hold of it ; presented once more after long centuries of darkness and obscuration of the light caused by the dominance of Ecclesiastical Christianity.

What Theosophy, through the teaching of H. P. Blavatsky, brought once more to light was *The Divine Nature of Man*, and the PATH which must be pursued by the individual in order to attain to a conscious realisation of that divine nature. Let those who will, scoff and mock at the personality of the woman ; that is the sum and substance of her mission and teaching ; that was the message once more delivered at the end of the XIXth Century for those who had ears to hear.

This message is still a 'heresy' for the Christian Church, notwithstanding that it is plainly the teaching of the Christian Scriptures from beginning to end, when spiritually and not literally interpreted. Yet even in the dead letter it is plainly to be recognised when theological prejudices and traditional dogmas are no longer allowed to obscure the truth.

To return to my own personal relations with Madame Blavatsky, I was, as I have already said, attracted in the first instance by the teachings, and only sought to know the messenger

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after I had to a considerable extent assimilated those teachings. There was certainly in my case no emotional approach, and I held very largely in reserve any judgment I might feel inclined to pass as to her temperamental and most marked personal characteristics. I never asked her to perform, nor did I ever see her perform any occult phenomena. These phenomena, upon which so many placed their whole reliance, and which probably made for her more enemies than friends, always appeared to me to be of secondary importance to the teachings, though I might say that they appeared to me not merely to have been overwhelmingly vouched for, but also not inherently impossible in themselves. Psychical research has made great progress since that time, and it is hardly too much to say that their inherent possibility is now scientifically demonstrated. Certainly if they were performed to-day they would be received in scientific circles with much less incredulity than was the case forty years ago, and would stand a better chance of being properly attested—even by the Society for Psychical Research—than they were then. As a matter of fact, the Society for Psychical Research never investigated the *phenomena* at all. Their celebrated " Report " is simply based on the examination of witnesses some one to four years after the phenomena themselves had taken place.

The most that can be said for the remarkable powers which H. P. Blavatsky undoubtedly possessed from her childhood up, and which she undoubtedly did exhibit on many occasions, is, that they demonstrate the fact that these powers can be possessed and intelligently used, not in any ' mediumistic ' manner, but by the proper use of the trained will. But there is nothing new in this ; it is an age-long knowledge in the East under the name of *Yoga*. Notwithstanding this, it is certainly the case that the question of the genuineness or otherwise of the phenomena which Madame Blavatsky exhibited was made, and is made to-day by many the pivot on which the acceptance or rejection of her message and teaching revolves, and not the intrinsic value of the teachings themselves. One may in fact say that if every single phenomenon which she exhibited could be proved to have been nothing but an expert conjuring trick, it would not detract one jot from the truth or otherwise of the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, or *The Voice of the Silence*. But it would make H. P. Blavatsky's life and character infinitely more difficult to explain than it is through the acceptance of the genuineness of her powers.

To-day, belated attacks are occasionally made on the

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personality of H. P. Blavatsky by those to whom the teachings are obnoxious; these attacks coming in general either from 'Christian' or from 'Spiritualistic' sources. The facility with which the most innocent actions can be made to appear as contributory evidence of guilt when once that guilt has become a prejudged matter, is well known to all students of human nature, as well as in the records of our criminal courts. Many an innocent man has been condemned to imprisonment and even to death on circumstantial evidence which was afterwards shown to have been utterly misconstrued. Apart from that, many people have had a bitter experience of how easily a scandal or a libel is spread, and how difficult it is to kill it once it has been set going. This inclination to distort and to misrepresent where prejudice has already condemned has surely never had a more virulent illustration than in the attacks which have been made on the personality of H. P. Blavatsky from various quarters. I do not propose, however, in this work to deal with these attacks in detail: indeed it would require a whole volume to do so. I shall, however, have a few remarks to make later on with reference to the principal attack, and the one which is most often brought up to-day, that of the Society for Psychical Research, in their so-called "Report on Phenomena Connected with Theosophy," published in their *Proceedings*, Vol. IX, December, 1885.[1]

The whole question of phenomena both was and is of such secondary importance to the teachings, that it did not at that time, nor can it ever, have any influence upon those to whom the teachings appeal for their own intrinsic truth; and it is inevitable as time goes on that they will fall more and more into the background. Those who buy H. P. Blavatsky's works to-day—and the demand for them is greater than ever—do not do so because of her phenomena, and indeed in many cases know very little about her personality at all.

And so in this work I am dealing very little either with the personality—understood in the conventional sense—or with the attacks that have been made on the admittedly defective personality—though not defective in the way that her detractors have so freely represented. It will be instructive if I give here an extract from one of the letters from the Master "M" to A. P. Sinnett.[2]

"As we are not likely, worthy sir, to correspond very often now—I will tell you something you should know, and may derive profit from.

[1] See the Appendix to this work.
[2] Letter No. XLIV, p. 263. The Letter is dated February, 1882.

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On the 17th November next the Septenary term of trial given the Society at its foundation in which to discreetly 'preach us' will expire. One or two hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionally, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others—wiser as it would now seem—held differently, but consent was given for the trial. It was stipulated, however, that the experiment should be made independently of our personal management; that there should be no abnormal interference by ourselves. So casting about we found in America the man to stand as leader [1]—a man of great moral courage, unselfish and having other good qualities. He was far from being the best, but (as Mr. Hume speaks in H. P. B.'s case)—he was the best one available. With him we associated a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments. Combined with them she had strong personal defects, but just as she was, there was no second to her living fit for this work. We sent her to America, brought them together—and the trial began. From the first both she and he were given clearly to understand that the issue lay entirely with themselves. And both offered themselves for the trial for certain remuneration in the far distant future as—as K. H. would say—soldiers volunteer for a Forlorn Hope. For the 6½ years they have been struggling against such odds as would have driven off any one who was not working with the desperation of one who stakes life and all he prizes on some desperate supreme effort. Their success has not equalled the hopes of their original backers, phenomenal as it has been in certain directions. In a few more months the term of probation will end. If by that time the status of the Society as regards ourselves —the question of the 'Brothers' be not definitely settled (either dropped out of the Society's programme or accepted on our own terms) that will be the last of the 'Brothers' of all shapes and colours, sizes or degrees. We will subside out of public view like a vapour into the ocean. Only those who have proved faithful to themselves and to Truth through everything, will be allowed further intercourse with us. And not even they, unless, from the President downward they bind themselves by the most solemn pledges of honour to keep an inviolable silence thenceforth about us, the Lodge, Tibetan affairs. Not even answering questions of their nearest friends, though silence might seem likely to throw the appearance of 'humbug' upon all that has transpired. In such a case effort would be suspended until the beginning of another septenary cycle when, if circumstances should be more auspicious, another attempt might be made, under the same or another direction."

We may note here in the first place the admittedly "strong personal defects" of H. P. B.; in the second place the fact that the Theosophical Society was not under the "personal

[1] Colonel H. S. Olcott.

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management" of the Masters; and in the third place that the Theosophical Society *was* the failure here foreshadowed, and that the Masters *did* withdraw any evidence of their existence: though those who after H. P. B.'s death assumed the control did *not* respect the "most solemn pledge of honour to keep an inviolable silence"—if ever they had given it, which is very doubtful. It follows from this that those who have since exploited the Masters, and so freely given "Master's orders", have either been guilty of a breach of this pledge, or else—which is far more likely—they have not been of the number of those who were entrusted with further communications.

H. P. Blavatsky spent a life of toil and renunciation—how great a renunciation I will show presently—in the service of the Masters who entrusted her with this great mission to the world, the revival of the Ancient Occult Doctrine or Wisdom Religion. But great and far reaching as have been the effects of her mission, the Theosophical Society was, almost from the first, a dead failure in the finding of any considerable number of people who could really appreciate what the acceptance of that teaching involved in their own lives, and who could therefore present to the world through the Society a *united* BROTHERHOOD with all that that means in an *Occult* sense, and not merely in any outward conventional or social sense. Brotherhood in the Occult sense does *not* mean the promiscuous gathering together into one Society or Community of a mass of heterogeneous characters with all sorts of personal prejudices, aims, motives, or opinions. It was defined by Mahatma K. H. in Letter No. V. (p. 20) to Mr. Sinnett in the following words:—

"If you are willing I will send you an *Essay* showing why in Europe more than anywhere else, a *Universal Brotherhood, i.e.*, an association of 'affinities' of strong magnetic yet dissimilar forces and polarities centred around one dominant idea, is necessary for successful achievements in occult sciences."

In the next letter (p. 24) he says):—

"The *Chiefs* want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity,' a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds."

In this work I am asking that H. P. Blavatsky should be judged by her literary record and not by her personality. It is that record which must count in the future as the personality sinks more and more into the background. I doubt, indeed,

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if the personality to-day is of any account with those who are attracted by the teachings. We do not disparage Shakespeare's plays, or Byron's poetry, or Wagner's music, or indeed in any way allow our knowledge, or want of knowledge, of what they were personally to affect our appreciation of their work. So should it be, and so will it be with H. P. Blavatsky. That the teachings of Theosophy cannot be accepted by all—much less the inner teaching and practice of Occultism which leads to the supreme achievement—is well recognised; and nothing can be said against those who attack or criticise these teachings from their own special stand-point, however narrow or prejudiced that may be. But to endeavour to disparage the teachings themselves by slandering and vilifying the personality of the devoted woman who brought them once more to the notice of the world at large, and who never represented them as her own, or herself as otherwise than an impersonal messenger—hardly, indeed, as her letters sometimes show, understanding herself why or how she was acting as such—to do that simply exhibits the irrationality and malice which so commonly accompanies all forms of bigotry and prejudice.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."[1] Does that statement gain any force because of the *personality* of Jesus? It is simply a statement of the *natural* law of *Karma*, or the moral law of cause and effect, known and taught in the East for ages previously.[2] "*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*"[3]—another statement of the same law, but made much more understandable and rational by Theosophy in its association with the principle of reincarnation.

In view of this natural moral law I have often been aghast at the slanderous attacks which have from time to time been launched against H. P. Blavatsky by 'Christian' writers, and even by so-called *dignitaries* of the Church: slanders which have been refuted over and over again. These 'dignitaries' have not hesitated to stoop so low as to slander and vilify a dead woman because of their hatred of her teachings, running counter as these certainly do to the traditional dogmas of the Church. To slander a living person is held to be not merely the sign of an ignoble nature but also a crime for which a legal remedy is provided.

[1] Matt. VII, 1.
[2] The idea of judgment by a *personal* God is too anthropomorphic to be entertained by any rational man to-day.
[3] Gal. 6, 7.

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To slander a dead person is doubly and trebly ignoble, not merely because the person is not alive to defend himself or herself, and that no legal action can be taken on his or her behalf, but because all noble minds feel instinctively that whatever may have been the faults or failings of the individual, death must draw a veil over them.

It is worth recording here that in 1890 the New York *Sun* published one of the most scandalous and venomous attacks ever made on Madame Blavatsky. It was written by Dr. Elliott Coues—at one time a member of the T. S., but in whom the "immutable law" previously referred to (p. 21) had a most disastrous effect. Mr. W. Q. Judge, at that time the General Secretary of the American Section of the T. S., immediately filed an action for slander against the *Sun* in H. P. B.'s name. Before this action, however, could come on for hearing, H. P. B. died, and the action was automatically nullified. The *Sun*, however, on the 26th September, 1892, accepted a long Article by Mr. Judge, vindicating H. P. B.'s character; and at the same time published a paragraph fully retracting and repudiating the previous libellous article. It will be noted that this was not done under legal compulsion, but quite voluntarily; and all honour is due to the *Sun* for this straightforward course. It is an example which many of the modern detractors and slanderers would do well to follow—in view of the inexorable law of Karma, if not from their own sense of moral values. The charges included every accusation ever made against H. P. B.; and the outcome of the case constitutes an absolute vindication of her good name and fame, which ought to have silenced every subsequent accuser. The difficulty of course is to make such facts as widely known as are the baseless accusations and hearsay reports.

It is of course freely admitted that H. P. Blavatsky had no outward appearance of being a saintly character, nor even a religious person in the ordinary acceptation of the term; yet we cannot deny to her the possession of a deeply religious nature in all that is fundamental to religion apart from specific creed or doctrine. So far as any outward profession of religion is concerned she was a Buddhist, having taken *Pansil* along with Col. Olcott in Ceylon in 1880.

As regards her attitude to Christianity, this appears to be very fully and frankly set forth in the following letter which was sent by her to her sister with reference to an article which appeared in the Russian journal *Novoe Vremya* in 1887, saying that she had settled in London with a view to demolishing Christianity

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and spreading Buddhism; and further, that she had already built a Pagoda with Buddha's Idol in it, etc., etc.: there being in fact no word of truth in any of these statements. Her letter sent to the *Novoe Vremya* was not published, but this letter which she subsequently wrote to her sister, Mme. Jelihovsky was published in the New York Theosophical Journal *The Path* (Vol. X, p. 236) as follows :—

"Why should *Novoe Vremya* tell such fibs? Whence could it gather that our intention is to preach Buddhism? We never dreamed of such a thing. If in Russia they read my *Lucifer*, our chief organ in Europe at present, they would learn that we preach the purest Theosophy, avoiding the extremes of Count Tolstoi, trying to reëstablish the purely Christlike Theosophy and life-giving morality. In the third, November, number there will be an article of mine ('The Esoteric Character of the Gospels') in which I stand up for the teachings of Christ, glorifying, as usual, his true doctrine, not disfigured as yet either by Popery or Protestantism. I, *i.e.*, we Theosophists, certainly do unmask Phariseeism and superstition of every kind. I do not spare Catholicism either, which has overdressed the pure teachings of Christ with unnecessary gewgaws and empty-sounding ritualism, or Protestantism which, in the heat of its indignation against the wilfulness of the Pope and the vanity of the Catholic clergy, has stripped the tree of truth of all its healthy bloom and fruit as well as of the barren flowers which were grafted on it by Popery. We mean, it is true, to give it hot to bigotry, to Phariseeism, to bitter materialism, but 'Buddhism' is not the right word for them to use. Make of it whatever you can. People call me, and, I must admit, I also call myself a heathen. I simply can't listen to people talking about the wretched Hindus or Buddhists being converted to Anglican Phariseeism or the Pope's Christianity: it simply gives me the shivers. But when I read about the spread of Russian orthodoxy in Japan, my heart rejoices. Explain it if you can. I am nauseated by the mere sight of any foreign clerical, but as to the familiar figure of a Russian pope, I can swallow it without an effort. . . . I do not believe in any dogmas, I dislike every ritual but my feelings towards our own church-service are quite different. I am driven to think that my brains lack their seventh stopper.[1] Probably it is in my blood. . . . I certainly will always say: a thousand times rather Buddhism, a pure moral teaching, in perfect harmony with the teachings of Christ, than modern Catholicism or Protestantism. But with the faith of the Russian Church I will not even compare Buddhism. I can't help it. Such is my silly, inconsistent nature."

Perhaps this was not the only thing in which she was inconsistent, but at least she could recognise it herself, and was not afraid to own to it.

[1] Russian equivalent for "a bee in the bonnet."

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Yes, her stormy life was, *on the surface*, full of inconsistencies, puzzles, enigmas, contradictions, misunderstandings—mistakes also, if you like—but which of us can cast a stone at her in respect of any of these? *On the surface*, Yes. But underneath was a heart of gold, an iron will, an inflexible purpose, a steadfast devotion to the cause of Truth and to the Masters whom she served.

Underneath was—the *real* H. P. Blavatsky.

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CHAPTER III

FIRST PERIOD: EARLY DAYS. 1831–1848

CLOSE on midnight, July 30/31 in the year 1831, in the town of Ekaterinoslow, in the Province of that name in Southern Russia, there was born into the family of Colonel Peter Hahn—a noble Mecklenburg family settled in Russia—a daughter, to whom was given the name of Helena Petrovna.

Her grandfather on her father's side was General Alexis Hahn von Rottenstern Hahn, and on her mother's side she was the granddaughter of Privy Councillor Andrew Fadeef and of the Princess Helene Dolgourouky. Thus on her father's side she was descended from the nobility of Germany—the Counts Von Hahn belonging to an old Mecklenburg stock—and on her mother's side she claimed her descent from one of the oldest families of the Russian Empire, in direct descent from the Grand Duke Rurik, the first Ruler called to govern Russia.

From her very birth the little Mdlle. Hahn was brought up in an atmosphere of what now-a-days is commonly regarded as *superstition*, implanted in her mind by the Ukraine nurses to whom she was entrusted, and who retained all the popular Russian beliefs in nature spirits, witchcraft, and magical customs and rites. The very night of her birth was associated with the belief that this was the one day in the whole year on which anyone could be born exempt from the persecutions of certain nature spirits or goblins, and on each anniversary of her birth mystic rites were performed by the nurses and household—apparently unbeknown to the parents.

This secret education—if such it may be called—in the lore of the occult, was imprinted on the mind of a child who was naturally what we should now term *psychic*. It would appear that at a very early age she actually visualised, saw and talked of and with these nature spirits, which were certainly to her real objective entities: whether as the objectivised creations of her own mind or otherwise may be left to the modern psychologist and student of these matters to decide according to his own individual stand-point.

The following was recorded by her sister, Mme. Jelihovsky in a diary kept by her during her girlhood, and afterwards published in a work called "Juvenile Recollections compiled for my children":—

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"Fancy, or that which we all regarded in these days as fancy was developed in a most extraordinary way, and from her earliest childhood, in my sister Helen. For hours at times she used to narrate to us younger children, and even to her seniors in years, the most incredible stories with the cool assurance and conviction of an eye-witness, and one who knew what she was talking about. When a child, daring and fearless in everything else, she got often scared into fits through her own hallucinations. She felt certain of being persecuted by what she called 'the terrible glaring eyes' invisible to everyone else, and often attributed by her to the most inoffensive inanimate objects; an idea that appeared quite ridiculous to the bystanders. As to herself, she would shut her eyes tight during such visions, and run away to hide from the ghostly glances thrown on her by pieces of furniture or articles of dress, screaming desperately, and frightening the whole household. At other times she would be seized with fits of laughter, explaining them by the amusing pranks of her invisible companions. She found these in every dark corner, in every bush of the thick park that surrounded our villa during the summer months; while in winter, when all our family emigrated back to town, she seemed to meet them again in the vast reception rooms of the first floor, entirely deserted from midnight till morning. Every locked door notwithstanding, Helen was found several times during the night hours in those dark apartments in a half-conscious state, sometimes fast asleep, and unable to say how she got there from our common bedroom on the top story. She disappeared in the same mysterious manner in daytime also. Searched for, called and hunted after, she would be often discovered, with great pains, in the most unfrequented localities; once it was in the dark loft, under the very roof, to which she was traced, amid pigeons' nests, and surrounded by hundreds of those birds. She was 'putting them to sleep' (according to the rules taught in 'Solomon's Wisdom'), as she explained; and, indeed, pigeons were found, if not asleep, still unable to move and as though stunned, in her lap at such times. At other times behind the gigantic cupboards that contained our grandmother's zoological collection, surrounded by relics of fauna, flora, and historical antiquities, amid antediluvian bones of stuffed animals and monstrous birds, the deserter would be found, after hours of search, in deep conversations with seals and stuffed crocodiles. If one could believe Helen, the pigeons were cooing to her interesting fairy tales, while birds and animals, whenever in solitary *tête-à-tête* with her, amused her with interesting stories, presumably from their own autobiographies. For her all nature seemed animated with a mysterious life of its own. She heard the voice of every object and form, whether organic or inorganic; and claimed consciousness and being, not only for some mysterious powers visible and audible for herself alone in what was to every one else empty space, but even for visible but inanimate things such as pebbles, mounds and pieces of decaying phosphorescent timber."[1]

[1] See *Incidents in the Life of Mme. Blavatsky*, by A. P. Sinnett, p. 33ff. This book contains the fullest account obtainable of Mme. Blavatsky's childhood.

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Her early powers of what is now known as *psychometry*, or perhaps as the ability to read in the *Astral Light*, are recorded as follows :—

" I well remember when stretched at full length on the ground her chin reclining on her two palms, and her two elbows buried deep in the soft sand, Helen used to dream aloud, and tell us of her visions, evidently clear, vivid, and as palpable as life to her ! How lovely the description she gave us of the submarine life of all those beings, the mingled remains of which were now crumbling to dust around us. How vividly she described their past fights and battles on the spot where she lay, assuring us she saw it all ; and how minutely she drew on the sand with her finger the fantastic forms of the long dead sea monsters, and made us almost see the very colours of the fauna and flora of those dead regions. . . . She never spoke in later years as she used to speak in her childhood and early girlhood. The stream of her eloquence has dried up, and the very source of her inspiration is now seemingly lost ! . . . It was her delight to gather around herself a party of us younger children, at twilight, and after taking us into the large dark museum, to hold us there, spell-bound, with her weird stories. Then she narrated to us the most inconceivable tales about herself ; the most unheard of adventures of which she was the heroine, every night, as she explained. Each of the stuffed animals in the museum had taken her in turn into its confidence, had divulged to her the history of its life in previous incarnations or existences. Where had she heard of reincarnation, or who could have taught her anything of the superstitious mysteries of metempsychosis, in a Christian family ? " [1]

As an early example of that quest for occult knowledge which subsequently drove her out into the world on her *Wanderjahre*, I may instance the following, which her sister prefaces by saying that even at that early age—she would then be about eight or perhaps nine years old—Helen insisted that there had always existed wise men who knew everything and had the most wonderful command over the forces of nature. She assured her sisters that they existed to-day, but only made themselves known to those who were worthy of knowing and seeing them, and who believed in, instead of laughing at them.

" As a proof of what she said she pointed to an old man, a centenarian, who lived not far from the villa, in a wild ravine of a neighbouring forest, known as *Baranig Bouyrak*. The old man was a real magician, in the popular estimation ; a sorcerer of a good, benevolent kind, who cured willingly all the patients who applied to him, but who also knew

[1] For a modern testimony to the possibility and nature of this faculty of visualising from the *Astral Records*, or "the Memory of Nature," see "The Candle of Vision," by "A. E." (George W. Russell).

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how to punish with disease those who had sinned. He was greatly versed in the knowledge of the occult properties of plants and flowers, and could read the future, it was said. He kept bee-hives in great numbers, his hut being surrounded by several hundreds of them. During the long summer afternoons, he could always be found at his post, slowly walking among his favourites, covered as with a living cuirasse, from head to foot, with swarms of buzzing bees, plunging both his hands with impunity into their dwellings, listening to their deafening noise, and apparently answering them—their buzzing almost ceasing whenever he addressed them in his (to us) incomprehensible tongue, a kind of chanting and muttering. Evidently the golden-winged labourers and their centenarian master understood each other's languages. Of the latter, Helen felt quite sure. 'Baranig Bouyrak' had an irresistible attraction for her, and she visited the strange old man whenever she could find a chance to do so. Once there, she would put questions and listen to the old man's replies and explanations as to how to understand the language of bees, birds, and animals, with a passionate earnestness. The dark ravine seemed in her eyes a fairy kingdom. As to the centenarian 'wiseman' he used to say of her constantly to us: 'This little lady is quite different from all of you. There are great events lying in wait for her in the future. I feel sorry in thinking that I will not live to see my predictions of her verified; but *they will all come to pass*!' " [1]

The two principal features in her disposition which it is necessary to note in the young Mdlle. Hahn in view of her subsequent history and personal characteristics are, in the first place those innate psychic faculties to which I have thus briefly referred, and the great attraction which everything mysterious and occult had for the growing child; and in the second place her ungovernable self-will, and what amounted to a passionate rebellion against all restraint of custom and conventionality. This was a marked characteristic all through her life, and the cause of much of the adverse criticism and scandal by which those who only judged her by outward appearances and conventional standards endeavoured to ruin her reputation and her work. How much of this indomitable self-will—afterwards brought into control and made to serve in the accomplishment of her mission, and an inflexible devotion and obedience to the Masters whom she served—was a matter of her mixed German and Russian or Slavonic heredity, and how much was brought over from previous incarnations, it is impossible to say. As a mere matter of heredity why should she have been so different from the rest of the family? Heredity has never accounted for genius, much less for the occultist. But who that great soul was who operated

[1] *Incidents*, p. 42.

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for a time through the personality of the woman we knew as H. P. Blavatsky, must be for the historian a mere conjecture. We must bear in mind here that even the Buddha had to spend long years in strenuous search and discipline before the spiritual man, the divine Ego, could unite with the lower personality so that we could say that "He" was the enlightened one. In H. P. Blavatsky's case there were in later life physical disabilities which must have sadly hampered the use of the body by the Higher Self. We have here the key to much that to the ordinary person is unintelligible in the life and character of H. P. Blavatsky; but with this I shall deal more fully in a subsequent chapter.

With reference to this indomitable self-will, manifesting in the child as an uncontrollable 'temper', and which more or less—rather more than less—was characteristic of her all through her life, Col. Olcott records in his *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol. I, p. 257) that he once asked the Master why a permanent control could not be put upon her fiery temper, "why she should not always be modified into the quiet, self-centred sage that she became under certain obsessions"—possessions rather, that is to say when one of the Masters or 'controls' was in possession of her body. "The answer was, that such a course would inevitably lead to her death from apoplexy; the body was vitalised by a fiery and imperious spirit, one which had from childhood brooked no restraint, and if vent were not allowed for the excessive corporeal energy, the result must be fatal." Col. Olcott says he was told that in order to understand what was meant he must look into the history of her kinsfolk, the Russian Dolgoroukis: that he did so, and that he found that this princely and warlike family, tracing back to Rurik (ninth century) had been always distinguished by extreme courage, a daring equal to every emergency, a passionate love of personal independence, and a fearlessness of consequences in the carrying out of its wishes. "This," says Col. Olcott, "was H. P. B.'s own character to the life, and she more than once told me that she would not be controlled by any power on earth or out of it. The only persons she actually reverenced were the Masters, yet even towards them, she was occasionally so combative that in certain of her moods the gentler ones could not, and did not approach her. To get herself into the frame of mind when she could have open intercourse with them had—as she had pathetically assured me—cost her years of the most desperate self-restraint. I doubt if any person had ever entered the Path against greater obstacles or with more self-suppression."

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Mddle. Hahn's mother died when she was still a child, and at the age of eleven she was taken charge of altogether by her grandmother who lived at Saratow, where her grandfather was civil governor. Here she remained for five years until the time of her marriage to General Blavatsky, and was more or less 'educated' by a succession of governesses and tutors who for the most part could make nothing of her, since she was such an extraordinary and exceptional child, and her temper was such that it was always enough to forbid her to do a thing to make her do it at all costs. It was this, indeed, that led to her marriage to old General Blavatsky, who was at least three times her age—she was then 17—her governess having one day taunted her by saying that her temper and disposition was so bad that no one would ever marry her, not even the old man she had laughed at so much and called 'a plumeless raven'. That was enough for Mdlle. Hahn; three days after she made him propose. That appears to have been her only idea; but she was forced to carry it through, and the marriage ceremony duly took place. Her aunt says that at the altar, when she heard the priest say to her, "Thou shalt honour and obey thy husband," she was heard to mutter, "Surely, *I shall not.*" She appears to have had some sort of an idea that as a married woman she would have more personal liberty than she had as a girl, otherwise it is not possible to conceive that she would have consented to the actual ceremony; but what followed can be better imagined than described. For about three months the fight for impossible concessions continued, and then she managed to escape, took an English steamer from Poti to Constantinople, and so began her independent life and her *Wanderjahre.*

At Constantinople she fell in with a Russian lady of her acquaintance, the Countess K——, and travelled with her for a time in Egypt, Greece, and other parts of Eastern Europe, being supplied with money by her father, who appears to a certain extent to have understood his daughter's characteristics and temperament, and the mistake of the marriage. He was far away with his regiment when the marriage was mooted, and does not appear to have been able to take any hand in the decision. When his daughter was thirteen he had taken her for a visit to England and to Paris. That was her first journey abroad, and she appears to have been more docile in his hands than with anyone else.

One object in taking her abroad was to procure for her good music lessons, as she showed great natural talent for music.

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She had some lessons from Moscheles, and later on is supposed to have played at concerts in various towns in Europe. I well remember on one occasion, on a visit by her to my house in London in 1889, she sat down at the piano and played Schubert's *Erl-König*, to my great surprise and delight, as I had never even heard that she had ever been a pianist.

General Blavatsky appears to have tried to get a divorce after she left him, on the ground that the marriage had never been consummated, but Russian law at that time was very strict in the matter and the attempt failed.

Writing to Mr. Sinnett when he was applying to her for information to aid him in compiling his *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, she summarises her childhood in the following racy manner [1] :—

" My childhood ? Spoilt and petted on one side, punished and hardened on the other. Sick and ever dying till seven or eight, sleep-walker ; possessed by the devil. Governesses two—Mme. Peigneux, a French woman, and Miss Augusta Sophia Jeffries a Yorkshire spinster. Nurses—any number. No *Kurd* nurse. One was half a Tartar. Father's soldiers taking care of me. Mother died when I was a baby. Born at Ekaterinoslow. Travelled with Father from place to place with his artillery regiment till eight or nine, taken occasionally to visit grandparents. When 11 my grandmother took me to live with her altogether. Lived in Saratow when Grandfather was Civil Governor, before that in Astrachan, where he had many thousands (some 80 or 100,000) Kalmuck Buddhists under him.

" Visit to London ? I was in London and France with Father in '44 not 1851. This latter year I was alone and lived in Cecil Street in furnished rooms at one time, then at Mivart's Hotel, but as I was with old Countess Bagration, and when she went away remained with her Jezebel demoiselle de compagnie, no one knows *my* name there. Lived also in a big hotel somewhere between City and Strand or in the Strand, but as to names or numbers you might just as well ask me to tell you what was the number of the house you lived in during your last incarnation. In 1845 father brought me to London to take a few lessons of music. Took a few later also—from old Moscheles. Lived with him somewhere near Pimlico—but even to this I would not swear. Went to Bath with him, remained a whole week, heard nothing but bell-ringing in the churches all day. Wanted to go on horseback astride in my Cossack way ; he would not let me and I made a row I remember and got sick with a fit of hysterics. He blessed his stars when we went home ; travelled two or three months through France, Germany and Russia."

As " Madame Blavatsky " we must now trace briefly the period of her *Wanderjahre*.

[1] *Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, pp. 149–50.

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CHAPTER IV

SECOND PERIOD: WANDERJAHRE. 1848–1873

WHEN Madame Blavatsky left her nominal husband in 1848, some three months after the marriage ceremony, she was only 17 years of age. She had been, as we have seen, brought up in the highest society, surrounded with every luxury, and almost entirely free from restraint of any kind, having been in fact a veritable *enfant terrible.*

One can readily understand that the violent change in her circumstances which the marriage would involve, would bring her face to face with "realities" in this world with which she had previously been totally unfamiliar, and would undoubtedly change the wilful child into something more nearly approaching responsible womanhood; albeit her absolute ignorance of human nature and the ways of the world—not to mention the *occult* world in which she had hitherto lived so largely an ideal life of her own—sadly unfitted her to launch out on world-wide travels, dependent entirely on her own knowledge and resources. Nevertheless, her indomitable will, and a certain natural genius for acquiring any knowledge or experience to which she cared to pay any attention, would carry her through circumstances and experiences where others would most assuredly make shipwreck of their lives. We might add to this that from her childhood there were evidences that she had invisible protectors; and that those whom she afterwards knew in the flesh as Masters, Adepts, or Mahatmas, were already following the development of the one who was destined to be the Pioneer in an attempted revival of a long-lost knowledge of Man's inner nature and powers.

The main object and incentive in all her subsequent wanderings was in fact to penetrate into these deeper mysteries, to find those who could instruct her, and explain to her the nature of those abnormal faculties with which she herself was so remarkably endowed. Thus she appears to have been attracted to this, that, or the other part of the world by hints or rumours of some out-of-the-way practices in magic, sorcery, witchcraft, spiritualism—anything and everything which savoured of the occult.

So far as Mme. Blavatsky's itinerary during this period is concerned, it may be briefly set forth as follows. The dates, however, cannot be considered to be altogether reliable. They are taken for the most part from Sinnett's *Incidents in the Life*

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of Madame Blavatsky; but in writing of this period he says (p. 59): "Unfortunately, it is impossible for me to do more than sketch the period of her life that we now approach in the meagerest outline. . . . She never kept diaries during this period, and memory at a distance of time is a very uncertain guide; but if the present record is uneven in its treatment of various periods, I can only point in excuse for this to the obvious embarrassments of my task."

We have seen that first of all she met the Countess K—— in Constantinople, and travelled with her in Egypt, Greece, and other parts of Eastern Europe. This companionship, however, does not appear to have lasted more than a few months. In Egypt she is said to have met with an old Copt who was credited with great magical powers, and she appears to have been more or less a pupil of his for some three months or so. She met him again afterwards in 1872.

We next hear of her travelling in Europe, sometimes by herself, and sometimes with a Russian Countess B——. This would be in 1849 and 1850, during part of which time she appears to have been in Paris, and to have met there with a famous mesmerist, whose name, however, we have not got. He appears to have endeavoured to get her under his control, and to avoid this she quitted Paris precipitately and went to London, where she again had the company of the Countess B——.

In January 1851 she returned to Paris, leaving again in July in order to go to Canada, to which place she was attracted by the idea that the Red Indians could supply her with some of the occult knowledge for which she was seeking. She appears to have passed through London, for it is recorded that when there in July 1851 she saw for the first time in the flesh the Adept whom she had previously seen so many times in vision, or in astral form, and who was her own special guardian and teacher, the Mahatma "M."

The Countess Wachtmeister records in her *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and the Secret Doctrine* (p. 57) that when at Würzburg with Mme. Blavatsky in 1885, her aunt Mme. Fadeeff sent to her a box containing a lot of old "rubbish". The Countess unpacked this box for Mme. Blavatsky, and handed her the contents one thing after another. Suddenly Mme. Blavatsky gave an exclamation of delight, and said: "Come and look at this which I wrote in the year 1851, the day I saw my blessed Master." In a scrap-book, in faded writing, the Countess saw the following lines, which she copied direct from the book.

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"Nuit memorable. Certaine nuit par un clair de lune qui se couchait à—Ramsgate, 12 Août, 1851—lorsque je rencontrai le Maître de mes rêves."

The Countess says that on seeing the manuscript she asked why "Ramsgate" was written instead of "London"; and H. P. B. told her that it was a "blind," so that anyone casually taking up the book would not know where she had met her Master. We must be prepared for a good many of these "blinds" in all her subsequent statements about the Masters, as well as in the teachings themselves. They are deliberately employed to test the intuition of the would be *chela*, as well as to conceal occult teachings which *cannot* be imparted openly. H. P. Blavatsky had to suffer much misrepresentation and many accusations of untruthfulness on this account, because she could not and would not impart knowledge which was and is only given under the strictest seal of secrecy. This procedure is somewhat foreign to our Western ideas, since we are inclined to think that anything or everything that anyone knows should be common property without any reservations; but that is only due to the fact that the West has altogether lost the knowledge of the traditional *Gnôsis*, in which these reservations may be traced back to the earliest ages of which we have any literary records. Thus for example Philo (first century) says:—

"Most excellent contemplators of nature and all things therein, they (the ancient sages) scrutinise earth and sea, and air and heaven, and the natures therein, their minds responding to the orderly motion of the moon and sun, and the choir of all the other stars, both variable and fixed. They have their bodies, indeed, planted on earth below; but for their souls, they have made them wings, so that they speed through the æther and gaze on every side upon the powers above, as though they were the true world-citizens, most excellent, who dwell in cosmos as their city; such citizens as wisdom hath as her associates, inscribed upon the roll of Virtue, who hath in charge the supervising of the common weal. . . . Such men, though (in comparison) few in number, keep alive the covered spark of Wisdom *secretly*, throughout the cities (of the world), in order that Virtue may not be absolutely quenched and vanish from our human kind."

Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the "unknown philosopher" (1743–1803) writes as follows:—

"But although the light is intended for all eyes, it is certain that all eyes are not so constituted as to be able to behold it in its splendour. It is for this reason that the small number of men who are depositaries

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of the truths which I proclaim are pledged to prudence and discretion by the most formal engagements."

Even Jacob Böhme—by no means an Occultist—has to refrain from explanations on certain matters revealed to him. Thus he says [1] :—

" Here we have hinted enough to the understanding of our school-fellows : further we must here be silent."

The obscurity of much of his writings is well known to students, but is undoubtedly purposive.

And so, when towards the close of the XIXth century the existence of these " Masters of the Wisdom " is once more partially disclosed to the world, we find our learned *savants*, wise in their own conceit, and imagining that no one can possibly know more than they do, denying the existence of these advanced members of the Race, calling them " bogus " Mahatmas, and setting them down as pure invention on the part of H. P. Blavatsky, and consequently rejecting the disclosure of the *Ancient Wisdom* which she partially unveiled and partially hid with many " blinds ", appropriate to conceal only from those whose intuition, faith, or previously acquired knowledge in former incarnations has not been sufficient to lead them to the light. It is interesting to note that so very early in her career she apparently instinctively used a " blind " in speaking of her Master.

It should be noticed that the 12th August, noted above as the date on which H. P. B. met her Master, corresponds with the 31st of July in the Russian calendar. She herself makes the note :—" C'est Juillet 31 style russe—jour de ma naissance—*vingt ans* ! " The Mahatma " M " had in fact come to London in the suite of some Indian Princes who were on a visit at that time.

After this incident Mme. Blavatsky sailed for Quebec, and in that City was introduced to a party of Red Indians. With these she discussed the mysterious doings of the medicine men ; but when eventually the party disappeared, taking with them some of her own personal property, she appears to have been disillusioned as to the character of these " noble savages."

From Quebec she went to New Orleans, attracted there by reports as to the mysterious knowledge and rites of the Voodoos, the native negroes and half-castes, who were addicted to certain magical practices of by no means a reputable nature. This,

[1] *Mysterium Magnum*, X, 62.

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however, would not deter Mme. Blavatsky, who was quite fearless and impartial in her investigations, and had not at that time the necessary knowledge to distinguish between 'white' and 'black' magic. But here her occult guides would appear to have come to the rescue; and having been warned in a vision as to the danger of the practices she was investigating, she took her departure for Texas and Mexico. Here she appears to have gone through some very rough experiences, and at times great personal dangers, but always guarded, very largely by her own fearlessness, but doubtless also by those who were watching over her in an occult manner.

It was during these Mexican wanderings that her thoughts turned to India as the real land of the Ancient Wisdom. It would appear from Mr. Sinnett's narrative (p. 65) that she wrote to a certain Englishman whom she had met in Germany two years previously, and whom she knew to be on the same quest as herself, and asked him to join her in the West Indies in order that they might go to India together. This he consented to do, and the party was further augmented by the addition of a Hindoo whom Mme. Blavatsky had met in Mexico, and whom she believed to be a *Chela* of one of the Masters.

The three adventurers appear to have reached Ceylon via the Cape somewhere about the end of 1852, but did not keep together, Mme. Blavatsky being intent on penetrating into Tibet, whilst the "Chela" appears to have endeavoured to influence her in other directions which did not accord with her intentions. Her endeavour to cross into Tibet was a failure, which Mme. Blavatsky attributed to the difficulties placed in her way by the British Resident in Nepal. There were doubtless occult reasons at that time why she did not find the physical locality of the Masters, since she did afterwards do so. She therefore returned South, went to Java and Singapore, and from thence to England in 1853.

England at that time, however, was no place for a patriotic Russian subject—and Mme. Blavatsky was always intensely patriotic, notwithstanding that she afterwards became a naturalised American citizen—and at the end of 1853 she again went over to America, this time to New York, to Chicago, then merely an infant City, and from thence to the far West, across the Rocky Mountains by caravan, and so to San Francisco. She remained in America about two years, and then once more set sail for India via Japan and the Straits, reaching Calcutta some time at the end of 1855, or perhaps early in 1856.

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During all this time she had never communicated with her mother's family; but her father appears to have been informed from time to time as to her whereabouts, and to have supplied her with money. During this second visit to India she met a German gentleman known to her father, who had in fact instructed him to try and find his daughter. This gentleman was himself on a journey to the East in search of some occult information, and he had with him two friends. The four of them joined forces, and travelled together through Kashmir to Leli (or Leh) in Ladakh in company with a Tartar *Shaman*, who was instrumental in introducing them to certain Buddhist Monasteries where they witnessed a good many very remarkable occult phenomena.

All these adventurers were bent on entering Tibet. The German and another of his party succeeded in getting a few miles over the frontier, but were politely brought back after they had walked sixteen miles. The third gentleman, Mr. K——, an ex-Lutheran minister, was prevented by fever from making the attempt. Mme. Blavatsky herself, however, was more successful. Aided by the Tartar *Shaman*, and invested in an appropriate disguise, she was able to cross the frontier, and to penetrate a considerable way into the interior. This was in 1856. An account of this adventure is partly narrated in Mr. Sinnett's *Incidents* (p. 69), from which it appears that having got into extreme difficulties, she was ultimately rescued by a party of twenty-five horsemen who had been directed in an occult manner to find them at a place where they were, and which "no living man endowed with common powers could have known." They were conducted safely back to the frontier by roads and passes of which Mme. Blavatsky had no previous knowledge.

After this adventure, Mme. Blavatsky travelled awhile in India, and ultimately sailed from Madras to Java, and from thence to Europe in 1858, where she resided for some time in France and Germany, and then suddenly returned in a dramatic manner to her family in Russia. She made her appearance at Pskoff during a wedding ceremony.

Mme. Jelihowsky, her sister, gives the following account of her return.[1]

"They were all sitting at supper, carriages loaded with guests were arriving one after the other, and the hall-bell kept ringing without interruption. At the moment when the bridegroom's best men arose, with glasses of champagne in their hands, to proclaim their good

[1] See A. P. Sinnett's *Incidents*, p. 76.

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wishes for the happy couple—a solemn moment in Russia—the bell was again rung impatiently. Mme. Yahontoff, Mme. Blavatsky's sister, moved by an irrepressible impulse, and notwithstanding that the hall was full of servants, jumped up from her place at the table, and, to the amazement of all, rushed herself to open the door. She felt convinced, she said afterwards, though why she could not tell, that it was her long lost sister!"

Speaking of her journeying in India on this last occasion, Mme. Blavatsky says in one of her letters to Mr. Sinnett (p. 151):—

"Went to India in 1856—just because I was longing for Master. Travelled from place to place, never said I was Russian, people taking me for what I liked. Met Külwein and his friend at Lahore somewhere. Were I to describe my visit to India only in that year that would make a whole book, but how can I NOW say the truth. Suppose I were to tell that *I was in man's clothes* (for I was very thin then) which is solemn truth, what would people say? So I was in Egypt with the old Countess who liked to see me dressed as a *man student*, "gentleman student" she said. Now you understand my difficulties? That which would pass with any other as eccentricity, oddity, would serve now only to *incriminate* me in the eyes of the world. Went with Dutch vessel because there was no other, I think. Master ordered me to go to Java for a certain business. There were two whom I suspected always of being chelas there. I saw one of them in 1869 at the Mahatma's house, and recognised him, but he denied."

It would appear from this that she was already at that time receiving conscious directions from her Master: that is to say she had already become an acknowledged chela; but this does not mean that she was under direct guidance and instruction in all matters. Thus in a letter to Mr. Sinnett, Mahatma K. H. says:—

"You have a letter from me in which I explain *why* we never *guide* our chelas (the most advanced even); nor do we forewarn them, leaving the effects produced by causes of their own creation to teach them better experience." [1]

After her return to Russia in 1858, Mme. Blavatsky lived with various members of her family at Pskoff and at Rougodevo in the District of Novorjef, about 200 versts from St. Petersburg. At this latter place her father and her sister, Mme. Jelihowsky, were with her, and many very interesting phenomena were recorded by her sister, and afterwards communicated to Mr. Sinnett. (See *Incidents*, Chaps. IV, V, VI.) It was during this stay at Rougodevo that Mme. Blavatsky had a terrible illness, due

[1] *Mahatma Letters*, p. 374.

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to the opening of a mysterious wound near the heart. Her family never could learn how this had been received. It was liable to re-open at times, and Col. Olcott records in his *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol. I, p. 9) that it did so at Chittenden, Vermont, in 1874, where he first met her when he was investigating the spiritualistic phenomena in connection with the Eddys. He says that the wound was due to a stab with a stiletto, and that besides this wound she had had her left arm broken in two places by a sabre stroke, a musket bullet still embedded in her right shoulder and another in her leg: these wounds having been received at the battle of Mentana, in October, 1867, where she and a number of other European ladies were present as volunteers with the Garibaldian forces.

Mme. Jelihowsky records of this illness at Rougodevo, that when the local physician was called in :—

"He had hardly examined the wound of the patient prostrated before him in complete unconsciousness, when suddenly he saw a large, dark hand between his own and the wound he was going to anoint. The gaping wound was near the heart, and the hand kept slowly moving at several intervals from the neck down to the waist. To make his terror worse, there began suddenly in the room such a terrific noise, such a chaos of noises and sounds from the ceiling, the floor, window-panes, and every bit of furniture in the apartment, that he begged he might not be left alone in the room with the insensible patient." [1]

After Mme. Blavatsky had recovered from this illness, she and her sister went, in the Spring of 1860 to visit their grandparents at Tiflis in the Caucasus. It is worth recording that during the three weeks' journey they passed through Zadonsk, a place of pilgrimage in Russia, where the holy relics of St. Tihon are preserved. On the particular day that they were there, the learned Metropolitan Isidore (one of the three "Popes" of Russia) was conducting the service in the Church. He had known the family from their childhood, and when the two sisters were in Church he recognised them, and after the service he invited them to his house. Mme. Jelihowsky relates what happened as follows :—

"He received us with great kindness. But hardly had we taken our seats in the drawing room than a terrible hubbub, noises, and loud raps in every conceivable direction burst suddenly upon us with a force to which even we were hardly accustomed ; every bit of furniture in the big audience-room cracked and thumped—from the huge

[1] *Incidents*, p. 134.

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chandelier under the ceiling, every one of whose crystal drops seemed to become endowed with self-motion, down to the table, and under the very elbows of his holiness, who was leaning on it. Useless to say how confused and embarrassed we looked—though, truth compels me to say that my irreverent sister's embarrassment was tempered with a greater expression of fun than I would have wished for. The Metropolitan Isidore saw at a glance our confusion, and understood, with his habitual sagacity, the true cause of it. He had read a good deal about the so-called 'spiritual' manifestations, and on seeing a huge arm-chair gliding towards him, laughed, and felt a good deal interested in this phenomenon. He enquired which of us two sisters had such a strange power, and wanted to know when and how it had begun to manifest itself. We explained to him all the particulars as well as we could, and after listening very attentively, he suddenly asked Mme. Blavatsky if she would permit him to offer her "invisible" a mental question. Of course, his holiness was welcome to it, she answered. We do not feel at liberty to publish what the question was. But when his very serious query had received an immediate answer—precise and to the very point he wanted it to be—his holiness was so struck with amazement, and felt so anxious and interested in the phenomenon, that he would not let us go, and detained us wi h him for over three hours. He had even forgotten his dinner. Giving orders not to be interrupted, the venerable gentleman continued to hold conversation with his unseen visitors, expressing all the while his profound astonishment at their "all-knowledge". When bidding good-bye to us, the venerable old man blessed the travellers, and turning to Mme. Blavatsky, addressed to her these parting words:—

"'As for you, let not your heart be troubled by the gift you are possessed of, nor let it become a source of misery to you hereafter, for it was surely given to you for some purpose, and you could not be held responsible for it. Quite the reverse! for if you but use it with discrimination, you will be enabled to do much good to your fellow creatures.'

"These are the authentic words of his Holiness, Isidore, the Metropolitan of our orthodox Greek Church of Russia, addressed by him in my presence to my sister Mme. Blavatsky." [1]

We might contrast this with even the present day attitude of the orthodox Church of Rome and the Anglican Church, which attributes all these phenomena to the Devil and his legions.

Mme. Blavatsky remained at Tiflis some two years, and for another year she visited various places in the Caucasus, in Imeretia, Georgia, and Mingrelia. Towards the end of this period, that is to say in 1863, she was residing at Ozoorgetty, a military settlement in Mingrelia. It was a little town lost among

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

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old forests which in those days had neither roads nor conveyances. Here she had another serious and mysterious illness. She began—as she repeatedly told her friends—" to lead a double life." She describes this illness as follows [1]:—

" Whenever I was called by name, I opened my eyes upon hearing it, and was myself, my own personality in every particular. As soon as I was left alone, however, I relapsed into my usual, half-dreamy condition, and became *somebody else* (who, namely, Mme. Blavatsky will not tell). I had simply a mild fever that consumed me slowly but surely, day after day, with entire loss of appetite, and finally of hunger, as I would feel none for days, and often went a week without touching any food whatever, except a little water, so that in four months I was reduced to a living skeleton. In cases when I was interrupted, when in my other *self*, by the sound of my present name being pronounced, and while I was conversing in my dream life,—say at half a sentence either spoken by me or those who were with my second *me* at the time, —and opened my eyes to answer the call, I used to answer very rationally, and understood all, for I was never delirious. But no sooner had I closed my eyes again than the sentence which had been interrupted was completed by my other self, continued from the word, or even half the word, it had stopped at. When awake, and *myself*, I remembered well *who I was* in my second capacity, and what I had been and was doing. When *somebody else, i.e.*, the personage I had become, I know I had no idea of who was H. P. Blavatsky ! I was in another far-off country, a totally different individuality from myself, and had no connection at all with my actual life."

We are much more familiar now-a-days with the phenomenon of double personality than was the case at that time, and this case of H. P. Blavatsky is exceedingly interesting in connection with the complex personality of this remarkable woman. I shall deal with it later on when I shall attempt some sort of analysis of the problem which she presents.

This illness, however, with which we are now dealing, was quite beyond the skill of the local army surgeon who was the only available medical man, and as Mme. Blavatsky was rapidly declining, he ordered her off to Tiflis. The only method by which she could be conveyed in her state was by boat along a small river, a four days' journey to Kutais. She had only four native servants to take charge of her during the journey ; and she was so weak that she lay in the boat like one dead. She remembers nothing of it ; but the servants on arriving at Kutais refused—with the exception of one old retainer—to remain with her. They had been frightened out of their senses because, as

[1] See *Incidents*, p. 147.

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they declared, they had seen for three nights in succession what they swore was their mistress gliding off from the boat and across the water in the direction of the forest, while the body still remained prostrate in the bottom of the boat. Twice the man who towed the boat, upon seeing the "form", ran away shrieking and in great terror; and indeed if it had not been for the one old faithful servant, the boat and the patient would have been altogether abandoned.

At Kutais there was a distant relation, and with great difficulty Mme. Blavatsky was transported from there to Tiflis, where she gradually recovered, and then in 1863 went to Italy.

During these last few years in Russia, her occult powers had been gradually changing and developing in certain new directions. Broadly speaking this change was one in which, from being a more or less irresponsible medium, unable to control the phenomena which took place wherever she went, she gradually acquired the power to subject them to her will. Of this, her sister Mme. Jelihowsky writes as follows:—[1]

"At Pskoff and Rougodevo, it happened very often that she could not control, nor even stop its manifestations. After that she appeared to master it (the force) more fully every day, until after her extraordinary and protracted illness at Tiflis she seemed to defy and subject it entirely to her will. This was proved by her stopping any such phenomena at her will, and by previous arrangement for days and weeks at a time. Then when the term was over, she could produce them at her command, and leaving the choice of what should happen to those present. In short, as already said, it is the firm belief of all that there, where a less strong nature would have been surely wrecked in the struggle, her indomitable will found somehow or other the means of subjecting the world of the invisibles—to the denizens of which she has ever refused the name of 'spirits' and souls—to her own control. Let it be clearly understood, however, that H. P. B. has never pretended to be able to control *real spirits*, *i.e.*, the spiritual monads, but only Elementals; as also to be able to keep at bay the *shells* of the dead."

In 1866 Mme. Blavatsky wrote:—[2]

"Now I shall never be subjected to external influences. The last vestiges of my psycho-physical weakness is gone, to return no more. I am cleansed and purified of that dreadful attraction to myself of stray spooks and ethereal *affinities*. I am free, free, thanks to THOSE whom I now bless at every hour of my life."

"I believe in this statement," said Mme. Jelihowsky to Mr. Sinnett in a conversation with him in Paris in 1884, "the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

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more so as for nearly five years we had a personal opportunity of following the various and gradual phases in the transformation of that force."

It is more than likely that during this period Mme. Blavatsky was undergoing an occult training and initiation when out of her body, at night, as well as during her mysterious illness. There was a sort of tradition in the early days of the Theosophical Movement that she had spent seven years in Tibet with the Masters; and in a letter to *Light* in 1884 [1] she makes the positive statement that: "I have lived at different periods in Little Tibet as well as in Great Tibet, and these combined periods form more than seven years." We have seen that according to the dates we have given, but which can only be accepted provisionally, she was in the East from 1855 to 1858, and further on we shall note that she was again in the East between 1867 and 1870, though whether in Tibet or not appears to be uncertain. But granted her power to leave her physical body—of which, from what I have already narrated, there does not appear to be any doubt—her occult training would take place on the astral plane, for she would visit the *Âshrama* of the Master in that manner, and there receive the necessary instruction. This is a possibility of which Mr. Sinnett does not appear to have taken any account.

From the time that she went to Italy in 1863 until she again returned to Russia in 1870 is also seven years, and she might very well have been undergoing her occult training in the above manner during these years without being physically in Tibet. During the last three years of this period, however, she was actually "in the East." She travelled a good deal in Europe from 1863 to 1867, and in the latter year was, as already noted, present at the battle of Mentana, where she was wounded. In November of that year, however, she left Italy for India, where she passed the next three years without communicating at all with her family: so that in the words of her aunt, Mme. Fadeeff, "All our researches had ended in nothing. We were ready to believe her dead."

It was under these circumstances that Mme. Fadeeff received at Odessa in November 1870 the following letter in the now well-known handwriting of the Mahatma K. H. It was delivered to her she says—in a letter written by her to Col. Olcott in June 1884—"in the most incomprehensible and mysterious manner, by a messenger of Asiatic appearance, *who then disappeared before my very eyes.*"

[1] Reproduced in *A Modern Panarion*, p. 251.

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Ten days after writing this to Col. Olcott, she sent the original letter to him, and it is now at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar. This is the first record of any phenomenal letter from a Master; and it will be observed that it was ten years previous to the phenomenal letters which Mr. Sinnett and others subsequently received. The letter was in French, and the following is the translation:

"To the Honourable,
Most Honourable Lady,
Nadyejda Andreewna Fadeew,
Odessa.

"The noble relations of Mad. H. Blavatsky have no cause whatsoever for grief. Their daughter and niece has not left this world at all. She is living, and desires to make known to those whom she loves that she is well and quite happy in the distant and unknown retreat which she has selected for herself. She has been very ill, but is so no longer; for under the protection of the Lord Sangyas (Buddha) she has found devoted friends who guard her physically and spiritually. The ladies of her house should therefore remain tranquil. Before 18 new moons shall have risen, she will return to her family."

It would appear then that if Mme. Blavatsky was not actually at that time in Tibet, she was at all events under the care of the Masters, and undergoing her final preparation for the work she had to accomplish for them.

Towards the end of 1870 Mme. Blavatsky left India and returned to Europe via the newly opened Suez Canal, and after spending a short time at Piraeus she took passage in a Greek vessel for Spezzia. The vessel contained a cargo of gunpowder, and was blown up just after it left port; but Mme. Blavatsky and a few of the other passengers were saved, with no more belongings than the clothes they wore when they were picked up out of the water. They were provided for temporarily by the Greek Government, and sent to various destinations, Mme. Blavatsky going to Alexandria, and subsequently to Cairo.

From Cairo she wrote to her relations to tell them of her return from India and the circumstances in which she was situated, and saying that she would remain in Egypt for some time before returning home. This was in 1871.

It was now, in Cairo, that she made her first attempt at anything in the nature of a public propaganda or teaching. She founded in Cairo the *Société Spirite*, for the investigation of mediums and phenomena according to Allan Kardec's theories and philosophy. It has been said that at this time she was

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herself nothing but a medium, and in fact an out and out spiritualist. This, however. was certainly not the case, as we have already seen from her sister's testimony. I shall deal later on in a separate chapter with her relation to "Spiritualism" in general. Mr. Sinnett in his *Incidents* says that her idea at this time was to give free play in the first instance to accepted spiritualistic phenomena, and then to show people how mistaken were the popular explanations, and so lead them to the deeper occult teachings. She wrote: "They know no better, and it does me no harm—for I will very soon show them the difference between a passive medium and an active doer." She wrote to England and France for mediums, but in the meanwhile she unfortunately employed some exceedingly shady characters who were hanging about Cairo, and the *Société* quickly came to grief. The following is her own account of the affair [1]:—

"They steal the Society's money, they drink like sponges, and I now caught them cheating most shamefully our members, who come to investigate the phenomena, by bogus manifestations. I had very disagreeable scenes with several persons who held me alone responsible for all this. So I ordered them out. . . . The *Société Spirite* has not lasted a fortnight—it is a heap of ruins—majestic, but as suggestive as those of the Pharaoh's tombs. . . . To wind up the comedy with a drama, I got nearly shot by a madman—a Greek, who had been present at the only two public séances we held, and got possessed, I suppose, by some vile spook."

After this fiasco she went to live at Boulak, and there she again met her old friend the Copt, who had acquired a great reputation as a magician. Mr. Sinnett in his *Incidents* mentions many interesting phenomena which occurred during her stay in Egypt; and indeed she herself appears to have acquired even a greater reputation than the Copt. However, she left Egypt in April 1872, and returned to her family at Odessa in July, having first of all been to Syria and Constantinople. She remained at Odessa till March 1873, when she went to Paris, staying with her cousin Nicolas Hahn; and in July of that year she "was ordered to New York."[2]

Respecting this "order" I have already given a quotation (p. 26) from the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* showing what was the inception of the projected attempt to give to the world "the impulse for a new cycle of occult research," and how Mme. Blavatsky was sent to America in order that she might meet

[1] See *Incidents*, p. 159. [2] See *Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 154.

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Col. H. S. Olcott, and be associated with him in this work. Thus with this "order" commences the third period of Mme. Blavatsky's eventful life; and from now onwards that life is—as she herself says in a letter to Mr. Sinnett (p. 154)—"*all opened.* From that time let the public know all."

Mme. Blavatsky is now—in 1873—forty-two. She has completed her *Wanderjahre,* she has served her apprenticeship not merely in the outer life of the world in many lands, communities, races, 'society'—from the highest Russian aristocracy to that of some of the most primitive races—but she has also sought and found many experiences and adventures in that 'borderland' of the 'occult' which is now regarded as a legitimate field for Psychical Research, but which in her time, and when offered by her, was regarded by academic science—with one or two exceptions only—as altogether unworthy of attention, and by the superstitious religionist as a province specially allocated to the Devil and all his minions.

What now may we consider to be the outcome of all this restless, stormy, strange and exceptional life? How are we to place the *personality* of this extraordinary woman at this epoch of her life; and what is its relation to the work she is now called upon to do?

In order to answer these questions we need a much more comprehensive view of the nature of the human personality than is commonly accepted, or is even guessed at by the new psychology; and I must digress for one chapter in an endeavour to outline the theosophical teachings in this matter; for it is only by those teachings that we can understand the complex personality of H. P. Blavatsky—or of ourselves.

H. P. Blavatsky—as I have previously said—taught us Theosophy; and it is only by Theosophy that H. P. Blavatsky can be explained.

Before I close this chapter, however, it will be convenient to refer here to the fact that this *Wanderjahre* period of Mme. Blavatsky's life, of which so little was known in detail even by her nearest relations, has been seized upon by her enemies and detractors as the one to which they could safely attach the most scandalous accusations.

It is not possible, nor is it necessary, for me to deal with these accusations in detail; they have each and all been refuted in one publication or another at various times during her life. One may express one's surprise, however, that they should still continue to be brought up by various people to-day who

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regard with antipathy the *teachings* of Theosophy; as if any of the incidents in H. P. Blavatsky's life could in any way affect the truth or otherwise of those teachings as they stand in her monumental works.

We know that Mme. Blavatsky was utterly careless—even if not scornful—of all restrictions on her freedom of action, and the society conventions of her time, and she undoubtedly thereby laid herself open to a good deal of misconstruction and scandalous criticism. But many of the things which she did, and which at that time were considered so shocking, are done to-day with perfect freedom and impunity; as, for example, wearing men's clothes, and riding astride.

There is, however, one particular accusation which may be mentioned and dealt with here. It is the accusation of having led, during this particular period, a sexually immoral life. Nothing could have been further from the truth, not merely on account of her inherent detestation of all sexual matters, but for the simple reason that such a course was physically impossible.

In 1885, when she was living in Wurzburg, she had a serious illness. During this illness she was medically examined by Dr. Leon Oppenheim, who thereupon gave the following certificate :—

"The undersigned testifies, as requested, that Madame Blavatsky, of Bombay—New York Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society—is at present under the medical treatment of the undersigned. She suffers from *Anteflexio Uteri*, most probably from the day of her birth; because as proven by a minute examination, she has never borne a child, nor has she had any gynæcological illness.

(Signed) DR. LEON OPPENHEIM.
WURZBURG, 3rd November, 1885.

"The signature of DR. LEON OPPENHEIM
is hereby officially attested.
WURZBURG, 3rd November, 1885.
The royal Medical Officer of the
District.
(Signed) DR. MED. ROEDER.

"We, the undersigned, hereby certify that the above is a correct translation of the German original before us.
Wurzburg, November 4th, 1885.
(Signed) HUBBE SCHLEIDEN.
(,,) FRANZ GEBHARD."

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With reference to this, Mme. Blavatsky wrote to Mr. Sinnett as follows :—[1]

Private.

" I enclose the medical certificate of Prof. Oppenheimer who made a minute and exact examination ' since my illness finds itself complicated now by some congenital crookedness of the *uterus*,' as he says—having it appears something to do with child-bearing (the *uterus* in general not mine or its crookedness) and which (though I had always had a dim conception that ' uterus ' was the same thing as ' bladder ') —which crookedness kills at once the missionaries and their hopes of proving me the mother of three or more children. Had he written a long and complicated statement of the reason *why* I could never have not only children, but anything in the shape of an extra since—*unless an operation is now made*—they can't get at that blessed uterus to cure it. I thanked and *declined*. Better *die* than have an operation made. But knowing *this* (certificate) shall have probably to be read in my defence—I did not permit him to go into physiological particulars and asked him simply to certify the fact that I *never had* any child or children, nor *could I have them*.

What next shall people say ?

Yours dishonoured in my old age

H. P. Blavatsky.

In another letter, previous to the above, she says :—[2]

" That I never was Mme. Metrovitch or even Mme. Blavatsky is something, the proofs of which I will carry to my grave—and it's no one's business."

But it must be confessed that Mme. Blavatsky had seriously compromised herself and given her enemies a decided lead by adopting a child and passing it off as her own in order to shield a friend from a great scandal.

When Mr. Sinnett was pressing her for information on this matter in order to compile his work, *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, she wrote to him :—[3]

" The incident of the adoption of the child ! I better be hung than mention it. Do you know if even witholding *names* what it would lead to ? To a hurricane of dirt thrown at me. When I told you that even my own father suspected me, and had it not been for the doctor's certificate would have never forgiven me, perhaps. After, he pitied and loved the poor cripple child."

Further on in the same letter she says :—[4]

" It is *simply impossible* that the plain undisguised truth should be said about my life. Impossible to even touch upon the child. There's

[1] *Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 177.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 147. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 151. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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the Baron Meyendorffs and all Russian aristocracy that would rise against me if in the course of contradictions (which are sure to follow) the Baron's name should be mentioned. I gave my *word of honour* and shall not break it—TO THE DEAD."

Col. Olcott in his *Old Diary Leaves* (Third Series, p. 246) records as follows :—

"To be able to answer one of Mme. Coulomb's shocking slanders about H. P. B. having been the mother of illicit offspring at Cairo, I sent for a respectable Tamil woman who had helped nurse H. P. B. throughout her dangerous illnesses of February, and, of course, had had to discover her exact physical state. As might have been expected by all who knew H. P. B.'s character intimately, the *ayah* affirmed and declared her willingness to go into court and testify that her late mistress had never been a mother. She even went so far as to say that whatever marriage she had contracted must have been a merely nominal one."

The Mme. Coulomb mentioned above came very prominently into notice as one of Mme. Blavatsky's slanderers in connection with the celebrated *Report* of the Society for Psychical Research in 1885 on the Phenomena connected with Theosophy. I deal with this Report in the Appendix hereto. Another prominent slanderer in connection with this *Report* was a Russian Journalist, V. S. Solovyoff, who published, after Mme. Blavatsky's death, the scandalous book entitled *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, to which I have already referred. This book was sponsored by the Society for Psychical Research, and I deal with it to some extent in the Appendix, as also in Chapter XIII.

A third slanderer of whom much has been made by Mme. Blavatsky's enemies and detractors was her Cousin, Count Sergius Witte, who refers to her at some length in a volume of *Memoirs* published by him.

It is not necessary to deal with this in detail, but the grossly untruthful nature of his statements can be judged from the assertions he makes that Mme. Blavatsky married an Englishman who had gone with her on a business trip to the United States (no date given) ; that it was the medium Home to whom she owed her occult knowledge ; that she made her peace with her legitimate husband Blavatsky (no date given), and established a home at Tiflis ; and a host of other details of her life during her *Wanderjahre* which are most manifestly untrue from existing records of her travels.

The unreliability of his assertions can further be judged from the statement which he makes that she went from Cairo to

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England and there founded "a Theosophic Society"; whereas the Theosophical Society was founded by her in New York in 1875. That she went from thence to India to study the occult science of the Hindus; whereas she went from New York to India in 1879 to establish the Headquarters of the Society there. That upon her return from India she settled in Paris as the acknowledged head of the theosophists; and that "shortly afterwards she fell ill and died," whereas she settled in London in 1887, and died there in 1891, surrounded by numerous devoted friends and students. There is in fact hardly a grain of truth in any of Count Witte's statements. He was eighteen years her junior, and admits that he met his Cousin for the first time at Tiflis when he was a young boy, and that his narrative is mostly written from "stories current in our family." How much he has drawn upon his imagination—or else wilfully misrepresented—may be gathered from the fact that at this first meeting he describes his Cousin's appearance as follows. "At that time she was but a ruin of her former self. Her face, apparently once of great beauty, bore all the traces of a tempestuous and passionate life, and her form was marred by an early obesity."

Now we have seen that Mme. Blavatsky's return to Tiflis was in the Spring of 1860; she would therefore then be 29 years of age, whilst the boy Witte was only 11 years old; or supposing it to have been a year later when he saw her, we may say 30 and 12. But the portraits of the New York period from 1874 onwards—that is to say 14 years later—certainly show no traces of a beauty spoilt by "all the traces of a tempestuous and passionate life," nor had she at that time "a form marred by an early obesity." The portrait which was published as a frontispiece to *Isis Unveiled*, and which is reproduced herewith, is sufficient to give the lie to Count Witte's slanders in this respect.

We can hardly absolve Count Witte from deliberate slander and misrepresentation, though his motive is obscure. Perhaps it may be found in a superstitious and semi-religious idea that she was in league with the Devil, by whose aid her occult phenomena, which he fully admits, were accomplished. Thus he says:—

"Let him who still doubts the non-material origin and independent existence of the soul in man consider the personality of Mme. Blavatsky. During her earthly existence, she housed a spirit which was, no doubt, independent of physical or physiological being. As to the particular realm of the invisible world from which the spirit emerged, there may be some doubt whether it was Inferno, Purgatory or Paradise. I

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cannot help feeling that there was something demoniac in that extraordinary woman."

Well, doubtless there is something demoniac in each and every one of us, but perhaps not in the sense in which the above is intended.

Princess Helene von Racowitza in her *Autobiography* [1] has a very great deal to say in praise of H. P. Blavatsky and her teachings; as also in her book *Wie ich mein Selbst fand.* She knew H. P. B. intimately in New York when she was writing *Isis,* and also subsequently in London. The following passage may be quoted as against Count Witte's slanders :—

" She was a combination of the most heterogeneous qualities. . . . In matters of social life she evinced a truly touching naïveté and ignorance. She possessed an irresistible charm in conversation, that comprised chiefly an intense comprehension of everything noble and great; and her really overflowing enthusiasm, joined to the most original and often coarse humour, was a mode of expression which was the comical despair of prudish Anglo-Saxons.

" Her contempt for, and rebellion against, all social conventions, made her appear sometimes even coarser than was her wont, and she hated and fought conventional lying with real Don-Quixote-like courage. But whoever approached her in poverty or rags, hungry and needing comfort, could be sure to find in her a warm heart and an open hand—more than with most well-mannered, cultured people. She and Colonel H. S. Olcott, the most faithful of all her pupils, lived strictly in accordance with Buddhistic teachings, and were absolute vegetarians. No drop of wine, beer or fermented liquors ever passed their lips, and she had a most fanatical hatred of everything intoxicating " (p. 351).

We may now cast a glance at the teachings with regard to the constitution of Man as set forth in the works of this " extraordinary woman."

[1] Translated from the German by Cecil Marr, and published by Constables in 1910.

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CHAPTER V

THE HIGHER AND THE LOWER SELF

I HAVE already alluded in several places to the distinction which must be made between the higher and the lower *Self*; between the immortal spiritual Ego, and the temporary personality which is what we commonly call 'ourselves.'

The distinction is a fundamental one in Theosophy, since it lies at the root of that great *duality* in our nature whereby there appears to be a continual conflict between what we call good and evil, or the promptings of the higher Self as against the self-will of the lower personal self. We shall find that this is the key to much that is otherwise enigmatical in the life of H. P. Blavatsky—as, indeed, it is with each one of us; only with her there was a most remarkable *personality*, exceedingly strong and self-willed, and withal endowed with extraordinary psychic faculties scarcely recognised at that time as being possible for anyone to exercise. So far as her own inner life struggle is concerned, her great achievement is that she *did* bring this lower personality into absolute subjection to the will and purpose of the higher Self *in all matters that concerned her life-work and mission as she had received these from her great Teachers*. The qualification is important, as I shall indicate more fully later on; for in many matters she doubtless—as we all do—allowed the personality to have its own way. In the first instance, however, we must endeavour to get a broad view of the relation between the higher and the lower Self in its philosophical and psychological aspects.

The distinction between the higher and the lower *Self* is as old as the oldest philosophy in the world, but in the West it has been entirely lost sight of in Christian doctrine, which only recognises one *personal* self; a self which commences its existence —apparently from nowhere—when the individual is physically born into this world, which had no pre-existence, and yet from that moment of *time* has before it an endless eternal life. This was not the teaching of the more enlightened of the early Church Fathers. Thus Origen says:—

"The present inequalities of circumstances and character are thus not wholly explicable within the sphere of the present life. But this world is not the only world. *Every soul has existed from the beginning;* it has therefore passed through some worlds already, and will pass through others before it reaches the final consummation. It comes

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into this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the defeats of its previous life. Its place in this world as a vessel appointed to honour or dishonour is determined by its previous merits or demerits. Its work in this world determines its place in the world which is to follow this." (*De princ.* 3.3.5.).

It is not necessary here to enter into any detailed exposition of the distinctive theosophical doctrine of Reincarnation, with its complementary doctrine of Karma, or cause and effect operating from one life-time to another. In the above quotation it will be seen that Origen distinctly enunciates this doctrine of Karma, but speaks of cause and effect being carried over by the soul from its life in one " world " to its life in another. By this we can perhaps hardly understand that he taught reincarnation in this world : though in that case we should have to ask, where are these other " worlds " in which the soul has lived and will live ? It might in any case be argued that the pre-existence of the soul does not necessarily imply reincarnation in this world, though that is the most rational solution of the problem when we consider the matter in all its aspects and bearings.

But the *principle* which lies at the root of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not affected by these details, and is a very simple one. It obtains whatever may be our belief as to past or future states or " worlds " in which the soul has had and will have its existence. This principle is so clearly stated in theosophical teachings, derived from the ancient Wisdom Religion or *Gnôsis*, that only those who are hopelessly stuck in the old theological beliefs can fail to recognise its validity. The principle is simply this : that Man as we at present know him possesses both a mortal and an immortal nature. His mortal nature is that part of him which belongs to the *phenomenal* world : the world of time, space, and causation, in which everything is subject to birth, maturity, and death. His immortal nature is that higher or innermost part of his being which is rooted and grounded in the immortal, eternal, absolute PRINCIPLE, from which all things proceed, to which all things must return, and in which all things live and move and have their being. Philosophy calls this Principle the *ABSOLUTE* ; Religion calls it *GOD*. What is not generally recognised is, that the lower phenomenal *self*, or that *personality* which we commonly call ' ourselves ', cannot in the nature of the case be immortal ; whilst on the other hand the higher *Self* is inherently immortal in its own nature as being one with the eternal *ABSOLUTE* or *GOD*. That is the doctrine of Man's inherent divine nature.

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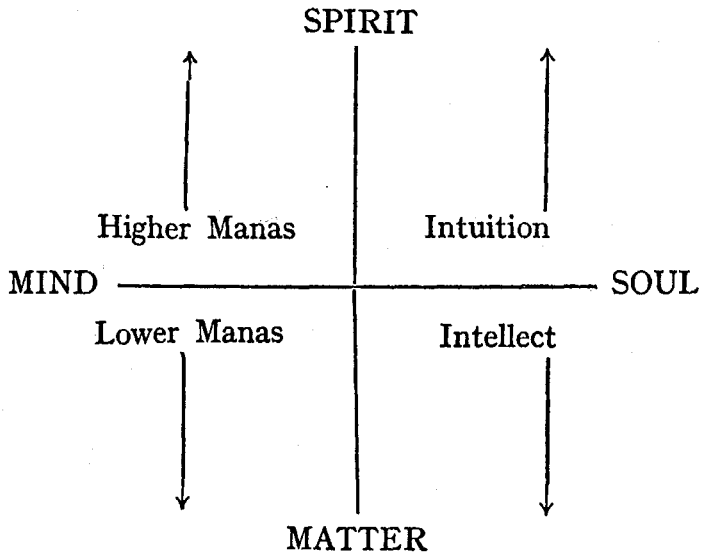
This higher Self never departs from its own nature. It always has been, is, and will be the spiritual *REALITY* of our nature. It needs no 'salvation', but on the contrary, it is only by re-uniting with that higher Self that there can be any salvation for the lower personality. It is the "Christ in You."

The phenomenal world to which the lower self or personality belongs is not merely our present outer world or universe of physical matter; it includes several inner planes of Substance—the etheric, the astral, and the lower mental: this latter being the plane of the *formal* or *concrete* mind or intellect, which views everything under the categories of time, space, and causation. In theosophical literature this is usually distinguished as the *Lower Manas.*

It may be useful to set this out in a very simple diagram. Lower Manas, or the formal conceptual mind which constitutes our normal consciousness or thinking *personality,* is essentially the consciousness of a *duality*: everything appears to us to have its opposite, and we are unable with this conceptual—or as we are wont to call it, rational—mind, to transcend this apparent duality.

In our diagram, then, we may indicate the separation which the mind makes between Spirit and Matter, and recognise that it is Mind itself which effects this separation, and that we intuitively place Spirit *above* and Matter *below.*



But we must also recognise the duality of Mind itself. In its lower aspect it is the cogniser of the phenomenal outer world under the categories of time, space, and causation—as Kant showed us. But it is itself the *Creator* of that outer phenomenal

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world ; not of course individually—though even that is to some extent true—but collectively, and in the ultimate as *Cosmic Mind*, the *Logos*, " By whom all things were made ; and without whom (Him) was not anything made that hath been made."

It is important to bear in mind that the individual could not have or manifest any attribute or principle whatsoever unless that principle existed in the first place as a *cosmic* principle.

In the higher aspect of Manas, or when the conscious subject turns his attention *inwards* instead of outwards to the phenomenal world, we may recognise at the present stage of our evolution the exercise of a faculty which is more or less a direct perception of reality or truth, and for which we do not appear to have any better term than *intuition*. Beyond intuition, however, we have a still higher exercise of this faculty in mystic *illumination*.

Mysticism is essentially the exercise of a supernormal faculty transcending intellect, or lower Manas, whereby the individual obtains a vital and conscious experience in his inmost being of his oneness with the higher region of absolute Reality. In doing this he does not contact anything that is *exterior* to himself. He falls back upon the glorious depths of his own being, his own inner immortal spiritual nature, which partakes of and is one with the Universal Absolute REALITY. In theosophical terminology he contacts his own Higher Self ; and he does this in the first place by transcending the formal mind of concrete ideas, and by entering the consciousness of the higher Manas he receives the light of the two highest spiritual principles, Atma and Buddhi. These three spiritual principles, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, constitute the divine immortal Ego, the spiritual Triad, or the *individuality* as distinguished from the lower *personality*. It is this higher Self that overshadows the series of personalities which appear and disappear like evanescent phantoms in the great cyclic process of the phenomenal world of time and space. It is this higher Self towards which the personality aspires in all that is known as Religion ; for Religion—apart from all questions of doctrine, creed, or dogma—is the aspiration of the lower personality to attain to a *spiritual* quality of life, to attain to a perfection of truth, goodness and beauty, dimly recognised as the highest *good*.

It is, indeed, only as this higher Self is recognised and becomes the dominant principle in the soul, becomes the essential *life* of the lower personality, that there can be for that personality any ' salvation ' ; for it is only by union with the higher Self—the " Christ in You "—that anything of the personality can survive

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that process of disintegration which sooner or later is the fate of everything in the *phenomenal* universe, from atoms to Solar Systems.

This fact of the divine inner spiritual Self, and the manner in which it is veiled and obscured by the lower self, by the various bodies or vehicles, physical, astral, mental, which constitute the *personality*, is very finely stated by Robert Browning in his great poem *Paracelsus*, in some lines which I have already quoted (p. 5 *supra*).

I have said that it is the lower mind or Manas that thus obscures the *Real* by a process of limitation under the categories of what we know as time, space, and causation. It is for this reason that H. P. B. writes in *The Voice of the Silence*," The Mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer."

The immediate aim, therefore, of all who aspire to tread the PATH which ancient Sages have indicated, and which H. P. B. once more pointed out: the PATH that leads to liberation and adeptship: is to do precisely what Browning indicates: to clear away the veil of *Mâyâ*, the "baffling and perverting carnal mesh" in which the normal personality lives, and thereby to allow the light of Eternal Reality to illumine the whole consciousness.

Modern psychology recognises that what we know as *personality* is a very limited, and in fact a very deceptive thing. The consciousness of the normal "I" is merely a surface consciousness: or as William James states the matter:—

"One conclusion, forced upon my mind . . . has ever since remained unshaken. It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question—for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map. At any rate, they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality." [1]

Modern psychology also recognises that the personality may be wholly dominated by a "dissociated complex": that

[1] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 388.

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is to say that some fixed idea with its associated train of thought absorbs or becomes for the time being the whole of the personality. In extreme cases of monomania the ordinary rationality is entirely ignored, and the subject is generally placed in a lunatic asylum. In other cases the subject may be normally rational in everything except this one subject—as for example is so often found in religion and politics.

Now we might say that our normal personality, centred in the lower Manas, is precisely such a " dissociated complex " from the total contents of our being or consciousness. Indeed we constantly practise this dissociation whenever we *abstract* ourselves by attention to some one particular subject, oblivious perhaps to everything that is going on around us. We may therefore liken the action of the lower Manas, which normally dominates our personality, to a dissociated complex of the higher Manas, which includes the lower, but so much more besides. Thus Bergson tells us that :—

" Intellect has detached itself from a vastly wider reality, but there has never been a clean cut between the two ; all around conceptual thought there remains an indistinct fringe which recalls its origin. We compare the intellect to a solid nucleus formed by means of condensation. This nucleus does not differ radically from the fluid surrounding it. It can only be reabsorbed in it because it is made of the same substance." [1]

" Intellectuality and materiality have been constituted, in detail, by reciprocal adaptation. Both are derived from a wider and higher form of existence. It is there that we must replace them, in order to see them issue forth." [2]

This latter sentence is very suggestive, and is quite in line with the theosophical teaching that we must raise our consciousness to the level of the higher Manas before we can free ourselves from the limitations and illusions which the formal conceptual mind creates.

It is on this parting line between the higher and the lower Manas that the great conflict of life takes place. It is there that the personality—or what is perhaps more commonly called the *soul*—works out either its salvation or its damnation ; its continual existence, or its ultimate destruction.

" The soul (personality) that sinneth, it shall die." But what is sin ? If we are to answer this question in the broad light

[1] *Creative Evolution*, p. 203. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

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of theosophical teachings, in a *cosmic* regard, and ignoring the theological casuistries which have attached to the term, we may accept the definition of the *Theologia Germanica* :—

" Sin is nought else, but that the creature turneth away from the unchangeable Good and betaketh itself to the changeable ; that is to say, that it turneth away from the Perfect to ' that which is in part ' and imperfect, and most often to itself."

Thus we say that to the extent to which the ' soul ', the personality, is constituted of, or contains the elements of, the lower phenomenal world ; to that extent it must inevitably perish—or perhaps we should rather say that it must still continue to be subject to the *mortality*, the ever changing flux, the illusion, of that lower phenomenal world, until, in the long, long course of evolution these elements have been finally eliminated, or transmuted, and the self of the *personality* seemingly reunited with the higher spiritual Self, the immortal spiritual Ego. The personality has been wholly dissolved away in the clear light of the eternal imperishable REALITY to which it has now apparently attained, though in truth it was all the time, and never can be, other in its essential being than THAT. " It can only be reabsorbed in it because it is made of the same substance." *Tat tvam asi*—That art Thou—is the key doctrine of the ancient *Upanishads*. Also in the *Theologia Germanica* we read :—

" That which is perfect is a Being, who hath comprehended and included all things in Himself and His own Substance, and without whom, and beside whom, there is no true Substance. For He is the Substance of all things, and is in Himself unchangeable and immovable, and changeth and moveth all things else."

" For when the vain imagination and ignorance are turned into an understanding and knowledge of the truth, the claiming anything for our own will cease of itself. Then the man says : ' Behold ! I, poor fool that I was, imagined it was I, but behold ! it is, and was, of a truth, God ! "

We may note now the ordinary theosophical classification of the various " principles " which constitute the totality of our nature whilst in incarnation, and then proceed to apply this key to an understanding of the many apparent contradictions in the complex personality of " the Sphinx of the XIXth century," Madame H. P. Blavatsky.

The following classification is that given in *The Key to Theosophy*, page 91 :—

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	SANSCRIT TERMS.	EXOTERIC MEANING.	EXPLANATORY.
LOWER QUATERNARY	(*a*) Rupa, or Sthula-Sarira.	(*a*) Physical body.	(*a*) Is the vehicle of all the other "principles" during life.
	(*b*) Prana.	(*b*) Life, or Vital principle.	(*b*) Necessary only to *a*, *c*, *d* and the functions of the lower *Manas*, which embrace all those limited to the (*physical*) brain.
	(*c*) Linga Sharira.	(*c*) Astral body.	(*c*) The *Double*, the phantom body.
	(*d*) Kama rupa.	(*d*) The seat of animal desires and passions.	(*d*) This is the centre of the animal man, where lies the line of demarcation which separates the mortal man from the immortal entity.
THE UPPER IMPERISHABLE TRIAD	(*e*) *Manas*—a dual principle in its functions.	(*e*) Mind, Intelligence: which is the higher human mind, whose light or radiation links the MONAD, for the lifetime, to the mortal man.	(*e*) The future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether Manas gravitates more downward to Kama rupa, the seat of the animal passions, or upwards to *Buddhi*, the Spiritual *Ego*. In the latter case, the higher consciousness of the individual Spiritual aspirations of *mind* (Manas), assimilating Buddhi, are absorbed by it and form the *Ego*, which goes into Devachanic bliss.
	(*f*) Buddhi.	(*f*) The Spiritual Soul.	(*f*) The vehicle of pure universal Spirit.
	(*g*) Atma.	(*g*) Spirit.	(*g*) One with the Absolute, as its radiation.

We note here in the first instance the main division between the four lower principles—constituting the *personality*—and the three higher principles—"the Upper Imperishable Triad"—constituting the immortal Ego or *individuality*.

We need not concern ourselves here with any detailed analysis of the nature and functions of each individual principle, since

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it is with the main distinction between the lower and the higher Self with which we are principally concerned. In various Eastern Schools it will be found that the "principles" are differently enumerated; and in any case the student must not hold too rigidly to any mere classification, or to any precise definition of the nature and function of a "principle". He will find it elsewhere stated, for example, that the physical body is not regarded as a principle at all. We can only regard this classification in fact as an *exoteric* teaching, sufficient to carry the occult student a certain distance. Behind it lie secrets of initiation which the aspirant must discover for himself as he progresses along the PATH; but even so, the intuitive student will recognise that much has been withheld, and will avoid any very rigid adherence to the classification here given.[1]

All these 'theosophical' classifications—"principles", "globes", "chains", "rounds" and "rings", etc.—necessarily belong to the perceptions of the lower 'rational' mind, which cannot transcend the categories of time and space. But since the subject can only be presented in this manner to be intelligible at all, we must make the best of it, and in any case we can say that such is the *appearance* of things to us at our present stage of evolution, or of individual attainment, whatever may be the *Reality* behind all this flux of phenomena, the great world Process of involution and evolution.

"We Occultists and Theosophists", says H. P. B.,[2] "see in it (the objective universe) the only universal and eternal *reality* casting a periodical reflection of *itself* on the infinite spatial depths. This reflection, which you regard as the objective *material* universe, we consider as a temporary *illusion* and nothing else. That alone which is eternal is *real*."

Now it is one of the axioms of Occult Science that Man is the *microcosm* of the *macrocosm*: that he reflects the macrocosm, and the macrocosmic process in the totality of his nature and constitution. It is most important to understand and bear this in mind. Man cannot have as a 'principle' anything that is not

[1] In *The Mahatma Letters* (p. 279) Mahatma K. H., tells Mr. Sinnett that: "Morya wanted me to acquaint you with the totality of the subtile bodies and their collective aggregate, as well as with the distributive aggregate or the *sheaths*. I believe it is premature."

On page 356 he tells him that he has "to put all the different pieces together and evolve out of them the skeleton or a shadow of our system which, although not exactly the original—this would be an impossibility—would be as near an approach to it as could be made by a non-initiate." He says also that "much was purposely made obscure." In a letter to Mr. Sinnett (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 464) H.P.B. tells him that he (Sinnett) "gave the Truth out, but by *far not* the whole truth, especially about rounds and rings, which was only at best *allegorical*."

[2] *Key*, p. 84.

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cosmic in its nature. He could not have an astral body or vehicle, nor a mental or 'causal' body or vehicle unless there existed in the first place an astral *substance*, an astral 'plane', and a mental *substance* or 'plane': any more than he could have a physical body or an etheric body unless there was in the first instance a cosmic physical substance—or, as we usually call it, 'matter'—and also a cosmic ether.

Modern physical science is beginning to discover some of the properties of the ether, and is inclined to regard it as the ultimate Substance of the Universe. Occult Science, however, teaches that the ether with which physical science is now dealing is only the lowest of four physical ethers, and that very far from being the ultimate universal Substance, these four ethers, together with the three states of matter, solid, liquid, and gaseous, which we recognise with our lowest physical senses, constitute merely the seven subdivisions of the lowest of the seven Planes of our Cosmos.

Now since the individual man is a microcosm of the macrocosm, he has in his four lower principles, in his *personality*, a reflection of the macrocosmic process of involution and evolution; he has a *cyclic* process of birth, maturity, and death; and if "we occultists and theosophists" regard the whole objective material universe as an illusion—since time and space are not realities, but modes of our consciousness—much more do we regard as an illusion the temporary *personalities* to which the ordinary individual attaches so much importance, and to which he clings so persistently both here and in his after death states.

In the *Key to Theosophy* (p. 33) H. P. B. answers in the following manner the question, "But what is the distinction between this 'true individuality' and the 'I' or 'Ego', of which we are all conscious?"

"Before I can answer you, we must argue upon what you mean by 'I' or 'Ego'. We distinguish between the simple fact of self-consciousness, the simple feeling that 'I am I', and the complex thought that 'I am Mr. Smith' or 'Mrs. Brown'. Believing as we do in a series of births for the same Ego, or re-incarnation, this distinction is the fundamental pivot of the whole idea. You see 'Mr. Smith' really means a long series of daily experiences strung together by the thread of memory, and forming what Mr. Smith calls 'himself'. But none of these 'experiences' are really the 'I' or the Ego, nor do they give 'Mr. Smith' the feeling that he is himself, for he forgets the greater part of his daily experience, and they produce the feeling of *Egoity* in him only while they last. We Theosophists, therefore,

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distinguish between this bundle of 'experiences', which we call the *false* (because so finite and evanescent) *personality*, and that element in man to which the feeling of 'I am I' is due. It is this 'I am I' which we call the *true* individuality; and we say that this 'Ego' or individuality plays, like an actor many parts on the stage of life. Let us call every new life on earth of the same *Ego* a *night* on the stage of a theatre. One night the actor, or 'Ego', appears as 'Macbeth', the next as 'Shylock', the third as 'Romeo', the fourth as 'Hamlet', or 'King Lear', and so on, until he has run through the whole cycle of incarnations. The Ego begins his life-pilgrimage as a sprite, an 'Ariel', or a 'Puck'; he plays the part of a *super*, is a soldier, a servant, one of the chorus; rises then to 'speaking parts', plays leading *rôles*, interspersed with insignificant parts, till he finally retires from the stage as 'Prospero' the *magician*."

In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* (p. 264) we find K. H. writing:—

"I have been on a long journey after supreme knowledge, I took a long time to rest. Then, upon coming back, I had to give all my time to duty, and all my thoughts to the Great Problem. It is all over now: the New Year's estivities are at an end and I am 'Self' once more. But what is *Self*? Only a passing guest, whose concerns are like a mirage of the great desert."

That the ordinary individual does not and cannot thus regard his 'Self' or *personality* is obvious enough, and consequently he judges others from the same point of view, from outward appearance and worldly importance. In the *Mahatma Letters* there is very much said to Mr. Sinnett about his own failure in this respect.[1]

It is of course entirely from this superficial standpoint that H. P. Blavatsky has been judged by her enemies and detractors. We shall endeavour to get behind it in our next chapter.

We hear much scientifically and philosophically of *evolution*, but we hear very little about *involution*. Yet we cannot have the one without the other. Every *evolved* organism, from an atom to a Solar System, or from a moneron to a man, necessitates some *involved* principle—whether you call that involved principle simply *energy*, or whether you call it *life*. Locked up within the limits of the physical atom of matter is a vast store of what science calls *energy*, but which Theosophy recognises as an aspect of the ONE LIFE. Break up the physical atom, and this *involved* energy is liberated; it becomes more *cosmic*; it returns to its pre-atomic state. Break up the physical organism of the

[1] See for example, p. 261.

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individual man, and the same thing happens with the involved higher or deeper " principles ", and the consciousness of the Ego falls back upon these inner or more cosmic states.

Theosophy, or the Ancient Wisdom, recognises this process of involution and evolution as a cyclic process by which not merely do individual forms or organisms come into existence, but which is applicable through vast periods of time to the whole visible universe as a periodical manifestation of " An Omnipresent Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible."[1] Cycle within cycle, not merely the parts, the atoms or Solar Systems, but the whole phenomenal manifested Universe appears and disappears: issuing out of what to our consciousness is *subjectivity* into objectivity, and periodically returning again to subjectivity. In Eastern phraseology this process constitutes for the whole Universe the " Days and Nights of Brahma." In relation to particular worlds such as our own, it constitutes the cycles of " Rounds " and " Races ", with many minor cyclic subdivisions. Thus our present Earth is said to be in its fourth *Round* out of seven through which it must pass—there being a period of " obscuration " between each Round. Also our present Aryan Race is said to be the fifth out of seven which will complete the evolution of Humanity on this present Globe during this Round.

It will readily be seen that individual man does but repeat the cosmic process in his own little cycle of appearances and disappearances, or births, ' deaths ', and rebirths on this earth. In the interval between his various incarnations he falls back upon the more interior or cosmic planes of his being. Perhaps we should more appropriately call this *involution*, since it is a more or less complete return to his Source ; whilst re-birth, from this point of view, is an evolution, a going out from that Source. We are more accustomed, however, to think of evolution in connection with the acquirement of a more and more complex organism, whereby the inner involved life is able to manifest more and more of its own inherent nature and powers. Thus we say that Man is *evolving* as he attains to a more and more intense mental and spiritual life.

But the principal thing to note here, as the key to the conflict we have already referred to between the higher and the lower *Self* is this : that the lower self—the four lower principles—is the product of the evolutionary life-process which is traced back by science to the very lowest forms of life on this Globe. By

[1] *Secret Doctrine*, I, p. 14.

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Theosophy it is traced still further back; but we need not deal with that here. The point that we wish to emphasise is this: that the *personality* has behind it, and ingrained in its very nature, all that vast evolutionary process of life on this Globe, from the lowest organisms upwards. This is not merely a *past* process which the Race has now left behind; it is one which every individual repeats from the moment of conception in his mother's womb. Each individual in his nine months' gestation runs through the whole evolutionary process; from the single germ-cell or moneron the embryo passes through metazoa, invertebrates, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, to mammals—to which latter class he belongs as an animal to-day. Other classes will follow later in the many millions of years which are still ahead of human evolution on this Earth.

To-day Man is capable by reason of his more highly developed or evolved organism of responding more or less readily to the higher cosmic principle of *Manas*—Mind, Intellect, Reason—and is overshadowed intuitively by the still higher principles of Atma and Buddhi, the true spiritual Root and Source of his being. This overshadowing it is that constitutes the great religious instinct in Man; the instinct to return to his Source, to realise his true inner divine nature; and many and strange are the forms and formulas in which the, as yet, clouded and perverted lower nature endeavours to express this deep-seated instinct, which all through history has been the most powerful factor for evil as well as for good in Man's evolutionary progress.

If we look broadly at the Human Race to-day, we must see that the main evolutionary centre is in Mind, Manas. It is mind functioning as intellect which exhibits not merely the greatest activity, but also, in our scientific achievements, the greatest progress. At the same time we must also recognise that this evolution of Manas is still mainly directed downwards or outwards; the minds of the vast majority of the Race are still directed mainly or wholly to "the things of this world", to the acquirement of material wealth, prosperity, or power, whereby all the strife and conflict and wars of our modern so-called *civilization* results. We shall never be really civilized, nor will wars cease, until the great majority of the Race have acquired the higher spiritual Manas, and Universal Brotherhood has thereby become an accomplished fact. Which of us as individuals can truly say that we have freed ourselves from our attachment to the good things of this world; or can even say that our main effort is to free ourselves from that attachment;

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or can say that we have freed ourselves from individual, social, or racial prejudices and judgments. Yet this detachment has to be accomplished before we can enter into our spiritual heritage, either in this world or in the next. Millions of so-called *spirits* in " the next world " are simply earth-bound *personalities*, no nearer to the true spiritual life than they were in the flesh.

In so-called religion—that is to say in formulated beliefs, creeds, dogmas—we have the effort of the mind or intellect to bring down into this lower region of time and space the *intuitive* recognition of the higher spiritual nature of Man. But religion itself is not formulated belief: it is the pure spiritual *quality* of life freed from the lower elements, " the weak and beggarly elements ", whereby the spirit is obscured by the lower nature. The individual is not ' saved ' by any mere profession of faith, nor by anything done for him, nor by mere good works. The spiritual rebirth, the return to his inherent divine nature, is an inner process in the man himself.

> " Though Christ our Lord a thousand times
> in Bethlehem be born,
> And not in thee, thy soul remains
> eternally forlorn."

At present this spiritual achievement, this birth of the " Christ in You " is mainly regarded as *Mysticism*; and it is certainly only in mystical states of consciousness that we can contact this higher region of our nature. But Mysticism is for most people—and indeed not without some show of reason in many of its examples—the synonym of a vague, unhealthy emotionalism; and whilst for the true mystic himself it is the deepest reality of his nature, having touched which he can no longer count " the things of this world " as having the slightest ' reality ' or value: he is unable—from the very fact that this consciousness belongs to the higher Manas which transcends the categories of time and space—to express in intelligible terms what that deeper reality is which he contacts.

At the same time we must recognise not merely that at the present stage of the evolution of the Race the individual mystic is a rarity, but also that in these individual cases, even with the classical mystics, the faculty is very imperfectly developed, and is more or less intermittent and sporadic in its action.

Contrasted with this more or less natural evolution of our spiritual nature and faculties, we have offered to us in Theosophy what has broadly come to be known as *Occultism*. It is the

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acquirement of these faculties through a definite intensive training in which knowledge of the higher or deeper laws of nature and of our own being is arrived at step by step on the PATH, guided more or less by those who are already Masters and Initiates in the higher science.

The mystic may be compared to a man who finds himself suddenly—he knows not how—on a high mountain top. There he momentarily catches a glimpse—he knows not how—of undreamed of Realities, but cannot sustain his position by his own volition. Thus St. Augustine writes :—

" And when this power also within me found itself changeable, it lifted itself up to its own intelligence, and withdrew its thoughts from experience, abstracting itself from the contradictory throng of sensuous images, that it might find out what that light was wherein it was bathed, when it cried out that beyond doubt the unchangeable was better than the changeable, and how it came to know the unchangeable, which it must have known in some way or another, for otherwise it could not have preferred it so confidently to the changeable. And thus, with the flash of one hurried glance, it attained to the vision of THAT WHICH IS. And then at last I saw Thy invisible things understood by means of the things that are made, but I could not sustain my gaze ; my weakness was dashed back, and I was relegated to my ordinary experience, bearing with me nothing but a loving remembrance, cherishing, as it were, the fragrance of those viands which I was not yet able to feed upon." (*Confessions*).

But the Occultist is one who is steadily climbing the mountain ; making sure of his footing at each step, and adapting himself as he ascends to the changing conditions and rarefied atmosphere of the heights which he reaches and overpasses. When he finally reaches the topmost heights he has become an Adept, a Master of Wisdom, a Saviour of Mankind, a Buddha, a Christ.

" He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.

" Yea, He is mighty. The living power made free in him, that power which is HIMSELF, can raise the tabernacle of illusion high above the gods, above great Brahm and Indra." [1]

Such, indeed, Theosophy points out as the goal of each individual of the Race in the long, long course of evolution ;

[1] *Voice of the Silence*, p. 65.

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though at the present time the vast majority are not as yet able even to glimpse its possibility, or to accept this great message, being wholly concerned with the things of this world, or, in their religion, with *personal* salvation.

We cannot attain to the measure of the stature of the perfect divine man by mere emotionalism. Indeed this may be one of our greatest hindrances. We have to *know* the laws of our being, spiritual as well as material; and *Manas* is the principle by which that knowledge is attained. But knowledge is not everything. There is such a thing as "spiritual wickedness in high places." That is one of the deepest mysteries of BEING—that both 'good' and 'evil' emanate from the same Source. Thus Jacob Böhme—one of the few real seers who have approached this mystery—says:—

"God giveth power to every life, be it good or bad, unto each thing, according to its desire, for He Himself, is ALL; and yet He is not called God according to every being, but according to the light wherewith He dwelleth in Himself, and shineth with His power through all his beings. He giveth in His power to all His beings and works, and each thing receiveth His power according to its property; one taketh darkness, the other light; each hunger desireth its property, and yet the whole essence or being is all God's, be it evil or good, for from Him and through Him are all things; what is not His love, that is His anger"[1]

Occult knowledge, then, unless accompanied by an utter renunciation of *Self*, leads to "the left hand path", to the making of the "black magician"; and against this we are constantly warned in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky.

If those detractors and slanderers who have judged and condemned her had had some knowledge of the foregoing principles, they might possibly have been more charitable and just in their pronouncements—nay, would they not, indeed, have refrained altogether from passing a judgment, remembering the precept, the enunciation of an occult law, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

Personal condemnation is only justified when some specific evil can only be combated in that way; but no one has ever been able to show the specific evil which H. P. Blavatsky wrought which would justify their attacks and slanders: save only that

[1] *De Signatura Rerum*, VIII, 42.

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her teachings were obnoxious to them as conflicting with their own conceptions of religious or other dogmas.

Writing under the heading of "Modern Heresies", a 'dignitary' of the Church of England was recently guilty of repeating these oft refuted slanders, with the apparent idea that this supported his 'heresy' thesis. When brought to book and challenged to state the specific evil which H. P. Blavatsky wrought apart from his supposed 'heresies', he was silent.[1]

H. P. Blavatsky was an Occultist, not a Mystic in the ordinary classical sense. Let us now see in the light of the theosophical principles I have thus briefly set forth how we are able to estimate her *personality*, and the life-work which she accomplished.

[1] For particulars of this particularly scandalous attack, see No. II of the *Proceedings* of The Blavatsky Association.

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CHAPTER VI

THIRD PERIOD: THE REAL H. P. BLAVATSKY

WE now come to the third period in the eventful life of Mme. H. P. Blavatsky; the period when, having 'found herself'—"My inner Self which but for his (my Master) calling it out, awakening it from its slumber, would never have come to conscious being—not in *this* life, at all events."[1]—she accepts the guidance of that higher Self, and subordinates every consideration of the lower *personal* self to its promptings.

This inner monition was no different in the case of H. P. Blavatsky than in that of any great reformer who, under this prompting, has endeavoured to bring to his fellow men the spiritual enlightenment which he has himself received, sacrificing everything that this world holds to be of value to the supreme demand of the spiritual life. The inner monition, we say, is no different, but the outer form that it takes is quite another matter. In each and every case, according to the teaching of Theosophy, the inner monition comes from the higher Self of the individual. But it is not necessarily or even generally ascribed to that higher Self: to "the inmost centre in us all", as Browning calls it. We have to remember, as indicated in our last Chapter, not merely that the higher Self only *overshadows* the personality, and cannot really impose its will on the actions of that personality, but also that its influence has to 'come down' through *Manas*, through mental strata as it were, already moulded and characterised by certain *formal* concepts derived more immediately from the outer environment and the prevailing notions, beliefs, and the limitations of general knowledge which belong to the community and the age to which the personality belongs: whilst it has also to reckon with the "baffling and perverting carnal mesh which binds it, and makes all error."

In the case of great Christian teachers and reformers, we naturally find this influence, this 'call' attributed to a personal God, or to the 'Holy Ghost'; neither of these being considered in any sense to be the inner Self of the individual. It is true that this Eastern doctrine, of the oneness of the higher Self and the universal SELF, which is at least as old as the oldest *Upanishads*, is recognised and taught by some of the Christian Mystics—Eckhart for example—but it has always been a heresy for

[1] *Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 104.

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Ecclesiastical Christianity, nor is it to be found in the 'Gospel' of any popular Christian reformer or evangelist. We should contend, however, that it is the true doctrine of the Christian Scriptures when rightly interpreted; and that it is Theosophy which enables us to recognise this. It is in fact mystical as distinguished from ecclesiastical or theological Christianity.

The case of H. P. Blavatsky, however, is quite different from that of the religious reformer who has a 'call' which expresses itself in terms of the religion of the community to which he belongs—since he knows of no other. "He who knows but one religion knows none." H. P. Blavatsky was not merely far too cosmopolitan in her researches and experience not to have perceived the limitations, the prejudices, the bigotry associated with every individual religion, but she had been definitely instructed and initiated in that KNOWLEDGE, that Ancient Wisdom or *Gnôsis* which lies behind and is the origin of the Sacred Scripture of all times and nations, and from which, as secondary effects, innumerable formulated religions, creeds, dogmas, and sects arise. Thus in *Isis Unveiled* she writes:—[1]

"The three personalities of Christna, Gautama, and Jesus appeared like true gods, each in his epoch, and bequeathed to humanity three religions built on the imperishable rock of ages. That all three, especially the Christain faith, have in time become adulterated, and the latter almost unrecognizable, is no fault of either of the noble Reformers. It is the priestly self-styled husbandmen of the 'vine of the Lord' who must be held to account by future generations. Purify the three systems of dross of human dogmas, the pure essence remaining will be found identical."

H. P. B. had been definitely instructed and initiated by living Masters, Adepts, Initiates, Mahatmas: one of whom, the Mahatma M., was her own particular Master whom she reverenced and obeyed with a devotion and fidelity which few have equalled in any cause, and which expressed itself in a life of martyrdom in fulfilling the mission which was entrusted to her to make this same Ancient Wisdom, and the PATH of attainment thereto, known to some extent to the modern world after centuries of darkness and the obscuration of truth.

Much as the existence of these Masters of Wisdom, and of H. P. Blavatsky's own Masters or Mahatmas [2] has been questioned, and even derided in some quarters, the whole life of this remarkable woman is inexplicable without this fact. Nor is it her own life and testimony merely that is in question. There were numerous

[1] Vol. II. p. 536. [2] *Maha-Atma* = Great Soul.

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other individuals who, on the evidence of their own experience of the existence of these Masters, devoted their life to their service and the work that was required of them at that time. First and foremost of these we have Col. H. S. Olcott: hardly less devoted and steadfast in the cause than was H. P. B. herself. His personal testimony to the existence of the Masters cannot lightly be set aside,[1] and he sacrificed his whole worldly career and prospects to follow the 'call' which came to him from them.

We have in the letter quoted on page 26 a statement of the reason for the inception of the great mission entrusted to H. P. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott. I shall deal with its development in subsequent chapters, my object now being to disclose the nature of the mission, and to endeavour to estimate the character and qualifications of the woman who figures most prominently in the great effort known as the modern Theosophical Movement.

But we might well pause here and ask ourselves whether we are really qualified to do this. On what is our judgment to be based? If on mere appearances, on the outward showing of the *personality*, we may as well confess at once that we have neither right nor reason in doing so. We shall merely be judging as the world judges—and condemns.

But if we endeavour to look any deeper, we are still limited to the knowledge which we have of outward acts and their apparent motives; and though this may carry us some distance, and enable us to ignore much that our better judgment will tell us is merely superficial, yet it certainly cannot give us that comprehensive view of the *inner self* in its relation to the outer which the Masters possess, and which would determine their choice. We must, then, go to them and to what they have said[2] before we can form even an imperfect estimate of the *Real H. P. Blavatsky*. Nevertheless we may say, that looking broadly at the character and life-work of the woman after she undertook the mission entrusted to her, we are safe in asserting that her first and foremost characteristic was her unswerving and passionate devotion to that mission, and to those who entrusted her with it. Nothing but the reality of that mission, the actuality of the vast store of Occult knowledge from which she was permitted partially to draw aside the veil, and the existence of the Great Lodge of Adepts who—as Louis Claud de Saint-Martin told us more than one hundred years ago[3]—are the custodians of that knowledge: could account for the laborious and self-sacrificing life which

[1] See his *Old Diary Leaves*.
[2] See *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*.
[3] See page 304 *infra*.

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H. P. Blavatsky led from the time that she went to America in 1873 until the very day of her death.

I shall trace that life, and the martyrdom it entailed, to some extent in the subsequent chapters of this work. In the meanwhile let us look at what is involved in the quotation from Mahatma M's letter which I have given on page 25.

Mahatma Morya, who writes this letter to Mr. Sinnett in February 1882, was H. P. B.'s special Master: the Master to whom she was *Chela*. The other Mahatma, Koot Hoomi Lal Singh, 'K. H.', was, however, the one who undertook specially to correspond with Mr. Sinnett, and from whose communications Mr. Sinnett's *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism* were compiled. The bulk of the Letters in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, from which I shall now quote, are from him.

During the course of his correspondence with Mr. Sinnett, which commenced in October, 1880, K. H. had to undergo an initiation which involved his retirement for three months (p. 207), and M. took his place. The return from this retirement is referred to in the quotation I have given on page 69, and also we are told by M. (p. 219) :—

"A few days before leaving us, Koot Hoomi speaking of you said to me as follows :—'I feel tired and weary of these never ending disputations. The more I try to explain to both of them (A. P. S. and A. O. H.) the circumstances that control us and that interpose between us so many obstacles to free intercourse, the less they understand me! Under the most favourable aspects this correspondence must always be unsatisfactory, even exasperatingly so, at times; for nothing short of personal interviews, at which there could be discussion and the instant solution of intellectual difficulties as they arise, would satisfy them fully. It is as though we were hallooing to each other across an impassible ravine, and only one of us seeing his interlocutor. In point of fact, there is no-where in physical nature a mountain abyss so hopelessly impassable and obstructive to the traveller as that spiritual one which keeps them back from me.'

"Two days later, when his 'retreat' was decided upon, in parting he asked me :—'Will you watch over my work, will you see it falls not into ruins?' I promised. What is there I would not have promised him at that hour! At a certain spot not to be mentioned to outsiders, there is a chasm spanned by a frail bridge of woven grasses and with a raging torrent beneath. The bravest member of your Alpine Clubs would scarcely dare to venture the passage, for it hangs like a spider's web and *seems* to be rotten and impassable. Yet it is not; and he who dares the trial and succeeds—as he will if it is right that he should be permitted—comes into a gorge of surpassing beauty of scenery—

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to one of *our* places and to some of *our* people, of which and whom there is no note or minute among European geographers. At a stone's throw from the old Lamasery stands the old tower, within whose bosom have gestated generations of Bodhisatwas. It is there, where now rests your lifeless friend—my brother, the light of my soul, to whom I have made a faithful promise to watch during his absence over *his* work."

We are further told (p. 375) that the state of consciousness into which the Master K. H. had passed was that of "Tong-pa-ngi"—which, however, conveys nothing to our uninitiated minds. He, however, tells us himself afterwards (p. 424) :—

"Alas! by no means are we all 'gods'; especially when you remember that since the palmy days of the 'impressions' and 'precipitations'—'K. H.' has been born into a *new* and *higher* light, and even that one, in no wise the most dazzling to be acquired on this earth. Verily the *Light of Omniscience* and infallible Prevision on this earth—that shines only for the highest CHOHAN alone is yet far away from me!"

I may remark here that the difference between the two Mahatmas as disclosed in these Letters: difference of character, of method and style in writing—not to mention handwriting—is one of the very strong internal evidences that Mme. Blavatsky could not herself have written these letters, as her enemies and detractors have asserted, whatever may have been the occult method by which she was employed as the transmitter of some, but not all, of them.

To return to the passage which I have quoted in which Mahatma M. tells Mr. Sinnett of the inception of the effort to promulgate the Occult doctrine: the effort which became known as the modern Theosophical Movement: the effort of "one or two of us", who, "hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionally, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance": we may note in the first place that "consent was given", under certain conditions. We might naturally ask, By whom was the consent given? There is very little information in these *Letters* as to the ramifications, organisation and government of the great Lodge of Initiates; nevertheless, here and there we do get a glimpse of some of the laws which bind and restrict the actions of its individual members; and in particular we have behind the two Masters in question the shadowy figure of a "Maha Chohan", the "Chief", continually checking and prohibiting. Thus on page 116 we are told: "H. P. B. is in despair: the Chohan refused permission to M.

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to let her come this year further than the Black Rock, and M. very coolly made her unpack her trunk."

On page 202 we find Mahatma K. H. writing to Sinnett :—

" You must have understood that I am still, and notwithstanding the Chohan's approval of my ' Lay-Chela '—under last year's restrictions, and cannot bring to bear on the parties concerned all the psychic powers that I otherwise could. Besides, our laws and restrictions with regard to money or any financial operations whether within or outside our Association, are extremely severe—inexorable on some points."

On page 63 he says :—

" I can say *no more* except that the Chohan has permitted me to devote my spare time to instruct those who are willing to learn, and you will have work enough to ' drop ' your Fragments at intervals of two or three months. My time is *very limited* yet I will do what I can."

On page 113 he again says :—

" I tell you, my dear friend, I am far less free to do as I like than you are in the matter of the *Pioneer*. None of us but the highest *Chutuktus* are their full masters."

Turning to page 186 we find him telling Sinnett that :—

" Ever since I undertook the extraordinary task of teaching two grown up pupils with brains in which the methods of Western science had crystallized for years ; one of whom is willing enough to make room for the new iconoclastic teaching, but who, nevertheless, requires a careful handling while the other will receive nothing but on condition of grouping the subjects as *he wants them to group*, not in their natural order—I have been regarded by all our Chohans as a lunatic. I am seriously asked whether my early association with Western ' Pelings ' had not made of me a half-Peling and turned me also into a ' dzing dzing ' visionary."[1]

Behind the *Chohan* or *Chohans* stands—what ? Speaking of his " venerable chief " Mahatma K. H. says [2] :—" We are not gods, and even they, our chiefs—*they hope*." The real fact is, as disclosed by Theosophy, that there is no break in the scale

[1] Koot Hoomi was a native of the Punjab, but he was sent to Europe while still a young man to be educated in Western knowledge ; hence the reference in this sentence, and also one by Mahatma M. (p. 218) where he says : " I am not a fine scholar, Sahibs, like my blessed Brother." In *The Occult World* (p. 123), Sinnett comments on the remarkable difference in style, etc., between the communications from K. H. and those from M. as being proof conclusive that these Letters were not composed by Mme. Blavatsky.

[2] *Letters*, p. 210.

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of evolution from the lowest to the highest—and who shall say what that *highest* is ?

On page 64 of the *Letters*, Mahatma K. H. says :—

" I will have to remain silent as to the Dhyan Chohans, nor can I impart to you the secrets concerning the men of the seventh round. The recognition of the higher phases of man's being on this planet is not to be attained by mere acquirement of knowledge. Volumes of the most perfectly constructed information cannot reveal to man life in the higher regions. One has to get a knowledge of spiritual facts by personal experience and from actual observation."

Hence initiation into this knowledge required that the candidate should pass into higher states of consciousness, as we have seen in the case of the retirement of K. H.

The history of man on this Globe goes back millions and millions of years, yet there are still primitive savages, between whom and a modern philosopher or scientist the gap is as great, or perhaps greater, than that between these and a Mahatma. All along the line of evolution—let us say merely within our own historical period—here and there have been found a few individuals who could pass from the ranks of the ordinary individual with his racial, conventional and other limitations, to the arcane region of the higher knowledge. What is needed ? Not mere intellect. Indeed, intellect alone is a bar and a stumbling block rather than a qualification. Let the student read carefully the *Mahatma Letters*, and note what is said about this in respect of the two foremost *intellectuals* concerned therein, A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume. Over and over again these two are told plainly that they cannot be accepted as *Chelas*, and the reason why. Thus Mahatma K. H. writes to Mr. Sinnett in July, 1884 (p. 351) :

" My poor, blind friend—you are entirely unfit for practical occultism ! Its laws are immutable ; and no one can go back on an order once given. However, I am determined to make one more effort—(the last that I am permitted)—to open your inner intuition. If my voice, the voice of one who was ever friendly to you in the human principle of his being—fails to reach you as it has often before, then our separation in the present and for all times to come—becomes unavoidable. It pains me for you, whose heart I read so well—every protest and doubt of your purely intellectual nature, of your cold Western reason—notwithstanding. But my first duty is to *my* Master. And duty, let me tell you, is for us, stronger than any friendship or even love ; as without this abiding principle which is the indestructable cement that has held together for so many milleniums, the scattered custodians of nature's grand secrets—our Brotherhood,

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nay, our doctrine itself—would have crumbled long ago into unrecognisable atoms. Unfortunately, however great your purely *human* intellect, your spiritual intuitions are dim and hazy, having never been developed. Hence, whenever you find yourself confronted by an apparent contradiction, by a difficulty, a kind of *inconsistency* of occult nature, one that is caused by our time-honoured laws and regulations—(of which you know nothing, for your time has not yet come)—forthwith your doubts are aroused, your suspicions bud out—and one finds that they have made mock at your better nature, which is finally crushed down by all these deceptive appearances of outward things! You have not the faith required to allow your Will to arouse itself in defiance and contempt against your purely worldly intellect, and give you a better understanding of things hidden and laws unknown. You are unable I see, to force your better aspirations—fed at the stream of a real devotion to the Maya you have made yourself of me—(a feeling in you, that has always profoundly touched me)—to lift up the head against cold, *spiritually blind* reason; to allow your heart to pronounce loudly and proclaim that which it has hitherto only been allowed to whisper: 'Patience, patience. A great design has never been snatched at once.' You were told, however, that the path to Occult Science has to be trodden laboriously and crossed at the danger of life; that every new step in it leading to the final goal, is surrounded by pit-falls and cruel thorns; that the pilgrim who ventures upon it is made first to confront and *conquer* the thousand and one furies who keep watch over its adamantine gates and entrance—furies called Doubt, Skepticism, Scorn, Ridicule, Envy and finally Temptation—especially the latter; and that he, who would see *beyond*, had to first destroy this living wall; that he must be possessed of a heart and soul clad in steel, and of an iron, never failing determination, and yet be meek and gentle, humble, and have shut out from his heart every human passion that leads to evil. Are you all this? Have you ever begun a course of training which would lead to it? No; you know it as I do. You are not born for it; nor are you in a position—a family man with his wife and child to support, with work to do—fitted in any way for the life of an ascetic, not even of a—Mohini. Then why should you complain that powers are not given to you; that *even proof of our own powers* begins to fail you, etc.? True you have offered several times to give up meat and drink, and I have refused. Since you cannot become a regular *chela* why should you? I thought you had understood all this long ago; that you had resigned yourself, satisfied to wait patiently for future developments and for my personal freedom."

Further on in the same letter he says (p. 355) :—

"You have proudly claimed the privilege of exercising your own uncontrolled judgment in occult matters you could know nothing about—and the occult laws—you believe you can defy and play with,

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with impunity—have turned round upon you and have badly hurt you. It is all as it should be. If, throwing aside every preconceived idea, you could TRY and impress yourself with this profound truth, that intellect is not all powerful by itself; that to become a 'mover of mountains' it has first to receive life and light from its higher principle—Spirit, and then would fix your eyes upon everything occult, spiritually trying to develop the faculty according to the rules, then you would soon read the mystery right."

In that priceless gem of theosophical teachings, *Light on the Path*, written down by M. C. (Mabel Collins) through the influence of another, a European Adept, we are told :—

"Remember, O disciple, that great though the gulf may be between the good man and the sinner, it is greater between the good man and the man who has attained knowledge; it is immeasurable between the good man and the one on the threshold of Divinity. . . . Those that ask shall have. But though the ordinary man asks perpetually, his voice is not heard. For he asks with his mind only; and the voice of the mind is only heard on that plane on which the mind acts. . . . To read, in the occult sense, is to read with the eyes of the spirit. To ask is to feel the hunger within—the yearning of spiritual aspiration. . . . The mind may recognise truth, but the spirit cannot receive it. To learn is impossible until the first great battle has been won."

The qualifications for discipleship are neither 'goodness' nor intellect, though neither of these can be neglected; but how often do we not find 'goodness' associated with a religious bigotry, pride and dogmatism, or at least with some encasing mould of religious creed which is an absolute bar to that wider and deeper spiritual truth which includes all religions, and is "no respecter of persons". As for intellect, even modern philosophers such as Bergson or Wm. James, have fully recognised that it is neither fitted for nor intended to supply a knowledge of *Reality*; and that the more it is relied upon, the less freedom is there for the higher faculty of intuition. Thus Bergson says :—[1]

"The intellectual tendencies innate to-day, which life must have created in the course of its evolution, are not at all meant to supply us with an explanation of life: they have something else to do."

Wm. James tells us :—[2]

"For my own part, I have finally found myself compelled to *give up the logic*, fairly, squarely, and irrevocably. It has an imperishable use in human life, but that use is not to make us theoretically acquainted with the essential nature of reality."

[1] *Creative Evolution*, p. 22. [2] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 212.

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As regards the further or higher faculty which Bergson calls intuition, he tells us that :—[1]

"Intuition is mind itself, and, in a certain sense, life itself; the intellect has been cut out of it by a process resembling that which has generated matter. Thus is revealed the unity of the spiritual life. We recognise it only when we place ourselves in intuition in order to go from intuition to intellect, for from the intellect we shall never pass to intuition."

I think that we may claim that in these extracts from two of the leading philosophers of our day, we have practically, though in other words, the same doctrine as that which is disclosed in the extracts I have given from the *Mahatma Letters*. One more extract of a practical nature I may give in illustration of this important matter, the Key to the gateway into the Arcanum of Occultism. Writing to Mr. Sinnett about Crookes' discoveries in radiant matter, Mahatma K. H. says (p. 341) :—

"If he wearies not of trying, he may discover that most noble of all facts, his true SELF. But he will have to penetrate many strata before he comes to *It*. And to begin with, let him rid himself of the *maya* that any man living can set up 'claims' upon Adepts. He may create irresistible *attractions* and compel their attention, but they will be spiritual, not mental or intellectual. And this bit of advice applies and is directed to several British theosophists, and it may be well for them to know it. Once separated from the common influences of Society, *nothing* draws us to any outsider save his evolving spirituality. He may be a Bacon or an Aristotle in knowledge, and still not even make his current felt a feather's weight by us, if his power is confined to the *Manas*. The supreme energy resides in the *Buddhi*; latent—when wedded to *Atman* alone—active and irresistible when galvanised by the *essence* of 'Manas', and when none of the dross of the latter commingles with that pure essence to weigh it down by its finite nature. *Manas*, pure and simple, is of a lower degree, and of the earth earthy; and so your greatest men count but as nonentities in the arena where greatness is measured by the standard of spiritual development."

It was to this deeper knowledge of REALITY and the true *Self*, and the development of the faculties whereby these are known and apprehended in a *practical* manner—whereby the individual becomes a Master, an Initiate, an Adept, a Maha-Atma—that the great effort was made during the last quarter of last century to direct the attention of the world. The *attention* was directed sure enough. H. P. Blavatsky's phenomena and writings, from the time of the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, and

[1] *Creative Evolution*, p. 282.

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of A. P. Sinnett's *Occult World*, and *Esoteric Buddhism*, became the talk of the whole world. But with what result ?

" One or two of us hoped," says Mahatma M. (p. 263) in a letter I have already quoted: [1] " that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionally, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others—wiser as it would now seem—held differently."

The message was in fact rejected by so-called Christians of all denominations—as indeed was only to be expected. But it was also rejected by the academic *intellectuals* of the day; by the materialistic scientists, of course, but also by the psychical researchers, notwithstanding A. P. Sinnett's desperate efforts to work particularly in that direction. It was rejected further by the Spiritualists—but I shall deal more fully with that matter in chapter VIII.

But though the 'World' rejected the message, and wrote H. P. Blavatsky down as a fraud and a charlatan, the effort was by no means a complete failure. The Theosophical Society was founded, and rapidly acquired members in every part of the world. H. P. Blavatsky's message, the message of *Theosophy*, reached the hearts and understandings of thousands whose inner nature and intuition had reached the point of development at which the appeal could find a suitable soil for further growth. A few of these thousands would doubtless definitely enter the PATH. With others certain efforts would be made, which, though they might appear to fail in this present incarnation, would undoubtedly bear fruit in future lives. " For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come."

That the Theosophical *Movement* had to be distinguished from the Theosophical *Society*, and even from the work of H. P. Blavatsky herself, is indicated in a letter to Sinnett from Mahatma M. dated as early as 3rd March, 1882 (p. 271):—

" Europe is a large place but the world is bigger yet. The Sun of Theosophy must shine for all, not for a part. There is more of this movement than you have had an inkling of, and the work of the T. S. is linked in with similar work that is secretly going on in all parts of the world. Even in the T. S. there is a division, managed by a Greek Brother about which not a person in the Society has a suspicion excepting the Old Woman and Olcott; and even he only knows it is progressing and occasionally executes an order I send him in connection with it."

[1] See *supra*, p. 26.

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It is perhaps useless to speculate as to what H. P. Blavatsky was in former lives that she should have reached the development which she had attained in this life. There is a mystery behind the *real* H. P. Blavatsky, the higher Self, of which we only get a hint now and again. Let us see first of all what she herself has to say about her inner Self. In a letter to Mr. Sinnett [1] she writes as follows :—

"Now, do you really think that you know ME my dear Mr. Sinnett ? Do you believe that, because you have fathomed—as you think—my physical crust and brain ; that—shrewd analyst of *human* nature though you be—you have ever penetrated even beneath the first cuticles of my *Real Self* ? You would gravely err if you did. I am held by all of you as *untruthful* because hitherto I have shown the world only the true *exterior* Mme. Blavatsky. It is just as if you complained of the *falseness* of a moss and weed covered, and *mud*-covered, stony and rugged rock for writing outside, 'I am *not* moss covered and mud-plastered ; your eyes deceive you for you are unable to see beneath the crust' etc. You must understand the allegory. It is not *boasting*, for I do not say whether *inside* that unprepossessing rock there is a palatial residence or an humble hut. What I say is this : you *do not know* me ; for whatever there is *inside* it, is *not what you think* it is ; and—to judge of me therefore, as of one *untruthful* is the greatest mistake in the world, besides being a flagrant injustice. *I* (the real inner 'I') am in prison, and cannot show myself as I am, with all the desire I may have to. Why then, should I, because speaking of myself *as I am* and feel myself to be, why should I be held responsible for the *outward* jail-door and *its* appearance, when I have neither built nor decorated it ? . . . Perchance you may find out yet your mistake concerning the other—the well hidden party."

But Sinnett never did find this out. He was suspicious and jealous to the last : as witness his ungrateful book, *The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe.*

Next in importance we may quote the following letter from Mahatma K. H. to Mr. Sinnett.[2] It is annotated by him as being, "K. H.'s Confidential Memo about Old Lady. Received Simla, Autumn, 1881" :—

"I am painfully aware of the fact that the habitual incoherence of her statements—especially when excited—and her strange ways make her in your opinion a very undesirable transmitter of our messages. Nevertheless, kind Brothers, once that you have learned the truth ; once told, that this unbalanced mind, the seeming incongruity of her speeches and ideas, her nervous excitement, all that in

[1] *Mahatma Letters*, p. 465. [2] *Ibid.*, 20.

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short, which is so calculated to upset the feelings of sober minded people, whose notions of reserve and manners are shocked by such strange outbursts of what they regard as her temper, and which so revolt you—once that *you know* that nothing of it is due to any fault of hers, you may, perchance, be led to regard her in quite a different light. Notwithstanding that the time is not quite ripe to let you entirely into the secret, and that you are hardly yet prepared to understand the great Mystery even if I told it, owing to the great injustice and wrong done, I am empowered to allow you a glimpse behind the veil. This state of hers is intimately connected with her occult training in Tibet, and due to her being sent out alone into the world to gradually prepare the way for others. After nearly a century of fruitless search, our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a European *body* upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and our own. You do not understand ? Of course not. Please then, remember, what she tried to explain, and what you gathered tolerably well from her, namely the fact of the *seven* principles in the *complete* human being. Now, no man or woman, unless he be an initiate of the ' fifth circle ', can leave the precincts of *Bod-Las* and return back into the world in his integral whole—if I may use the expression, *One*, at least of his seven satelites has to remain behind for two reasons : the first to form the necessary connecting link, the wire transmission—the second as the safest warranter that certain things will never be divulged. She is no exception to the rule, and you have seen another exemplar—a highly intellectual man—who had to leave one of his skins behind ; hence is considered highly eccentric. The bearing and status of the remaining *six* depend upon the inherent qualities, the psycho-physiological peculiarities of the person, especially upon the idiosyncracies transmitted by what modern science calls ' atavism '. Acting in accordance with my wishes, my brother M. made to you through her a certain offer, if you remember. You had but to accept it, and at any time you liked, you would have had for an hour or more, the real *baitchooly* to converse with, instead of the psychological cripple you generally have to deal with now."

Here then we have not merely the ordinary distinction in a normal personality between the lower and the higher Self, but we have the disclosure of a profound occult fact in the case of H. P. Blavatsky, and also of that of another person whose identity is not disclosed. This fact throws a vivid light on much in H. P. B.'s case which would otherwise be inexplicable. Her outer personality is continually referred to by both K. H. and M. in such terms as the following :—

" An enfeebled female body in which, as we might say, a vital cyclone is raging much of the time " (p. 9). " She is but a ' shell'

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at times, and I often careless in watching her" (p. 256). "The poor, worn out mortality we know as the 'Old Lady'" (p. 285). "My poor old chela" (p. 217). "She is a woman though she be an *Upasika* (female disciple) and except on occult matters can hardly hold her tongue" (p. 237). "Oh, the poor, trusting, credulous nature! Take away from her her clairvoyant powers; plug up in a certain direction her intuitions—as in duty bound was done by M.—and what remains? A helpless, broken-hearted *woman*"! (p. 315). "The ricketty old body becomes sometimes positively dangerous" (p. 368). "Try to believe more than you do in 'the old lady'. She *does* rave betimes; but she *is* truthful, and does the best she can for you" (p. 443). "Ill health resulting from natural causes, and mental anxiety have made her nervous to an extreme degree, and sadly impared her usefulness to us" (p. 444).

Alas! it has been mainly by these outward and visible characteristics that H. P. B. has been judged: by many of her so-called friends as well as by her enemies. Sinnett is warned over and over again against such a superficial judgment.[1]

It is very important to bear in mind that H. P. B. had not merely—as each one of us has—to fight the battle between the lower and the higher Self, but that she, being a *chela*, had special temptations and trials, quite apart from the onerous nature of the mission entrusted to her. We must also remember that that mission was entrusted to her and H. S. Olcott on the condition that they were to work independently of the personal management of the Masters, from whom there would be "no abnormal interference". (p. 263).

In a most important letter to A. P. Sinnett, dated October, 1882, the whole of which need not be quoted here, Mahatma K. H. gives us a vivid insight into some of the conditions of chelaship which were applicable to H. P. B. and her mission. After referring to a mass of misconceptions and misrepresentations by her enemies, he continues (p. 309):—

"You will perhaps enquire, why *we* have not interfered? Why *we*, the natural protectors of the Founders, if not of the Society, have not put a stop to the shameful conspiracies? A pertinent question; only I doubt whether my answer with all its sincerity will be clearly understood. You are thoroughly unacquainted with our system, and could I succeed in making it clear to you, ten to one your 'better feelings'—the feelings of a European—would be ruffled, if not worse, with such a 'shocking' discipline. The fact is, that to the last and

[1] Those who profess to think that Mme. Blavatsky wrote all these *Mahatma Letters* 'out of her own head', would do well to look out all the references to her contained in them, and then ask themselves whether she could possibly have written about herself in such terms.

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supreme initiation every chela—(and even some adepts)—is left to his own device and counsel. We have to fight our own battles, and the familiar adage—the adept *becomes*, he is not *made*—is true to the letter. Since every one of us is the *creator* and producer of the *causes* that lead to such or some other *results*, we have to reap but what we have sown. *Our chelas are helped but when they are innocent of the causes that lead them into trouble*; when such causes are generated by foreign outside influences. Life and the struggle for adeptship would be too easy, had we all scavengers behind us to sweep away the *effects* we have generated through our own rashness and presumption. Before they are allowed to go into the world they—the chelas—are every one of them endowed with more or less clairvoyant powers; and, with the exception of that faculty that, unless paralyzed and watched would lead them perchance to divulge certain secrets that must not be revealed—they are left in the full exercise of their powers—whatever these may be:—why don't they exercise them? Thus, step by step, and after a series of punishments, is the chela taught by bitter experience to suppress and guide his impulses; he loses his rashness, his self sufficiency, and never falls into the same errors. All that now happens is brought on by H. P. B. herself; and to you, my friend and brother, I will reveal her shortcomings. . . . Know then, that if she ever became guilty of real, *deliberate deception*, owing to that 'zeal', it was when in the presence of phenomena produced, she kept constantly denying—except in the matter of such trifles as bells and raps—that she had anything to do with their production *personally*. From your 'European standpoint' it is downright deception, a big thundering *lie*; from our *Asiatic* standpoint, though an imprudent, blamable zeal, an untruthful exaggeration, or what a Yankee would call 'a blazing cook-a-hoop', meant for the benefit of the 'Brothers',—yet withall, if we look into the motive—a sublime self-denying, noble and meritorious—not *dishonest*—zeal. Yes; in that, and in that alone, she became constantly guilty of *deceiving* her friends. She could never be made to realize the utter uselessness the danger of such a zeal; and how mistaken she was in her notions that she was adding to our glory, whereas, by attributing to us very often phenomena of the most childish nature, she but lowered us in the public estimation, and sanctioned the claims of her enemies that she was 'but a medium'! But it was of no use. In accordance with our rules, M. was not permitted to forbid her such a course, in so many words. She had to be allowed full and entire freedom of action, the liberty of *creating causes* that became in due course of time her scourge, her public pillory. He could at best forbid her producing phenomena, and to this last extremity he resorted as often as he could, to her friends and theosophists great dissatisfaction. Was, or rather is, it lack of intellectual perceptions in her? Certainly not. It is a psychological disease, over which she has little if any control at all. Her impulsive nature . . . is always ready to carry her beyond the

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boundaries of truth, into the regions of exaggeration; nevertheless without a shadow of suspicion that she is thereby deceiving her friends, or abusing of their great trust in her. The stereotyped phrase: 'It is *not I*; I can do nothing by myself . . . it is all they—the Brothers . . . I am but their humble and devoted slave and instrument'—is a downright *fib*. She can and did produce phenomena, owing to her natural powers combined with several long years of regular training, and her phenomena are sometimes better, more wonderful and far more perfect than those of some high, initiated chelas, whom she surpasses in artistic taste and purely Western appreciation of art—as for instance in the instantaneous production of pictures; witness—her portrait of the 'fakir' Tiravalla mentioned in *Hints*,[1] and compared with my portrait by Djual Khool. Notwithstanding all the superiority of his powers, as compared with hers; his youth as contrasted with her old age; and the undeniable and important advantage he possesses of having never brought his pure unalloyed magnetism in direct contact with the great impurity of your world and society—yet do what he may, he will never be able to produce *such* a picture, simply because he is unable to conceive it in his mind and Tibetan thought. Thus while fathering upon us all manner of foolish, often clumsy and *suspected* phenomena, she has most undeniably been *helping* us in many instances: saving us sometimes as much as two-thirds of the power used, and when remonstrated—for often we are unable to prevent her doing it on her end of the line—answering that she had no need of it, and that her only joy was to be of some use to us. And thus she kept on killing herself inch by inch, ready to give—for our benefit and glory, as she thought—her life-blood drop by drop, and yet invariably denying before witnesses that she had anything to do with it. Would you call this sublime, albeit foolish self-abnegation—'dishonest'? We do not; nor shall we ever consent to regard it in such a light. . . . Such is the true history, the *facts* with regard to her 'deceptions', or, at best—'*dishonest* zeal' No doubt she has merited a portion of the blame; most undeniably she is given to exaggeration in general, and when it becomes a question of 'puffing up' those she is devoted to, her enthusiasm knows no limits. Thus she has made of M. an Apollo of Belvedere, the glowing description of whose physical beauty, made him more than once start in anger, and break his pipe while swearing like a true—Christian; and thus, under her eloquent phraseology, I, myself had the pleasure of hearing myself metamorphosed into an 'angel of purity and light'—shorn of his wings. We cannot help feeling at times angry, with, oftener—laughing at, her. Yet the feeling that dictates all this ridiculous effusion, is too ardent, too sincere and true, not to be respected or even treated with indifference. I do not believe that I

[1] *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy* No. I, p. 116. For a reproduction of this portrait, and an account of its production, see Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 368.

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was ever so profoundly touched by anything I witnessed in all my life, as I was with the poor old creature's ecstatic rapture when meeting us recently both in our natural bodies, one—after three years, the other—nearly two years absence and separation in flesh. Even our phlegmatic M. was thrown off his balance, by such an exhibition—of which he was chief hero. He had to use his *power*, and plunge her into a profound sleep, otherwise she would have burst some blood-vessel including kidneys, liver and her ' interiors '—to use our friend Oxley's favourite expression—in her delirious attempts to flatten her nose against his riding mantle besmeared with Sikkim mud! We both laughed; yet could we feel otherwise but touched? Of course, she is utterly unfit for a *true adept*; her nature is too passionately affectionate, and we have no right to indulge in *personal* attachments and feelings. You can never know her as we do, therefore—none of you will ever be able to judge her impartially or correctly. You see the surface of things; and what you would term ' virtue ', holding but to appearances, we—judge but after having fathomed the object to its profoundest depths, and generally leave the appearances to take care of themselves. In your opinion H. P. B. is, at best for those who like her despite herself—a quaint, strange woman, a psychological riddle: impulsive and kindhearted, yet not free from the vice of untruth. We, on the other hand, under the garb of eccentricity and folly—we find a profounder wisdom in her *inner* Self than you will ever find yourselves able to perceive. In the superficial details of her homely, hard-working commonplace daily life and affairs, you discern but unpracticality, womanly impulses, often absurdity and folly; we, on the contrary, light daily upon traits of her inner nature the most delicate and refined, and which would cost an uninitiated psychologist years of constant and keen observation, and many an hour of close analysis and efforts to draw out of the depth of that most subtle of mysteries—human mind—and one of her most complicated machines—H. P. B.'s mind—and thus learn to know her true *inner* Self. . . . However crazy an enthusiast, I pledge to you my word of honour, she was never a *deceiver*; nor has she ever wilfully uttered an untruth, though her position often becomes untenable, and that she has to conceal a number of things, as pledged to by her solemn vows. And now I have done with the question."

On page 272 we find Mahatma M. saying :—

" The Old Woman is accused of *untruthfulness*, *inaccuracy* in her statements. ' Ask no questions and you will receive *no lies* '. She is *forbidden* to say what she knows. You may cut her to pieces and she will not tell. Nay—she is ordered in *cases of need* to *mislead* people; and, were she more of a natural born *liar*—she might be happier and won her day long since by this time. But that's just where the shoe pinches, Sahib. She is *too truthful*, *too outspoken*, *too incapable* of *dissimulation*: and now she is being daily crucified for it."

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This frank criticism and analysis of H. P. B.'s characteristics and *motives*, coming from such a source, ought surely to silence the superficial critics and detractors who, even now, seek to disparage her work by personal attacks. It is the message she delivered, and neither the manner of its delivery nor her admittedly " strong personal defects " that is the essential thing, and that has laid hold of the hearts and minds of so many thousands. The philosophy is there—*The Secret Doctrine, The Key to Theosophy, The Voice of the Silence*—and the PATH to " the Heart of the Universe ", to the inner secrets of Nature and the powers latent in Man. These, as she taught them, are legitimate subjects for examination and criticism ; and no amount of vulgar abuse of the devoted woman who spent her very life's blood in giving them to the world can in any way touch their intrinsic value. There is doubtless much that is open to criticism in the works I have named ; much that from a superficial point of view can be considered to be defective, superfluous, and even erroneous. Well, we admit that criticism in these directions is legitimate, though in most cases it will be found to be the limitations and prejudices of the critic which are disclosed rather than the defects of the doctrine itself.

The two Co-Founders of the Theosophical Movement—" given clearly to understand that the issue lay entirely with themselves " —made many mistakes. Perhaps the two greatest of these were, in the first place, the way in which they presented to the world the nature and powers of the Mahatmas ; and, in the second place, the use made of H. P. B.'s phenomenal powers.

Writing to Sinnett in 1882, Mahatma K. H. says (p. 323) :—

" The original policy of the T. S. [Brotherhood] must be vindicated, if you would not see it fall into ruin and bury your reputations under it. I have told you long ago. For years to come the Society will be unable to stand, when based upon ' Tibetan Brothers ' and phenomena alone. All this ought to have been limited *to an inner* and very SECRET circle. There is a hero-worshipping tendency clearly showing itself, and you, my friend, are not quite free from it yourself. . . . I am far from being perfect hence infallible in all I do ; tho' it is not quite as you imagine having now discovered. For you know—or think you know, of *one* K. H.—and can know but of one, whereas there are two distinct personages answering to that name in *him* you know. The riddle is only apparent and easy to solve, were you only to know what a real *Mahatma* is. You have seen by the Kiddle incident—perchance allowed to develop to its bitter end for a purpose—that even an ' adept ' when acting in his body is not beyond mistakes due to human carelessness."

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In another letter (p. 288) he says :—" When will any of you know and understand what we *really* are instead of indulging in a world of fiction."

It was this " hero-worshipping tendency " and " a world of fiction " with which Sinnett and others invested the Mahatmas in the first instance, that did so much harm to the cause of Theosophy. With this present volume of *Letters* before us, however, we are able to appreciate much that was obscure in the early days of the movement ; much that throws a vivid light on the *personalities* who figured prominently in those days, including, and more particularly, H. P. B. herself ; and much that clears up many of the misunderstandings which prevailed in the matter of the " Brothers ". We gain here, indeed, at last, as in an open book, an insight into the whole question as to the existence and nature of that Occult Knowledge which tradition has always assigned to a Hierarchy of Initiates as its Custodians ; and we gain also to a considerable extent an insight into the methods of at least one Branch of that Hierarchy, the Trans-Himalayan Branch. It is admitted that many of the methods of training and testing candidates or *Chelas* desirous of entering into this Occult World through this Branch are to a considerable extent such as would be obnoxious to our Western ideas ; but at the same time the general principles which prevail in order to ensure that the knowledge shall not be imparted to those who would use it for selfish ends, is such as must necessarily commend itself to our judgment.

There may be some who, even to-day, would contend that H. P. Blavatsky " invented the Mahatmas ", and wrote all these *Letters* herself. But the internal evidence of the Letters themselves is overwhelmingly against any such contention. Even the few extracts which I have given will, I think, serve to show this, while the Letters as a whole could not possibly have been the product of H. P. B.'s brain and hand : though it is admitted that she was the telepathic amanuensis of some, but by no means all, of them. There is a very great deal in some of the Letters explaining the method of this transmission ; but as I am not in any way concerned with the conversion of the sceptics, and the matter is really a side issue, I will not deal with it here.

As regards the phenomena which Madame Blavatsky exhibited, we must here again acknowledge that much of it was a mistake, and would have been better left undone. At the same time we must recognise—as already stated in one of the letters I have just quoted (p. 90)—that it was H. P. B.'s excess

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of zeal which was the *motive*; and also that the importunities of A. P. Sinnett and others were the immediate reasons why the phenomena were shown at all, and that it was Sinnett—in his book *The Occult World*—who was responsible for making them publically known.[1] Sinnett was out for phenomena and not for philosophy—phenomena, and still more phenomena. Over and over again he is rebuked for this. Thus M. says (p. 262) :—

"Also try to break thro' that great *maya* against which occult students, the world over, have always been warned by their teachers—the hankering after phenomena. Like the thirst for drink and opium, it grows with gratification. The Spiritualists are drunken with it; they are thaumaturgic sots. If you cannot be happy without phenomena, you will never learn our philosophy. If you want healthy, philosophic thought, and can be satisfied with such—let us correspond. I tell you a profound truth in saying that if you but choose wisdom all other things will be added unto it—in time. It adds no force to our metaphysical truths that our letters are dropped from space on to your lap or come under your pillow. If our philosophy is wrong a *wonder* will not set it right. Put that conviction into your consciousness and let us talk like sensible men. Why should we play with Jack-in-the-box; are not *our* beards grown?"

But Sinnett never did put that into his consciousness. In another Letter, dated October, 1884, (p. 368), he is told that his demands on the powers of H. P. B. for phenomena—including the transmission of letters—with which in her good nature and zeal she has complied, has virtually killed her.

"Remember what I said to you some two years ago, 'were H. P. B. to die before we found a substitute,' the powers through which we work in our communications with the outside world may permit the transmission of two or three letters more, then it would die out and you would have no more letters from me. Well—she is virtually dead; and it is yourself—pardon me this one more truth—who have killed the rude but faithful agent, one moreover who was really devoted to you personally. I have done my best to stop the evil, but I have neither jurisdiction or control over her. . . . Verily *our* ways are not *your* ways, hence there remains but little hope for us in the West."

Further on in the same letter (p. 370) he refers to the "deplorable state" of the Branches of the Theosophical Society, and to H. S. Olcott and H. P. B. in the following words :—

"With the London Lodge and most of the other Western Branches of the T. S. in a deplorable state, philosophy may be invoked to restrain one's impatience, but the chief thing called for at present, is

[1] In a letter to Sinnett (p. 364) Mahatma K. H. blames him for publishing *The Occult World* before sending it to him, K. H., for revision.

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some practical scheme for dealing with the situation. Some, most unjustly, try to make H. S. O. and H. P. B. solely responsible for the state of things. Those two are, say, far from perfect—in some respects quite the opposite. But they have that in them (pardon the eternal repetition but it is being as constantly overlooked) which we have but but too rarely found elsewhere—UNSELFISHNESS and an eager readiness for self-sacrifice for the good of others; what a 'multitude of sins' does not this cover!"

As far back as February, 1882, we find Mahatma M. writing to Sinnett as follows (p. 251):—

'We claim to know more of the secret cause of events than you men of the world do. I say then that it is the villification and abuse of the Founders, the general misconception of the aims and objects of the Society that paralyses its progress—nothing else. There's no want of definitiveness in these objects were they but properly explained. The members would have plenty to do were they to pursue reality with half the fervour they do *mirage*. I am sorry to find you comparing Theosophy to a painted house on the stage, whereas in the hands of true philanthrophists and theosophists it might become as strong as an impregnable fort. The situation is this: men who join the Society with the one selfish object of reaching power, making occult science their only or even chief aim, may as well not join it—they are doomed to disappointment as much as those who commit the mistake of letting them believe that the Society is nothing else. It is just because they preach too much 'the Brothers' and too little if at all *Brotherhood* that they fail. How many times had we to repeat, that he who joins the Society with the sole object of coming in contact with us, and if not of acquiring at least of assuring himself of the reality of such powers and of our objective existence—was pursuing a mirage? I say again then. It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood who is entitled to the possession of our secrets. He alone, such a man—will never misuse his powers, as there will be no fear that he should turn them to selfish ends. A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our *chela*—he is not worthy of becoming higher in knowledge than his neighbour. If he craves for phenomena let him be satisfied with the pranks of Spiritualism. Such is the real state of things. There was a time, when from sea to sea, from the mountains and deserts of the north to the grand woods and downs of Ceylon, there was but one faith, one rallying cry—to save humanity from the miseries of ignorance in the name of Him who taught first the solidarity of all men. How is it now? Where is the grandure of our people and of the one Truth? These, you may say, are beautiful visions which were once realities on earth, but had flitted away like the light of a summer's evening. Yes; and now we are in the midst of a conflicting people,

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of an obstinate, ignorant people seeking to know the truth yet not able to find it, for each seeks it only for his own private benefit and gratification, without giving one thought to others. Will you, or rather they, never see the true meaning and explanation of that great wreck and desolation which has come to our land, and threatens all lands—yours first of all? It is *selfishness* and *exclusiveness* that killed ours, and it is selfishness and exclusiveness that will kill yours—which has in addition some other defects which I will not name. The world has clouded the light of true knowledge, and *selfishness* will not allow its resurrection, for it excludes and will not recognise the whole fellowship of all those who were born under the same immutable natural law."

Such is the Master's statement as to what constitutes THEOSOPHY. It is fundamentally a spiritual quality of life which expresses itself in a realisation of the BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY on the basis of a common origin for all races, nations and peoples; and an active endeavour to promote "a regenerating practical Brotherhood" in this age in which a selfish and exclusive individualism lies at the root of all the evil which has "clouded the light of true knowledge."

That H. P. Blavatsky had this fundamental principle ever in view is apparent all through her teachings; and with all her 'faults', those who knew her personally, and were able to recognise what lay beneath her superficial characteristics, those who were able to recognise the Great Heart of the woman, knew that she did have that great quality of *unselfishness*, and "an eager readiness for self-sacrifice" which we have seen attributed to her by the Mahatma.

Most childlike, and even childish, in many worldly matters, and with a simple ingenuousness that was always ready to see the best in everyone, and to accept their professions of friendship and devotion to the Cause in all sincerity, she was only too easily led in many instances into situations which were extremely detrimental to her mission as well as to her own reputation. These caused her great mental sufferings; not on her own account, but because of the injury to the Cause, and the reflections and abuse which was brought upon the Masters whom she so much revered. We shall find this expressed over and over again in her own Letters.

And so now, having abstracted so much from the Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett which throws a vivid light upon both her outer and her inner nature; let us turn to her own Letters, and see what she has to say about herself in these matters.

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CHAPTER VII

THE REAL H. P. BLAVATSKY (*Continued*)

THE Volume of Letters from H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett was first published in 1925, four years after Mr. Sinnett's death, and is edited by Mr. A. T. Barker who also Edited *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, from which I have already quoted so freely in the previous Chapter.

Mme. Blavatsky's Letters cover a period from 1880, when she was in India, to 1888, when she was finally settled in London. They are an invaluable disclosure of the inner soul of the woman, as well as of her outer personality, and—shall we say?—" faults ". They are an invaluable disclosure also of the indomitable will with which she struggled on day after day and year after year to carry out the work assigned to her by the Eastern Lodge of Masters, and by her own Master M. in particular, under difficulties which—as the Master says in a quotation I have already given (p. 26) " would have driven off anyone not working with the desperation of one who stakes a life and all he prizes on some desperate supreme effort."

Those who have accused H. P. Blavatsky of " inventing " the Mahatmas must have very little perception if they can read these Letters of hers to Mr. Sinnett and still maintain the view that these Adepts were the figment of her own brain. Apart from the fact that there are numerous other independent witnesses to their existence, the whole of her life and effort is absolutely meaningless without this fundamental fact. Moreover, these present Letters taken in conjunction with *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* contain so many cross-references to incidents and events verified from other sources, that the more one studies and collates them the more one is struck with the fact that it was a sheer impossibility for the same person to have written both series of Letters. However, as I have said before, the aim of the present work is not to convince sceptics, but to disclose as far as may be possible the real inner self and motives of this extraordinary woman.

One of the most remarkable things in connection with her mission is the way in which she was kept alive long after she should, physically speaking, have died. Her London doctor, Dr. Z. Mennell, told the present writer that he did not know how she was kept alive with the complication of diseases from

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which she suffered, the most serious being perhaps Bright's disease. He said that there were certainly some occult influences behind it. That was in 1889; but as far back as 1880 matters were almost if not quite as bad with her. Thus in one of her earliest letters to Mr. Sinnett, dated November 2nd 1880, she says (p. 6):—

"I am afraid I begin a task above my strength. But if I do not yet peg out I am determined to fight my way through and never leave one chance to my enemies to bother me. . . . The doctor (Laurie) won't permit me to start to-morrow. He advises me though to change locality. Strong nervous disease, fever, and etc. he says. Oh I have enough of this old carcase!"

At the end of this letter there is a comment in Mahatma K. H.'s handwriting, apparently precipitated, and signed by him in full, as follows:—

"Spirit is strong but flesh is weak; so weak sometimes that it even overpowers the strong spirit 'which knows all truth.' And now, having almost shaken off its control this poor body raves. Since even *I* am not above suspicion in her sight, you can hardly be too indulgent or use too many precautions until this dangerous nervous crisis is passed. It was brought on by a series of unmerited insults (which of course such men as you and Col. Olcott would not have even noticed but which none the less put her to the torture) and can be cured only by rest and peace of mind. If you are ever to learn any lesson about man's duality and the possibility through occult science of awakening from its dormant state to an independent existence the invisible but real *I am*, seize this chance. Observe and learn. It is cases like this which puzzle the biologist and physiologist. But as soon as one learns this duality all becomes as clear as day. I am sorry to say I can now only act thro' her upon very rare occasions and under the greatest precautions. Mr. Hume's letter to her, a letter full of suspicion and benevolent insult—proved the 'one drop too much.' Her Punjab fever—once the typhoid symptom removed—is no worse in itself than many a European has passed through; while I may tell you now that the crisis is over—her reason as well as her life were in peril on Saturday night."

In the very next letter (p. 8) she says:—

"I feel I am dying. Now are *you* satisfied? The heat and this working 26 hours out of the 24 is killing me. My head swims, my sight is becoming dim and I am sure I will drop some day on my writing and be a corpse before the T. S. can say *boo*. Well I don't care. And why the deuce should I? Nothing left for me here; then better become a spook at once and come back to pinch my enemies noses."

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There is a considerable gap in the correspondence with Mr. Sinnett from about the end of 1880 to nearly the middle of 1882. It is probable that he had many letters from H. P. B. during this period, but they do not appear in the published Volume. H. P. B. herself was at Bombay, at the Headquarters of the Society, and principally occupied in editing *The Theosophist*, whilst Col. Olcott was away most of the year in Ceylon, working in the cause of Buddhism, and only returned to Bombay in December, 1881.

A very severe crisis occurred in the year 1882, in the health of Mme. Blavatsky. On September 19th she writes (p. 37) :—

" I am afraid you will soon have to bid me goodbye—whether to Heaven or Hell—*connais pas*. This time I have it well and good—Bright's disease of the kidneys ; and the whole blood turned into water with ulcers breaking out in the most unexpected and the less explored spots, blood or whatever it may be forming into bags à la *Kangaroo* and other pretty extras and *et ceteras*. This all *primo* brought by Bombay dampness and heat, and *secundo* by fretting and bothering. I have become so stupidly nervous that the unexpected tread of Babula's naked foot near me makes me start with the most violent palpitations of the heart. Dudley says—*I forced him to tell me this*—that I can last a year or two, and perhaps but a few days, for I can kick the bucket at any time in consequence of *an emotion*. Ye lords of creation ! Of such emotions I have twenty a day—how can I last then ? In December or January we shift our Headquarters to Madras and so how can I come to Allahabad !

" Boss wants me to prepare and go somewhere for a month or so toward end of September. He sent a chela here, Gargya Deva from Nilgerri Hills, and he is to take me off, where I don't know, but of course somewhere in the Himalayas. Boss is fearfully mad with Hume. He says he has spoilt all his work (! ?) But really—miserable as I was and shocked over his stupid and ' bumptious ' (as you say) letter, I was sick for weeks before, and so it is not Hume who did all the mischief, but M. is nevertheless black as night over him.[1] Ah well, it is my poor old aunt that I pity the most and—poor Olcott, what will he do without me ! Well I can hardly write I am really too weak. Yesterday they drove me down to the Fort to the doctor—I got up *with both my ears swollen thrice their natural size !* . . . I tell you I am very very sick. Yes, I wish I could see you once more, and dear Mrs. Gordon and my old Colonel whose ' Grandmother ' I may meet in some of the lower hells whither I will go—unless I am picked up by *Them* and made to stick in Tibet.

" Well good bye all ; and when I am gone—if I go before seeing you—do not think of me too much as an ' imposter '—for I swear I

[1] See M's letter, *infra*, p. 107.

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told you *the truth*, however much I have concealed of it from you. I hope Mrs. Gordon will not dishonour by *evoking* me with some medium. Let her rest assured that it will never be my spirit nor anything of me—not even *my shell*, since this is gone long ago."

She and Col. Olcott always declared that neither of them would ever communicate through a medium in the seance room after they had passed over. Notwithstanding this, there have been several publications of messages purporting to come from " Mme. Blavatsky ", and these should certainly be received with the greatest possible suspicion as to their authenticity.

The journey which she mentions in this letter as being in prospect was made by her in October. Col. Olcott refers to it briefly in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 391, by saying :— " H. P. B. was away at Darjeeling with some of our members, having meetings in the flesh with two of our Masters." She herself refers to this visit in writing to Mr. Sinnett from Darjeeling on the 9th October as follows (p. 38) :—

" How did you know I was here ? You seem to be surrounded by very gossiping friends. Well now that there is no more danger from your *blessed* Government and its officials, I was going to write to you myself and explain the motive for the *secrecy* ' which is so very *repulsive* generally to your European feelings.' The fact is that had I not left Bombay in the greatest secrecy—even some Theosophists who visit us believing me at home but busy and invisible as usual—had I not gone *incognito* so to say till I reached the hills and turned off the railway to enter Sikkim, I would *have never been allowed to enter it* unmolested, and would not have seen M. and K. H. in their *bodies* both. Lord, I would have been dead by this time. Oh the blessed blessed two days ! It was like the old times when the bear paid me a visit. The same kind of wooden hut, a box divided into three compartments for rooms, and standing in a jungle on four pelican's legs ; the same yellow chelas gliding noiselessly ; the same eternal ' gul-gul-gul ' sound of my Boss's inextinguishable chelum pipe ; the old familiar sweet voice of your K. H. (whose voice is still sweeter and face still thinner and more transparent) the same *entourage* for furniture—skins, and yak-tail stuffed pillows, and dishes for salt tea, etc. Well, when I went to Darjeeling, sent away by them—' out of reach of the chelas, who might fall in love with my beauty ' said my polite boss—on the following day already I received the note I enclose from the Deputy Commissioner warning me *not* to go to Tibet ! ! He locked the stable door after the horse had been already out. Very luckily ; because when the infernal six or seven babus who stuck to me like parasites went to ask passes for Sikkim they were refused point blank, and the Theos. Society abused and jeered at. But I had my revenge.

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I wrote to the Deputy Commissioner and told him that I had permission from Government—the fact of Government not answering for my safety being of little importance since I would be safer in Tibet than in London ; that after all I *did* go twenty or thirty miles beyond Sikkim territory, and remained there two days and *nothing happened* bad to me, and there I was. Several ladies and gentlemen anxious to see 'the remarkable woman', pester me to death with their visits, but I have refused persistently to see any of them. Let them be offended. What the d—— do *I* care. *I won't see anyone.* I came here for our Brothers and Chelas and the rest may go and be hanged. Thanks for your offer. I do mean to pay you a visit, but I cannot leave Darjeeling until [? while] my Boss is hovering near by. He goes away in a week or ten days and then I will leave D. and if you permit me to wait for you at your house I will do so with real pleasure. But I cannot be there much before the 20th, so if you write to tell them it will be all right.

"I have received via Bombay a long article by Mr. Hume. The most impudent and insulting I ever read. If he thinks I will print it, he may whistle for it. I will send it to you to-morrow with my letter for him as Boss advises me to do. If you find my letter good, send it to him, and the article *keep please* and return to me when you see me. I am very weak and must stop. Boss gives you his love—I saw him last night at the Lama's house."

H. P. B. returned from this visit "*mended*, if not thoroughly at least for some time to come", as K. H. says in one of his letters to Sinnett.

I have already referred to the enormous strain on H. P. B.'s constitution which was entailed in the production of the phenomena so constantly demanded of her by A. P. Sinnett and others : so much so that Sinnett was told bluntly that he had virtually killed her.[1]

It was not merely in psychic matters that Sinnett was such a drain on her vitality, but, also—though he always remained staunch in his adherence to the Masters—he was a continual distraction and anxiety because of his endeavour to force a policy in the Theosophical Society which would have made it a mere psychic phenomena affair, and very far from being the spiritual movement which was intended by the 'Brothers'. I have already quoted from letters from them showing how far he was from comprehending their motives and intentions that the Society should be the real example of a Universal Brotherhood.

On June 20th, 1882, we find H. P. B. writing to Sinnett as follows (p. 18) :—

[1] See *supra*, p. 95.

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"But it is something else that troubles me on *your* account, and this is a twofold matter. 1st your obstinate, determined plan of taking the public in general and the Anglo-Indians in particular into the confidence of every phenomenon that takes place; and 2nd, your entirely mistaken position, and pre-eminently antagonistic attitude towards those *who rule the destinies as yet* of *both K. H. and M.*

"Maybe I am now speaking *under inspiration* and you better not pooh-pooh my advice. First then, and concerning the first question: I most *decidedly, emphatically* and *uncompromisingly* kick against your eternal desire to do everything I do (in the way of stupid phenomena) with an eye to public enlightenment upon the subject. I DO NOT CARE ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION. I despise thoroughly and with all my heart Mrs. Grundy, and do not care a snap of my finger whether the Wm. Beresfords and the Hon. 'What d'ye call them' think well or bad of me as regards the phenomena produced. I refuse to proselytise them at the expense of the little self-respect and dignity that my duty to *those beyond*, and to the Cause have left in me. I rather not convert them, wherever the Brothers' names are mixed up with a phenomenon. Their names have been sufficiently dragged in the mud; they have been misused and blasphemed against by all the penny-a-liners of India. Nowadays people call their dogs and cats by the name of 'Koot-hoomi', and 'the dear old lady' has become with the 'Himalayan Brothers' a household caricature. Now, neither 'the dear old lady' *per se*, nor K. H. and M.—less than all THEY (the Chohans)—care about this mocking fiendishness; but we have others behind our backs who, on a general principle, would rather not allow names connected with the great Brotherhood to be besmeared in the eyes of the *native multitudes* (about the *Pelings* they do not care in the least). For over two years we fight, you and I, for this question; you have always insisted that without *the Brothers* there was no salvation for the T. S., that to take out their names from the concern was like throwing out the part of the Prince of Denmark from *Hamlet* and—you were wrong. You may insist till doomsday that you were and are right, I will always dispute the point, for I know what I am talking about, and I know my actors behind the scenery, while *you do not*. Therefore, whenever I can avoid giving the public a bone to pick over my and the *Brothers'* ! heads, I will do so. . . .

"You know I love and respect you above all other Englishmen in India. I love you personally for what you have done for me, and I respect you for your firm, fearless and independent attitude in fighting for the Brothers and the Society. But there is that unreasonable, most dangerous feature in you which is liable some day to *ruin all* irretrievably, and that is that *thirst* of throwing that which is holy to the dogs and scatter pearls before swine, and the utterly fatal idea, that you can ever bring the CHIEFS—beyond—to your way of thinking and writing. Hundreds of times have I told you, and even K. H. has hinted at that in his letters to you, that, notwithstanding all his

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personal regard for you, at the first motion of the Chohan's finger he would vanish out of your reach for ever and ever: *you would never hear of him so long as you lived.* How mistaken is your notion that there can be no Theos. Society without showing the Brothers 'like a red rag before a bull's face' as *they* express it—will be proved to you in the forthcoming *Supplement* of the *Theosophist.* If its contents will not show to you the real practical good the Society is doing—every *Brother put aside*—for the Natives, (and remember, this is the *main* object of K. H. and M.) then nothing will.

"No. 2. 'All this testing and probation business' . . . Well, suppose it *is* 'so repulsive to the straightforward European natures' (you might, perhaps, not identify so thoroughly *all* European natures with *your* nature, and thus be nearer the truth) suppose *it is*, can you help it? And do K. H.'s and M.'s *chiefs* care for you or even *my* kicking? Is it they who ever tried to fight *their* way to *you*, or is it you who went after them? Did they ever encourage you or anyone else? Did they ever show the slightest favour even to Olcott—their humble, submissive, patient, never murmuring slave? It is a '*to be*, or *not* to be'—for you. You have either to accept them *as they are* or else—leave them. It is (as) though you lectured the peak of Mount Everest, for its coldness and ruggedness. Such ideas and complaints as expressed in your letter to me will not shorten the distance between you and K. H. but rather widen the gulf. You *are* 'surrounded by meshes of tests and probations wrapped in invisible threads'—you may bet your life on it. Well, why don't you make an effort and disentangle yourself by a supreme effort? Break them, *it is very easy*—only with hem you will break the thread that connects you with K. H. that's all. It is not at *his hands* that you have to submit to the 'loathsome' horror of being (*not*) probably (but for *a certainty*) on probation, for he himself may be said to be on *probation*—only a far higher and far more difficult one. The CHIEFS do not make any difference during the first years between 'Englishmen of the better sort' and any other Englishman or native. In fact their hearts are rather for the natives. They fear and mistrust (as a nation) the English nation, and in their eyes a Russian, a Frenchman an Englishman, or any other son of Christendom and civilisation is an object to be hardly, if ever trusted. And do you know who it is, who at the present moment is set the *deadliest* against you English theosophists among the *Shaberons*? An Englishman, my dear Boss, a countryman of yours, a victim of your British laws and Mrs. Grundy; one who was once upon a time some forty years ago, a highly educated Squire, rich, and a Chief Justice in his county, a Greek and Latin scholar. So much permits me to say to you, and he is at my elbow—and who now is the deadliest enemy of civilisation and Christo*star* as he calls Europe. It is *he* and not the Tibetan

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or Hindu born Shaberons who mistrusts the rulers of the 'Eclectic T. S.', and that's all I am allowed to tell you.

" 'And now choose ye, this day, oh sons of Israel' whether you will worship the gods of your fathers or the new god found by you in the Wilderness.

" And to think that you have chosen for your unjust recriminations against their rules and statutes and their time honoured policy just the time when poor K. H. is negotiating as hard as he can, permission to help the Eclectic in Mr. Hume's and your persons, and that of having Eglinton to *furnish power* without expending their own! A nice diplomat you, my Boss. Then go and complain if you have the conscience to do so, when we receive instead of consent—REFUSAL. I wonder only, how it is possible that a man of your intellectual calibre should be unable to judge fairly and impartially of the situation. Is it *they* or *you* who want them? Is it you or they who cares for further intercourse? They may be, and, I have no doubt are quite alive to the good you can do the Eclectic and the Theosoph. Society proper. But you ought to know by this time that you will ever be *useless* to *them* personally, to their Fraternity. That you are not of the stuff they make the *chelas* with, and that, if you are allowed even a correspondence with K. H. it is absolutely out of regard *for him*, the best, the most promising of their candidates for Buddhaship, or rather Boddhisâtwaship; and that you make his work far more difficult, and even endanger his personal position by such a contemptuous criticism upon *their* actions.[1] But you are a true Englishman; and as you would treat a Burmah *politically*, imposing on it your will and interference, so you think you can treat *occult Tibet*—by interfering with its psychological internal policy. Well, you are arrogant and conceited as a nation, I must say, if you, one of the best of its sons do not seem to realise the utter uselessness of what you do, and to instinctively so to say, seek to bring to bear *even upon the Tibetan Adepts* the weight of your universal interference! I hope you will forgive me the rudeness of my remarks—*if* rudeness there is, which I hope not—for I speak with a view to your own good, and fearing lest you should throw new difficulties in the way of your connection with K. H. and *my* 'Boss'."

But Sinnett was not the worst sinner in respect of harassing H. P. B. nigh unto death. There were many others who, while professing to be friends were in reality treacherous foes. Thus we find her writing to Mrs. Sinnett under date July 23rd, 1885 (p. 104):—

" My dearest Mrs. Sinnett—*my heart is broken*—physically and *morally*. For the first I do not care; Master shall take care it shall

[1] In a letter a month later (see p. 24) she says: " Mr. Sinnett, will you be so ungrateful as to allow K.H. who has sacrificed more than you will ever know of, for the future of both of you and the Society, to be so spoken of by Massey? . . . I wish I were dead before I found our K. H. so reviled!"

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not burst, so long as I am needed ; in the second case there is no help. Master can, and shall *not* interfere with Karma. My heart is broken not for what my *true, open* enemies have done—them, I despise ; but for the selfishness, the weakheartedness in my defence, the readiness shown to accept and even *to force me* to all manner of sacrifices—when Masters are my witnesses—I was ready to shed the last drop of life in me, give up every hope, for the last shred of—I shall not say happiness—but rest and comfort in this life of torture, for the cause I serve and (as) for every *true* Theosophist. The treachery—that atmosphere of soft and sympathetic words, expressive of the utmost selfishness at the bottom of them, whether due to weakness, or ambition—was something terrible. I shall not mention names. With some, with most of them, I shall remain on good terms to my dying day. Nor shall I allow them to suspect I read through them from the first."

One of the most insincere of these 'friends' was the already mentioned A. O. Hume. He was a high Government official in India. He had been given in the first instance some great opportunities of learning the occult teachings and of corresponding with the Masters,[1] and professed to have the interests of the Society very much at heart, continually writing articles for the *Theosophist*. He is the "H—X" of *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy*, published in India in 1882. The collation of all the passages referring to him in *The Mahatma Letters* is in itself a liberal education in the methods, ways, thoughts and feelings of the 'Brothers'. Very early in the series (p. 19) Mahatma K. H. speaks of his "sceptical logic", whilst in one of his letters to Mr. Sinnett at that time Hume is spoken of as being "a monument of pride and unconscious selfishness." It is indeed most instructive to trace in these Letters the gradual bringing to light of his character, and the increasing disgust of the Mahatmas, until finally they would have nothing more to do with him. Incidentally we find in this series absolute proof that they were not written by H. P. B.

In reply to some criticisms by Hume, Mahatma K. H. writes to Sinnett (p. 185) :—

"Of course of course ; it is our usual way of getting out of difficulties. Having been 'invented' ourselves, we repay the inventors by inventing imaginary races. There are a good many things more we are charged with having invented. Well, well, well ; there's one thing, at any rate, we can never be accused of inventing ; and that

[1] In *The Mahatma Letters*, p. 7, K. H. writes :—"This gentleman also has done me the great honour to address me by name, offering to me a few questions and stating the conditions upon which he would be willing to work for us seriously." See further a letter from K. H. to Hume, p. 137.

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is *Mr. Hume himself.* To invent his like transcends the highest *Siddhi* powers we know of."

Speaking of his treatment of H. P. B., Mahatma M. says (p. 222) :—

"Had he *hated* her with the most bitter hatred, he could not have tortured her foolishly sensitive nerves more effectually than he has, while 'still loving the dear old woman'. He has done so with those he loved best, and, unconsciously to himself, he will do so more than once in the hearafter; and yet his first impulse will be always to deny it, for he is indeed fully *unconscious* of the fact, the extreme kindness of his heart being in such cases entirely blinded and paralyzed by another feeling, which, if told of, he will also deny. Undismayed by his epithet of 'goose and Don Quichote', true to my promise to my Blessed Brother.[1] I will tell him of it whether he likes it or not; for now that he has openly given expression to his feelings, we have either to understand each other or break off. . . . I say that unless he understands how utterly inapplicable to us is the standard according to which he is accustomed to judge Western people of his own society, it would simply be a loss of time for me or K. H. to teach and for him to learn. . . . Mr. Hume prides himself in the thought that he never had 'a spirit of veneration' for anything but his own abstract ideals. We are perfectly aware of it. Nor could he possibly have any veneration for anyone or anything, as all the veneration his nature is capable of is—concentrated upon *himself.* This is a fact and the cause of all his life troubles."

Further on in the same letter he says (p. 223) :—

"The most sincere and outspoken man in India, Mr. Hume is unable to tolerate a contradiction; and, be that person *Dev* or mortal, he *cannot* appreciate or even permit without protest the same qualities of sincerity in any other than himself. Nor can he be brought to confess that anyone in this world can know better than himself anything that *he* has studied and formed *his* opinion thereupon."

In a letter dated October 1882, Mahatma K. H. writing to Sinnett again refers to Hume, who had then apparently sent in his resignation. The references are too long to quote in full, but the following sentences occur (p. 302) :—

"The deposition and abdication of our great 'I am' is one of the most agreeable events of the season for your humble servant. *Mea culpa!*—I exclaim, and willingly place my guilty head under a shower of ashes—from the Simla cigars if you like—for it was my doing! . . . in a letter enclosed he says—we 'may be *tantrikists*' (better ascertain the value of the compliment paid)—and, he is preparing, nay—all

[1] See p. 79, *supra.*

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prepared—to plunge from extreme *Adwaitism* into transcendental *theism*, once more. Amen. I hand him over to the Salvation Army. . . ."

Later on, in March 1883, we find Mahatma K. H. speaking of (p. 337) :—

" Our ex-friend Mr. Hume—(now entirely in the hands of the Brothers of the Shadow) "—and saying that a certain change of policy by which " the more our actual existence be doubted—the better ", was due to his " incessant underground intrigues."

The following letter is important not merely as it refers to Mr. Hume but also in reference to the policy of the Masters in general which had been so much misunderstood. The letter is not dated, but was apparently written some time in 1882 (p. 416) :

" The deduction of Mr. Massey that ' the adept foresight was not available ' in sundry noted cases of theosophical failure is but the restatement of the old error that the selection of members and the actions of Founders and Chelas are controlled by us ! This has been often denied, and—as I believe—sufficiently explained to you in my Darjeeling letter, but objectors cling to their theory despite all. We have no concern with, nor *do we guide the events generally* : yet take the series of names he quotes and see that each man was a useful factor towards producing the net result. Hurry-Chund drew the party to Bombay—although they had prepared to go to Madras,[1] which would have been fatal at that stage of the Theosophical movement ; Wimbridge and Miss Bates gave an English complexion to the party and caused from the first much good by causing a bitter journalistic assault upon the Founders which brought on reaction ; Dayanand stamped the movement with the impress of Aryan nationality ; and lastly Mr. Hume—who is already the secret and may well become the open foe of the cause—has aided it greatly by his influence, and will promote it more despite himself, by the ulterior results of his defection. In each instance the individual traitor and enemy was given his chance, and but for his moral obliquity might have derived incalculable good from it to his personal Karma."

Thus Hume's character stands out in lurid characters in these *Letters*, and finally M. and K. H. would have nothing more to do with him.

In a long letter to Sinnett dated August 26th, 1882, the whole of which cannot be quoted here, H. P. B. writes most indignantly in reference to Hume's treachery and double dealing. The letter commences (p. 29) :—

[1] See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 20, for an account of Hurrychund's treachery.

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" My dear Mr. Sinnett,

" I send you a letter just received from Mr. Hume. Read it if you please and judge. Now, I *positively* and emphatically decline to receive such etters. He may or may not remain in the Society—it's the Brothers' business. He may or may not do it and me under the pretext of philanthrophy all the injury he can think of, but he will not do it *through* me, nor will he take me as his mouthpiece to repeat to K. H. messages which are the most impudent in the world. If *they* have not, I *have* enough of him and his generous benefactions he forces upon us, if I have to pay such a price as that for it. Why the dickens does he not write all this to K. H. himself ? or, have they again quarrelled and the correspondence is stopped ? I expected as much and knew it would come to this. He sends me an article for publication ; it has and *must be absolutely published* he says. Now I would have thrown the article into the fire, not for what it contains of *me*, or against *Isis*—which he calls the most *inaccurate* work full and teeming with *practical errors* (much *he* knows of it !) but what it says of the Brothers, when he calls them ' selfish Asiastics ', blames and criticises them, warns the public against them, etc. I certainly would have thrown it into the fire but K. H. sent word with Morya that he wanted it absolutely published, and I have of course but to shut up.[1] (See *The Theosophist*, Sept. 1882, Vol. III, p. 324).

" Why don't *you* quarrel with K. H. ? Why is it that he, the mildest of mortals, likes you so much and comes to nearly feel sick at the mention of Hume's name ? I do not protest against the cruel, humiliating treatment of myself, for I have sacrificed my individuality long ago. But I must say, that ever since he began to write for the alleged good of the Society and assumed the rôle of its benefactor, father and patron, I have received more insults, more kicks from him than from any body I know of. . . . Why should *I* be sacrificed, be offered in a holocaust to the Lord God of Israel who is Mr Hume himself in his opinion, I suppose. Our Society lived and thrived well without him. . . . I would rather have preferred to die in my *mediocrity* than too much celebrity as he makes it now. The higher a position the greater the fall. I only laboured to establish the Society firmly so that after my death—which fortunately is not very far off—it would thrive, and a better one than I should come and take my place. Why then *should he* come in like an African *Simoon*, blasting and destroying all on his passage, impeding my work, showing my *mediocrity* in a blaze of light, criticising all and everything, finding fault with everybody and forcing the whole of India to point a finger

[1] In an undated letter from K. H. to Sinnett (p. 242) he says, apparently in reference to this article :—" Since we have mixed ourselves with the outside world, we have no right to suppress the personal opinion of its individual members, nor eschew their criticisms, however unfavourable to us—hence the positive order to H. P. B. to publish Mr. Hume's article. Only, as we would have the world see both sides of the question, we have also allowed the joint protest of Deb, Subba Row, Damodar, and a few other chelas—to follow his criticism of ourselves and our System in the Theosophist."

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of scorn at me. . . . Is there *no salvation for the Society outside of him*, the great Hume, the Mount Everest of intellect, as he believes himself? . . . He is not satisfied with *their system*, he 'wanted many times to break with them.' Oh the irreparable blow to the Fraternity —if he does. A poor dry weed rolling down the Cheops Pyramid would be as likely to hurt the Pyramid as he the Brotherhood by breaking with them. Well, look out for yourself. I have done with him. If he injures the Society we will go—to China or Ceylon instead of going December to Madras—that's all."

Writing to H. P. B. on the 19th January, 1886, Col. Olcott says of Hume [1]:—

"Hume will probably 'eave us alone now. He has his heart's desire in being Boss-General in Native politics and is humbugging them with sweetness as he did us. He got together about 100 Delegates at the Bombay 'National Congress', and one fine day will leave them all sitting in the mud while he walks off with band playing and colours flying to do some fresh deviltry."

To Hume's credit it must be said that when the Coulomb conspiracy in connection with the Society for Psychical Research was in full swing, he wrote a letter to the Calcutta *Statesman* defending Mme. Blavatsky in the matter of the forged letters which the Coulombs said had been written by her.[2]

Also in 1881 he wrote a long letter to the *Saturday Review* defending her name and reputation against a virulent attack which had appeared in that paper in its issue of Sept. 3rd.[3]

In *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy*, page 99, Hume asserts that he is "*quite* certain of the existence of the Brothers, and so may every human being become, who will live the life and exercise the psychical faculties with which he has been endowed by nature." This declaration is dated June 1882. On page 179 we find a similar declaration by him. "Of course, I personally *now* KNOW that they *do* exist."

In the same Pamphlet, No 1, page 90, he writes of H. P. B. as follows:—

"When you know yourself to have sacrificed everything in life, for the hope of being able to spread truth and do good to your fellows; —when, despising comfort and enjoyment, you are toiling day and night (and how she works all who have enjoyed her acquaintance well know) in the purely unselfish desire to benefit others—it *is*, to say the least, aggravating to see yourself continually denounced, in the public prints, by anonymous writers as a swindler, imposter, liar, and what not. . . .

[1] H.P.B.'s *Letters*, p. 327.
[2] See *infra*, Appendix, p. 294.
[3] See *The Occult World*, Preface to the second edition, for a copy of this letter.

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"And after all, nothing is more certain than that if her bitterest calumniator came to her next day, sick or in trouble, she would strive as hard to relieve him as though he had been a friendly supporter.

"Like everyone else she has her faults, and owing to her disregard for appearances, she shows them more freely than any ordinary person would; but her faults, as far as I can judge, lie on the surface; and in essentials she is, it seems to me, a far better woman than the majority of her neighbours, and infinitely better than with her very peculiar physical and mental organization she could possibly have been, were not the cause in which all her hopes are bound up, in her belief, a true and good one."

To revert again to the *Mahatma Letters*, we find M. writing as follows to Mr. Sinnett under date Feb. (?) 1882 (p. 268) :—

"I will thank you my dear Sinnett Sahib for a personal favour. Since K. H. is too much of a *perfect* Yogi-Arhat, to stop the hand (of A. O. Hume) that undaunted by failure keeps on trying to catch the Tibetan yak by the neck to bend it under its yoke, then all that remains for me to do is to make once more my appearance on the *nataka-shala* to put a stop to a performance that threatens to become monotonous even to us—well trained in patience. I cannot avail myself of your kind advice to write to Mr. Hume in *my brightest red*,[1] since it would be opening a new door for an endless correspondence, an honour I would rather decline. But I write to you instead, and send you a telegram and answer on back on't it, for your perusal. What talk of his is this? Reverence may not be in his nature, nor does anyone claim or care for it any way! But I should have thought that his head, that is capacious enough to hold anything, had a corner in it for some common sense. And that sense might have told him that either we are what we claim, or we are not. That in the former case, however exaggerated the claims made on behalf of *our powers*, still, if our knowledge and foresight do not transcend his then we are no better than *shams and imposters*, and the quicker he parts company with us—the better for him. But if we are in any degree what we claim to be, then he acts like a wild ass. Let him remember, that we are not Indian Rajahs in need of and compelled to accept political *Ayahs*, and nurses to lead us on by the string. That the Society was founded, went on and will go on *with or without him*—let him suit himself as to the latter.

"So far his help, that he thrusts on us, much after the fashion of Spanish mendicant *hidalgos* who offer their sword to protect the traveller with one hand and clutch him by the throat with the other, has not—as far as I can find [been] very beneficial to the Society so far. Not to one of its founders, at any rate, whom he has nigh killed

[1] An allusion to the fact that M. wrote either in red ink or in red pencil, while K. H. wrote in blue.

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last year at Simla and whom he now harasses, sticking to her like grim death, turning her blood into water and eating her liver out.

"Therefore I expect you to impress upon his mind that all we should 'give thanks for', would be to see him take care of his *Eclectic* and to leave the Parent Society to take care of itself. His advice and help to the editor of the *Theosophist* has no doubt been advantageous to the editor, and she does feel grateful to him for it after deducting the large share she owes to yourself. But we beg leave to state, that some line ought to be drawn somewhere—between said editor and ourselves; for we are not quite the Tibetan triplets he takes us to be. Therefore, whether we be the ignorant savages and Orientals of his making—every wolf being Master in his own den—we claim the right to know our own business best, and respectfully decline his services as a captain to steer our Theosophical ship even on 'the ocean of *worldly life*' as he metaphorizes in his *sloka*. We have allowed him, under the good pretext of saving the situation with the British theosophists to ventilate his animosity against us in the Organ of our own Society, and to draw our portrait-likenesses with a brush dipped in haughty bile—what more does he want? As I ordered the Old Woman to telegraph him back—he is not the only skilful navigator in the world; he seeks to avoid Western breakers, and we to steer our canoe clear of Eastern sandbanks. Does he mean in addition to this to dictate from the Chohan down to Juala Khool and Deb what we shall and what we shall not do? Ram, Ram and the holy Nagas! Is it after centuries of independent existence that we have to fall under a foreign influence, to become the puppets of a Simla Nawab? Are we school boys, or what, in his fancy to submit to the rod of a Peling schoolmaster? . . .

"Notwithstanding his sulks I beg you will tell him that you heard *from me*—and that I have asked you to let him know my *ultimatum*: if he would not break with the whole shop altogether, and *for ever*, I will not suffer him to interfere with his wisdom between our ignorance and the Parent Society. Nor shall he ease his bad humour on one who is not responsible for anything we may do or say—a woman so sick that as in 1877 I am again forced to carry her away—when she is so needed where she now is, at the Headquarters—for fear she will fall all to pieces. And that this state of hers was brought on lately by him owing to constant anxiety for the Society, and partially if not wholly by his behaviour at Simla—you can take my word for it. The whole situation and future of the *Eclectic* hangs on Koothoomi if you will not help him. If notwithstanding my advice and the Chohan's evident displeasure he will persist making a fool of himself sacrificing himself for a man who is the evil genius of the Society in one direction —well it's his own business, only I will have nothing to do with it. *Your true friend* I will ever remain, though you turn against me one of these days. Fern was tested and found a thorough *Dugpa* in his moral nature. We will see, we will see; but very little hope left notwithstanding his splendid capacities. Had I hinted to him to

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deceive his own father and mother he would have thrown in *their* fathers and mothers in the bargain. Vile, vile nature—yet irresponsible. Oh ye Westerns, who boast of your morality! May the bright Chohans keep you and all yours from the approaching harm is the sincere wish of your friend . . M."

Finally the Mahatmas K. H. and M. would neither of them have anything to do with Hume. At the end of one of H. P. B.'s letters to Sinnett, dated December 7th, 1882, we find an annotation by M. as follows (p. 41) :—

"And the 'Boss' says so still. But the 'Boss' will ask no more Mr. Hume to do anything for either Society or *humanity*. Mr. Hume will have henceforth, to ride his own 'donkey' and we too remain satisfied with our own legs."

I have dwelt thus at some length on the case of Mr. Hume not merely because it shows so clearly what H. P. B. had to contend with in this direction, and what a drain it was on her vitality, but because it throws such a vivid light on many matters in the early history of the Society which were very obscure before these *Letters* were published. But perhaps more even than this the extracts I have now given are exceedingly interesting in their bearing upon the question as to the existence of the Masters, their methods of working, and the conditions under which *chelaship* must be sought. We are shown how contact with the occult and psychic forces under whose influence the candidate must inevitably come, turns the man inside out, and brings to the front evil tendencies, unsuspected by himself. This *must* happen if the candidate is to make further progress; for these evil tendencies must be *entirely eliminated* before he is ready to take even the first steps in *real Occultism* as distinguished from mere psychic faculties such as any ordinary person may possess, even to a considerable degree, and yet not be an Occultist.[1]

The reference in the above quoted letter from M. to Mr. Sinnett, to his being again forced to carry her away as in 1877, probably refers to the journey which she made in October 1882 to Sikkim. The letter has no date except 1882, but it is placed in the series between one dated February 1882, and another dated 3rd March 1882. I think that it was written much later, probably in August 1882. I shall refer to this journey to Sikkim immediately.

[1] Readers of this are recommended to obtain a copy of H. P. B.'s two Articles *Practical Occultism*, and *Occultism versus the Occult Arts*, which appeared, the former in *Lucifer*, April, 1888, and the latter, May, 1888, and have since been issued in Pamphlet form. It may be obtained from The Blavatsky Association, 26, Bedford Gardens, London, W. 8. Price 9d.

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I must now record the fact that H. P. B. was more than once restored to comparative health by occult means when on the very point of death.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 555, H. P. B. writes :—

" Sound generates, or rather attracts together, the elements that produce an *ozone*, the fabrication of which is beyond chemistry, but within the limits of Alchemy. It may even *resurrect* a man, or an animal whose astral ' vital body ' has not been irreparably separated from the physical body by the severance of the magnetic or odic chord. *As one saved thrice from death* by that power, the writer ought to be credited with knowing personally something about it."

In a letter dated March 26th, 1881, Mahatma K. H. says (p. 242) : —

" Our hapless ' Old Lady ' is sick. Liver, kidneys, head, brain, legs, every organ and limb shows fight and snaps its fingers at her efforts to ignore them. One of us will have to ' *fix* her ' as our worthy Mr. Olcott says, or it will fare bad with her."

She was " fixed " on the occasion I have referred to above when she visted the Masters in October 1882. K. H. refers to this in a letter dated October 1882 (p. 321) at the end of which he says :—" H. P. B. is *mended*, if not thoroughly at least for some time to come."

In one of H. P. B.'s letters to Sinnett published in the Appendix to *The Mahatma Letters*, and dated from Adyar, March 17th (apparently 1885)—just after Hodgson's S. P. R. " researches " —she says (p. 469) :—

" Such is in brief the present situation. It began at Simla opening with the first act and now comes the *Prologue* [*Epilogue*] that will soon finish with my death. For, though, doctors notwithstanding (who proclaimed my four days' agony, and the impossibility of recovering) I suddenly got better, thanks to Master's protecting hand. I carry two mortal diseases in me which are not cured—heart, and kidneys. At any moment the former can have a rupture, and the latter carry me away in a few days. I will not see another year. All this is due to five years of constant anguish, worry and repressed emotion. A Gladstone may be called a ' fraud ' and laugh at it. I can't, say what you may, Mr. Sinnett. . . . An old and dying woman, confined to her room ; forbidden to mount a few steps lest her heart bursts ; never reading a paper for fear of finding there the most vile personal abuse ; receiving letters from Russia but from relatives—a spy, a dangerous character ! Oh Britishers of India where is your valour ? [1] . . . Such is *my* life

[1] This refers to the suspicions of the Indian Government, fostered by the Coulombs and by Hodgson, that she was a Russian spy.

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during my convalescence, when every emotion, says the doctor, *may prove fatal.* So much the better. . . . This will probably be my last letter to you, dear Mr. Sinnett. It took me a week nearly to write this one—I am so feeble; and then I do not think I will have an opportunity."

Notwithstanding this serious state of her health in 1885, H. P. B., as we know, lived six years more, and completed the enormous task of writing *The Secret Doctrine, The Voice of the Silence, The Key to Theosophy,* and innumerable Articles for the *Theosophist, Lucifer,* and other Magazines—with which I shall deal in subsequent chapters. Who is there of all her detractors who under the same conditions of physical martyrdom would have done one-hundredth part of the work which she subsequently did—for what, and why? For the *Cause of Humanity* which had been entrusted to her. For her absolute devotion to the Masters, and willingness to endure and suffer all, to the very last gasp, in their service.

I must now record the greatest sacrifice of all that she ever made, one that she herself told me was the hardest trial which she ever had in all her life. It was the choice given her when on the point of death, of dying then and there, or of living on to complete the work she had begun. She was longing with her whole being to die. Worn out as we have seen, not merely with physical disease but also with the constant injustice of the slanderous attacks which were made upon her and the Masters —she made the choice of a further life of martyrdom that certain things which the Master showed her should still be accomplished for the furtherance and establishment of the great revival of the *Ancient Wisdom* under the auspices of the Movement now so widely known and world-spread under the name of *Theosophy.* In particular, *The Secret Doctrine* had to be written. The first intimation that it *had* to be written is to be found in a letter from H. P. B. to Sinnett in January, 1885 (p. 64) :—

"And now the outcome of it is, that I, crippled down and half dead, am to sit up nights again and rewrite the whole of *Isis Unveiled,* calling it *The Secret Doctrine,* and making three if not four volumes out of the original two, Subba Row helping me and writing most of the commentaries and explanations. . . . As for me, let me die in peace among my household gods. I have become too old, too sick and broken down to be of any use. I am dying by inches in my harness."

In Vol. III of his *Old Diary Leaves,* Col. Olcott refers to this as follows (p. 199) :—

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"On the following night—as my Diary entry states—'H. P. B. got from her Teacher the plan for her *Secret Doctrine*, and it is excellent. Oakley and I tried our hands at it yesterday, but this is much better.' Meanwhile, the accumulation of materials for the book has long been going on. It will be news to some that this was not originally intended to be a new book, but only a recasting and amplification of *Isis Unveiled*, with the late T. Subba Row, B.A., B.L., as co-editor with H. P. B. As first advertised in the *Theosophist*, it was to have been issued in monthly parts of 77 pp. each, and to have run to about twenty parts. This new scheme, given her by her Teacher, changed this programme, and the gradual building up of the present grand work was the result."

Let us now turn to a letter written to Mrs. Sinnett, dated July 23rd, after H. P. B. had returned to Europe. I have already quoted part of this letter (see p. 105 *supra*). I must now quote the part which refers to the cure (p. 104) and *the great renunciation* on which I have commented above.

"But I shall never—nor could I if I would—forget that ever-memorable night during the crisis of my illness, when Master, before exacting from me a certain promise, revealed to me things that He thought I ought to know, before pledging my word to Him for the work He *asked me* (not *ordered* as He had a right to) to do. On that night when Mrs. Oakley and Hartmann and everyone *except Bowajee* (D.N.), expected me every minute to breathe my last)—I learnt all. I was shown *who was* right and who wrong (unwittingly) and who was entirely treacherous; and a general sketch of what I had to expect outlined before me. Ah, I tell you, I *have* learnt things on that night—things that stamped themselves for-ever on my Soul; black treachery, assumed friendship for selfish ends, *belief in my guilt*, and yet a *determination to lie in my defence*, since I was a convenient step to rise upon, and what not! Human nature I saw in all its hideousness in that short hour, when I felt one of Master's hands upon *my heart, forbidding it cease beating*, and saw the other calling out *sweet future* before me. With all that, when He had shown me *all, all*, and asked 'Are you willing?'—I said 'Yes', and thus signed my wretched doom, for *the sake of the few* who *were entitled to His thanks*. Shall you believe me if I say, that among those few your two names stood prominent? You may disbelieve, or perhaps doubt—yet it was so. Death was so welcome at that hour, rest so needed, so desired; life like the one that stared me in the face, and that is realised now—so miserable; yet how could I say *No* to Him who wanted me to live! But all this is perhaps incomprehensible to you, though I do hope it is not quite so."

Col. Olcott refers to this incident in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, Chap. XV. He was on a mission tour in Burmah when, on the 28th January, 1885, he received a telegram from Adyar, from

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Damodar saying :—" Return at once Upasika dangerously ill." He immediately sailed for Madras, where he arrived on the 5th February. He records that (p. 207) :—

" I hurried home and found H. P. B. in a state between life and death, with congestion of the kidneys, rheumatic gout, and an alarming loss of vitality. Added to this, an enfeebled action of the heart had brought her to a crisis where her life trembled in the balance. She was so delighted to see me that she put her arms around my neck, as I came to her bedside, and wept on my breast. I was unspeakably glad to be there to at least, bid her farewell and assure her of my steadfastness. Her attending physicians, Dr. Mary Scharlieb and Dr. Franz Hartmann, M.D., said it was simply a miracle that she was alive. Our Teacher had worked the wonder by coming one night when they were waiting for her last gasp, laying his hand on her, and snatching her back from death. Wonder ul woman ! This same thing happened with her at Philadelphia, when Dr. Pancoast told her that her leg must be cut off to save her life ; but she was out of the house the very next day, with her mortifying limb cured. . . . By the tenth, H. P. B. was about again, and so much better that, when a telegram came from Leadbeater urging my return to Rangoon as there was a very promising opening for the T. S., she consented to my going. So I sailed on the ' Oriental ' on the 11th My ' Chum ' wept when we parted, and I should too if I had thought it was for the last time, but my mind was now completely reassured on that point. The recollection that she would not be permitted to die before her work was accomplished and somebody was ready to fill the gap she would leave, came back to me. I had forgotten that in my momentary grief at the thought of parting from her."

The next phenomenal recovery is recorded by the Countess Wachtmeister in her book, *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and " The Secret Doctrine "* (Chap. X) from which I shall have occasion to quote more fully later on.

Mme. Blavatsky was at that time, March 1887, living at Ostend with the Countess, and was entirely occupied in writing *The Secret Doctrine.*

" In the meanwhile H. P. B. was getting worse, and the Belgian doctor, who was kindness itself, tried one remedy after another, but with no good result, and I began to get seriously alarmed and anxious as to what course I should adopt. H. P. B. was in a very lethargic state, she seemed to be unconscious for hours together, and nothing could rouse or interest her. Finally a bright inspiration came to me. In the London group I knew there was a Doctor Ashton Ellis, so I telegraphed to him, described the state that H. P. B. was in, and entreated him to come without delay."[1]

[1] See p. 20, *supra.*

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Dr. Ellis arrived the next night, and had a consultation with the Belgian doctor. They both agreed that the case was practically hopeless, and that it was exceedingly rare for anyone to live as long as H. P. B. had done with the kidneys so much diseased. The Countess continues :—

" Several times the following day Mr. Ellis massé'd her until he was quite exhausted ; but she got no better, and to my horror I began to detect that peculiar faint odour of death which sometimes precedes dissolution. I hardly dared to hope that she would l ve through the night, and while I was sitting alone by her bedside she opened her eyes and told me how glad she was to die, and that she thought the Master would let her be free at last. . . . She had hoped that she would have been able to give more to the world, but the Master knew best. And so she talked on at intervals, telling me many things. At last she dropped off into a state of unconsciousness, and I wondered how it would all end. . . . Even to me, who had been alone with her for so many months, she was an enigma, with her strange powers, her marvellous knowledge, her extraordinary insight into human nature, and her mysterious life, spent in regions unknown to ordinary mortals, so that though her body might be near, her soul was often away in commune with others. Many a t me I have observed her thus and known that only the shell of her body was present.

" Such were the thoughts which passed through my mind, as I sat hour after hour that anxious night, watching her as she seemed to be getting weaker and weaker. A wave of blank despondency came over me, as I felt how truly I loved this noble woman, and I realised how empty life would be without her. No longer to have her affection and confidence would be a most severe trial. My whole soul rose in rebellion at the thought of losing her. . . . I gave a bitter cry and knew no more.

" When I opened my eyes, the early morning light was stealing in, and a dire apprehension came over me that I had slept, and that perhaps H. P. B. had died during my sleep—died whilst I was untrue to my vigil. I turned round towards the bed in horror, and there I saw H. P. B. looking at me calmly with her clear grey eyes, as she said ' Countess come here.' I flew to her side. ' What happened, H. P. B.—you look so different to what you did last night.' She replied, ' Yes, Master has been here ; He gave me my choice, that I might die and be free if I would, or I might live and finish *The Secret Doctrine*. He told me how great would be my sufferings and what a terrible time I would have before me in England (for I am to go there) ; but when I thought of those students to whom I shall be permitted to teach a few things, and of the Theosophical Society in general, to which I have already given my heart's b'ood, I accepted the sacrifice, and now to make it complete, fetch me some coffee and something to eat, and give me my tobacco box.' "

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Thus for the second time that great soul accepted the martyrdom of this life that her mission might not be left incomplete so long as there was the possibility of adding something more to it. She actually lived another four years after this, and, as we know, published two Volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* besides *The Key to Theosophy*, and that incomparable little gem of occult teaching, *The Voice of the Silence*,[1] and a great mass of other literary work.

What the writing of these works involved I shall endeavour to set forth in these subsequent chapters, when we shall see, even more clearly than I have here shown, the enormous labour and self-sacrifice which this noble woman devoted to her mission, as well as the further martyrdom she had to endure physically, mentally, and—we may guess, though we can hardly know—occultly also.

Oh ye detractors and slanderers who, even to-day, from the mire of your own vile imaginations and the bigotry of your modern Pharisaism and uncharitable 'Christianity', endeavour to bespatter and belittle the reputation of this devoted woman —there is not one of you who is worthy to have unloosed the latchet of her shoes: let the "faults" of her *personality* have been what they may.

She sacrificed the last ounce of her life-blood that she might disclose to the world some glimpse of that *Ancient Wisdom* which is beyond all price, which leads to "the Heart of the Universe", to liberation, and the final goal of all human endeavour.

Criticise her teachings by all means—that is fair and legitimate —but even so remember that she was but a very imperfect instrument, and that much has been withheld which the world, individualistic to the core as it is, and pressing all its knowledge of natural forces into the service of more and still more destructive weapons of war—is by no means as yet ready to receive.

Criticise her teachings by all means, if you have not the wit to perceive their deep import and application to your own professed religion; but henceforth let only he among you who is without sin cast another stone at her.

[1] A most important reprint of the original edition of this work has recently been published in China through the efforts of Mrs. A. L. Cleather and Mr. Basil Crump. It has as a frontispiece a few sentences specially written for this edition in Tibetan characters by H. H. The Tashi Lama, and reproduced in facsimile. The work is endorsed by him as being the only true exposition in English of the Heart Doctrine of *Mahayana* Buddhism, and its noble idea of self-sacrifice for humanity. In H. P. B.'s Preface to the work she says: "The Book of Golden Precepts (of which the *Voice* is a translation) contains about ninety distinct little treatises. Of these I learnt thirty-nine by heart, years ago."

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CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUALISM

WE may now take up the story of H. P. B.'s first efforts to give to the outer world some knowledge of the vast inner *Occult World* which she had to some extent explored, and into the science and philosophy of which she had to a certain extent been initiated.

It must not be supposed that at this early date or period of her mission she had anything like the complete knowledge which she afterwards exhibited in her writings. Her private letters of this period show quite clearly that in many respects the information which she gave out was supernormal; that is to say it did not belong at all to her normal personality. She herself did not rightly understand how she could possess it; and in fact she was largely an enigma to herself. But since her first efforts to carry out the mission entrusted to her took the direction of an endeavour to deal with the Spiritualistic Movement of that time, we must consider this phase in the first instance.

We have already seen that when in Cairo in 1871, Mme. Blavatsky endeavoured to commence her public mission by founding the *Société Spirite*, but that this quickly came to grief owing to the fraudulent practices of the disreputable mediums she employed.

When she went to America in 1873, the Spiritualistic movement was having a boom, and the original idea, not merely of Mme. Blavatsky but also of the Masters, appears to have been that this movement could be utilised for their purpose of giving "the impulse for a new cycle of occult research." At all events Col. Olcott states in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 13, that in hunting over an old Scrap Book he found a memorandum by Mme. Blavatsky which he thinks she intended to be published after her death. In this memorandum she says:—"I was sent from Paris to America on purpose to prove the phenomena and their reality, and show the fallacy of the spiritualistic theory of spirits."

She goes on to say:—

"But how could I do it best? I did not want people at large to know that I could *produce the same things* AT WILL. I had received orders to the contrary, and yet I had to keep alive the reality, the

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genuineness and *possibility* of such phenomena, in the hearts of those who from Materialists had turned Spiritualists, but now, owing to the exposure of several mediums, fell back again, returned to their scepticism. This is why, selecting a few of the faithful, I went to the Holmeses, and helped by M. and his *power*, brought out the faces of John King and Katie King from the Astral Light, produced the phenomena of materialisation, and allowed the spiritualists at large to believe it was done through the medium of Mrs. Holmes. She was terribly frightened herself, for she knew that *this once* the apparition was real. Did I do wrong ? The world is not prepared yet to understand the philosophy of Occult Science ; let them first assure themselves that there are beings in the invisible world, whether ' Spirits ' of the dead or elementals, and that there are hidden powers in man which are capable of making a *god* of him on earth. When I am dead and gone people will, perhaps, appreciate my disinterested motives. I have pledged my word to help people on to *Truth* while living, and I will keep my word. Let them abuse and revile me ; let some call me a medium and a Spiritualist, others an imposter. The day will come when posterity will learn to know me better. Oh, poor foolish, credulous, wicked world ! "

On this Col. Olcott comments :—

" The whole thing is here made plain : the Spiritualism she was sent to America to profess and ultimately bring to replace the cruder Western mediumism, was Eastern Spiritualism, or Brahma Vidya. The West not being prepared to accept it, her first assigned work was to defend the real phenomena of the ' circle ' from that prejudiced and militant enemy of spiritual belief—materialistic, sciolistic, physical science, with its votaries and leaders. The one necessary thing for the age was to check materialistic scepticism and strengthen the spiritual basis of the religious yearning. Therefore, the battle being joined, she took her stand beside the American Spiritualists, and for the moment made common cause with them. Yes, posterity *will* do her justice."

When Mme. Blavatsky, therefore, first went to America she warmly espoused the cause of Spiritualism, and allowed herself to be thought a Spiritualist, and even a medium. The Spiritualists who have so vindictively attacked her for her teachings with regard to the nature of certain spiritualistic phenomena, have brought this forward as evidence that at one time she was an out and out Spiritualist *in their meaning of the term* : and they have even insinuated that she changed from Spiritualism to Theosophy because Spiritualism had ceased to *pay*. This is a monstrous invention for which there is not a scrap of evidence ; the real truth being that neither she nor Col. Olcott ever

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endeavoured to make a single dollar by Spiritualism—nor by Theosophy either, for that matter.

When Madame Blavatsky called herself a Spiritualist she always had in mind the higher Spiritualism which both she and her teachers acknowledged—as I shall show presently. She was never a Spiritualist in the sense that she believed that all the phenomena were produced by the conscious action of the 'spirits' of discarnate human beings. How could she be? I have already quoted a letter to her sister (p. 49) in which she says, as far back as 1866, that at last she had freed herself from the influence of the "spooks and ethereal affinities" who had previously haunted her, and were the cause of her early mediumistic phenomena which she could not control. I have also quoted her sister's testimony (p. 49) that she was now able to control the phenomena *at will*; and that, "to the denizens of which (the invisible world) she had ever refused the name of 'spirits' and 'souls'."

In a letter to *The Spiritualist*, December 13th, 1874 she writes as follows.

"As it is, I have only done my duty; first, towards Spiritualism, that I have defended as well as I could from the attacks of imposture under the too transparent mask of science; then towards two helpless, slandered mediums. . . . But I am obliged to confess that I really do not believe in having done any good—to Spiritualism itself. . . . It is with a profound sadness in my heart that I acknowledge this fact, for I begin to think there is no help for it."

There is thus no doubt that Mme. Blavatsky wrote and spoke and used phrases at this time, and even much earlier, which would give the impression to any undiscerning or malicious outsider that she was an enthusiastic Spiritualist in the ordinary acceptation of the term; but it is quite impossible, in view of what we have already shown as to her own powers and occult knowledge, to attribute to her no deeper comprehension of the matter than is to be found in the common explanation given by the Spiritualists of the acknowledged phenomena.

She found herself in New York involved in the fight then going on between Spiritualism and Materialism. Spiritualism represented for her at that time the great force which was to break down the Materialism of science, then so much in evidence; and it was that more than anything else which she had in view.

As she never did things by halves, she threw herself headlong into this battle, and found herself involved in controversies with innumerable opponents all over the world, but specially in the

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American Journals of that period: hoping thereby eventually to lead up to the real spiritual philosophy which it was her mission to give to the world.

In the *Mahatma Letters* (p. 289) we find Mahatma K. H. telling Mr. Sinnett :—

"It was H. P. B., who acting under the orders of Atrya (one whom you do not know) was the first to explain in the *Spiritualist* the difference there was between *psyche* and *nous*, *nefesh* and *ruach*—Soul and Spirit. She had to bring the whole arsenal of proofs with her, quotations from Paul and Plato, from Plutarch and *James* etc. before the Spiritualists admitted that the Theosophists were right. It was then that she was ordered to write *Isis*—just a year after the Society had been founded. And, as there happened such a war over it, endless polemics and objections to the effect that *there could not be in man two souls*—we thought it was premature to give the public more than they could possibly assimilate, and before they had digested the 'two souls';—and thus the further sub-division of the trinity into 7 principles is left unmentioned in *Isis*."

When the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875, she had already made a clear distinction between 'Spiritism' and 'Spiritualism'.

Thus about this period she wrote to her sister as follows.

"What kind of Spiritist can you see in, or make of me, pray? If I have worked to join the Theosophical Society, in alliance offensive and defensive, with the Arya Samaj of India (of which we are now forming a section within the parent Theosophical Society), it is because in India all the Brahmins, whether orthodox or otherwise, are terribly against the *bhoots*,[1] the mediums, or any necromantic evocations or dealings with the dead in any way or shape. That we have established our Society in order to combat, under the banner of Truth and Science, every kind of superstitious and preconceived hobbies. That we mean to fight the prejudices of the Sceptics as well as the abuse of power of the false prophets, ancient or modern, to put down the high priests, the Calchases, with their false Jupiterean thunders, and to show certain falacies of the Spiritists. If we are anything we are *Spiritualists*, only not in the modern American fashion, but on that of the ancient Alexandria, with its Theodadiktoi, Hypatias, and Porphyries."[2]

At a somewhat earlier date she wrote to her sister :—

"The more I see of mediums—for the United States are a true nursery, the most prolific hot-bed for mediums and sensitives of all kinds, genuine and artificial—the more I see the danger humanity is surrounded with. Poets speak of the thin partition between this

[1] The simulcra or ghost of a deceased person—an 'Elementary', or spook.
[2] See *Incidents*, p. 179.

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world and the other. They are blind: there is no partition at all except the difference of states in which the living and the dead exist, and the grossness of the physical senses of the majority of mankind. Yet, these senses are our salvation. They were given to us by a wise and sagacious mother and nurse—nature; for, otherwise, *individuality* and even *personality* would have become impossible: the dead would be ever merging into the living, and the latter assimilating the former. Were there around us but one variety of 'spirits',—as well call the dregs of wine, spirits,—the reliquae of those mortals who are dead and gone, one could reconcile oneself with it. We cannot avoid, in some way or other, *assimilating* our dead, and little by little, and unconsciously to ourselves, we become *they*—even physically, especially in the unwise West, where cremation is unknown. *We breathe and devour the dead*—men and animals—with every breath we draw in, as every human breath that goes out makes up the bodies, and feeds the formless creatures in the air that will be men some day So much for the physical process; for the mental and the intellectual, and also the spiritual, it is just the same; we interchange gradually our brain-molecules, our intellectual and even spiritual auras, hence—our thoughts, desires, and aspirations, with those who preceded us. This process is common to humanity in general. It is a *natural one*, and follows the economy and laws of nature, insomuch that one's son may become gradually his own grandfather, and his aunt to boot, imbibing their combined atoms, and thus partially accounting for the possible resemblance, or atavism. But there is another law, an exceptional one, and which manifests itself among mankind sporadical y and periodically: the law of *forced* post-mortem assimilation, during the prevalence of which epidemic the dead invade the domain of the living from their respective spheres—though, fortunately, only within the limits of the regions they lived in, and in which they are buried. In such cases, the duration and intensity of the epidemic depends upon the welcome they receive, upon whether they find the doors opening widely to receive them or not, and whether the necromantic plague is increased by magnetic attraction, the desire of the mediums, sensitives, and the curious themselves, or whether again, the danger being signalled, the epidemic is wisely repressed.

"Such a periodical visitation is now occurring in America. It began with innocent children—the little Misses Fox—playing unconscious'y with this terrible weapon. And, welcomed and passionately invited to 'come in', the whole of the dead community seemed to have rushed in, and got a more or less strong hold of the living. I went on purpose to a family of strong mediums—the Eddys—and watched for over a fortnight, making experiments, which, of course, I kept to myself. . . . You remember, Vera, how I made experiments for you at Rougodevo, how often I saw the ghosts of those who had been living in the house, and described them to you, for you could never see them. . . . Well, it was the same daily and nightly in Vermont, I

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saw and watched these soulless creatures the shadows of their terrestrial bodies, from which in most cases soul and spirit had fled long ago, but which throve and preserved their semi-material shadows, at the expense of the hundreds of visitors that came and went, as well as of the mediums. And I remarked under the advice and guidance of my Master, that (1) those apparations which were genuine were produced by the 'ghosts' of those who had lived and died within a certain area of those mountains; (2) those who had died far away were less entire, a mixture of the real shadow and of that which lingered in the personal aura of the visitor for whom it purported to come; and (3) the purely fictitious ones, or as I call them, the reflection of the genuine ghosts or shadows of the deceased personality. To explain myself more clearly, it was not the spooks that assimilated the medium, but the medium, W. Eddy, who assimilated unconsciously to himself the pictures of the dead relatives and friends from the aura of the sitters.

"It was ghastly to watch the process! It made me often sick and giddy; but I had to look at it, and the most I could do was to hold the disgusting creatures at arm's length. But it was a sight to see the welcome given to these *umbrae* by the spiritualists! They wept and rejoiced around the medium, clothed in these empty materialised shadows; rejoiced and wept again, sometimes broke down with emotion, a sincere joy and happiness that made my heart bleed for them. 'If they could but see what I see' I often wished. If they only knew that these simulcra of men and women are made up wholly of the terrestrial passions, vices, and worldly thoughts, of the residuum of the personality that was; for these are only such dregs that could not follow the liberated soul and spirit, and are left for a second death in the terrestrial atmosphere, that can be seen by the average medium and the public. At times I used to see one of such phantoms, quitting the medium's astral body, pouncing upon one of the sitters, expanding so as to envelop him or her entirely, and then slowly disappearing within the living body as though sucked in by its every pore." [1]

Mme. Blavatsky had in fact already discovered at that time that the 'Spiritualistic' or 'Spirit st' movement could not be utilised for the promulgation of the *Spiritual Philosophy* which she had learnt in the East; the "hidden powers in man which are capable of making a *god* of him on Earth."

I am writing now, of course, of Spiritism as it existed at that time in America; that is to say fifty years ago. The occult explanation of the phenomena must certainly be the same to-day as it was then; but the 'Spiritualism' of to-day has doubtless been purged to some extent of the terrible indictments brought against it at that time by many of its own leaders; though even

[1] See *Incidents*, p. 175.

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to-day so much of it is merely Spiritism of the phenomenal or "spookey" kind. Where the phenomena are now investigated in a sane and scientific manner, it is no longer called *Spiritualism* but *Psychical Research*—a much more appropriate term, for the bulk of so-called *spiritualistic* phenomena have no right whatsoever to be classed as spiritual in any sense of the term.

Col. Olcott states in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 72, that early in 1875 a small but independent Journal called the *Spiritual Scientist* was started in Boston by a Mr. E. Gerry Brown; and that he and Mme. Blavatsky were specially ordered to support it as being calculated to place Spiritualism on a sounder scientific and philosophical basis. Col. Olcott subscribed several hundred dollars to the expenses of the journal, and also drew up a preliminary circular advertising it. He says with reference to this circular (p. 75):—

"I wrote it to carry out the expressed wishes of the Masters that we—H. P. B. and I—should help the Editor of the *Scientist* at what was to him, a difficult crisis, and used my best judgment as to the language most suitable for the purpose. When the circular was in type at the printers, and I had corrected the proofs, and changed the arrangement of the matter into the final paragraphs, I enquired of H. P. B. (by letter) if she thought I had better issue it anonymously or append my name. She replied that it was the wish of the Masters that it should be signed thus: "*For the Committee of Seven*, BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR." And so it was signed and published. She subsequently explained that our work, and much more of the same kind, was being supervised by a Committee of seven Adepts belonging to the Egyptian group of the Universal Mystic Brotherhood. Up to this time she had not even seen the circular, but now I took one to her myself and she began to read it attentively. Presently she laughed and told me to read the acrostic made by the initials of the six paragraphs. To my amazement, I found that they spelt the name under which I knew the (Egyptian) adept under whose orders I was then studying and working. Later, I received a certificate, written in gold ink, on a thick green paper, to the effect that I was attached to this 'Observatory', and that three (named) Masters had me under scrutiny. This title, Brotherhood of Luxor, was pilfered by the schemers who started, several years later, the gudgeon-trap called "The H. B. of L." The existence of the real Lodge is mentioned in Kenneth Mackenzie's *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia* (p. 461)."

"Nothing in my early occult experience during this H. P. B. epoch, made a deeper impression on my mind than the above acrostic. It proved to me that space was no bar to the transmission of thought-suggestions from the teacher's to the pupil's brain; and it supported the theory that, in the doing of world work, the agent may often be

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actually led by overseeing directors to do things which they choose to have done, without his being at all conscious that his mind is not functioning under the sole impulse of its controlling Ego."

Writing to the *Spiritual Scientist* in August, 1875, Mme. Blavatsky says :—

" Spiritualism, in the hands of an adept, becomes Magic, for he is learned in the art of blending together the laws of the Universe, without breaking any of them and thereby violating Nature. In the hands of an inexperienced medium, Spiritualism becomes UNCONSCIOUS SORCERY ; for he opens, unknown to himself a door of communication between the two worlds, through which emerge the blind forces of Nature lurking in the Astral Light, as well as good and bad spirits."[1]

Modern Spiritualism does not appear to have recognised even yet the existence of these " blind forces of Nature "—*i.e.*, nature ' spirits ', classified in general under the term ' elementals '—as the immediate agents in the production of many of the so-called ' spiritualistic ' phenomena : more particularly the physical phenomena of sounds, lights, movements of objects, apports, etc. The medium has no control over these, but the adept has ; and it was precisely this change in Mme. Blavatsky from being in the first instance, in her early days, an irresponsible medium, to the acquirement of the knowledge and powers of the trained occultist or adept, which gives her the right to speak with authority in this matter.

But when she really endeavoured to put forward the true occult explanation of the phenomena, the Spiritualists were the first to turn and rend her ; nor have they even to-day ceased to discredit and vilify her by every means in their power. Some of their most prominent leaders while professing to deplore the breach between Spiritualists and Theosophists, never miss an opportunity of flinging a stone at her.

Col. Olcott records in his *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol. I, p. 25) that in May 1875 Mme. Blavatsky made the following entry in her " Scrap Book ", with reference to the attempted formation of a " Miracle Club " in New York.

" An attempt in consequence of orders received from T* B* (a Master) through P. (an Elemental) personating John King. Ordered to begin telling the public the truth about the phenomena and their mediums. And now my martyrdom will begin ! I shall have all the Spiritualists against me, in addition to the Christians and the Sceptics. Thy will, oh M., be done. H. P. B."

[1] See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 110.

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To this Col. Olcott adds the following remarks.

" The plan was to keep closed doors to all save the members of the Club, who were forbidden to divulge even the place of meeting. ' All the manifestations, including materialisations, to occur in the light, and without a cabinet ' (*Spiritual Scientist*, May, 19, 1876.) Taking H. P. B.'s remark above, as written, it looks as though there would have been no Theosophical Society—it looks so, I say—if her intended medium for the Miracle Club had not utterly failed us and so precluded my completing the organisation."

To-day we may make a broad distinction between Spiritualism and Psychical Research. The latter includes the phenomena of the former, but does not necessarily accept the hypothesis of spirit agency as affording a satisfactory explanation ; nor does it import into the investigation of the phenomena any religious element. Psychical Research has disclosed many factors in connection with the subconscious, with telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., which introduce elements into many so-called spirit communications that appear to many investigators to rule out altogether their validity as such. It is true, however, that many of these scientific and materialistic investigators have stretched the subconscious theory to breaking point in their endeavour to avoid the spirit hypothesis ; but on the other hand it must be said that the credulity with which many, if not most, spiritualists accept such communications on their own hypothesis, and attach an exaggerated importance to them, as if what comes from ' the other side ' must necessarily be accepted from that mere fact, is repellant to the scientific and rational mind.

As a matter of fact there is rarely anything which can really be called *spiritual* in any of these communications, and certainly not in the physical phenomena of the seance room which so many ' spiritualists ' seek after so eagerly. I propose in future to speak of these communications as *necropathic*. We already have *telepathy* as the recognised scientific term for psychic communication between living persons, and *necropathy* would appear to be the natural term for communication from ' the other side '.

Spiritualism as distinguished from Psychical Research is neither philosophical nor scientific, when the religious and emotional element is imported into it. Spiritualists establish ' Churches ' for the promulgation of their fundamental teaching, *i.e.*, that they have definite proof of the survival of bodily death. Well, such proof, whenever or however accepted, is undoubtedly not merely a great consolation to thousands who wish for some certainty in the matter, some sign, some message from loved ones

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who have passed out of this physical existence, but as a definitely established fact it is a great step forward in its addition to the general sum total of accepted human knowledge. I say *accepted*, because although the experimental demonstration of the fact has always been known down through the ages to special students of the occult, it has found no place in the teachings of the Christian Churches, or in the official recognition of science. In the one case it is simply a 'faith' based upon a supposed historical event;[1] in the other case it is simply relegated to a region to which scientific methods of research do not apply; though psychical research has largely broken down this exclusiveness.

There are two aspects of the question, however, which might be pointed out here which are commonly overlooked or ignored by Spiritualists. In the first place there is nothing essentially religious in the mere fact of survival of bodily death, or in communication with the surviving entity. It is no more—or no less—religious than the fact of being born into this world. In the second place, as was pointed out by the late F. W. H. Myers and several other writers, survival of bodily death does not necessarily imply immortality. There is no *proof* of immortality in the mere fact of survival. How indeed, could there be any *proof* of immortality if immortality means endless life! It must remain a hope, a belief, a 'faith', based either on a supposed *divine* revelation, or else on philosophical grounds. This cannot be dealt with at any length here, but it may be pointed out that immortality is only for that part of man which is inherently immortal in its own nature, *i.e.* the real *Spirit*. But this being immortal in its own nature, it is neither born nor does it die; it is pre-existing as well as post-existing.

"Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;
Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!
Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit for ever;
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!"[2]

But if the normal personality, that which we conventionally call *we*, has none of this life of the spirit in it: what of immortality can there be for that temporary, changing, evanescent personality? "Quench not the spirit", says St. Paul; thereby implying the possibility of this severance of our inherently immortal nature from our temporal illusive 'self'.

The real true *Spiritualism* is to know and live this life of the

[1] If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain." I Cor. 15, 17.
[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, Sir Edwin Arnold's verse translation, *The Song Celestial*.

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Spirit as being one's essential nature here and now; and not that we *become* 'spirits' when we throw off the physical body. The mere reception of messages from the deceased, which is mostly what so-called *Spiritualism* aims at, has no right to be called Spiritualism if at all; and one who has real spiritual knowledge—or even 'faith', you like to call it so—has no need of any spiritistic *proof* of survival.

Now as regards the quarrel, if so it must be called, between Spiritualism and Theosophy, this turns mainly on the above stated unphilosophical use of the term *Spirit* by the Spiritualists, and the failure of the latter to distinguish between the lower personality and the real immortal spiritual Ego; to distinguish between communications—and more particularly phenomena—which can only in their very nature come from, or be caused by, the personality in its immediate after-death state on the 'astral' plane, and communications which have a truly *spiritual* character, and which, as such, are always subjective in their nature, never objective. In the former case the communications are never found to contain anything more than the knowledge, opinions, religious beliefs etc. of the deceased personality; they are coloured through and through with the personal characteristics of the individual as exhibited when here in the flesh, and are no more *spiritual* than was the man before he "passed over". They give rise, indeed, to very conflicting views among spiritualists themselves, precisely as do the conflicting beliefs of individuals here on this side. Thus one set of spiritualists may be found teaching reincarnation,[1] whilst another set, on the authority of their "spirit guides", deny the doctrine *in toto*. There is in fact nothing more 'spiritual' or more authoritative, or more illuminating in these messages than if they had been spoken by these *persons* while in the flesh.

The late Stainton Moses ("M. A. Oxon.") whom Mme. Blavatsky speaks of as "one of the very few *philosophical* Spiritualists"[2] brought a very severe indictment against the Spiritualists of his time. In *Light*, June 22nd, 1889, he writes as follows:

"The ordinary Spiritualist waxes wroth if anyone ventures to impugn his assured knowledge of the future and his absolute certainty of the life to come. Where other men have stretched forth feeble hands groping into the dark future, he walks boldly as one who has a chart and knows his way. . . . He is magnificent in his dealings with man's most cherished expectations. . . . .

[1] See for example the communications from Mr. W. T. Stead's control "Julia" in "*After Death*," p. 149; and the communication from Mr. Stead himself in "*The Blue Island*", p. 146.

[2] *Key to Theosophy*, p. 31.

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"When one comes to deal with this magnificent person in a practical way, what is the result? Very curious and disappointing. He is so sure of his ground that he takes no trouble to ascertain the interpretation which others put upon his facts. The wisdom of the ages has concerned itself with the explanation of what he rightly regards as proven; but he does not turn a passing glance on its researches. He does not even agree altogether with his brother Spiritualist. . . . He is a law unto himself, and a thorn in the side of his neighbours."

Stainton Moses studied Theosophy with Mme. Blavatsky, and there is a very great deal said about him and his 'spirit' guide 'Imperator' in *The Mahatma Letters* to A. P. Sinnett.

In the *Key to Theosophy* (p. 32) Mme. Blavatsky writes as follows:—

ENQ. "I was told that the Theosophical Society was originally founded to crush Spiritualism and belief in the survival of the individuality in man?

THEO. You are misinformed. Our beliefs are all founded on that immortal individuality. But then like so many others, you confuse *personality* with individuality. Your Western psychologists do not seem to have established any clear distinction between the two. Yet it is precisely that difference which gives the key-note to the understanding of Eastern philosophy, and which lies at the root of the divergence between the Theosophical and Spiritualistic teachings. And though it may draw upon us still more the hostility of some Spiritualists, yet I must state here that it is Theosophy which is the *true* and unalloyed Spiritualism, while the modern scheme of that name is, as now practised by the masses, simply transcendental materialism."

The physical phenomena of so-called Spiritualism have of course no more right to that title than any other physical phenomena, however abnormal or extraordinary they may be. How can a 'materialisation' be any more—or any less—a manifestation of 'Spirit' than is the man in his physical body? The discovery of ectoplasm is beginning to give us the clue to the semi-physiological nature of these manifestations; whilst psychical research in general is bringing most of the so-called 'spirit' communications into the region of mere psychology, or the science of *mind* as we know it here and now.

In *The Hibbert Journal* for January 1928, we find an article on "The Phenomena of Mediumistic Trance", by T. W. Mitchell, M.D. Summing up his conclusions, this writer justly says that: "Belief in the reality of telepathy may make belief in survival easier, but at the same time it makes proof of survival more

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difficult, just in so far as we are ignorant of the limits of telepathy between the living."

We may place against this the following passage from an article by H. P. B. in the first volume of *The Theosophist*, page 7, written in 1879.

"We can never know how much of the mediumistic phenomena we *must* attribute to the disembodied, until it is settled how much *can* be done by the embodied, human soul, and the blind but active powers at work within those regions which are yet unexplored by science."

All these psychic matters which are being rediscovered to-day, and are becoming more or less orthodox science, belong to "the wisdom of the ages"; though present day Spiritualists are paying little if any more attention to that wisdom than when "M. A. Oxon." wrote thirty-eight years ago. All that they appear still to be satisfied with is the bare fact that communications *do* come from "the other side"; whilst in many circles, and by some of the most prominent leaders, these communications are accepted most uncritically, as if they were necessarily "gospel truth" because they come from that shadowy region.

Perhaps what is required to-day is a clear distinction between these personal communications and phenomena, to which the term *Spiritism* might possibly be applied—though even that is a concession to the old fallacy that the 'Spirit World' lies just the other side of the grave—and communications which are really *spiritual* in their nature, and come *subjectively*.

This true subjective Spiritualism has never been disputed by H. P. Blavatsky or her Teachers. Thus in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 28) H. P. B. says: "In *psychic*, and so to say, 'Spiritual' Spiritualism, we do believe, most decidedly."

In *The Mahatma Letters* (p. 113) we find K. H. writing:—

"It is not against *true* Spiritualism that we set ourselves, but only against indiscriminate mediumship and—physical manifestations, —materialisations and trans-possessions especially. Could the Spiritualists be only made to understand the difference between *individuality* and *personality*, between *individual* and *personal* immortality and some other truths, they would be more easily persuaded that Occultists may be fully convinced of the *monad's* immortality, and yet deny that of the soul—the vehicle of the *personal Ego*; that they can firmly believe in, and themselves practice spiritual communications and intercourse with the *disembodied* Egos of the *Rupa-Loka*, and yet laugh at the insane idea of 'shaking hands' with a 'Spirit'!; that, finally, that as the matter stands, it is the Occultists and the Theosophists who are true Spiritualists, while the modern sect of that name is composed simply of *materialistic* phenomenalists."

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Again on page 101 he says :—

" Many of the *subjective* spiritual communications—most of them when the sensitives are pure minded—are real ; but it is most difficult for the *uninitiated* medium to fix in his mind the true and correct pictures of what he sees and hears. Some of the phenomena called psychography (though more rarely) are also real. The spirit of the sensitive getting odylised, so to say, by the aura of the Spirit in the Deva-Chan, becomes for a few minutes *that departed personality*, and writes in the hand writing of the latter, in his language and in his thoughts, as they were during his life time. The two spirits become blended in one, and the preponderance of the one over the other during such phenomena determines the preponderance of *personality* in the characteristics exhibited in such writing and ' trance speaking '. What you call ' rapport ' is in plain fact an identity of molecular vibration between the astral part of the incarnate medium and the astral part of the disincarnate personality. . . . The less identical the vibratory impulses, the more mediumistic and less spiritual will be the message. So then, measure your medium's moral state by that of the alleged ' controlling ' Intelligence, and your tests of genuineness leave nothing to be desired."

In *Isis Unveiled* (I, p. 67) H. P. B. says :—

We are far from believing that all the spirits that communicate at circles are of the classes called ' Elemental ' and ' Elementary '. Many—especially among those who control the medium subjectively to speak, write, and otherwise act in various ways—are human, disembodied spirits. Whether the majority of such spirits are good or *bad*, largely depends on the private morality of the medium, much on the circle present, and a great deal on the intensity and object of their purpose. . . . But in any case, human spirits can *never* materialise themselves in *propria personâ*."

In view of these pronouncements it is difficult to see why Spiritualists have been, and are even to-day, so bitter against Madame Blavatsky : except that they like to think that in *all* cases—materialisations and so-called ' spirit ' photographs in particular—their phenomena are all *propria personâ*.

Why do they so often go out of their way to attack her character, as if that had anything to do with the truth or otherwise of the teachings ?—not to mention that the slanders which they continue to repeat have been refuted over and over again.

It is perhaps difficult to say to-day who are " the very few *philosophical* Spiritualists." Are there any at all ? Certainly so far as popular propaganda is concerned one does not find them in evidence. On the other hand there are a few very remarkable books obtained by that higher spiritual *rapport* of which " K. H."

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speaks in the above quotation. These are really spiritual in their nature. One such I might mention on which I place a very high value. It is by an anonymous writer—whether an acknowledged Spiritualist or not I do not know. The title of the work is "*Christ in You*". It was first published in 1910 by Mr. John M. Watkins; and it is a very hopeful sign of the need for and appreciation of a work of this class that over 30,000 copies have been sold.

Whether the following quotation from *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 30) written in 1888, is applicable to-day to "the most learned and intelligent among the Spiritualists" or not, I may leave to the individual judgment—or prejudices—of my readers.

"We have no desire to interfere with the belief of the Spiritualists any more than with any other belief. The *onus probandi* must fall on the believers in 'spirits'.. And at the present moment, while still convinced that the higher sort of manifestations occur through the disembodied souls, their leaders and the most learned and intelligent among the Spiritualists are the first to confess that not *all* the phenomena are produced by spirits. Gradually they will come to recognise the whole truth; but meanwhile we have no right nor desire to proselytize them to our views. The less so, as in the cases of purely *psychic and spiritual manifestations*, we believe in the intercommunication of the spirit of the living man with that of disembodied personalities. We say that in such cases it is not the *spirits* of the dead who descend on earth, but the spirits of the living that *ascend* to the pure Spiritual Souls. In truth there is neither *ascending* nor *descending*, but a change of state or condition for the medium. Although there is hardly a human being whose Ego does not hold free intercourse, during the sleep of his body, with those whom it loved and lost, yet, on account of the positiveness and non-receptivity of its physical envelope and brain, no recollection, or a very dim, dream-like remembrance, lingers in the memory of the person once awake."

The complete teachings which are contained in *The Key to Theosophy* and *The Mahatma Letters* to A. P. Sinnett with reference to the after-death states, and the nature of the communications from so-called 'spirits' in mediumistic circles, are too voluminous to be dealt with here. The student is recommended to collate them and form his own opinion. He will then find a profound philosophy as to the true nature of *Spirit* and the constitution of Man which is utterly lacking in the crude 'Spiritualism' which takes its stand on phenomena which, at the best, are only *psychic* in their nature, and for which the most appropriate term would appear to be *necropathy*—when, indeed, they do not degenerate into simple *necromancy*.

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CHAPTER IX

WORK IN AMERICA, 1873–1878

THE two principal events in this American chapter of H. P. Blavatsky's life were, the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875, and the publication of *Isis Unveiled* in 1877.

We must devote a separate chapter to this latter item, since it involves so much bearing upon the inner and occult side of the life and work of this remarkable woman. In the meanwhile, however, we may glance briefly at the outer events of the preliminary period of her mission.

We have already seen that she went to America by order of her Master in 1873, arriving in New York in July of that year. She had no special orders as to what she had to do when she got there; she was left entirely to her own resources and initiative, in accordance doubtless with the occult method of dealing with *chelas* in the first instance; though the immediate object of sending her to America was afterwards disclosed in a letter which I have already quoted (p. 25) *i.e.*, to bring her and Colonel Olcott together. Meanwhile she herself had to be tested and tried.

Col. Henry Steel Olcott was an officer of the American Army who had rendered good service during the war between the North and the South, and was subsequently employed in a Government Department. He was also a lawyer and an author. Dr. Alexander Wilder, M.D., who was closely associated with the production of *Isis Unveiled*, says of him that he "was a skilful lawyer, and had been employed by the administration at Washington to ferret out alleged violations of law." [1] His status is sufficiently established from the fact that when he left America for India in 1878 with Mme. Blavatsky, he took with him an autograph letter from the President of the United States introducing and recommending him to all Ministers and Consuls of that country. Reproductions of a very large number of testimonials as to his character and services from 1856 to 1878 appeared in the *Supplement* to *The Theosophist*, January, 1881.

Speaking subsequently of his services for Theosophy, Mahatma K. H. says in a letter to Mr Sinnett :—[2]

"Him we can trust under *all* circumstances, and his faithful service is pledged to us come well,—come ill. . . . Where can we find an equal devotion? He is one who never questions, but obeys; who may make innumerable mistakes out of excessive zeal, but never is

[1] *The Word*, Vol. VIII (1908), p. 87. [2] *Mahatma Letters*, p. 14.

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unwilling to repair his fault even at the cost of the greatest self-humiliation; who esteems the sacrifice of comfort and even life something to be cheerfully risked whenever necessary; who will eat any food, or even go without; sleep on any bed, work in any place, fraternise with any outcast, endure any privation for the cause."

The meeting between Mme. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott did not take place till September, 1874, when Olcott was investigating the spiritualistic phenomena of the Eddy Brothers, at Chittenden, in the State of Vermont, on behalf of the *New York Daily Graphic*. It was seeing his letters in the *Graphic* that took Mme. Blavatsky to Chittenden—at least that was the apparent *outer* cause of her going there. The meeting was a fateful one, for it was the commencement of a life-long partnership in the great work which the Masters had projected, and which has developed into what is to-day the world-wide Theosophical Movement.

Col. Olcott records this first meeting with Mme. Blavatsky as follows:—[1]

"Since I am to tell the story of the birth and progress of the Theosophical Society, I must begin at the beginning, and tell how the two founders first met. It was a very prosaic incident; I said "*Permettez moi, Madame*", and gave her a light for her cigarette; our acquaintance began in smoke, but it stirred up a great and permanent fire. . . . The dinner hour at the Eddy's was noon, and it was from the entrance door of the bare and comfortless dining-room that Kappes and I first saw H. P. B. She had arrived shortly before noon with a French Canadian lady, and they were at table as we entered. My eye was first attracted by a scarlet Garibaldian shirt the former wore, as in vivid contrast with the dull colours around. Her hair was then a thick blond mop, worn shorter than the shoulders, and it stood out from her head, silken-soft and crinkled to the roots, like the fleece of a Cotswold ewe. This and the red shirt were what struck my attention before I took in the picture of her features. It was a massive Calmuck face, contrasting in its suggestion of power, culture, and imperiousness, as strangely with the commonplace visages about the room as her red garment did with the grey and white tones of the walls and woodwork and the dull costumes of the rest of the guests. All sorts of cranky people were continually coming and going at Eddy's to see the mediumistic phenomena, and it only struck me on seeing this eccentric lady that this was but one more of the sort. Pausing on the door-sill, I whispered to Kappes, 'Good gracious! look at *that* specimen, will you.' I went straight across, and took a seat opposite to her to indulge my favourite habit of character-study. The two ladies conversed in French, making remarks of no consequence,

[1] *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 1 ff.

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but I saw at once from her accent and fluency of speech that, if not a Parisian, she must at least be a finished French scholar. Dinner over, the two went outside the house, and Mme. Blavatsky rolled herself a cigarette, for which I gave her a light as a pretext to enter into conversation. . . . 'I hesitated before coming here,' she said, 'because I was afraid of meeting that Col. Olcott.' 'Why should you be afraid to meet him, Madame?' I rejoined. 'Oh! because I fear he might write about me in his paper.' I told her that she might make herself perfectly easy on that score, for I felt quite sure Col. Olcott would not mention her in his letters unless she wished it. And I introduced myself."

Referring to Mme. Blavatsky's coming to America, Col. Olcott writes as follows (*op. cit.* p. 20):—

"Among other things about herself H. P. B. told me, when I had got along far enough to know of the Brotherhood and her relation with it, that she had come to Paris the previous year (1873) intending to settle down for some time under the protection of a relative of hers, residing in the Rue de l'Université, but one day received from the 'Brothers' a peremptory order to go to New York to await further orders. The next day she had sailed with little more than money enough to pay her passage. She wrote to her father for funds to be sent her in care of the Russian Consul in New York, but this could not arrive for some time, and as the Consul refused her a loan, she had to set to work to earn her daily bread. She told me she had taken lodgings in one of the poorest quarters in New York—Madison Street—and supported herself by making cravats or artificial flowers—I forget which now—for a kind-hearted Hebrew shop-keeper. She always spoke to me with gratitude about this little man. As yet she had received no intimation as to the future. It was a sealed book. But the following year, in October, 1874, she was ordered to go to Chittenden and find the man who, as it turned out, was to be her future colleague in a great work—myself."

Mr W. Q. Judge, in an interview with the *New York Times*, Jan. 6th, 1889, narrates the following incident in connection with Mme. Blavatsky's voyage to America.[1]

"She reached Havre with a first class ticket to New York, and only two or three dollars over, for she never carried much money. Just as she was going aboard the steamer, she saw a poor woman, accompanied by two little children, who was sitting on the pier, weeping bitterly.

"Why are you crying?" she asked.

"The woman replied that her husband had sent to her from America money to enable her and the children to join him. She

[1] See *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and The Secret Doctrine*, by the Countess Constance Wachtmeister, p. 147.

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had expended it all in the purchase of steerage tickets for herself that turned out to be utterly valueless counterfeits. Where to find the swindler who had so heartlessly defrauded her she did not know, and she was quite penniless in a strange city. 'Come with me', said Mme. Blavatsky, who straightway went to the agent of the steamship company and induced him to exchange her first class ticket for steerage tickets for herself, the poor woman and the children. Anybody who has ever crossed the ocean in the steerage among a crowd of emigrants will appreciate the magnitude of such a sacrifice to a woman of fine sensibilities, and there are few but Mme. Blavatsky who would have been capable of it."

This incident is but typical of the great heart of the woman, the real H. P. B., which impelled her to a life-long sacrifice of all her personal advantages of birth and position, of health and comfort, that she might give to the world the great message with which she was entrusted; that message which all the great spiritual teachers in all ages have proclaimed, now in one form, now in another. In her literary productions she has sought to unify these teachings, and to show that they are all derived from the great primal source of the Hierarchy of Initiates.

After this first meeting of the two Founders of the Theosophical Movement which I have recorded above, the real work began. Mme. Blavatsky resided for some time in New York, being principally occupied, as I have shown in the last chapter, in a vigorous campaign in defence of Spiritualism. In 1875 she resided for a time in Philadelphia, and Col. Olcott records in *Old Diary Leaves* many instances of her occult powers which she exhibited to him and to others at that time; gradually educating him, as he says, to an understanding and appreciation of the reality and profundity of the knowledge of the Eastern Sages.

One incident out of the numerous ones in which Col. Olcott came into personal contact with members of this Hierarchy may be given here. It is recorded in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 379.

Col. Olcott having explained that he had retired for the night, and was sitting in his room smoking and reading, continues :—

"I was quietly reading, with all my attention centred on my book. Nothing in the evening's incidents had prepared me for seeing an adept in his astral body; I had not wished for it, tried to conjure it up in my fancy, nor in the least expected it. All at once, as I read with my shoulder a little turned from the door, there came a gleam of something white in the right-hand corner of my right eye; I turned my head, dropped my book in astonishment, and saw towering above me in his great stature an Oriental clad in white garments, and wearing

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a head-cloth or turban of amber-striped fabric, hand-embroidered in yellow floss-silk. Long raven hair hung from under his turban to the shoulders; his black beard, parted vertically on the chin in the Rajput fashion, was twisted up at the ends and carried over the ears; his eyes were alive with soul-fire; eyes which were at once benignant and piercing in glance; the eyes of a mentor and a judge, but softened by the love of a father who gazes on a son needing counsel and guidance. He was so grand a man, so imbued with the majesty of moral strength, so luminously spiritual, so evidently above average humanity, that I felt abashed in his presence, and bowed my head and bent my knee as one does before a god or a god-like personage. A hand was lightly laid on my head, a sweet though strong voice bade me be seated, and when I raised my eyes, the Presence was seated in the other chair beyond the table. He told me he had come at the crisis when I needed him; that my actions had brought me to this point; that it lay with me alone whether he and I should meet often in this life as co-workers for the good of mankind; that a great work was to be done for humanity, and I had the right to share in it if I wished; that a mysterious tie, not now to be explained to me, had drawn my colleague and myself together; a tie which could not be broken, however strained it might be at times. He told me things about H. P. B. that I may not repeat, as well as things about myself, that do not concern third parties. How long he was there I cannot tell: it might have been a half-hour or an hour; it seemed but a minute, so little did I take note of the flight of time. At last he rose, I wondering at his great height and observing the sort of splendour of his countenance—not an external shining, but the soft gleam, as it were, of an inner light—that of the spirit. Suddenly the thought came into my mind: 'What if this be but hallucination; what if H. P. B. has cast a hypnotic glamour over me? I wish I had some tangible object to prove to me that he has really been here; something that I might handle after he is gone!' The Master smiled kindly as if reading my thought, untwisted the *fehtâ* from his head, benignantly saluted me in farewell and—was gone: his chair was empty; I was alone with my emotions! Not quite alone, though, for on the table lay the embroidered head-cloth; a tangible and enduring proof that I had not been 'overlooked' or psychically befooled, but had been face to face with one of the Elder Brothers of Humanity, one of the Masters of our dull pupil-race."

The appearance of the 'double' of a living person at a distance from the physical body is now a well-recognised psychical phenomenon, but such was very far from being the case at that time; and indeed in 1885, when the Society for Psychical Research published their condemnatory Report on the phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society, they rejected the overwhelming evidence of Col. Olcott and many others in connection

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with the appearance of the Mahatmas—not merely in their 'astral' bodies but also *in propria persona*—as being accounted for on the supposition that they were due "either (a) to deliberate deception carried out by or at the instigation of Mme. Blavatsky, or (b) to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention on the part of witnesses." [1]

Yet how could any of these hypotheses apply to the above case? Col. Olcott was cross-examined by the Committee when he gave evidence before them in London in 1885, and he then showed them the *fehtâ* which was left with him by the Mahatma.[2] Of course there was only his own word for the genuineness of this, and "for the purposes of psychical research" this is never considered to be sufficient without confirmatory evidence. Nevertheless, we have either to accept his evidence or else accuse him of being a deliberate liar. There could be no question of self-deception in this case, nor was there any possibility of the Mahatma having been personated by someone who entered and left by the door; though Mr. Hodgson in his subsequent Report sweepingly declares all such appearances to have been fraudulent personations by the Coulombs and others. Besides, the personality of the visitor, and the nature of the conversation precludes any such hypothesis in this case, as in others also.

This incident, if it were a singular and isolated one, would perhaps by itself not be sufficient to establish in a general way the possibility of such phenomena; but there is a mass of cumulative evidence given by reliable witnesses which can hardly fail to convince any but those who would deny all such phenomena on *a priori* grounds. We may mention here that the S. P. R. in their final Report specifically absolved Col. Olcott from any complicity in fraudulent representations or phenomena.

Psychical research has itself since that time come very near indeed to the proof of the possibility, if not the actuality, of the possession of latent powers in many people which make them capable of producing such-like phenomena. At all events it has definitely proved that the appearance of the double, both unconsciously and by conscious intention, is an actual phenomenon. In 1886 Messrs E. Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, and F. Podmore, all members of the S. P. R. Committee above mentioned, published their work entitled *Phantasms of the Living*, which contains a great many verified and accepted instances of such projections of the double. Later on, in 1903, Mr. Myers published his classical work *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. In that work the

[1] See Appendix, page 260 *infra*. [2] See *First Report of the Committee*, p. 45.

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phenomenon is again definitely accepted, and Mr Myers practically admits that one might acquire the power to project the double at will. It is in fact only one step from the recorded instances of a *casual* exercise of this power to that of a perfectly trained capacity to do it at any time. Mr. Myers says in reference to this :—[1]

"I have seen no evidence to show that anyone can claim to be an adept in such matters—has learned a method of thus appearing at will. Some such power as this is frequently claimed in oriental books as attainable by mystic practices. We have not thus far been fortunate enough to discover any performances corresponding to these promises."

Well, that may perhaps be so notwithstanding all the evidence given to Mr Myers himself by theosophical witnesses.[2]

But Mr. Myers goes on to say (p. 211) :—

"In these self-projections we have before us, I do not say the most useful, but the most extraordinary achievement of the human will. What can lie further outside any known capacity than the power to cause a semblance of oneself to appear at a distance? What can be a more *central* action—more manifestly the outcome of whatsoever is deepest and most unitary in man's whole being? Here, indeed, begins the justification of the conception expressed at the beginning of this chapter :—that we should now see the subliminal self no longer as a mere chain of eddies or backwaters, in some way secluded from the main stream of man's being, but rather as itself the central and potent current, the most truly identifiable with the man himself. Other achievements have their manifest limit; where is the limit here? The spirit has shown itself in part dissociated from the organism; to what point may its dissociation go? It has shown some independence, some intelligence, some permanence. To what degree of intelligence, independence, permanence, may it conceivably attain? Of all vital phenomena, I say, this is the most significant; this self-projection is the one definite act which it seems as though a man might perform equally well before and after bodily death."

This would appear to be a complete acknowledgment of the fact.

Can we doubt that if the mass of evidence accumulated in Messrs. Gurney, Myers and Podmore's works had been available in 1885, when Mr Hodgson's obviously pre-judged "investigations" were made, and his *Report* of his visit to India published,[3] the verdict would have been very different. We may admit that "for the purposes of psychical research" it might be considered

[1] See p. 210 of the abridged 1907 edition of his work.

[2] See the *Preliminary Report of the S.P.R. on the Phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society*. This Report was issued privately, and does not appear in the ordinary *Proceedings* of the Society.

[3] See Appendix *infra*.

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that the evidence was incomplete, since the "agents"—in this case the Mahatmas—were not available for cross-examination by the learned members of the S. P. R. Nevertheless, in the above instance recorded by Col. Olcott we have, as already said, no alternative but to accept his word or else to write him down as a deliberate liar: and the same applies to his testimony respecting many other occasions on which the Mahatmas were seen, as certified by many other witnesses besides himself. The fact is that although individual cases might be considered to be insufficient by themselves, the *cumulative* testimony is overwhelming; and this is a conclusion which became more and more apparent to me after I joined the Theosophical Society, and became better acquainted with the personalities concerned, as well as with H. P. B. herself. Making every allowance for "spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention", and even for "deliberate deception", it was impossible to conceive that these hypotheses would cover the whole of the cases; for it would practically involve conspiracy to defraud in the case of everyone concerned in the matter, and would ruin the character of witnesses whose word in any other matter would be unhesitatingly accepted.

Another statement by Mr. Myers may perhaps with advantage be quoted here as covering much that is definitely taught in Occult Science.

"'What definite reason do I know why this should *not* be true?'—this is the question which needs to be pushed home again and again if one is to realise—and not in the ordinary paths of scientific speculation alone—how profound our ignorance of the Universe really is.

"My own ignorance, at any rate, I recognise to be such that my notions of the probable and improbable in the Universe are not of weight enough to lead me to set aside any facts which seem to me well attested, and which are not shown by experts actually to conflict with any better-established facts or generalisations. Wide though the range of established science may be, it represents, as its most far-sighted prophets are the first to admit, a narrow glance only into the unknown and infinite realm of law.

"The evidence, then, leading me thus unresistingly along, has led me to this main difference from our early treatment of veridical phantasms. Instead of starting from a root-conception of a telepathic impulse merely passing from mind to mind, I now start from a root-conception of the dissociability of the self, of the possibility that different fractions of the personality can act so far independently of each other that the one is not conscious of the other's action." [1]

[1] *Human Personality*, p. 190, abridged edition of 1907.

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It will readily be recognised by theosophical students what a near approach this is to teachings with which they are familiar; and in particular to the functions and operation of the various 'principles' constituting the personality and the individuality of man, as referred to by me in the previous Chapter V.

What we are pleased to call our normal *self* is merely a temporary "dissociated complex" of a larger Self—the "Higher Self"—and even that is but a dissociated complex of a still higher, or more unitary SELF. Between the higher and the lower are any number of such dissociated complexes or *selves*, which the lower *manas*, the intellect, places as a succession of states of consciousness in the time order, and calls them "reincarnations": only realising them as past, present, and future. But there is no such time-order for the unitary SELF, where past, present, and future exist as an eternal NOW. Hence the teaching of all the Eastern Sages that the phenomenal world with its time and space *appearance*—or shall we say with the new physics, 'time-space'?—is pure illusion, which can only be overpassed when intellect is transcended and the real SELF known in mystical consciousness. Thus in the *Vivekachudamani*, we read :—[1]

"Man's circle of birth and death comes through the fault of attributing reality to the unreal, but this false attribution is built up by mind; this is the effective cause of birth and death and sorrow for him who has the faults of passion and darkness and is without discernment." (¶ 182.)

"For when all delusions of the understanding are cast away without remainder, then this whole universe, perceived as innumerable forms through unwisdom, becomes the Eternal only." (230.)

"For him who has discerned the true being of the Eternal, the ancient circle of birth and death has ceased. If it remain, he has not discerned the being of the Eternal; it still lies beyond him." (444)

"From the discernment that 'I am the Eternal', works heaped up through hundreds of millions of ages are dissolved, as dream-works on waking." (449).

We find Mahatma K. H., when writing to Mr. Sinnett, and endeavouring to tell him of the difficulty of communicating the Occult knowledge to the merely intellectual man, speaking as follows (p. 29).

"I feel even irritated at having to use these three clumsy words—past, present and future! Miserable concepts of the objective phases of the Subjective Whole, they are about as ill adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving."

[1] Translated by Chas. Johnston under the title of *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom.*

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Bergson comes very near to representing this transcendental philosophy; but as he never really ventures into the region of Mysticism, nor even into that of phenomenal psychology, he never really transcends the time-space order of intellect.

But one might well seek to know in what respects Mr. Myers could bring forward "definite reasons" in connection with the theosophical phenomena connected with Mme. Blavatsky and the Mahatmas why "this should *not* be true." In any case the S. P. R. could not prove that the Mahatmas did *not* exist; nor could they prove that they did *not* possess the power of projecting the astral double at will, as was done in some verified and accepted cases investigated by the S. P. R.

In view of the present position of psychical research, it is quite time that the Society should reconsider the sweeping verdict and stigma of fraud and charlatanism which they attached to Mme. Blavatsky at a time when these phenomena were so new, and apparently so revolutionary as to be almost inevitably rejected on *a priori* grounds; and as a matter of fact were so rejected.

The question of the possibility of these and other occult phenomena is not merely a question of immediate evidence. If these phenomena—which, according to theosophical teachings, touch merely the borderland of the possibilities of the powers latent in Man—are to be rejected *a priori*, such rejection strikes at the very root of religion itself in its highest and best connotation as the effort of Man to realise *his essential spiritual and divine nature.*

But if Man's inner essential nature is divine; if it is the Christ *in* you: then all the powers that lie hidden in what Mr. Myers calls "the unknown and infinite realm of law" are his. That Man's inner and essential nature *is* divine has been the teaching of Sages, Seers, and Mystics of all ages, ever since the unknown writers of the *Upanishads* summed up the teaching in the aphorism THAT ART THOU: and wrote that "Verily he who hath seen, heard, comprehended and known the *Self*, by him is this entire Universe known." [1]

In a more recent Scripture we read: "The works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do."

Where, then, are the *a priori* reasons for refusing to believe in the possibility of such comparatively simple powers and command of the physical and psychic part of our nature as the Mahatmas are reputed to possess, and some of which were actually

[1] *Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad*, II, 4, 5.

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demonstrated by them, and by H. P. B. herself? Is it because our learned savants are unwilling to admit that any human beings can possibly know more than *they* do of the laws of nature? Is it because they imagine that these deeper secrets of nature—if they are really in possession of the Adepts—would have been common property, or at all events commonly exhibited: there being no need to guard them so secretly? But such guardianship has been recognised in all ages. Thus Plotinus says:—

"This, therefore, is manifested by the mandate of the mysteries, which orders that they shall not be divulged to those who are uninitiated. For as that which is divine cannot be unfolded to the multitude, this mandate forbids the attempt to elucidate it to any one but him who is fortunately able to perceive it." (Enn. VI, 9, 11.)

Writing to Mr. Sinnett in reference to this secrecy, Mahatma K. H. explains exactly the same thing, that is to say that the knowledge can only in the nature of the case be communicated to "him who is fortunately able to perceive it."

"It is the common mistake of people that we willingly wrap ourselves and our powers in mystery—that we wish to keep our knowledge to ourselves, and of our own will refuse 'wantonly and deliberately' to communicate it The truth is that till the neophyte attains to the condition necessary for that degree of Illumination to which, and for which, he is entitled and fitted, most *if not all* of the Secrets are *incommunicable*. The receptivity must be equal to the desire to instruct. The illumination *must come from within*. Till then no hocus-pocus of incantations, or mummery of appliances, no metaphysical lectures or discussion, no self-imposed penance can give it. All these are but means to an end, and all we can do is to direct the use of such means as have been empirically found by the experience of ages to conduce to the required object. And this was, and has been *no secret* for thousands of years. Fasting, meditation, chastity of thought, word and deed; silence for certain periods of time to enable nature herself to speak to him who comes to her for information; government of the animal passions and impulses; utter unselfishness of intention; the use of certain incense and fumigations for physiological purposes, have been published as the means since the days of Plato and Iamblichus in the West, and since the far earlier times of our Indian *Rishis*." (p. 283.)

Are our modern savants prepared, even in the first essential, namely, a deep *faith* in the possibilities of their own inner nature? Are they prepared to comply with the age-long rules under which alone they can be fitted for the difficult and dangerous enterprise of forcing their evolution in advance of the Race: to a point to

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which the Race as a whole will only attain long ages hence—but yet will surely attain ?

Man evolves from the animal—not to go any further back—to the human ; and from the human to the divine ; and from the divine to the inconceivable and inexpressible NOUMENON from whence he set out on his long pilgrimage through the *phenomenal* worlds. But there is no break in the scale of evolution from the highest to the lowest, and from the lowest to the highest on the return journey—such at least is the teaching of Theosophy.

Mineral, and plant, and animal we see evolving below us—yet we still partake of their nature and evolution. But those who have passed on to a higher phase we see but rarely—though they also partake of *our* evolutionary struggles. And when they do endeavour to disclose to the world the possibilities of that higher phase to which they have attained, their message is for the most part received with incredulity and scorn.

> " One or two of us hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionally, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others—wiser as it would now seem—held differently."[1]

If there are any who think that if the higher science really exists, they at least are worthy and prepared to be initiated into it, let them carefully consider what is set forth in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett,* in the Section, dealing with Probation and Chelaship. Let them note how A. O. Hume, Sinnett himself, and many others failed to comply with, or even to appreciate, the most elementary conditions required from the candidate for initiation. The athlete must train if he would win the race ; the doctor, the lawyer, the learned professor, must qualify in their own particular manner for their respective positions. Is it to be supposed that the " Kingly Science ", the *Raja Yoga,* can be attained without the corresponding training and the preliminary qualifications ; without the *capacity* to " enter the Path " which leads to liberation and Adeptship ? Not thus have the great spiritual teachers ever taught. The very first condition is renunciation of desire for any of those things that the world holds to be best worth striving for.

> " Four higher roadways be : only those feet
> May tread them which have done with earthly things."

H. P. Blavatsky was no saint in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but she *did* have this preliminary qualification. Her

[1] *The Mahatma Letters,* p. 263.

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whole life was a renunciation. She never asked for or sought anything that this world could give for herself. Led in the first instance by the inner urge to wander the Earth in search of the hidden occult knowledge, in due course she found it; and when it became her mission to direct the footsteps of others to "the road that leads to the Heart of the Universe", she concentrated her whole energies on that work, sacrificing position, health, wealth, and reputation to give the message to the world.

But the learned savants of that time wrote her down a fraud and a charlatan; and half the world to-day, without any real knowledge of the facts of the case, or any capacity for appreciating the profound spiritual teachings contained in her works, ignorantly echoes this condemnation.

We may now turn to the record of the inception of the Theosophical Society. H. P. B. returned to New York some time in 1875, and occupied rooms at 46, Irving Place. Meanwhile Col. Olcott had made an attempt to form a "Miracle Club" with the principal object of investigating spiritualistic phenomena. This scheme, however, fell through; but later on, on the 7th September, a meeting was held at H. P. B.'s rooms, when Mr. George Henry Felt lectured on "The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians." A report of the meeting appeared in one of the New York dailies as follows.[1]

"One movement of great importance has just been inaugurated in New York under the lead of Col. Henry S. Olcott, in the organization of a Society, to be known as the Theosophical Society. The suggestion was entirely unpremeditated, and was made on the evening of the 7th inst. n the parlors of Mme. Blavatsky, where a company of seventeen ladies and gentlemen had assembled to meet Mr. George Henry Felt whose discovery of the geometrical figures of the Egyptian Cabbala may be regarded as among the most surprising feats of the human intellect. The company included several persons of great learning, and some of wide personal influence. The Managing Editors of two religious papers; the co-editors of two literary magazines; an Oxford LL.D.; a venerable Jewish scholar and traveller of repute; an editorial writer of one of the New York morning dailies; the President of the New York Society of Spiritualists; Mr. C. C. Massey, an English visitor (barrister-at-law); Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten and Dr. Britten; two New York lawyers besides Col. Olcott; a partner in a Philadelphia publishing house; a well-known physician; and, most notable of all, Mme. Blavatsky herself, comprised Mr. Felt's audience. . . . During a convenient pause in the conversation, Col. Olcott rose, and after briefly sketching the present condition of

[1] See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 118.

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the spiritualistic movement; the attitude of its antagonists, the Materialists; the irrepressible conflict between science and religious sectaries; the philosophical character of the ancient theosophies and their sufficiency to reconcile all existing antagonism; and the apparently sublime achievement of Mr. Felt, in extracting the key to the architecture of Nature from the scanty fragments of ancient lore left us by the devastating hands of the Moslem and Christian fanatics of the early centuries; he proposed to form a nucleus around which might gather all the enlightened and brave souls who are willing to work together for the collection and diffusion of knowledge. His plan was to organise a society of Occultists, and begin at once to collect a library; and to diffuse information concerning those secret laws of Nature which were so familiar to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, but are totally unknown by our modern world of science."

This was the inception of the Theosophical Society. Several meetings followed at which officers were nominated and a constitution drafted; and finally, on the 17th November, 1875, the Society was formally constituted, and Col. Olcott, who had been elected President, delivered his presidential address.

The first officers of the Society were as follows:—

President, Henry S. Olcott; *Vice-Presidents*, Dr. S. Pancoast and G. H. Felt; *Corresponding Secretary*, Mme. H. P. Blavatsky; *Recording Secretary*, John Storer Cobb; *Treasurer*, Henry J. Newton; *Librarian*, Charles Sotheran; *Councillors*, Rev. J. H. Wiggin, R. B. Westbrook, LL.D., Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, C. E. Simmons, M.D., and Herbert D. Monachesi; *Counsel to the Society*, William Q. Judge.

The Theosophical Society thus established continued its meetings more or less in private; and indeed, at a meeting of the Council in March, 1876, it was resolved to adopt certain signs of recognition to be used by the Fellows for admission to the meetings. The Society, however, did not flourish. The influential Spiritualists who had at first joined did not find matters to their liking, and resigned their membership; and Col. Olcott records that from the close of 1876 to that of 1878, when he and Mme. Blavatsky left for India, the Society was comparatively inactive. But the two Founders themselves were by no means inactive. There was a continual flow of visitors to their residence, and Col. Olcott records the general state of affairs in the following words:—[1]

"The idea was never more vigorous, nor the movement more full of vitality, than when it was divested of its external corporateness, and

[1] *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 331.

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its spirit was compressed into our brains, hearts and souls. Our Headquarters' life was ideal throughout those closing years. United in devotion to a common cause, in daily intercourse with our Masters, absorbed in altruistic thoughts, dreams, and deeds, we two existed in that roaring metropolis as untouched by its selfish rivalries and ignoble ambitions as though we occupied a cabin by the seaside, or a cave in the primeval forest. I am not exaggerating when I say that a more unworldly tone would not be found in any other home in New York. The social distinctions of our visitors were left outside our threshold; and rich or poor, Christian, Jew, or Infidel, learned or unlearned, our visitors received the same hearty welcome and patient attention to their questions upon religious and other subjects. H. P. B. was born so great an aristocrat as to be at ease in the highest society, and so thorough a democratic altruist as to give cordial hospitality to the humblest caller."

It is interesting to note that Col. Olcott records that on the 5th April, 1878, Mr. T. A. Edison sent in a signed application for membership in the Theosophical Society.

Shortly after the formation of the T. S., Mme. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott both took suites of rooms at 433 West 34th Street, and Mme. Blavatsky settled down to continuous work at the writing of *Isis Unveiled*, Col. Olcott working with her in the evenings after returning from his professional duties. The work was finally completed and published in 1877; but the narrative of this we must reserve for our next chapter.

On the 8th July, 1878, Mme. Blavatsky took out naturalisation papers as a citizen of the United States of America.

On June 27th, 1878, the first branch of the T. S. was formed in London by the following persons: J. Storer Cobb, C. C. Massey, Dr. C. Carter Blake, Dr. George Wyld, Dr. H. J. Billing, and Miss E. Kislingbury. Mr. C. C. Massey was elected President, and Miss Kislingbury Secretary.

There is one incident in Mme. Blavatsky's life at this time which has been the subject of much adverse comment, and which had perhaps better be mentioned here. This was her second marriage in Philadelphia, at the end of 1876 to a Mr. B——. I had better give the narrative in Col. Olcott's words.[1]

"One of my Chittenden letters in the *Daily Graphic* aroused the interest of Mr. B—a Russian subject—and led him to write me from Philadelphia expressing his strong desire to meet my colleague and talk over Spiritualism. No objection being made by her, he came over to New York towards the end of 1875, and they met. It turned out that he fell at once into a state of profound admiration, which he

[1] *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 55.

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expressed verbally, and later, by letter, to her and to me. She persistently rebuffed him when she saw that he was matrimonially inclined, and grew very angry at his persistence. The only effect was to deepen his devotion, and he finally threatened to take his life unless she would accept his hand. Meanwhile, before this crisis arrived, she had gone to Philadelphia, put up at the same hotel, and received his daily visits. He declared that he would ask nothing but the privilege of watching over her, that his feeling was one of unselfish adoration for her intellectual grandeur, and that he would make no claim to any of the privileges of wedded life. He so besieged her that—in what seemed to me a freak of madness—she finally consented to take him at his word and be nominally his wife; but with the stipulation that she should retain her own name, and be as free and independent of all disciplinary restraint as she then was. So they were lawfully married by a most respectable Unitarian Clergyman of Philadelphia, and set up their *lares* and *penates* in a small house in Sansom Street, where they entertained me as guest on my second visit to that city—after my book was finished and brought out. The ceremony took place, in fact, while I was stopping in the house, although I was not present as a witness. But I saw them when they returned from the clergyman's residence after the celebration of the rite.

"When I privately expressed to her my amazement at what I conceived to be her act of folly in marrying a man younger than herself, and inexpressibly her inferior in mental capacity; one, moreover, who could never be even an agreeable companion to her, and with very little means—his mercantile business not being as yet established—she said it was a misfortune that she could not escape. Her fate and his were temporarily linked together by an inexorable Karma, and the union was to her in the nature of a punishment for her awful pride and combativeness, which impeded her spiritual evolution, while no lasting harm would result to the young man. The inevitable result was that this ill-starred couple dwelt together but a few months. The husband forgot his vows of unselfishness, and, to her ineffable disgust, became an importunate lover. She fell dangerously ill in June from a bruise on one knee caused by a fall the previous winter in New York upon the stone flagging of a sidewalk, which ended in violent inflammation of the periostem and partial mortification of the leg; and as soon as she got better (which she did in one night, by one of her quasi-miraculous cures, after an eminent surgeon had declared that she would die unless the leg was instantly amputated), she left him and would not go back. When after many months of separation, he saw her determination was unchangeable, and that his business through his mismanagement, was going to the dogs, he engaged counsel and sued for a divorce on the ground of desertion. The summonses were served upon her in New York, Mr. Judge acting as her counsel, and on the 25th May, 1878, the divorce was granted. The original documents

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have ever since been in my custody. That is the whole story, and it will be seen that it shows no criminality nor illegality on her part, nor any evidence that she derived the slightest worldly advantage from the marriage beyond a very moderate maintenance, without a single luxury, for a few months."

In the Autumn of 1878, indications were given by the Masters that work was to be taken up in India, and preparations were made to clear up everything in New York : Col. Olcott being now prepared to give up all his worldly connections and prospects to follow the call he had received. Besides Mme. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, the party for India consisted of Miss Bates, an English governess, and Mr. Wimbridge, an artist and architect. The actual departure was made on the 19th December, in the steamship *Canada* bound for London, where they arrived on the 3rd January, 1879.

On the 17th January the party left London for Liverpool, where they embarked for Bombay on the *Speke Hall*. The voyage was a wretched one, as the ship was badly found, and very much overladen ; but at last they made Bombay harbour, on the 16th February, and on landing were met by several native gentlemen who were already members of the Theosophical Society—Mr. Mooljee Thackersey, Pandit Shyamji Krishnavarma, Mr Ballajee Sitaram, and Mr Hurrychund Chintamon. They were accommodated in a house in the Hindu quarter of the town ; and so began this second and memorable period of the great work.

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CHAPTER X

THE WRITING OF "ISIS UNVEILED"

MADAME BLAVATSKY'S first great literary effort to present the Occult philosophy and teachings to the world was the writing of *Isis Unveiled.*

The publication of this work in two volumes in New York, in 1877, marks the commencement of her world-wide literary and occult reputation. It created an immense *furore* ; and the first edition was exhausted in ten days. Many of the American Journals reviewed it most favourably ; though of course there were also many adverse criticisms, both flippant and prejudiced. Here are a few of the notices.

"This monumental work . . . about everything relating to magic, mystery, witchcraft, religion, spiritualism, which would be valuable for an encyclopaedia."—*North American Review.*

"It must be acknowledged that she is a remarkable woman, who has read more, seen more, and thought more than most wise men. Her work abounds in quotations from a dozen different languages, not for the purpose of a vain display of erudition, but to substantiate her peculiar views. Her pages are garnished with foot-notes, establishing, as her authorities, some of the profoundest writers of the past. To a large class of readers, this remarkable work will prove of absorbing interest . . . demands the earnest attention of thinkers, and merits an analytic reading."—*Boston Evening Transcript.*

"The appearance of erudition is stupendous. References to, and quotations from, the most unknown and obscure writers in all languages abound, interspersed with allusions to writers of the highest repute, which have evidently been more than skimmed through."—*New York Independent.*

"An extremely readable and exhaustive essay upon the paramount importance of re-establishing the Hermetic Philosophy in a world which blindly believes that it has outgrown it."—*New York World.*

"A marvellous book both in matter and manner of treatment. Some idea may be formed of the rarity and extent of its contents when the index alone comprises fifty pages, and we venture nothing in saying that such an index of subjects was never before compiled by any human being. . . . But the book is a curious one, and will no doubt find its way into libraries because of the unique subject matter it contains. . . . It will certainly prove attractive to all who are interested in the history, theology, and the mysteries of the ancient world."—*Daily Graphic.*

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"The present work is the fruit of her remarkable course of education, and amply confirms her claims to the character of an adept in secret science, and even to the rank of a hierophant in the exposition of its mystic lore."—*New York Tribune.*

"It is easy to forecast the reception of this book. With its striking peculiarities, its audacity, its versatility, and the prodigious variety of subjects which it notices and handles, it is one of the remarkable productions of the century."—*New York Herald.*

Mr. Quaritch, the well-known London bookseller, became the English agent for the work, and wrote :—"The book will evidently make its way in England and become a classic. I am very glad to be the English agent."

But as a matter of fact there is very much in the work which, as a literary composition, lends itself to adverse criticism. Mme. Blavatsky herself has fully recognised this, and has readily acknowledged it. In an article in *Lucifer*, her London Magazine, Vol. VIII, p. 241 she wrote as follows, under the heading "My Books."

"Of all the books I have put my name to, this particular one is, in literary arrangement, the worst and most confused. . . . Carefully analysed from a strictly literary and critical standpoint, *Isis* was full of misprints and misquotations ; it contained useless repetitions, most irritating digressions, and to the casual reader, unfamiliar with various aspects of metaphysical ideas and symbols, as many apparent contradictions ; that much of the matter in it ought not to be there at all ; and also that it has some very gross mistakes due to the many alterations in the proof-reading in general, and word corrections in particular. Finally, that the work, for reasons that will now be explained, has no system in it ; and that it looks in truth, as remarked by a friend, as if a mass of independent paragraphs, having no connection with each other, had been well shaken up in a waste paper basket, and then taken out at random and—published.

"Such is also now my sincere opinion. The full consciousness of this sad truth dawned upon me when, for the first time after its publication in 1877, I read the work through from the first page to the last, in India, in 1881. And from that date to the present, I have never ceased to say what I thought of it, and to give my honest opinion of *Isis* whenever I had an opportunity of so doing. This was done to the great disgust of some, who warned me that I was spoiling its sale. But as my chief object in writing it was neither personal fame nor gain, but something far higher, I cared little for such warnings. For more than ten years this unfortunate 'masterpiece', this 'monumental work', as some reviews have called it, with its hideous metamorphoses of one word into another, thereby entirely transforming the meaning, with its misprints and wrong quotation marks, has given

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me more anxiety and trouble than anything else during a long lifetime which has ever been more full of thorns than roses.

"But in spite of these too great admissions, I maintain that *Isis Unveiled* contains a mass of original and hitherto never divulged information on occult subjects. That this is so, is proved by the fact that the work has been fully appreciated by all those who have been intelligent enough to discern the kernel, and pay little attention to the shell, to give the preference to the idea and not to the form, regardless of its minor shortcomings. Prepared to take upon myself—*vicariously*, as I will show—the sins of all the external, purely literary defects of the work, I defend the ideas and teachings in it, with no fear of being charged with conceit, since *neither ideas nor teachings are mine*, as I have always declared; and I maintain that both are of the greatest value to mystics and students of Theosophy. So true is this that when *Isis* was first published, some of the best American papers were lavish in its praise—even to exaggeration. . . .

"What I am determined to do is to give *facts*, undeniable and not to be gainsaid, simply by stating the peculiar, well known to many, but now almost forgotten circumstances under which I wrote my first English work. I give them *seriatim*.

(1) When I came to America in 1873, I had not spoken English—which I had learnt in my childhood colloquially—for over thirty years. I could understand when I read it, but could hardly speak the language.

(2) I had never been at any college, and what I knew I had taught myself; I have never pretended to any scholarship in the sense of modern research; I had then hardly read any scientific European works and knew little of Western philosophy and sciences. The little which I had studied and learned of these disgusted me with its materialism, its limitations, narrow cut-and-dried spirit of dogmatism, and its air of superiority over the philosophies and sciences of antiquity.

(3) Until 1874 I had never written one word in English, nor had I published any work in any language. Therefore—

(4) I had not the least idea of literary rules. The art of writing books, of preparing them for print and publication, reading and correcting proofs, were so many closed secrets to me.

(5) When I started to write that which developed later into *Isis Unveiled*, I had no more idea than the man in the moon what would come of it. I had no plan; did not know whether it would be an essay, a pamphlet, a book, or an article. I knew that *I had to write it*, that was all. I began the work before I knew Col. Olcott well, and some months before the formation of the Theosophical Society.

Thus the conditions for becoming the author of an English Theosophical and scientific work were hopeful, as everyone will see. Nevertheless, I had written enough to fill four such volumes as *Isis*, before I submitted my work to Col. Olcott. Of course he said that everything—save the pages dictated—[by the Masters] had to be re-written. Then we started on our literary labours, and worked together every

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evening. Some pages, the English of which he had corrected, I copied; others, which would yield to no mortal correction, he used to read aloud from my pages, Englishing them verbally as he went on dictating to me from my almost undecipherable MSS. It is to him that I am indebted for the English in *Isis*. . . . When the work was ready, we submitted it to Professor Alexander Wilder, the well-known scholar and Platonist of New York, who after reading the matter, recommended it to Mr. Bouton for publication. Next to Col. Olcott, it is Professor Wilder who did the most for me. It is he who made the excellent *Index*, who corrected the Greek, Latin and Hebrew words, suggested quotations and wrote the greater part of the *Introduction* 'Before the Veil'. If this was not acknowledged in the work, the fault is not mine, but because it was Dr. Wilder's express wish that his name should not appear except in foot-notes.[1]

"I had no idea of correcting galley-proofs; Col. Olcott had little leisure to do so; and the result was that I made a mess of it from the beginning. Before we were through with the first three chapters, there was a bill for six hundred dollars for corrections and alterations, and I had to give up the proof-reading. Pressed by the publisher, Col. Olcott doing all that he possibly could do, but having no time except in the evenings, and Dr. Wilder far away at Jersey City, the result was that the proofs and pages of *Isis* passed through a number of willing but not very careful hands, and were finally left to the tender mercies of the publisher's proof-reader. Can one wonder after this if 'Vaivasvata' (Manu) became transformed in the published volumes into 'Vishvāmitra', that thirty-six pages of the Index were irretrievably lost, and quotes placed where none were needed (as in some of my own sentences !), and left out entirely in many a passage cited from various authors? If asked why these fatal mistakes have not been corrected in a subsequent edition, my answer is simple; the plates were stereotyped; and notwithstanding all my desire to do so, I could not put it into practice, as the plates were the property of the publisher; I had no money to pay for the expenses, and finally the

[1] Dr. Wilder contributes an exceedingly interesting article to *The Word*, Vol. VII (1908), p. 77, on "How *Isis Unveiled* was written." *The Word* was a Theosophical monthly, published in New York, and in a foot-note to the article the Editor says:—"The one individual best able to bear witness, from among all who had personal knowledge of the authorship, is Alexander Wilder, physician and scholar, the most able of the Platonists. To-day, at 85 years, he has the buoyancy of youth, the mental virility of manhood, and all with his Platonic 'enthusiasm'."

Dr. Wilder read the original MS. of *Isis* for the publisher, Mr. J. W. Bouton of New York, and reported that:—"The manuscript was the product of great research, and that so far as related to current thinking, there was a revolution in it." Some people at the time attributed the work to Dr. Wilder himself.

Dr. Wilder says further:—"Believing that the main body of the work would not be sufficiently attractive to purchasers, I urged her to include in it accounts of the marvellous things which she had observed in India. But this she invariably declined to do, saying that it was not permitted by 'the Brothers'. That was a tribunal that I could not question; my wisdom in the matter was that of the market-place."

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firm was quite satisfied to let things be as they are, since, notwithstanding all its glaring defects, the work—which has now reached its seventh or eighth edition—is still in demand. . . .

"Though I have since learned sufficient English to have been enabled to edit two magazines—*The Theosophist* and *Lucifer*—yet, to the present hour I never write an article, an editorial or even a simple paragraph, without submitting its English to close scrutiny and correction ;—considering all this and much more, I now ask every impartial and honest man and woman whether it is just or even fair to criticise my works—*Isis*, above all others—as one would the writings of a born American or English author ! What I claim in them as my own is only the fruit of my learning and studies in a department hitherto left uninvestigated by Science, and almost unknown to the European world. I am perfectly willing to leave the honour of the English grammar in them, the glory of the quotations from scientific works brought occasionally to me to be used as passages for comparison with, or refutation by, the old Science, and finally the general make-up of the volumes, to everyone of those who have helped me to arrange the matter, correct the imperfect English, and prepare it for print. But that which none of them will ever claim, from first to last is the fundamental doctrine, the philosophical conclusions and teachings. Nothing of that have I invented, but simply given it out as I have been taught ; or, as quoted by me in *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. I, p. 46) from Montaigne : 'I have here made a nosegay of culled (Eastern) flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them.'

"Is any one of my helpers prepared to say that I have not paid the full price for the string ? "

The above article—which I have not quoted in full—is additionally interesting as being almost the last that she ever wrote. It is dated April 27, 1891, and she died on the 8th May following.

Isis Unveiled is described as "A Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology". Its purpose is to trace down through the ages the existence of a Secret Knowledge and an Occult Tradition which is the true Science of Man, both in his outer relation with the physical world and in his inner relation with the psychic and spiritual planes of the Universe. Modern materialistic science is fiercely assailed, as also are the corrupt forms of religion which have replaced the original teachings of the great spiritual Light-Bringers.

Many of our modern scientific discoveries have confirmed the occult hints as to the constitution of matter which were given in *Isis* ; whilst it need hardly be said that the materialism which prevailed in science at that time has now utterly broken down

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before the modern discovery of the disintegration of matter and the constitution of the atom.

As regards religion—well, the present decay of the old theology speaks for itself as a justification for much that H. P. Blavatsky wrote fifty years ago, though it can hardly be said as yet that religion in high places in the West has accommodated itself to the new stand-point which modern discoveries and scholarship have enabled rational thinkers to occupy; nor even that due acknowledgment has been given to the ancient sources of their symbolism and ritual.

The challenge of *Isis* to accepted shibboleths in both science and religion was, at that time, a bold and startling one; and it is no wonder that its author should have found herself the object of the most virulent attacks for the purpose of discrediting both her and her work. However, *Isis* came to stay, and it still commands a sale, notwithstanding that it was later on replaced by the much more important and explicit work, *The Secret Doctrine*.

We may now turn to Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* for some additional information as to the conditions under which *Isis* was written; and also to some of H. P. B.'s letters written at that time to some of her relations.

Turning to the first volume of *Old Diary Leaves*, page 202, ff. we find the following:—

"If any book could ever have been said to make an epoch, this one could. Its effects have been as important in one way as those of Darwin's first great work have been in another: both were tidal waves in modern thought, and each tended to sweep away theological crudities and replace the belief in miracle with the belief in natural law. And yet nothing could have been more commonplace and unostentatious than the beginning of *Isis*. One day in the Summer of 1875, H. P. B. showed me some sheets of manuscript which she had written, and said: 'I wrote this last night "by order", but what the deuce it is to be I don't know. Perhaps it is for a newspaper article, perhaps for a book, perhaps for nothing; anyhow, I did as I was ordered.' And she put it away in a drawer and nothing more was said about it for some time. But in the month of September—if my memory serves—she went to Syracuse (N.Y.), on a visit to her new friends, Professor and Mrs. Corson, of Cornell University, and the work went on. She wrote me that it was to be a book on the history and philosophy of the Eastern Schools and their relation with those of our own times. She said she was writing about things she had never studied, and making quotations from books she had never read in all her life: that, to test her accuracy, Prof. Corson had compared her

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quotations with classical works in the University Library, and had found her to be right. . . .

"A month or two after the formation of the Theosophical Society she and I took two suites of rooms at 433 West 34th Street, she on the first and I on the second floor, and thenceforward the writing of *Isis* went on without break or interruption until its completion in the year 1877. In her whole life she had not done a tithe of such literary labour, yet I never knew even a managing daily journalist who could be compared with her for dogged endurance or tireless working capacity. From morning till night she would be at her desk, and it was seldom that either of us got to bed before 2 o'clock A.M. . . .

"She worked on no fixed plan, but ideas came streaming through her mind like a perennial spring which is ever overflowing its brim. Now she would be writing upon Brahma, anon upon Babinet's electrical 'meteor-cat'; one moment she would be reverentially quoting from Porphyrios, the next from a daily newspaper or some modern pamphlet that I had just brought home; she would be adoring the perfection of the ideal Adept, but diverge for an instant to thwack Professor Tyndall or some other pet aversion of hers, with her critical cudgel. Higgledy-piggledy it came, in a ceaseless rivulet, each paragraph complete in itself and capable of being excised without harm to its predecessor or successor. Even as it stands now, and after all its numerous recastings, an examination of the wondrous book will show this to be the case. . . .[1]

"Whence did she get this knowledge? That she had it, was unmistakable; whence did she get it? Not from her governesses in Russia; not from any source known to her family or most intimate friends; not in any college or university, for she never matriculated at either; not in the huge libraries of the world. To judge from her conversation and habits before she took up this monster literary task, she had not learnt it at all, whether from one source or another; but when she needed it she had it, and in her better moments of inspiration—if the term be admissible—she astonished the most erudite by her learning quite as much as she dazzled all present by her eloquence and delighted them by her wit and humorous raillery. . . .[2]

[1] Dr. A. Wilder says:—"A full third, or even more, of what was published, was written by Mme. Blavatsky after Mr. Bouton had set about putting the work in type. She was by no means expert in preparing her material, she patched and changed, making a very large bill for 'alterations'. Indeed she never actually finished the work, the publisher declared to me, till he told her that she must stop."

[2] A particularly interesting example of her recondite knowledge is to be found in a quotation attributed by her to Shakespeare which appears on p. 142 of *The Key to Theosophy*, as follows:

> "Why should my birth keep down my mounting spirit?
> Are not all creatures subject unto time?
> There's legions now of beggars on the earth,
> That their original did spring from kings,
> And many monarchs now, whose fathers were
> The riff-raff of their age. . . ."

This quotation is taken from the first act of a play which only appears in the

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"Then whence did H. P. B. draw the materials which compose *Isis*, and which cannot be traced to accessible literary sources of quotation? *From the Astral Light*, and, by her soul-senses, from her Teachers—the 'Brothers', 'Adepts', 'Sages', 'Masters', as they have been variously called. How do I know it? By working two years with her on *Isis* and many more years on other literary work.

"To watch her at work was a rare and never-to-be-forgotten experience. We sat at opposite sides of one big table usually, and I could see her every movement. Her pen would be flying over the page, when she would suddenly stop, look out into space with the vacant eye of the clairvoyant seer, shorten her vision as though to look at something held invisibly in the air before her, and begin copying on her paper what she saw. The quotation finished, her eyes would resume their natural expression, and she would go on writing until again stopped by a similar interruption. . . .

"The 'copy' turned off by H. P. B. presented the most marked dissemblances at different times. While the handwriting bore one peculiar character throughout, so that one familiar with her writing would always be able to detect any given page as H. P. B.'s, yet, when examined carefully, one discovered at least three or four variations of the one style, and each of these persistent for pages together, when it would give place to some other of the caligraphic variants. That is to say, there would not often—never, as I now remember—be more than two of the styles on the same page, and even two only when the style which had been running through the work of, perhaps, a whole evening or half an evening, would suddenly give place to one of the other styles which would, in its turn, run through the rest of an evening, or the next whole evening, or the morning's 'copy'. One of these H. P. B. handwritings was very small, but plain; one bold and free; another plain, of medium size, and very legible; and one scratchy and hard to read, with its queer, foreign-shaped a's and x's and e's. There was also the greatest possible difference in the English of these various styles. Sometimes I would have to make several corrections in each line, while at others I could pass many pages with scarcely a fault of idiom or spelling to correct. Most perfect of all were the manuscripts which were written for her while she was sleeping. The beginning of the chapter on the civilisation of Ancient Egypt (Vol. I, Chap. XIV.) is an illustration. We had stopped work the evening before at about 2 A.M. as usual, both too tired to stop for our usual smoke and chat before parting; she almost fell asleep in her chair while I was bidding her good-night, so I hurried off to my

Folio edition of 1685, and entitled "The History of the Life and Death of Thomas, Lord Cromwell." It has been omitted from later editions as possibly not being genuine, and certainly not up to the Shakespearian standard. H. P. B. has omitted two superfluous lines after the second line; but she certainly never had access to the original Folio, nor to any copy or quotation from it. A very long search was recently made by some theosophists before it could be found and verified.

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bedroom. The next morning, when I came down after my breakfast, she showed me a pile of at least thirty or forty pages of beautifully written H. P. B. manuscript, which, she said, she had had written for her by—well, a Master, whose name has never yet been degraded like some others. It was perfect in every respect, and went to the printers without revision."

We see from the above that we have three occult facts set before us in connection with the writing of *Isis Unveiled*. These facts were not merely observed by Col. Olcott in the writing of *Isis*, but they were subsequently observed by others also in connection with the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The first of these facts is the clairvoyant reading of quotations in the *Astral Light*. This fact, or at all events an analagous faculty, is by no means unknown to-day in the annals of psychical research. There are innumerable cases of clairvoyance with which those who have studied the subject are familiar, and to deny the possibility of H. P. B.'s clairvoyant powers in this matter is simply to be ignorant of what psychical research has now definitely verified. We might, however, instance as being somewhat analogous the classical case of William Blake, who, as is well known, drew his figures of prophets and other historical characters 'from the life'. They were present to his vision when he not merely sketched them, but also held converse with them. We are taken here into another region of consciousness than that of the normal, and we cannot apply to it our normal concepts or consciousness either of space or time, past, present, or future.

Here is H. P. B.'s own description of how this takes place. It is given in a letter to her sister, Mme. Jelihovsky,[1]

"Well, Vera, whether you believe me or not, something miraculous is happening to me. You cannot imagine in what a charmed world of pictures and visions I live. I am writing *Isis*; not writing, rather copying out and drawing that which She personally shows to me. Upon my word, sometimes it seems to me that the ancient Goddess of Beauty in person leads me through all the countries of past centuries which I have to describe. I sit with my eyes open and to all appearances see and hear everything real and actual around me, and yet at the same time I see and hear that which I write. I feel short of breath; I am afraid to make the slightest movement for fear the spell might be broken. Slowly century after century, image after image, float out of the distance and pass before me as if in a magic panorama; and meanwhile I put them together in my mind, fitting in epochs and dates, and know *for sure* that there can be *no mistake*.

[1] See *The Path*, N.Y., Vol. IX, p. 300.

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Races and nations, countries and cities, which have long disappeared in the darkness of the prehistoric past, emerge and then vanish, giving place to others; and then I am told the consecutive dates. Hoary antiquity makes way for historical periods; myths are explained to me with events and people who have really existed, and every event which is at all remarkable, every newly-turned page of this many-coloured book of life, impresses itself on my brain with photographic exactitude. My own reckonings and calculations appear to me later on as separate coloured pieces of different shapes in the game which is called casse-tête (puzzles). I gather them together and try to match them one after the other, and at the end there always comes out a geometrical whole. . . . Most assuredly it is not I who do it all, but my Ego, the highest principle that lives in me. And even this with the help of my Guru and teacher who helps me in everything. If I happen to forget something I have just to address him, or another of the same kind, in my thought, and what I have forgotten rises once more before my eyes—sometimes whole tables of numbers passing before me, long inventories of events. They remember everything. They know everything. Without them, from whence could I gather my knowledge?"[1]

The second occult fact in the writing of *Isis* is the change of *personality* while the writing was proceeding; involving both a change in the literary style of the matter written, and also in the handwriting itself. Col. Olcott has a good deal to say about this in Chapters XIV and XV of Vol. I of *Old Diary Leaves*. He discusses as to whether this change could have been due (a) to the phenomenon of multiple personality, now a well recognised psychic fact, or (b) to ordinary mediumship, *i.e.*, control by discarnate intelligences. Both these hypotheses he rejects as by no means explaining the actual symptoms and facts of the case. He says (p. 236):—

"Our next question is, did she write *Isis* in the capacity of an ordinary spiritual medium, *i.e.*, under the control of spirits of the dead? I answer, Assuredly not. If she did, then the power of controlling her organism worked differently from any that is recorded in books or that I, personally, ever saw operating during the many years in which I was interested in that movement. I have known mediums of all sorts—speaking, trance, writing, phenomena-making, medical, clairvoyant, and materialising; have seen them at work, attended their séances and observed the signs of their obsession and possession. H. P. B.'s case resembled none of them. Nearly all they did she could do; but at her own will and pleasure by day or by night, without forming 'circles', choosing the witnesses, or imposing the usual

[1] Compare this account with the one she subsequently gives about the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*, page 228, *infra*.

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conditions. Then, again, I had ocular proof that at least some of those who worked with us were living men, from having seen them in the flesh in India after having seen them in the astral body in America and Europe; from having touched and talked with them. Instead of telling me that they were spirits, they told me they were as much alive as myself, and that each of them had his own peculiarities and capabilities; in short, his complete individuality. They told me that what they had attained to, I should, one day, myself acquire; how soon, would depend entirely upon myself; and that I might anticipate nothing whatever from favour; but, like them, must gain every step, every inch of progress by my own exertions."

Finally he gives an account of many instances of this change of personality in H. P. B. which were striking proofs that her body—or 'shell', as one of the Masters speaks of it[1]—was occupied from time to time by one or other of the Masters themselves.

If this is a possibility which as yet is unverified by psychical research, we may at least say this much: that obsession by a discarnate intelligence having been proved to be a fact—though some irreconcilables still dispute this—it is by no means impossible that a living Adept who possesses the power to project his double at will, could just as easily take possession of the physical body of—shall we say a 'medium'?—as can a discarnate individual. But H. P. B. was no ordinary medium. In her case there was the special occult training which would enable her readily to leave the 'shell' to be occupied by the particular Master requiring it. Here is her own account of the matter, written to her sister Mme. Jelihovsky.[2]

"Do not be afraid that I am off my head. All that I can say is that someone positively *inspires me*. . . . More than this: someone enters me. It is not I who talk and write: it is something within me, my higher and luminous Self, that thinks and writes for me. Do not ask me, my friend, what I experience, because I could not explain it to you clearly. I do not know myself! The one thing I know is that now, when I am about to reach old age, I have become a sort of storehouse of somebody else's knowledge. . . . *Someone* comes and envelopes me as a misty cloud and all at once pushes me out of myself, and then I am not 'I' any more—Helena Petrovna Blavatsky—but someone else. Someone strong and powerful, born in a totally different region of the world; and as to myself, it is almost as if I were

[1] O. D. L., I. p. 247. "Those who represent us in the *shell*." It is interesting to note that she was called a "shell" thus early, as this is repeated in one of the Mahatma Letters to Sinnett, p. 256, where Mahatma M. says: "She is but a 'shell' at times, and I often careless in watching her."

[2] See *The Path*, N.Y., Vol. IX, p. 266.

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asleep, or lying by not quite conscious—not in my own body but close by, held only by a thread which ties me to it. However, at times I see and hear everything quite clearly; I am perfectly conscious of what my body is saying and doing—or at least its new possessor. I even understand and remember it all so well that afterwards I can repeat it and even write down *his* words. . . . At such a time I see awe and fear on the faces of Olcott and others, and follow with interest the way in which *he* half-pityingly regards them out of my own eyes and teaches them with my physical tongue. Yet not with my mind but his own, which enwraps my brain like a cloud. . . . Ah, but I really cannot explain everything."

It will be seen that there is some reference here to her Higher Self as being the inspiring "*he*", and possibly some may think that the Higher Self theory can account for the whole of the facts.[1]

With regard to this Col. Olcott writes (*Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, p. 251):—

"She writes her Aunt that when her Master was busy elsewhere he left his substitute with her, and then it was her 'Luminous Self' her Augoeides, which thought and wrote for her. About this, I cannot venture an opinion, for I never observed her in this state. I only knew her in three capacities, *viz.*, her proper H. P. B. self; with her body possessed or overshadowed by the Masters; and as an amanuensis taking down from dictation. It may be that her Augoeides, taking possession of her physical brain, gave me the impression that it was one of the Masters that was at work; I cannot say. But what she omits telling her Aunt is that there were many, many times, when she was neither possessed, controlled nor dictated to by any superior intelligence, but was simply and palpably H. P. B., our familiar and beloved friend, latterly our teacher; who was trying as well as she could to carry out the object of her literary mission."

Several depreciators and critics of *Isis* have endeavoured to show that it was "simply and palpably" this normal H. P. Blavatsky who wrote the whole of the book. They have done this not by examining the history of the woman, or the evidence of her own family that she never had the necessary education for such a work, nor the unique nature of much that is put forward in the work itself, but by endeavouring to show that the greater

[1] This theory has been specially advocated in connection with all and every psychological fact and phenomenon—including all so-called 'spiritualistic' phenomena—by Maurice Maeterlinck in his well-known work *The Unknown Guest*. In a later work, however, *The Great Secret*, this all-inclusive theory has been considerably modified, and an admission made of the possibility of discarnate communications.

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part of it is simply plagiarised. It has been represented as being simply a jumble of quotations from numerous current works without any acknowledgment or quotation marks. We have, however, already seen what H. P. B. herself had to say about this, and doubtless when criticised from a purely literary point of view, and more especially with *malice prépensé*, there is much which would lend itself to such criticism.[1] Nevertheless, the actual success of the book, and the continued demand for further editions, shows quite clearly that there is a *something* therein which survives all its superficial faults, a something which touches the inner intuition rather than the outer intellect. The work in fact stands as a pioneer work pointing to a road which leads " to the heart of the universe " ; a road which has always existed—as the work itself endeavours to show—but which had been lost and obscured by centuries of ignorance and superstition under the dominance of what has been known historically as Ecclesiastical Christianity. And so to an age which was rapidly rejecting the traditional theology, *Isis* pointed to the original spiritual and occult sources of the literalised and materialised doctrines which had for so long a time held the Western world in bondage. For those who had already intuitively sensed the deeper spiritual possibilities of their nature, it pointed out the age-long Wisdom-Tradition of a real *Gnôsis*, with its succession of Initiates and Adepts, always ready to instruct those who were fitted to receive the great Mysteries of Man and his relation to the Cosmos. And since the danger of the reaction from the old theology lay in a purely materialistic science—it being in fact the great progress and discoveries in science which had upset the old theology—*Isis* had to show also the inadequacy of such science alone to account for the existence of Man and the Cosmos : and to give at least a few hints as to the teachings of the Occult Science in this matter.

As I have already said, the success of the book showed that this core of truth in the work quite overshadowed its literary

[1] Writing in 1881 to Mr. Sinnett (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 45) K.H. says :—' By-the-bye, you must not trust *Isis* literally. The book is but a tentative effort to divert the attention of the Spiritualists from their preconceptions to the true state of things. The author was made to hint and point out in the true direction, to say what things *are not*, not what they are. Proof readers helping, a few real mistakes have crept in, as on page 1, chapter I, Volume I, Where divine Essence is made emanating from Adam instead of the reverse."

Also on page 182 we find him saying :—" Many are the subjects treated upon in *Isis* that even H. P. B. was not allowed to become thoroughly acquainted with ; yet they are not contradictory if—' misleading '. To make her say—as she was made by me to say—that the passage criticised was ' incomplete, chaotic, vague, clumsy as many more passages in that work ', was a sufficiently ' frank admission ', I should think, to satisfy the most crotchetty critic."

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faults, and showed that the world was not altogether given up to superstition on the one hand, or to materialism and scepticism on the other. There were and are thousands now incarnated to whom this work and *The Secret Doctrine* make their intuitive appeal as knowledge which, to some extent at least, is old and familiar, as having been contacted and acquired in previous incarnations.

Well, let that be as it may, the work stands as a pioneer work at that time, pointing, in an age of materialism and scepticism, to a great *tradition* which could more than satisfy not merely the thirst for real scientific knowledge, but also the deepest spiritual aspirations of the individual and of the Race.

The somewhat recent work (1922) by Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Great Secret*, is a splendid vindication of the tradition of an Ancient Knowledge and Wisdom which it is the main thesis of *Isis Unveiled* to disclose. Thus Maeterlinck says (p. 143) :—

"We can hardly dispute the fact that the priests of India and Egypt, and the Magi of Persia and Chaldea, had a knowledge of chemistry, physics, astronomy and medicine which we have undoubtedly surpassed in certain respects, but in others we are perhaps very far from having caught up with them. Without recalling here the blocks of stone weighing 1,500 tons, transported by unknown means over enormous distances, or the rocking-stones, masses of rock weighing 500 tons, which were never native to the soil upon which they now rest, and which date from the prehistoric era of the Atlanteans, it is an undoubted fact that the great pyramid of Cheops, for example, is a sort of stupendous hieroglyph, which, by its dimensions, its proportions, its internal arrangements, and its astronomical orientation, propounds a whole series of riddles of which only the most obvious have hitherto been deciphered. An occult tradition has always affirmed that this pyramid contained essential secrets, but only quite recently has any one begun to discover them."

After giving some of the mathematical and astronomical data which are to be found in the measurements of the pyramid, he says :—

"It is impossible to attribute these extraordinary data to mere coincidence. They prove that the Egyptian priests, in geography, mathematics, and astronomy, possessed knowledge that we are barely beginning to reconquer, and there is nothing to tell us that this enigmatic pyramid does not contain a host of other secrets which we have not yet discovered. But the strangest, most disconcerting fact is that none of these innumerable hieroglyphs that have been deciphered, nothing, indeed, to be found in the whole literature of ancient Egypt,

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makes any allusion to this extraordinary knowledge. It is obvious even that the priests sought to conceal it; the sacred or pyramidal cubit, the key to all scientific measurements and calculations, was not employed in everyday use; and all this miraculous knowledge, coming whence no one knows, was deliberately and systematically buried in a tomb and propounded as a riddle or a challenge to the future centuries. Does not the revelation of such a mystery, due merely to chance, permit us to suspect that many other mysteries of various sorts are awaiting the hazard of a similar revelation, in the same pyramid or in other monements or in the sacred writings."

Theosophists and occultists would take exception to the statement that the disclosure of some of these ancient records and mysteries was "due merely to chance", or that the others are "awaiting the hazard of a similar revelation." For they believe, where they do not *know*, that there are living Adepts and Initiates, who know these secrets; that the secrets have been preserved all through the dark ages by such a hierarchy of Adepts and Initiates, who now, from time to time, bring it about that now here and now there, as our knowledge increases and permits, some of these secrets of the past should be disclosed. And in this direction, for those who have ears to hear, and intuition enough to understand, *Isis Unveiled* is a key placed in our hands—defective perhaps in many respects; by no means a master-key fitting *all* locks; but still a key to open some locks, and perchance also to indicate how other keys may be fabricated: some of them possibly merely intellectual, for the scholar and the antiquarian, but mainly the old old teaching that each individual is *himself* the key to every riddle in the universe. Only by finding *himself*, in all the depths of his nature, can the individual find the key to this ancient knowledge, for it was wrapped up of old in allegory and symbol so that for the unworthy "seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

"For the book in which all mysteries lie is man himself, he himself is the book of the Being of all beings; seeing he is the likeness (or similitude) of God; the great *Arcanum* lieth *in* him, the revealing of it belongeth only to God's spirit."[1]

"Verily he who has seen, heard, comprehended and known the Self, by him is this entire universe known."[2]

Speaking of the after life, and the earlier conceptions of the Egyptians and the Greeks with regard to the *shades* and *manes*, Maeterlinck advances the teaching, so much disliked by the modern

[1] Jacob Böhme, *Epistles*, ix, 3. [2] *Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad*, II, 4, 5.

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Spiritualists, of the empty astral *shells*, which "continue to live by the reflection of their former lives." He then goes on to enunciate the pure theosophical teaching of the real soul or *Self*. Thus he says (*The Great Secret*, p. 135) :—

"But the imperishable spirit, the immortal soul is not there ; it is purifying itself elsewhere, in another body ; it is advancing upon the long invisible path which leads it back to God. At this stage, as in all remote beginnings, there is as yet no fear of death and the beyond. This fear does not manifest itself or develop in the great religions until the latter begin to be corrupted for the benefit of priests and kings. The intuition and intelligence of mankind have never again reached to heights which they attained when they conceived the ideal of divinity of which we find the most authentic traces in the Vedic traditions. One might say that in those days man disclosed at the topmost height of his stature, and there established, once for all, that conception of the divine which he subsequently forgot and frequently degraded ; but despite oblivion and ephemeral perversion, its light was never lost. And that is why we feel, beneath all these myths, behind all these doctrines, which are sometimes so contradictory, the same optimism, or at all events the same ignorant confidence ; for the most ancient secret of mankind is really a blind stupendous confidence in the divinity from which it emerged without ceasing to form part of it, and to which it will one day return."

Compare this with Professor Max Müller's statement with regard to the aphorism *That art Thou* which I have given on page 171.

There are many other passages in Maeterlinck's work which show that he has evidently studied theosophical literature very closely. He refers, for example, to such subjects as the Days and Nights of Brahma, the Akasha, Astral Bodies, Reincarnation, Energy as a manifestation of the One Universal Life, the true Ego, etc. He refers frequently also to the teachings of Rudolf Steiner ; "whom many persons regard as the greatest theosophist of our day."

Speaking of Mme. Blavatsky's work *The Secret Doctrine*, he says (*ibid*, p. 203) :—

"*The Secret Doctrine* is a sort of stupendous encyclopedia of esoteric knowledge, above all as regards its appendices, its commentaries, its *parerga*, in which we shall find a host of ingenious and interesting comparisons between the teachings and the manifestations of occultism throughout the centuries and in different countries. Sometimes there flashes from it an unexpected light whose far-spreading rays illuminate regions of thought which are rarely frequented to-day. In any case, the work would prove once again, if proof were

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needed, and with unexampled lucidity, the common origin of the conceptions which were formed by the human race, long before history as we know it, of the great mysteries which encompassed it. We also find in it some excellent and comprehensive tabulations in which occult knowledge is confronted by modern science and often seems, we must admit, to outstrip or excel the latter. Many other things, too, we find in it, thrown together at random, but by no means deserving the contempt with which we have for some time professed to regard them."

One might perhaps take note here that one of the most formidable—on the surface—of the literary criticisms of *Isis Unveiled* was published as an Appendix to the book by the Russian author, V. S. Solovyoff, entitled *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, to which I have already referred. This book was translated by Mr Walter Leaf, and published in England in 1895 under the auspices of The Society for Psychical Research. In the Appendix to the book Mr. Wm. Emmette Coleman professes to give a detailed analysis of the sources from which Mme. Blavatsky obtained both her theories and her unacknowledged information. He says :—

" In *Isis Unveiled* I discovered some 2,000 passages copied from other books without proper credit. By careful analysis I found that in compiling *Isis* about 100 books were used. About 1,400 books are quoted from and referred to in this work ; but from the 100 books which its author possessed, she copied everything in *Isis* taken from and relating to the other 1,300. There are in *Isis* about 2100 quotations from and references to books that were copied, at second hand, from books other than the originals : and of this number only about 140 are credited to the books from which Mme. Blavatsky copied them at second hand. The others are quoted in such a manner as to lead the reader to think that Mme. Blavatsky had read and utilised the original works, and had quoted from them at first-hand—the truth being that these originals had evidently never been read by Mme. Blavatsky. By this means many readers of *Isis*, and subsequently those of her *Secret Doctrine* and *Theosophical Glossary*, have been misled into thinking Mme. Blavatsky an enormous reader, possessed of vast erudition ; while the fact is her reading was very limited, and her ignorance was profound in all branches of knowledge."

But this criticism destroys itself, for if we accept Mr. Coleman's explanation that her reading was confined to 100 books or thereabouts, one can only say that to have assimilated those 100 in such a manner as to be able to give 2100 quotations from them *apropos* of the subject she was writing about at the time can hardly be said to be consonant with " a profound ignorance in all branches of knowledge ". The rest of Mr Coleman's article

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is to the same effect. He gives a list of the works—most of them quite obscure and out of the way—from which he says Mme. Blavatsky obtained the matter for *Isis*, and thus he piles up the evidence which shows that if we are to exclude all the occultly obtained information to which I have previously referred, she must in fact have been an exceedingly erudite woman. Besides, there is the testimony of many scholars and others that she showed an astonishing knowledge on all kinds of subjects in conversation as well as in writing.

Dr. Alexander Wilder, M.D., a learned Platonist, who acted as 'reader' for the publisher of *Isis*, Mr. J. W. Bouton of New York, and who assisted very considerably in revising the proofs while the work was going through the press, writes in *The Word*, Vol. VII (1908) P. 86 :—

"She was ready in conversation, and was at home on any topic however abstruse. Few persons in any walk of life are as well supplied with material for discourse. Even Col. Olcott, who was by no means inferior or commonplace, was not her equal except in his own profession."

Those, therefore, who wish to be critics, whether partial or impartial, can take their choice between the two theories : in the one case, that the normal H. P. Blavatsky was in fact by no means learned, but that abnormal and occult influences enabled her to write and discourse most learnedly on any and every conceivable subject : or in the other case, that she normally possessed this stupendous knowledge, and that no occult or abnormal influences need to be assumed.

But all this, in any case, only concerns the outer *shell* in which the teaching is contained. It is noticeable that these superficial critics never deal with the matter itself; they never deal with the *essentials*, the fundamental *principles* which the works were written to expound and illustrate. Does it matter to us how or from what works—if the occult theory, or rather *facts*, be eliminated—H. P. Blavatsky obtained the information which has enabled her to set forth those principles as a synthesis of knowledge which has always been before the world in the literature of all ages ? Mr. Coleman himself bears testimony to the fact of the existence of this knowledge in all ages which it was one of the main objects of *Isis Unveiled* to disclose. Thus he says :—

"The doctrines, teachings, dogmas, etc., of theosophy, as published by Helena Petrova Blavatsky, and affirmed to be derived from the

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quasi-infallible Mahatmas of Thibet, were borrowed from the philosophies and religions of the past and present, with some admixture of modern science. There is nothing original in this 'Wisdom of the Gods', or 'Wisdom Religion', save the work of compilation into a composite whole of the heterogeneous mass of materials gathered by Mme. Blavatsky from so many sources, and the garblings, perversions, and fabrications indulged in by her in the preparation of the system of thought called theosophy. . . .

"There is not a single dogma or tenet in theosophy, nor any detail of moment in the multiplex and complex concatenation of alleged revelations of occult truth in the teachings of Mme. Blavatsky and the pretended adepts, the source of which cannot be pointed out in the world's literature. From first to last, their writings are dominated by a duplex plagiarism—plagiarism in idea, and plagiarism in language."

But that is precisely what Mme. Blavatsky claimed for her work. The proof of the truth of the principles which she expounds lies in the very fact that they *are* contained in the Scriptures of all ages; that they have been recognised and set forth by the best and wisest at all times; and that now in this present generation they are once more eagerly welcomed by thousands who have turned away from the "garblings, perversions, and fabrications" of orthodox religion on the one hand, and of materialistic science on the other.

That much of this old Wisdom or *Gnôsis* was wrapped up in allegory and symbolism, the meaning of which has been lost to "the wise and understanding" in the worldly sense, is a fact which is now pretty widely recognised: thanks very largely to the work of H. P. Blavatsky. That she has also presented many of the old teachings and fundamental principles in a new form, and systematised them to some extent in a new manner, is also a fact; and doubtless this is what Mr. Coleman refers to as "garblings, perversions, and fabrications." Well, when all is said and done, the appeal which the works of H. P. Blavatsky make to the intellect or to the inner intuition of each individual must undoubtedly be an individual matter; and whilst some will care little for the literary form, or whether a passage has or has not been put into quotes—since the only question they are concerned with is, *is it true*?—others will doubtless carp and criticise because forsooth the literary make-up is defective, though the real motive of their attack lies in the fact that the teachings themselves are obnoxious to them.

This was probably the motive for Mr. Coleman's laborious work of analysis of the literary contents of *Isis*, on which he says

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he spent three years. Theosophists, indeed, may really feel indebted to him for this work, since it directs their attention to many sources of information of which they would otherwise have been ignorant, and thus enables them to confirm in a fuller manner than has been done in *Isis* the ancient and practically universal prevalence of the theosophical teachings concerning the origin, evolution, and destiny of Man. One cannot help wondering whether these teachings would find any more acceptance with Mr. Coleman and similar literary critics when presented as they have been with scholarly authority by Professor Max Müller in his *Theosophy or Psychological Religion*. The whole of this work is an excellent confirmation of the main principles which H. P. Blavatsky presented in her works: commencing with the fundamental one of *the divine nature of Man*, stated in the ancient *Upanishads* in the aphorism THAT ART THOU. Writing of this, Professor Max Müller says (p. 105) :—

"The expression Thou art that, means Thine Atman, thy soul, thy self is the Brahman, or, as we can also express it, the last result, the highest object discovered by Physical Religion is the same as the last result, the highest subject discovered by Anthropological Religion, or, in other words, the subject and object of all being and all knowing are one and the same. This is the gist of what I call *Psychological Religion*, or Theosophy, the highest summit of thought which the human mind has reached, which has found different expressions in different religions and philosophies, but nowhere such a clear and powerful realisation as in the ancient Upanishads of India."

Precisely. That is the core of the theosophical teachings as put forward by H. P. Blavatsky. That is the teaching which restores once more to Man, and to the individual, his spiritual dignity. But this is still a *heresy* in the Christian Church, notwithstanding that it is plainly the teaching of the Christian Scriptures, more especially of the New Testament, where Jesus Christ is the type of the regenerated man, aware of his divine nature and sonship. But H. P. B.'s teaching does something more than merely state and illustrate this fundamental fact, of which Professor Max Müller says further (p. 284) :—

"We must remember also that the fundamental principle of the Vedânta-philosophy, was not 'Thou art *He*', but Thou art *That*, and that it was not Thou *wilt be*, but Thou *art*. This 'Thou art' expresses something that is, that has been, and always will be, not something that has still to be achieved, or is to follow, for instance, after death."

H. P. B.'s teaching points both to the PATH of attainment to a realisation of this inner divine nature, and also to a hierarchy

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of Initiates down through the ages who have progressed along that PATH stage after stage beyond that which the ordinary individual—be he ever so wise or learned—has as yet even dreamed of attaining; for the theoretical acceptance of the teaching or doctrine is by no means equivalent to its practical realisation and achievement; and the PATH which theosophy points out is a long and arduous one. It is one which Humanity as a whole is pursuing in the natural course of the evolution of Man—the return journey after his "fall into matter"; whereby again hangs the whole mystery of the external phenomenal world of his present consciousness. Is it to be supposed that this great mystery can be lightly communicated, or indeed that it can be set forth at all in the forms of the intellect, limited as they are by the categories of time, space, and causation? But if, in the course of incalculable ages, Humanity as a whole will come by bitter experience to abandon "the things of this world", and realise and *live* in the knowledge and power of its divine nature: how much the greater is our effort strengthened, and our faith confirmed, when we have the knowledge that there are those who have already achieved in all degrees beyond our own present achievement; those who wait and watch for the opportunity of imparting their higher knowledge: being only able to do so as here and there one or more individuals manifest the *capacity* to receive.

It has been so in all ages, and with all the world's great teachers and 'Saviours'. Thus Jesus told his disciples "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now". Also St. Paul: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ (the higher spiritual *Self*, the divine *in* man). I fed you with milk, not with meat: for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay not even now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal. . . . Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect (or full grown): yet a wisdom not of this world."[1] This is no other than the statement of Mahatma K. H. which I have already quoted (p. 145) that the esoteric teaching is, in the very nature of the case, *incommunicable* to the ordinary individual. "The receptivity must be equal to the desire to instruct. The illumination *must come from within*. . . . And this was and has been no secret for thousands of years."

To return for a moment to Mr. Coleman's criticisms, he writes as follows of *The Secret Doctrine*:—

[1] This, and much else besides in his Epistles, shows Paul to have been an Initiate.

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"*The Secret Doctrine*, published in 1888, is of a piece with *Isis*. It is permeated with plagiarisms, and is in all its parts a rehash of other books. Two books very largely form the basis of this work—Wilson's translation of the *Vishun Purana*, and Prof. Winchell's *World Life*. The *Secret Doctrine* is saturated with Hinduism and Sanscrit terminology, and the bulk of this was copied from Wilson's *Vishnu Purana*."

I shall deal with the *Secret Doctrine* more in detail in a subsequent chapter; but in the meanwhile we may place against Mr. Coleman's opinions and strictures the statement of a very learned Tibetan, the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup,[1] the translator of a very remarkable and important work published last year under the title of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and edited by an Oxford scholar, Mr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, M.A., D.Litt., B.Sc. In this work (p. 7) we find the following passage :—

"As regards the esoteric meaning of the Forty-nine Days of the *Bardo*, compare H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (London, 1888) I, 238, 411; II, 617, 627–8. The late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup was of opinion that, despite the adverse criticisms directed against H. P. Blavatsky's works, there is adequate internal evidence in them of their author's intimate acquaintance with the higher *lamaistic* teachings, into which she claimed to have been initiated."

We may leave our readers to decide as to the relative merits of this statement and those of Mr. Coleman and other detractors: but in any case the fact remains, that in spite of all the criticisms that have been levelled against H. P. Blavatsky and her teachings, her works are more in demand to-day than ever before. An exact reprint, by a photographic process, of the original edition of *The Secret Doctrine* has recently been issued in America; this being necessitated from the fact that the third and subsequent editions were considerably altered and amended by unauthorised editors. An exact reprint of the original edition of *The Voice of the Silence* has also been published in Peking under the auspices of The Buddhist Research Society, and with a facsimile reproduction of some aphorisms written specially for this edition by His Holiness the Tashi Lāma. This edition—produced by Mrs. A. L. Cleather and Mr. Basil Crump—was also necessitated by alterations in the original text by those responsible for subsequent editions. (see p. 119 *supra*).

[1] The late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup was formerly Chief Interpreter on the staff of His Excellency Lonchen Satra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary to the Government of India. He was also attached to the Political Staff of His Holiness the Dalai Lāma on the latter's visit to India. At the time of his death he was lecturer in Tibetan to the University of Calcutta.

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Col. Olcott touches the real motive of all the numerous quotations with which H. P. B.'s works are filled when he says[1] :—

" H. P. B.'s most ardent and passionate wish was to gather together as many corroborations as possible, from all ancient and modern sources of the theosophical teachings she was giving out, and her interest all lay on the side of quoting respectable authorities, not in plagiarising from their works for her own greater glory."

Isis Unveiled is an eminently readable book. It fascinates with its singularly vigorous, piquant and versatile use of the English language: apart altogether from the variety of subjects of the deepest interest with which it deals, it exhibits extraordinary scholarship, a keen critical faculty, and great metaphysical penetration. It lifts a corner of the " Veil of Isis " for our inspection of some of the hidden causes of this outward show, this time-space flux of phenomena, this mere surface aspect of the universe, which we are pleased to call *Nature*; which conceals rather than reveals the eternal REALITY; and which eastern sages, untold milleniums ago, had already discovered and declared to be—*māyā*, illusion.

" Now, one should know that Nature (*Prakriti*) is illusion (*māyā*).
And that the Mighty Lord (Mahesvara) is the illusion maker (*māyin*)."[2]

The Theosophical literature which has appeared since the publication of *Isis*, and for which *Isis* may be said to have been originally responsible, is enormous. A rough Bibliography would run into well over one thousand publications; of which about three hundred would be Periodicals published at various times; some of them discontinued, but many of them still running from the early date of their commencement, notably *The Theosophist*, which was commenced shortly after H. P. B. went to India in 1879. These magazines are in 25 different languages.

We must now turn to the record of the work done in India, taking up the narrative where we left off in our last chapter.

[1] *Old Diary Leaves*, I, 230.

[2] *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, 4, 10.

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CHAPTER XI

WORK IN INDIA. 1879–1885

WE have seen that Mme. Blavatsky and her party landed at Bombay on the 16th February, 1879, and that they were accommodated in a small house which had been provided for them in the Hindu quarter of the town. Here they were quickly overwhelmed with visitors. Col. Olcott records that on the 17th February a reception was held at which over 300 invited guests were present. The fame of the author of *Isis Unveiled* had spread far and wide, and had been noted by the whole Indian press.

A special performance of the Hindu drama "Sitaram" was given in their honour at the Elphinstone Theatre. Col. Olcott records in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 19 :—

"We found ourselves quartered in the most conspicuous box, bedecked with garlands of jessamine and roses, given huge bouquets, supplied with refreshments, and, on our rising to leave, having to receive an address, read to us from the stage! The play was not over by any means, but our powers of endurance had reached their limit: we went at 9 p.m. and left the theatre at 2.45 a.m."

Both the Founders regarded India as their Mecca. It was there, in that land of mystery and tradition, and among "the Sons of Aryavarta", that they hoped to find the appropriate soil for the revival of the Ancient Wisdom Religion, and the establishment of the Theosophical Society on the basis of the fundamental principle of Universal Brotherhood. "Oh for India and HOME!" writes H. P. B. in her diary while tossing on the ocean on the voyage from America; whilst Col. Olcott records, when setting out from Sandy Hook: "At last we are crossing the blue water towards the Land of Promise."

Only nine days after landing in Bombay the initial impulse was given—who shall say from what source—to what proved to be one of the most important connections of any single individual with the Theosophical Movement. It was a letter from Mr. A. P. Sinnett, at that time the editor of the leading Indian Journal *The Pioneer*. In this letter he expressed his desire to become acquainted with the Founders of the Theosophical Society, and his willingness to publish any interesting facts about their mission in India. This was the commencement of a correspondence

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which continued till December, when H. P. B. and the Colonel went to Allahabad on a visit to the Sinnetts. What followed has been narrated by Mr. Sinnett in his *Occult World*. H. P. B.'s phenomenal powers were constantly in requisition to satisfy Mr. Sinnett's importunities for phenomena, and yet more phenomena. He himself was brought into communication with the "Brothers"; their letters to him, from which I have quoted in previous chapters, forming the basis of his subsequent work *Esoteric Buddhism*. Thus commenced the life-long connection with another of the early pioneers in this wonderful movement.

It is interesting to note Mr. Sinnett's impression of Mme. Blavatsky as recorded in his *Incidents*, Chapter IX. He writes (p. 222 ff.) :—

"I well remember the morning of her arrival, when I went down to the railway station to meet her. The trains from Bombay used to come into Allahabad in those days at an early hour in the morning, and it was still but just time for *chota hazree*, or early breakfast, when I brought our guests home. She had evidently been apprehensive, to judge from her latest letters, lest we might have formed some ideal conception of her that the reality would shatter, and had recklessly painted herself as a rough, old, "hippopotamus" of a woman, unfit for civilised society; but she did this with so lively a humour that the betrayal of her bright intelligence this involved, more than undid the effect of her warnings. Her rough manners, of which we had been told so much, did not prove very alarming, though I remember going into fits of laughter at the time when Col. Olcott, after the visit had lasted a week or two, gravely informed me that Madame was under 'great self-restraint' so far. This had not been the impression my wife and I had formed about her, though we had learned already to find her conversation more than interesting. . . .

"I want to give my readers an idea of Mme. Blavatsky, as I have known her, that shall be as nearly complete as I can make it, and I shall not hesitate to put in the shadows of the picture. The first visit she paid us was not an unqualified success in all respects. Her excitability, sometimes amusing, would sometimes take an irritating shape, and she would vent her impatience, if anything annoyed her, by vehement tirades in a loud voice directed against Col. Olcott, at that time in an early stage of his apprenticeship to what she would sometimes irreverently speak of as the 'occult business.' No one with the least discernment could ever fail to see that her rugged manners and disregard of all conventionalities were the result of a deliberate rebellion against, not of ignorance or unfamiliarity with, the customs of refined society. Still the rebellion was often very determined, and she would sometimes colour her language with expletives of all sorts, some witty and amusing, some unnecessarily

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violent, that we should all have preferred her not to make use of. She certainly had none of the superficial attributes one might have expected in a spiritual teacher; and how she could at the same time be philosopher enough to have given up the world for the sake of spiritual advancement, and yet be capable of going into frenzies of passion about trivial annoyances, was a profound mystery to us for a long while, and is only now partially explainable, indeed, within my own mind, by some information I have received relating to curious psychological laws under which initiates in occult mysteries, circumstanced as she is, inevitably come.[1] By slow degrees only, and in spite of herself—in spite of injudicious proceedings on her part that long kept alive suspicions she might easily have allayed, if she could have kept calm enough to understand them—did we come to appreciate the reality of the occult forces and unseen agencies behind her. . . .

"Recollection of this time supplies me with a very varied assortment of memory portraits of Madame, taken during different conditions of her nerves and temper. Some recall her flushed and voluble, too loudly declaiming against some person or other who had misjudged her or her Society; some show her quiet and companionable, pouring out a flood of interesting talk about Mexican antiquities, or Egypt, or Peru, showing a knowledge of the most varied and far-reaching kind, and a memory for names and places and archaeological theories she would be dealing with, that was fairly fascinating to her hearers. Then, again, I remember her telling anecdotes of her own earlier life, mysterious bits of adventure, or stories of Russian society, with so much point, vivacity, and finish, that she would simply be the delight for the time being of everyone present. . . .

"Her own nature was exceedingly warm-hearted and affectionate, as it is still, and must remain as long as she lives, in spite of the cruel disappointments and trials, the sickness and suffering of later years, the poignant regret she has spent over irremediable mistakes that have compromised the success of her cause, and the passionate sense of wrong under which she fumes, as the unteachable world complacently listens to the tales of her traducers, or, as flippant newspapers make fun of the wonderful stories told about her, as though she were a mountebank or imposter. Thus the prestige of her occult power, uncertain and capricious though it has latterly become, invests her with so much interest for people who have emerged from the bog of mere materialistic incredulity about her, that anyone with a tendency towards mysticism is apt to become possessed with something like reverence for her attributes, in spite of the strangely unattractive shell with which she sometimes surrounds them. Thus, in one way and another, large numbers of people in India who came to know her through ourselves, learned to regard her with a very friendly feeling, rugged manners and stormy temperament notwithstanding. . . .

[1] Sinnett is probably referring here to the information given in Mahatma M.'s letter which I have quoted on page 88 in reference to the loss of one of her 'principles'.

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"No one could understand Mme. Blavatsky without studying her by the light of the hypothesis—even if it were only regarded as such—that she was the visible agent of unknown occult superiors. There was much in her character on the surface as I have described it, which repelled the idea that she was an exalted moralist trying to lead people up towards a higher spiritual life. The internal excitement, superinduced by the effort to accomplish any of her occult feats, would, moreover, render her too passionate in repudiating suspicions which could not but be stimulated by such protests on her part. Conscious of her failure very often to do more than leave people about her puzzled and vaguely wondering how she did her 'tricks', she would constantly abjure the whole attempt, profess violent resolutions to produce no more phenomena under any circumstances for a sneering, undiscerning, materialistic generation, and as often be impelled by her love of wielding the strange forces at her command to fall into her old mistakes, to hurriedly rush into the performance of some new feat as she felt the power upon her, without stopping to think of the careful conditions by which it ought to be surrounded, if she meant to do more than aggravate the mistrust which drove her into frenzies of suffering and wrath. Once, however, recognise her as the flighty and defective, though loyal and brilliantly-gifted representative of occult superiors in the background, making through her an experiment on the spiritual intuitions of the world in which she moved, and the whole situation was solved, the apparent incoherence of her character and acts explained, and the best attributes of her own nature properly appreciated. . . .

"Of course Mme. Blavatsky's excitable and passionate disposition has been a frightful stumbling-block in her way: but what is the use in an orchard of the most gracefully shaped tree that bears no fruit? She might have been born with the manners of Mme. Recamier, and the sedate discretion of an English judge, and have been perfectly useless in her generation. Whereas, with all her defects, the possession of her splendid psychic gifts, of her indomitable courage—which carried her through the ordeals of initiation in the mysteries of occult knowledge, and again held her up against the protracted antagonism of materialistic opinion when she came back into the world with an onerous mission to discharge—and of her spiritual enthusiasm which made all suffering and toil as dust in the balance, compared with her allegiance to her unseen 'Masters', the possession, in short, of her occult attributes, has rendered her an influence in the world of great potency. The tree may not have assumed a shape that passing strangers would admire, but the fruit it has borne has been a stupendous harvest."

It is to be regretted that Mr. Sinnett's splendid work for Theosophy, and his whole-hearted defence of Mme. Blavatsky in the early days—and more especially in connection with the

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S. P. R. attack—was marred at the end of his life by the publication of a book in which he indulges in ill-natured, ungrateful, and often untrue reflections on her character, due to his own vanity and desire to pose as the real introducer of Theosophy in the West. He never forgave her for settling in England in 1887: as she naturally overshadowed his own prestige, and drew to her own circle many who had previously belonged to his—the present writer for one. As he grew older he appeared to forget altogether the debt that he owed to her, and his previous estimates of the value of her work, in an endeavour to claim for himself a superior position as a representative of the Masters. He claimed always to have been in communication with them independently of her; but their Letters to him which are now available show quite clearly that this could not have been the case. After they ceased to correspond with him, his "communications" were in fact purely of a mediumistic nature, and there is every reason to think that he was pretty well imposed upon.

His work to which I now refer, *The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe*, was published in 1922, after his death in 1921 at the age of 81, and was received with amazement and disgust by those who knew the real state of affairs, and the inner motives which had prompted the work, and also as regards its publication by the leading Theosophical Publishing House in this country. Thereby, however, hangs another tale, and a later and disastrous phase in the history of the Theosophical Society with which I do not propose to deal in this work.[1]

Shortly after the two Founders arrived in India, they set off on a tour for the purpose of arousing interest in the Society, and to form Branches in various districts. They went to Allahabad, Cawnpore, Bhurtpore, Jeypore, Agra, Saharanpore, Meerut, and a few other places. H. P. B. subsequently made this trip the basis of a series of brilliant letters to the Russian Journal *Russki Vyestnik* (*Russian Messenger*) under the title of *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan.* An English translation was subsequently published in London in 1892. Like every other work by H. P. Blavatsky, it has been attacked and criticised, and this time, forsooth, because it was not—what it never claimed to be—a strictly accurate record of the journey in question. In the translator's Preface to the English edition he quotes Mme. Blavatsky as saying:—

[1] Readers may be referred for further particulars to Mrs. A. L. Cleather's work, *H. P. Blavatsky: A great Betrayal*, published by Thacker, Spink & Co Calcutta 1922.

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"You must remember that I never meant this for a scientific work. My letters to the Russian Messenger, under the general title: 'From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan', were written in leisure moments, more for amusement than with any serious design. Broadly speaking, the facts and incidents are true; but I have freely availed myself of an author's privilege to group, colour, and dramatize them, whenever this seemed necessary to the full artistic effect; though, as I say, much of the book is exactly true. I would rather claim kindly judgment for it, as a romance of travel, than incur the critical risks that haunt an avowedly serious work."

The translator adds to this his own caution that the Russian editor was by no means accurate, since Mme. Blavatsky, being in India, never corrected the proof-sheets.

One of the most important events of the year 1879 was the commencement of the publication of *The Theosophist*, which has continued its unbroken career ever since. The first number was issued on the 1st October, 1879, with H. P. B. as editor in chief. The early numbers are of very great interest as bearing upon the objects and ideals of the Society in these early days. H. P. B. in her editorial, Vol. I, p. 2, says of Theosophy: "Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom-Religion*, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilisation." In the "Principles, Rules, and Bye-Laws" adopted on the 17th December, 1879, the Theosophical Society is stated to be: "Founded upon the basis of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity." [1]

In May, 1880, H. P. B. and Col. Olcott went to Ceylon, accompanied by Damodar K. Malavankar—a Brahmin *chela*, who subsequently went to the Masters in Tibet [2]—Mr. Wimbridge, two Hindus, two Parsis, the wife of one of the Hindus, and Babula, H. P. B.'s devoted Hindu servant. The party were received by the Sinhalese Buddhists with great enthusiasm, and were fêted high and low. Col. Olcott was almost daily addressing audiences which sometimes numbered as many as 3,000 to 4,000. Several Branches of the Society were formed, and the movement took a firm root in the Island.

On the 25th May, the two Founders were formally admitted to the Buddhist Religion by the ceremony of taking *Pânsil*. Col. Olcott records the ceremony as follows:—[3]

"On the 25th May, H. P. B. and I 'took *pânsil*' from the venerable Bulâtgama, at a temple of the Râmanya Nikâya, whose name at the moment escapes me, and were formally acknowledged as Buddhists.

[1] *Theosophist*, Vol. I, p. 179.
[2] See Appendix, p. 272, *infra*.
[3] *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 167.

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A great arch of greenery, bearing the words, 'Welcome to the members of the Theosophical Society', had been erected within the compound of the Vihâra. We had previously declared ourselves Buddhists long before in America, both privately and publicly, so that this was but a formal confirmation of our previous professions. H. P. B. knelt before the huge statue of the Buddha, and I kept her company. We had a good deal of trouble in catching the Pâli words that we were to repeat after the old monk, and I don't know how we should have got on if a friend had not taken his place just behind us and whispered them *seriatim*. A great crowd was present and made the responses just after us, a dead silence being preserved while we were struggling through the unfamiliar sentences. When we had finished the last of the *Sîlas*, and offered flowers in the customary way, there came a mighty shout to make one's nerves tingle, and the people could not settle themselves down to silence for some minutes to hear the brief discourse which, at the Chief Priest's request, I delivered."

In September 1880 the two Founders went to Simla to pay a second visit to the Sinnetts and it was during this visit that most of the phenomena recorded in Mr. Sinnett's work *The Occult World* took place, and Mr. Sinnett himself was put into communication with Mahatma Koot Hoomi. Mr. Sinnett records the receipt of his first letter from K. H. on page 65 of *The Occult World*; and this letter is the first of the series in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. It is endorsed by Mr. Sinnett as being "Received Simla about October 18th, 1880." So many denials have been made as to the genuineness of these *Letters*, and even as to the existence of the Masters themselves in physical bodies that it may be as well to record here in Mr. Sinnett's own words his ground for the belief that K. H. was a real person, and that the Letters were not the fabrication of Mme. Blavatsky. The quotation is on page 80 of *The Occult World* (sixth edition) and has reference to a telegram which he received from Koot Hoomi under circumstances which made it impossible that Mme. Blavatsky could have been the sender.

"This telegram, of no great importance as regards its contents, which were little more than an expression of thanks for some letters I had written in the papers, was, nevertheless, of great interest indirectly, affording me, as it ultimately did, evidence of a kind which could appeal to other minds besides my own, that Koot Hoomi's letters were not, as some ingenious persons may have been inclined to imagine—in spite of various mechanical difficulties in the way of the theory—the work of Madame Blavatsky. For me, knowing her as intimately as I did, the inherent evidence of the style was enough to make the suggestion that she might have written them, a mere

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absurdity. And, if it is urged that the authoress of *Isis Unveiled* has certainly a command of language which renders it difficult to say what she could not write, the answer is simple. In the production of this book she was so largely helped by the Brothers, that great portions of it are not really her work at all. She never makes any disguise of this fact, though it is one of a kind which it is useless for her to proclaim to the world at large, as it would be perfectly unintelligible, except to persons who knew something of the external facts, at all events, of occultism. Koot Hoomi's letters, as I say, are perfectly unlike her own style. But, in reference to some of them, receiving them as I did while she was in the house with me, it was not mechanically impossible that she might have been the writer. Now, the telegram I received at Allahabad, which was wired to me from Jhelum, was in reply specially to a letter I addressed to Koot Hoomi just before leaving Simla, and enclosed to Mme. Blavatsky, who had started some days previously, and was then at Amritsur. She received the letter, with its enclosure, at Amritsur on the 27th of October, as I came to know, not merely from knowing when I sent it, but positively by means of the envelope which she returned to me at Allahabad by direction of Koot Hoomi, not in the least knowing why he wished it sent to me. I did not at first see what on earth was the use of the old envelope to me, but I put it away and afterwards obtained the clue to the idea in Koot Hoomi's mind when Mme. Blavatsky wrote me word that he wanted me to obtain the original of the Jhelum telegram. Through the agency of a friend connected with the administration of the telegraph department, I was enabled eventually to obtain a sight of the original of the telegram—a message of about twenty words ; and then I saw the meaning of the envelope. The message was in Koot Hoomi's own handwriting, and it was an answer from Jhelum to a letter which the delivery post-mark on the envelope showed to have been delivered at Amritsur on the same day the message was sent. Mme. Blavatsky assuredly was herself at Amritsur on that date, seeing large numbers of people there in connection with the work o the Theosophical Society, and the handwriting of Koot Hoomi's letters nevertheless, appears on a telegram undeniably handed in at the Jhelum office on that date. So, although some of Koot Hoomi's letters passed through her hands to me, she is proved not to be their writer, as she is certainly not the producer of their handwriting."

A subsequent letter from Koot Hoomi, which is to be found as Letter number IV in the volume of *Letters*, page 12, confirms the above as follows :—

" The delivery of this letter may very possibly be delayed for a few days, owing to causes which it will not interest you for me to specify. Meanwhile, however, I have telegraphed you my thanks for your obliging compliance with my wishes in the matters you allude to in

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your letter of the 24th inst. I see with pleasure that you have not failed to usher me before the world as a possible ' confederate '. That makes our number ten, I believe ? But I must say, that your promise was well and loyally fulfilled. Received at Amritsar on the 27th inst., at 2 p.m., I got your letter about thirty miles beyond Rawul Pindee, five minutes later, and had an acknowledgment wired to you from Jhelum at 4 p.m. on the same afternoon. Our modes of accelerated delivery are not then, as you will see, to be despised by the Western world, or even the Aryan, English-speaking and skeptical Vakils."

Further on (p. 19) he says :—

" Though our hollow but plethoric friend, Mrs. B., were ever proved to be my *multum in parvo*, my letter-writer, and to manufacture my epistles, yet, unless she were ubiquitous, or had the gift of flying from Amritsar to Jhelum—a distance of over 200 miles—in two minutes, how could she have written for me the dispatch in my own handwriting at Jhelum hardly two hours after your letter was received by her at Amritsar ? "

Mr. C. C. Massey, who was closely connected with the movement at its commencement, and in some respects was a second Hume, gave his testimony to the genuineness of the K. H. Letters in a letter to *Light*, November 17th 1883. Writing about the so-called ' Kiddle Incident ', and the letter of K. H. which gave rise to it, he says :—

" I am bound to admit that there are circumstances connected with the receipt by Mr. Sinnett of other letters signed ' K. H.' which are, as regards those, apparently inconsistent with any instrumentality of Mme. B. herself, whether as medium or otherwise, and the handwriting is in both cases the same."

The two Founders left Simla on the 20th October, and proceeded to visit several places on their way back to Bombay; the return journey occupying ten weeks. They visited Amritsar, as shown above, Lahore, Multan, Amballa, Cawnpore, Benares, and Allahabad, where they again stayed with the Sinnetts who had returned there. From Allahabad they returned direct to Bombay, reaching home, as Col. Olcott records, on the 30th December, and taking possession of a new residence called " The Crow's Nest ", on the rocky slope of the hill of Breach Candy. This bungalow was occupied by them until December, 1882, when the Headquarters of the Society was permanently established at Adyar, Madras.

In April 1881, Col. Olcott made a second journey to Ceylon, H. P. B. being left at Bombay to edit *The Theosophist*. He was received by the Sinhalese with even more enthusiasm than on

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the occasion of the previous visit. His principal work was the creation of a National Fund for the establishment of Buddhist Schools for Buddhist children, so that they might not come under the influence of the proselytising missionaries of many denominations who were active in the Island. This naturally did not increase the liking of the said missionaries for the teachings and activities of the theosophists, and indeed their bitter sectarian opposition in India was continually in evidence, and culminated in 1884 in the Coulomb-Missionary Conspiracy.

In the meanwhile H. P. B. had paid another visit to the Sinnetts at Allahabad, and then went on with them to Simla for the remainder of the season to be the guest of Mr. A. O. Hume; and during this visit the Simla Eclectic Theosophical Society was formed, Mr. Hume being the President during the first year.

There is a very important letter in the series of *Mahatma Letters* dealing with the formation of this Simla Branch, which Sinnett and Hume wanted to make quite independent of the Parent Society, and to have very special privileges in the matter of instructions and the demonstration of phenomena granted to it by the Masters. They wanted in fact that the Masters should conform to *their* ideas as to how this occult knowledge should be imparted to the world—and specially to themselves. The letter from which I shall now quote is a very clear and definite exposition of the nature of the ancient occult science, and the conditions under which alone the aspirant can achieve a knowledge of it. The letter is too long to quote in full, yet it is so important in view of misunderstandings and misrepresentations respecting the Masters and their methods, that some part of it must be given. It is Letter No. II in the series :—

" We will be at cross purposes in our correspondence until it has been made entirely plain that occult science has its own methods of research as fixed and arbitrary as the methods of its antithesis physical science are in their way. If the latter has its dicta, so also has the former; and he who would cross the boundary of the unseen world can no more prescribe how he will proceed than the traveller who tries to penetrate to the inner subterranean recesses of L'Hassa—the blessed, could show the way to his guide. The mysteries never were, never can be, put within the reach of the general public, not, at least, until that longed for day when our religious philosophy becomes universal. At no time have more than a scarcely appreciable minority of men possessed nature's secret, though multitudes have witnessed the practical evidence of the possibility of their possession. The adept is the rare efflorescence of a generation of enquirers; and to become

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one, he must obey the inward impulse of his soul irrespective of the prudential considerations of worldly science or sagacity. Your desire is to be brought to communicate with one of us directly, without the agency of either Mad. B. or any medium. Your idea would be, as I understand it, to obtain such communications either by letters—as the present one—or by audible words so as to be guided by one of us in the management and principally in the instruction of the Society. You seek all this, and yet, as you say yourself, hitherto you have not found 'sufficient reasons' to even give up your 'modes of life'—directly hostile to such modes of communications. This is hardly reasonable. He who would lift up high the banner of mysticism and proclaim its reign near at hand, must give the example to others. He must be the first to change *his* modes of life; and, regarding the study of the occult mysteries as the upper step in the ladder of Knowledge, must loudly proclaim it such despite exact science and the opposition of society. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is obtained by force' say the Christian mystics. It is but with armed hand, and ready to either conquer or perish that the modern mystic can hope to achieve his object. . . .

"The first and chief consideration in determining us to accept or reject your offer lies in the inner motive which propels you to seek our instructions, and in a certain sense—our guidance. The latter in all cases under reserve—as I understand it, and therefore remaining a question independent of aught else. Now what are your motives? I may try to define them in their general aspect. They are: (1) The desire to receive positive and unimpeachable proofs that there really are forces in nature of which science knows nothing; (2) The hope to appropriate them some day—the sooner the better, for you do not like to wait—so as to enable yourself—(*a*) to demonstrate their existence to a few chosen western minds; (*b*) to contemplate future life as an objective reality built upon the rock of Knowledge—not of faith; and (*c*) to finally learn—most important this, among all your motives, perhaps, though the most occult and the best guarded—the whole truth about our Lodges and ourselves; to get, in short, the positive assurance that the 'Brothers'—of whom everyone hears so much and sees so little—are real entities—not fictions of a distorted hallucinated brain. . . .

"To our minds then, these motives, sincere and worthy of every serious consideration from the worldly standpoint, appear—*selfish*. They are selfish because you must be aware that the chief object of the T. S. is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men: and the real value of this term 'selfish', which may jar upon your ear, has a peculiar significance with us which it cannot have with you. Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthrophist there lurks the shadow of desire for self benefit, or a tendency to do

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injustice, even when these exist unconsciously to himself. Yet, you have ever discussed but to put down the idea of universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the T.S. on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. This, my respected and esteemed friend and Brother—will never do ! . . .

" What, you will say, can be more reasonable than to ask that teacher—anxious to disseminate his knowledge, and pupil—offering him to do so should be brought face to face, and the one give the experimental proofs to the other that his instructions were correct ? Man of the world, living in, and in full sympathy with it—you are undoubtedly right. But the men of this other world of ours, untutored in your modes of thought, and who find it very hard at times to follow and appreciate the latter, can hardly be blamed for not responding as heartily to your suggestions as in your opinion they deserve. The first and most important of our objections is to be found in our *Rules.* True, we have our schools and teachers, our neophytes and shaberons, (superior adepts), and the door is always opened to the right man who knocks. And, we invariably welcome the new comer ;—only, instead of going over to him he has to come to us. More than that : unless he has reached that point in the path of occultism from which return is impossible, by his having irrevocably pledged himself to our association, we never, except in cases of utmost moment—visit him or even cross the threshold of his door in visible appearance.

" Is any of you so eager for knowledge and the beneficent powers it confers as to be ready to leave your world and come into ours ? Then let him come ; but he must not think to return until the seal of the mysteries has locked his lips even against the chances of his own weakness or indiscretion. Let him come by all means, as a pupil to the master, and without conditions ; or let him wait, as so many others have, and be satisfied with such crumbs of knowledge as may fall in his way.

" And supposing you were thus to come—as two of your own countrymen have already—as Mad. B. did, and Mr. O. will ; supposing you were to abandon all for the truth ; to toil wearily for years up the hard steep road, not daunted by obstacles, firm under every temptation ; were to faithfully keep within your heart the secrets entrusted to you as a trial ; had worked with all your energy and unselfishly to spread the truth and provoke men to correct thinking and a correct life—would you consider it just, if, after all your efforts, we were to grant Mad. B. or Mr. O. as ' outsiders ' the terms you now ask for yourselves ? Of these two persons one has already given three-fourths of a life, the other six years of manhood's prime to us, and both will so labour to the close of their days. Though ever working for their merited reward, yet never demanding it, nor murmuring when disappointed. Even though they respectively could accomplish far less than they do, would it not be a palpable injustice to ignore them as proposed in an important field of Theosophical effort ?

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Ingratitude is not among our vices, nor do we imagine you would wish to advise it. . . .

"To conclude: we are ready to continue this correspondence if the view given of occult study as above suits you. Through the ordeal described, each of us, whatever his country, or race, has passed."

Writing to A. O. Hume on the same subject, Mahatma K. H. puts the matter even more forcibly than he has done in his letter to Sinnett.[1]

"For the life of me I cannot make out how I could ever impart to you that which I know, since the very A. B. C. of what I know, the rock upon which the secrets of the occult universe, whether on this or that side of the vale, are encrusted, is contradicted by you invariably and *a priori*. My very dear Brother, either we know something or we do not know anything. In the first case what is the use of your learning, since you think you know better? In the second case why should you lose your time? . . . You know that in order to enable you to read you have first to learn your letters—yet you want to know the course of events before and after the Pralayas, of every event here on this globe on the opening of a new cycle, namely, a mystery imparted at one of the last initiations, as Mr. Sinnett was told. . . . There are a thousand questions I will never be permitted to answer. . . . I tell you plainly you are unfit to learn, for your mind is too full, and there is not a corner vacant from whence a previous occupant would not arise, to struggle with and drive away the new comer. . . . The world of force, is the world of Occultism, and the only one whither the highest initiate goes to probe the secrets of being. Hence no one but such an initiate can know anything of these secrets. Guided by his Guru the chela first discovers this world, then its laws, then their centrifugal evolutions into the world of matter. To become a perfect adept takes him long years, but at last he becomes the master. The hidden things have become patent, and mystery and miracle have fled from his sight for ever. He sees how to guide force in this direction or that—to produce desirable effects. The secret chemical, electric or odic properties of plants, herbs, roots, minerals, animal tissue, are as familiar to him as the feathers of your birds are to you. No change in the etheric vibrations can escape him. He applies his knowledge, and behold a miracle! And he who started with repudiation of the very idea that miracle is possible, is straight-way classed as a miracle worker, and either worshipped by the fools as a demi-god or repudiated by still greater fools as a charlatan! And to show you how exact a science is occultism let me tell you that the means we avail ourselves of are all laid down for us in a code as old as humanity to the minutest detail, but everyone of us has to begin from the beginning, not from the end. Our laws are as immutable as those of Nature, and they were known to man and eternity before this strutting game-cock,

[1] See page 143 of *The Mahatma Letters*.

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modern science, was hatched. If I have not given you the *modus operandi*, or begun by the wrong end, I have at least shown you that we build our philosophy upon experiment and deduction—unless you choose to question and dispute this fact equally with all others. Learn first our laws and educate your perceptions, dear Brother. Control your involuntary powers, and develop in the right direction your will, and you will become a teacher instead of a learner. I would not refuse what I have a right to teach. Only I had to study for fifteen years before I came to the doctrines of cycles and had to learn simpler things at first. But do what we may, and whatever happens, I trust we will have no more arguing, which is as profitless as it is painful."

We have already seen that all these perfectly straightforward statements as to the conditions under which alone the occult knowledge could be imparted did not suffice to bring Hume into a receptive state of mind, so that finally he was given up altogether.

Col. Olcott returned to Bombay on the 19th December, and the commencement of the year 1882 saw him setting off on a tour to the North, lecturing and establishing various Branches of the Society. Mme. Blavatsky joined him at Boituckhana on the 5th April, and went to Madras on the 23rd. From there the two Founders proceeded on the 3rd May by house-boat on the Buckingham Canal, visiting Muttukur, Nellore, Mypaud and Padaganjam, at which place the house-boat was left, and they proceeded by palanquins and jampans to Guntur, their ultimate destination. Col. Olcott records that it was by no means an easy journey, and required as many as 53 coolies for the transport. Guntur was reached on the third day, and they were received with great acclamation, the streets being festooned and decorated for their reception ; two triumphal arches spanned the principal streets, and at night the place was a blaze of light with innumerable torches, limelights, and Bengal coloured fires.

From Guntur a return was made to the Canal at Padaganjam, from thence to Mypaud and Nellore, and from there by bullock carriages to Tiruppati, 78 miles, and the nearest station for the Madras railway ; the rest of the return journey being made by rail.

The year 1882 was marked by two events of great moment. The first of these was the visit of H. P. B. to Sikkim and Tibet in October on account of her illness. This I have already recorded in Chapter VII. A narrative of this journey, and how H. P. B. avoided the importunities and company of a number of native theosophists who endeavoured not to lose sight of her is

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given in *The Theosophist*, December, 1882. Mr. Sinnett reproduces part of this amusing narrative in his *Incidents* (p. 253). At Chandernagore the train started off with H. P. B. and four others, "against all regulations and before the bell was rung, and before even her own things could be placed in the van." Further along the line "another accident (?)" left the other four several stations short of Darjeeling, which they only reached a few days later, H. P. B. having then returned from her two days' visit to the Masters, as recorded in her letter.[1]

The second notable incident of this year was the removal of the Headquarters of the Society from Bombay to Adyar, Madras, where they have been established ever since.

On the occasion of the Founders leaving Bombay on the 17th December, a farewell entertainment was given by their native friends and members of the Society, and the following address was presented.[2]

"On the eve of your departure for Madras, we, the members of the Bombay Branch, beg most respectfully to convey to you our heartfelt and sincere acknowledgment for the benefit which the people of this Presidency in general, and we in particular, have derived from your exposition of the Eastern philosophies and religions during the last four years. Although the exigencies of the Society's growing business make it necessary to remove the head-quarters to Madras, we assure you that the enthusiasm for Theosophical studies and universal Brotherhood which you have awakened in us will not die out, but will be productive of much good in future. By your editorial efforts and public lectures, you have done much to awaken in the hearts of the educated sons of India a fervent desire for the study of their ancient literature which has so long been neglected; and though you have never undervalued the system of Western education for the people of India, which to a certain extent is necessary for the material and political advancement of the country, you have often justly impressed upon the minds of young men the necessity of making investigations into the boundless treasures of Eastern learning as the only means of checking that materialistic and atheistic tendency engendered by an educational system unaccompanied by any moral or religious instruction.

"You have preached throughout the country temperance and universal Brotherhood, and how far your attempts in that direction have been successful during the brief period of four years was perfectly manifest at the last anniversary of the Parent Society, just held in Bombay, when on one common platform brave hearts from Lahore and Simla to Ceylon, from Calcutta to Kattiawar, from Gujerat and

[1] See page 101 *supra*.
[2] See Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Jan. 1883, p. 8.

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Allahabad—Parsees, Hindoos, Buddhists, Jews, Mahomedans, and Europeans—assembled under the banner of Theosophy, and advocated the regeneration of India, under the benign influence of the British rule. Such a union of different communities, with all the prejudices of sects, castes, and creeds set aside, the formation of one harmonious whole, and the combining together for any national object, in short, a grand national union, are indispensible for the moral resuscitation of Hindoostan.

"Your endeavours have been purely unselfish and disinterested, and they, therefore, entitle you to our warmest sympathy and best respects. We shall most anxiously watch your successful progress, and take an earnest delight in the accomplishment of the objects of your mission throughout the *Aryawart*.

"As a humble token of our sense of appreciation of your labours of love, and as a keepsake from us, we beg most respectfully to offer for your acceptance, on behalf of our Branch, an article of Indian make, with a suitable inscription."

It cannot be supposed that all the activities in which the two Founders were engaged during these strenuous years were accomplished without great labour, mental anxiety, and physical discomfort, and also with considerable expenditure. It is on record in the Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Vol. II, No. 8, May, 1881, that the expense of the work done in India up to that time, the travelling expenses, and the fitting and maintenance of Headquarters, had cost some Rs. 26,419, while the receipts of the treasurer had been only Rs. 6,873. The balance of 19,546 was provided by the Founders themselves;[1] and though it has been suggested that they were living and doing a good business out of "initiation fees", the real fact is that H. P. B. was slaving at her desk from morning till night, often when she could scarcely hold a pen, writing articles for the Russian Journals to supplement the scanty resources of the Society; and in addition she had the heavy work of correspondence with Branches, and the editing of *The Theosophist*.

Her independence in money matters, and the way in which she regarded her work in this connection, may be gathered from the following characteristic letter to Mr. Sinnett when it was proposed to raise a fund to enable her to carry on with her literary work, *The Secret Doctrine* in particular. It appears to have been written from Würzburg.[2]

"I protest *and refuse most emphatically* any such thing as subscription or purses made up in my favour, and the reasons for it are several, which I am sure you must appreciate.

[1] There is also an item of Rs. 400 for 40 poor members' fees paid for them by Mme. Blavatsky herself.

[2] See *Letters*, p. 132.

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" (1) I do not want to *sell* for a consideration any *occult* work, S. D. least of all.

" (2) I cannot *engage or bind* myself. Once I accept money for it, that work must be done well, and satisfy the subscribers (of the fund or pension I mean). Suppose it does not? Then to all my crimes —*dishonesty in money matters* shall be added.

" (3) I cannot *bind* myself to a promise of working *only* on the S. D.—or working on it at all to its end. I may be sick, I may die—I may have the *blues*, and once I am *hired* I should feel like a *thief* had I to give up my work for any of the various reasons above named.

" Finally it is not the 'British' only who shall never be *slaves*. My father's daughter is against the Biblical institution, and I—DECLINE with thanks."

Mr. A. O. Hume, writing to the *Saturday Review* in 1881, in answer to a virulent attack which had been made on the Founders in that paper in its issue of the 3rd September, says :—

" To my certain knowledge they have spent on the Theosophical Society over £2,000 more than its total receipts, the accounts have been regularly audited, printed, and published, so that anyone may satisfy themselves on this head."[1]

In June 1882 the two Founders went to Baroda, where they were well received by the Gaikwar and other high native officials.

On the 15th July, Col. Olcott set out on another visit to Ceylon. It was on this visit that he discovered that he had great magnetic healing powers, and the fame of the cures which he accomplished spread far and wide.

There is not very much of note to record of the year 1883, though it appears to have been one of the busiest and most successful of the years in India. H. P. B. remained most of the time at Headquarters, editing *The Theosophist*, and doing other literary work, whilst Col. Olcott travelled North and South, some 16,500 miles in all, healing, and founding Branches of the Society. The number of Branches was increased during this year from 52 to 95.

September of this year saw H. P. B. paying a visit to Ootacamund, in the Nilgiri Hills, as the guest of Major-General Morgan and his wife. As the result of this and subsequent visits she wrote her work—first published in Russia, and afterwards (1926) translated into French—*Au Pays des Montagnes Bleues*. It is an exceedingly interesting account of the manners and customs, religion, morality, and occult practices of the mysterious tribes

[1] See the Preface to the second edition of *The Occult World* for a copy of the whole of this letter.

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who have inhabited these mountains, since no one knows when, or to what race they belong—the Todas, the Baddagas, the Irulas, the Kotas, and the Kurambas. An English translation of this work went through some numbers of *The Theosophist* in 1909–10, but they were not published in book form.

In the French edition a very high tribute is paid to the genius and work of Mme. Blavatsky in a Preface written by Monsieur Albert de Pouvourville, the well-known French scholar and author. He says :—

" The fortunate chance of my life has conducted me, during long years, to the far East, near to where Blavatsky drew at the same time her science and her glory. And, seen from over there, at this right-angle of the extreme East, she appears in the immortal reality of her soul, a thousand times clearer, purer, and more truly adept than in the distorted mirrors of the West, where so many cracks and hiatuses have deformed her noble image. . . .

" No : it is not on account of a certain aptitude for super-physical phenomena that the memory of Blavatsky merits to be honoured so long as voice can pronounce a eulogy : it is not because she could, at a sign, cause books in her library to descend on to her desk, that we erect here a tablet in admiration of her work for esoteric philosophy. It is, on the contrary, because she considered—as does the science of Yoga itself—that phenomena are quite secondary, and only to be taken as a proof of the degrees to which the seekers of truth successively attain ; it is because all her life and all her work were but a hymn to this hidden truth ; and it is because she has been able, without doubt as recompense for a disinterested patience and a deliberate renouncement, to transpose, in precepts from this time irrefutable, a tradition, difficult, secret, abstruse for the white race, and transmitted only, since the beginnings, by the most jealous of esoteric teachings. . . .

" No one can render a greater service to humanity than to proclaim the Unity of Eternal Truth, which successive revelations, far from unveiling, have but covered with new symbolisms. . . .

" Let us salute, then, in Blavatsky, one of the finest exponents of this Unity, of which she was, during the whole of her life, a vigorous defender, an assured adept, and, without doubt also, in the secret of her spirit, one of the rare and happy witnesses."

To this the translator, Monsieur Marc Semenoff adds his own testimony as to the life and character of the *real* H. P. Blavatsky.

" The name of Helena Blavatsky will become increasingly famous with time. A pioneer of genius, who struggled for the recovery of a unique knowledge, she lived for the highest, the most noble, the most thankless, but also the most fruitful Ideal : Instructor to humanity in

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the only road following which the stages in its inevitable evolution could be the most quickly overpassed. Justice will one day be rendered to her deeds and her work."

This is high praise indeed, and perhaps in our English estimation somewhat florid; but it strikes the right note, and, written in 1926, it is itself a witness that "the name of Helena Blavatsky becomes increasingly famous with time", in spite of all the detractors and slanderers who have endeavoured to smirch her reputation and belittle her work, both during her life and since her death.

Col. Olcott joined Mme. Blavatsky at the close of his long tour, and towards the end of September they left the Nilgiris to go to Pondichéry, the French settlement. Col. Olcott says that his pen was not equal to the task of depicting H. P. B.'s expression on finding that they were received at the railway station by the Governor's band playing "God Save the Queen", and taken in procession to their lodgings! On the 23rd September they returned to Madras, but on the 27th October the Colonel again started out on a long journey Northward, visiting Bellary, Adoni and Hyderabad, from thence to Secunderabad, Boparam, Sholapore, Poona, and from thence to Bombay.

Here Col. Olcott records that he received orders from his Guru to discontinue his magnetic healings. He writes:—[1]

"The prohibition came none too soon, for I am persuaded that I myself should have become paralyzed if the strain had been kept up, One morning, at Madras, just before starting on the present journey, I found my left forefinger devoid of sensation—a clear warning to be careful; and between Madras and Bombay it had taken me much longer and demanded far greater exertions to effect cures than it had previously: there was also a much larger percentage of failures. This is not to be wondered at, for, after treating one way and another some 8,000 patients within the twelvemonth, the sturdiest psychopath, let alone a man of fifty-odd, might be expected to have come to the last 'volt' in his vital battery: a state to which the tiring journeys, the nights of broken sleep, the often meagre food, and the ceaseless intellectual strain of a large correspondence, daily conversazioni, and almost daily extemporaneous lectures on profound themes must, naturally, have greatly helped to bring about."

On the 20th October, H. P. B. joined the Colonel at Bombay, but shortly after returned to Madras, while the Colonel, Mr. Brown, Damodar, and L. V. V. Naidu went North: visiting Jubbulpore, Allahabad, Ghazipore, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Bara

[1] *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 22.

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Banki, Bareilly, Moradabad, Aligarh, Delhi, Meerut, and Lahore. At this latter place the Colonel records (*ibid.*, p. 36) a visit from the Mahatma Koot Hoomi to himself and to Mr. Brown ; Damodar also being a witness of the visit.[1] The Colonel had two conversations with him on successive days.

From Lahore the party proceeded to Jammu to visit by invitation the Maharajah of Kashmir, who, Col. Olcot states, was a thoughtful Vedantin, well acquainted with philosophical systems, and a believer in the existence of living Mahatmas.

The next visit was to Kapurthala, where they were entertained by the Dewan, and duly organised a Branch of the Society. From thence they went to Jaipur, Baroda, Gooty, Kurnool, and then back to Madras, where they arrived on December 15th, in time for the Annual Convention of the Society on the 27th of that month.

Col. Olcott records in his Diary (Vol. III, p. 65) :—

" By the last day of December the greater part of the Delegates had left for their homes, and only our house-party remained. Thus closed one of the busiest, most encouraging and successful years in our Society's history. To get through my share of the work, I had travelled 16,500 miles in India and Ceylon. The future sparkled with bright promise ; but the lower gods were envious, and were already forging the thunderbolt that Mara meant to hurl at us within the next few months ; to how little profit, my narrative will show in the process of its unfolding."

[1] See *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, edited by C. Jinarājādasa, First Series, p. 47, for a copy of a letter which K. H. left with Olcott on this occasion. The original is at Adyar. See also " Some Experiences in India," by W. T. Brown, London, 1884.

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CHAPTER XII

WORK IN INDIA. 1879–1885 (Continued)

THE year 1884, which opened so auspiciously, proved to be the one in which the gathering forces of disloyalty and treachery within the Society, and of antagonism and hatred without, came to a head, and brought about a crisis, both in the outer affairs of the Society and in its inner occult existence, from which it never really recovered.

Already, at the commencement of the year, the clouds were gathering for the storm, and warning letters from the Masters showed that they were aware of what was coming before any outward signs were visible.

Col. Olcott records in his *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol. III, p. 90) that while travelling from Paris to London on the 5th April with Mohini M. Chatterji, a letter dropped from the roof of the railway carriage just above Mohini's head. Only Mohini and he were in the carriage. It was addressed to the Colonel, and was in the handwriting of Mahatma K. H. The Colonel does not give the contents of the letter in his *Old Diary Leaves*, but it appeared in *The Theosophist*, February, 1908; and among other things mentioned it contains the following:—

> "Do not be surprised at anything you may hear from Adyar, nor discouraged. It is possible—though we try to prevent it within the limits of Karma—that you may have great domestic annoyances to pass through. You have harboured a traitor and an enemy under your roof for years, and the missionary party are more than ready to avail of any help she may be induced to give. A regular conspiracy is on foot. She is maddened by the appearance of Mr. Lane Fox and the powers you have given to the Board of Control. We have been doing some phenomena at Adyar since H. P. B. left India, to protect Upasika from the conspirators."

This latter sentence appears to mean that certain phenomena which took place at Adyar in connection with the "Shrine" during H. P. B.s (Upasika's) absence were allowed to take place so that they could not be attributed to her "trickery". If genuine phenomena could and did take place during her absence, it is obvious that the ground for asserting that they were all due to her own contrivances was absolutely deprived of any validity. Two such cases are in fact recorded by Mr. Hodgson in his

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"Report of Investigations" in India,[1] but he disposes of them in his usual off-hand manner by supposing a confederate.

The allusion to the "she" traitor in the above letter is of course to Mme. Coulomb, and her conspiracy with the missionaries which developed later in the year with the publication of the forged letters to which I shall presently refer.

In a letter to Sinnett, apparently just after the Coulomb affair, Mahatma K. H. says (p. 322) :—

"I warned you all through Olcott in April last of what was ready to burst at Adyar, and told him not to be surprised when the mine should be fired."

Another letter referring to the same matter was received at Adyar on the 26th April by Dr. Hartmann through Damodar. I give this letter in the Appendix hereto, page 282, so need not repeat it here.

Let us see, however, what were the movements of the two Founders during this important year.

The Sinhalese Buddhists had obtained a promise from Col. Olcott that he would go to London to endeavour to obtain from the Government some modifications of certain religious disabilities under which they were suffering, and he decided to go in February. It was also decided that H. P. B. should accompany him on account of her health. They set sail from Bombay on the 20th February; the party consisting of the two Founders, Mohini M. Chatterji, B. J. Padshah, and H. P. B.'s servant Babula. The Headquarters at Adyar were left in charge of a Committee of Management, two of the members being Dr. Hartmann and Mr. Lane Fox.

The party reached Marseilles on the 12th March, and from thence proceeded to Nice to visit Lady Caithness (Duchess de Pomar), at whose house were quickly gathered round them a large number of influential people interested—perhaps more in the phenomena than the philosophy of Theosophy, though some few were genuine students of the latter. Col. Olcott mentions in particular Baron J. Spedalieri, a Kabbalist and pupil of Eliphas Lévi.

H. P. B. and the Colonel left for Paris on March 27th, the rest of the party having preceded them there. Apartments had been provided for them at 46 Rue Notre Dame des Champs, and here H. P. B. remained for three months, with an interim visit of one week to London on the 7th April. On the 5th April Col. Olcott

[1] See *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Part IX, December, 1885, page 373.

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and Mohini went to London. There had been trouble in the London Lodge between Dr. Anna Kingsford, Mr. Edward Maitland, and their party on the one hand, and Mr. Sinnett and the rest of the members on the other; the one party wishing to study the Hermetic teachings and philosophy which Mrs. Kingsford was giving out through her inspirations and visions, whilst the others wished to work on the lines of the Eastern philosophy which Mr. Sinnett had obtained through H. P. B. from the Masters, in the *Letters* from which I have quoted so freely. This dispute was settled by Col. Olcott in the first instance by the granting of a Charter for a separate Lodge to Dr. Kingsford and her party, called the "Hermetic Lodge T.S.". This, however, lasted only a very short time, and ultimately Mrs. Kingsford formed an independent "Hermetic Society".

At the annual meeting of the London Lodge when the arrangement for the retirement of Mrs. Kingsford and her party was formally confirmed, a sensation was created by the sudden appearance of Mme. Blavatsky, who had taken a 'flying trip' from Paris (not by aeroplane!) without notifying anyone that she was coming.

This period, the Spring of 1884, saw Theosophy in London as the great social and literary topic. The publication of Sinnett's *Occult World*, his own presence in London—he resigned the editorship of the *Pioneer* early in 1883 and came to reside in London—and the visit of Col. Olcott and of Mohini as a *chela*, all combined to arouse the greatest possible interest in the claims which were made as to the origin, teachings, and above all the 'miracles' said to be accomplished by Mme. Blavatsky and by the Mahatmas. Alas! it was precisely these—which "ought to have been limited to *an inner* and very SECRET circle"[1]—which aroused the antagonism of the scientific world represented by the Society for Psychical Research, and led to their prejudged, unscientific, and illogical "Report", as shown in the Appendix hereto.

However, at this time, Col. Olcott was invited to meet the greatest celebrities in the literary and scientific world. He records:—[2]

"I had my full share of dinners to eat in company with social lions, some of whom impressed me most amiably—others didn't. At Mrs. Tennant's house I met Sir Edwin Arnold, was invited to lunch with h m, and he gave me the valuable present of some pages of the original manuscript of the *Light of Asia*, which is now one of the curios

[1] *Mahatma Letters*, p. 323. [2] *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 98.

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of the Adyar Library. At Mrs. Bloomfield Moore's, Mr. Sinnett and I met Robert Browning, and talked some theosophy with that master of verse. Earl Russell had me up to Oxford for a night, and Lord Borthwick, F.T.S., to his place in Scotland for a fortnight. At one table I met an officer of the Queen's Household and a famous General; at another, one of the greatest of modern painters. Everywhere the theme of talk was Theosophy: the tide was rising. The ebb was to follow, but as yet no one foresaw it in Europe, for it was to begin at Madras: the Scottish Missionaries its engineers, the high-minded [?] Coulombs their tools."

At a dinner given at the Junior Atheneum Club he was introduced to Sir Wm. Crookes, Sir Wm. Barrett, and Messrs. F. W. H. Myers, F. Podmore, and E. Gurney of the Psychical Research Society; and this may be said to have been the beginning of the subsequent events in connection with the "Investigations" of this Society. Col. Olcott records of this as follows (*op. cit.*, p. 99):—

"There had been the making of acquaintances between us and the S.P.R.; entire cordiality and unsuspicious friendliness on our part; an equally apparent sympathy on theirs; agreeable social meetings at the houses of their leaders; and, finally, a consent on my part to be examined by a Committee of the S.P.R. The sky was purely blue, without the tiniest cloud to indicate the hurricane in preparation for us; so those were joyous days in London and Paris and H. P. B. and I were in exuberant spirits. On the 11th May (1884) I had my first sitting and examination with Messrs. F. W. H. Myers and J. Herbert Stack. A stenographer reported the Questions and Answers. The printed Report is in a pamphlet of 130 pp. 8vo. (Private and confidential to members of the S.P.R.), which was issued in December 1884, and which also contains reports of similar examinations by the Committee of Mohini M. Chatterji, and forty-two documentary appendices. The ground covered by the enquiry was as to the appearance of phantasms of the living; the projection and material constitution of the human Double; appearances and communications with the same at distances from the physical body; visits to the witnesses from living Adepts or Mahatmas; *apports* of ponderable objects; astral bell-sounds; the phenomenal receipt of written documents; the precipitation of Mahatmic writing within closed letters from ordinary correspondents while in transit through the mails; the giving of flowers by an Adept's double to a group of observers, etc. I think that any candid reader of the Report will notice the perfect candor, openness, and evident good faith of the witnesses, and the amplitude of corroboration contained in the documents which were laid by us before the Committee. But to understand our feelings when, later on, the S.P.R. made its merciless attack

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upon H. P. B., our Masters, and ourselves, one should try to put oneself in our places. Here were we laying bare a series of personal experiences which had for us a most private and sacred character, for no possible benefit that could accrue to ourselves, but solely that our testimony might help the cause of spiritual science and give comfort to other students not yet so favoured as ourselves; going before the Committee with no prepared case, but answering the questions sprung upon us, and hence putting ourselves at the mercy of those who had none of our enthuiasm, whose policy was to criticise, analyze, and pick flaws in our statements, and who in rendering their final judgment were unsparing of our feelings, sceptical as to our motives, and merciless to a degree. Worst of all, they were then incompetent through inexperience of psychical laws, mislead by the conclusions of an agent—Dr. Hodgson—whom they sent out to India to verify our statements and collect evidence, and by an utterly incompetant handwriting expert's report, and so put themselves on permanent record as the self-righteous calumniators of a woman—H. P. B.—who had neither done an injury to a living person, nor asked or received any benefit or reward for her services to the world, yet whom they dared to brand as 'one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting imposters in history.' "

The 23rd July saw the end of Col. Olcott's visit to London, he having in the meanwhile satisfactorily concluded his business with the Government on behalf of the Sinhalese Buddhists, and obtained for them many valuable concessions.

Mme. Blavatsky meanwhile had been having an equally prosperous time in Paris. She was the centre of attraction of a large circle of people interested in Occult Science and Philosophy in its various branches. She was also visited here by her sister, Mme. Jelihowsky. Mr. Sinnett records in his *Incidents* (p. 264) that in an article contributed to a Russian newspaper, Mme. Jelihowsky wrote as follows of her sister :—

" When, about the middle of May, we arrived in Paris, for an interview with Mme. Blavatsky, we found her surrounded by a regular staff of members of their Society who had gathered at Paris, coming from Germany, Russia, and even America, to see her after her five years absence in India; and by a crowd of the curious who had heard of the thaumaturgic atmosphere always around her, and were anxious to become eye-witnesses to her occult powers. Truth compels me to say that H. P. Blavatsky was very reluctant to satisfy idle curiosity. She has her own way of looking very contemptuously at any physical phenomena, hates to waste her powers in a profitless manner, and was, moreover, at the time quite ill. Every phenomenon produced *at her will* invariably cost her several days of sickness."

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She then goes on to record several of the phenomena witnessed, but I need not deal with any of these here except to note that the notorious Vs. Solovyoff, who afterwards attacked Mme. Blavatsky so bitterly and scandalously in his work *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, was a witness of many of these, and in reference to one of them in particular he himself sent an account of it to a St. Petersburg Journal the *Rebus*, at the conclusion of which he says :—

"The circumstances under which the phenomenon occured in its smallest details, carefully checked by myself, do not leave in me the smallest doubt as to its *genuineness* and reality. Deception or fraud in this particular case *are entirely out of the question*."[1]

In this same work of Solovyoff's he endeavours to give the reader the impression that Mme. Blavatsky was living in obscurity and neglect in the Rue Notre Dame des Champs. The evidence of her sister, however, as given above gives the lie to this misrepresentation, which is only one of the large number of lies with which Solovyoff's book is crammed. In the Appendix hereto, p. 297, and in my next chapter, I show how he has convicted himself of being a liar.

H. P. B. left Paris and came to London June 29th as a guest of Mrs. and Miss Arundale in Elgin Crescent, Notting Hill. Here she was naturally the centre of attraction for large numbers of influential people interested in the Theosophical Movement. Occasionally phenomena took place, one of which might be mentioned as it is recorded by Mme. Olga Novikoff. She had been singing a Russian song, and after the last chord had died away, Mme. Blavatsky said, "Listen," and held up her hand. Those present then "distinctly heard the last full chord composed of five notes, repeated in their midst."[2]

On the 16th August, H. P. B. left London for Elberfeld, where she was to be the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Gebhard. Col. Olcott was already there, having been touring Germany in the interests of the Society. Besides H. P. B. the party from London included Mrs. Holloway, Mohini, Bertram Keightley, and Mrs. Arundale.

Meanwhile matters at Headquarters at Adyar had been by no means proceeding smoothly. The disturbance centred round M. and Mme. Cou omb, who had been given employment at Headquarters ever since they had landed penniless at Bombay in August 1879. They had previously been acquainted with

[1] For particulars of this phenomenon see Sinnett's *Incidents*, p. 273.
[2] See Sinnett's *Incidents*, p. 276.

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Mme. Blavatsky at Cairo, and had written from Ceylon begging her to help them. The history of their treachery and conspiracy with the 'Christian' missionaries to ruin Mme. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society is sufficiently recorded in the Appendix hereto; but it might be placed on record here, in view of the slanderous statements which they subsequently made, that at this time, when they were seeking to obtain help from Mme. Blavatsky, Mme. Coulomb wrote the following letter to the Ceylon Times, 5th June, 1879—they being then in Ceylon—and sent a copy to H. P. B. at Bombay.

"I am not acquainted with any of the members of the said Society, except with Mme. Blavatsky. I have known this lady for these last eight years, and I must say the truth, that there is nothing against her character. We lived in the same town, and on the contrary she was considered one of the cleverest ladies of the age. Mme. B. is a musician, a painter, a linguist, an author, and I may say that very few ladies and indeed few gentlemen have a knowledge of things in general as Mme. Blavatsky."[1]

On the 13th May, the Committee of management left in charge of Headquarters during the absence of the two Founders in Europe, were obliged to expel Mons. Coulomb and his wife.[2] It was not, however, until September that the first of the forged letters which Mme. Coulomb asserted had been written by Mme. Blavatsky to her, appeared in the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, and it is fairly evident that the intermediate time was occupied in preparing these letters; otherwise, had they been in the possession of Mme. Coulomb at the time of her expulsion, she would not have lost four months before making use of them.

H. P. B. received the news of this treacherous attack whilst at Elberfeld, and her state of mind is perhaps better imagined than described When the matter appeared in the London *Times*, she wrote to that paper repudiating the authorship of the letters.[3]

The publication of the forged letters did not have much effect on the Movement in India, in fact it rather appeared to strengthen the position of the Founders on account of the native feeling against the missionaries for their constant attacks on the native religions which the Founders were endeavouring to expound and resuscitate.

An extract from an article in the *Indian Chronicle* is given

[1] See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, p. 98. [2] See Appendix, p. 281.
[3] See Appendix, p. 291,

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by Col. Olcott in his *Old Diary Leaves* (III, p. 185) which fairly represents this attitude :—

"We are not Theosophists ourselves . . . but we have a great respect for the founders of the Theosophical Society. It is the only foreign movement which appeals to the national feeling of India . . . and instead of being made the butt of ridicule, and its leaders the subject of persecution, it ought to be patiently nourished. The Christian scoffers . . . are perhaps not aware that the existence of Mahatmas . . . is universally believed throughout India, and it is preposterous to suppose that the Padris of Madras will do any serious harm to that belief. . . . Theosophy, though it may have to bear much temporary annoyance . . . will come out of the fiery ordeal purer for having gone through it."

In Europe, the London, German, and French Branches of the Society unanimously adopted resolutions expressing their admiration of Mme. Blavatsky's work, and their continued confidence in her.

Col. Olcott returned to India in November, and on landing in Bombay on the 10th was enthusiastically received. Mme. Blavatsky returned in December, having in the meanwhile been in Cairo to collect evidence as to the past history of the Coulombs. When she reached Madras she was accorded a reception even more tumultuously joyous than that which had been given to Col. Olcott. She was met at the pier by a large concourse of natives, garlanded, and taken in procession to the Pacheappa's Hall, which was crowded to suffocation. Here a most complimentary address was presented to her signed by over 300 students of the very same Christian College whose professors had conspired with the Coulombs to ruin the Society by attacking her reputation.

But notwithstanding all this expression of confidence and affection, H. P. B. suffered intensely from this attack on her character and her motives, and the more so that Mr. Richard Hodgson was at that time in Madras making his prejudged "investigations" into the genuineness of the Coulomb letters and the phenomena which had been reported to have taken place at Headquarters during the past four years. He never witnessed any phenomena himself, he never "investigated" any phenomena ; it was purely a matter of examining witnesses who had ; and how he carried this out is fully shown in the Appendix hereto.

Besides these distractions there was a conflict between H. P. B. and Col. Olcott as to the advisability of bringing an action for slander against the missionaries. H. P. B. wanted to

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rush into this action immediately, whilst the Colonel would not hear of this being done until the whole question had been submitted to the Annual Convention of the Society then about to assemble. This course was finally taken, and a strong Committee was appointed to report to the Convention. This Committee duly reported as follows :—[1]

" *Resolved* :—That the letters published in the *Christian College Magazine* under the heading of ' Collapse of Koot Hoomi ', are only a pretext to injure the cause of Theosophy ; and as these letters necessarily appear absurd to those who are acquainted with our philosophy and facts, and as those who are not acquainted with those facts could not have their opinion changed even by a judicial verdict given in favour of Mme. Blavatsky, therefore it is the unanimous opinion of this Committee that Mme. Blavatsky should not prosecute her defamers in a Court of Law ".

Signed by Norendro Nath Sen (Editor *Indian Mirror*, Hon. Magistrate, Calcutta, afterwards Member of the Legislative Council) ; A. J. Cooper-Oakley, M.A. ; Franz Hartman, M.D. ; S. Ramasamier (District Registrar, Madura) ; Naoroji Dorabji Khandalvala (Judge) ; Major-General H. R. Morgan ; Gyanendranath Chakravarti, M.A. (Inspector of Schools) ; Nobin K. Bannerji (Deputy Collector and Magistrate) ; T. Subbarow, B.A., B.L. ; (Pleader, High Court, Madras) ; P. Sreenevasrow (Judge) ; P. Iyaloo Naidu (Deputy Collector) ; Rudolph Gebhard ; R. Raghoonath Row (Deputy Collector, Madras, formerly Prime Minister, Indore) ; S. Subramania Iyer (since knighted, and appointed a Justice of the High Court, Madras).

It will be seen that both the influential and legal qualifications of this Committee are very high, and it can hardly be questioned that their Report and advice was a sound one. At all events it was unanimously adopted by the Convention, and thus H. P. B. was debarred from taking any legal action : a fact which subsequent detractors have endeavoured to interpret as evidence of her guilt. It was represented by several speakers at the Convention that there was no chance of justice being obtained in the Courts, as information showed that the whole case was prejudged on the basis of the *a priori* impossibility of the phenomena. The missionaries themselves appear to have displayed considerable eagerness to get H. P. B. into Court, so that she could be cross-examined in every detail connected with the Mahatmas. They appear to have displayed here a considerable shrewdness as to how she would stand such a cross-examination ; for there is no doubt that she would have created a very unfavourable impression in the witness box ; she would have been a

[1] *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 192.

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very bad witness on her own behalf, and moreover would certainly have refused to answer questions about the Mahatmas, and thus to drag them into publicity and probably open ridicule; and for this she would almost certainly have been committed for contempt of Court.

When the missionaries found that no action was to be taken in the matter, they made another effort to bring the matter into Court by bringing an action for libel against General Morgan, hoping thereby to be able to get H. P. B. into the witness box. When, however, she left India in March, and they found that she would not be available, they dropped the action.

The opinion of Judge Iyer, expressed in the following terms, was perhaps the one which carried the most weight with the Convention [1]:—

"From my experience I know the difficulty of proving the genuineness of letters in a Court of Law, a difficulty which has existed in cases in which I have been engaged myself. It is merely a question of opinion; and I would ask if it is not better to form such an opinion from the evidence embodied in a Pamphlet than by the surrender of one's judgment to the verdict of a Court of Justice. The question is whether this Society, putting itself forward as a Society for the promotion of peace and order, is justified in making an appeal to a Court of Justice in this matter. I think that every reasonable man is at liberty to form an opinion on the evidence placed before him . . . without going into a Court of Justice in which results are very often contrary to the truth. If Theosophy has only strength in itself, I consider it will survive such difficulties. . . . We cannot bind Mme. Blavatsky, but as a member of our Society I do not think it is the proper course for us to give the world the spectacle of a spiteful cross-examination. Many are insisting that it will be necessary, *simply because it would make an interesting trial*, but as sober men engaged in spreading the truth, we ought to take a different view."

Though H. P. B. bowed to the decision of the Convention, there is no doubt that she deeply resented it at the time, and in fact regarded it as nothing less than a cowardly betrayal. She became so ill that her life was in danger once more. There were also other matters which were causing disharmony and disturbance at Headquarters, and finally in March, 1885, she was induced to resign her official connection with the Society as Corresponding Secretary, to give up the editorship of *The Theosophist*, and to leave India altogether. She never returned. Despite the loyalty of the great majority, the poison of suspicion and mistrust had entered into the minds of several, and disruptive

[1] See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, p. 193.

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forces based on *personal* motives were at work. Who these persons were, and the motives which actuated them may be gathered from the Mahatma Letters to Sinnett; but one thing is certain, that with the withdrawal of H. P. Blavatsky from India, the real vital or vitalising occult influence and power was also withdrawn. The effort had in fact—as is acknowledged in the Mahatma Letters—failed in the vital and fundamental object of its inception, the principle of BROTHERHOOD.

Mme. Blavatsky sailed on the last day of March for Naples, accompanied by Miss Flynn and "Bawaji"—Bowajee D. Nath, a devoted Hindu *chela*. She was so ill that she had to be hoisted on board the vessel in a hospital chair. On reaching Italy she settled for the time being at Torre del Greco, Hotel del Vesuvius, and recovered her health to some extent. Also, if we may judge from a letter to Mrs. Sinnett, dated June 21st, she appears to have changed her views in the matter of the proposed prosecution of the missionaries, and to have seen the probable consequences in a clearer light. She writes as follows [1]:—

"The Masters being involved in this also, and I, determined to RATHER DIE A THOUSAND DEATHS than pronounce Their names, or answer questions about Them in a Court of Law—what can I do? Ah, Mrs. Sinnett, the plotters proved too cunning, too crafty for the T.S. and especially for myself. *She*—that female fiend—knew well, I *would and could not* defend myself in a Court because of the accusations, of myself and friends, and the whole of my life being so intimately connected with the Mahatmas. And to think that I should have been such a fool as to have imagined, at one time that in India it was as in Russia—that I could refuse to answer questions that were matters too sacred for me to discuss about in public. I never knew that the judge could, if he chose, *sentence me to prison for contempt of Court*, unless I answered all the blackguardly questions about the Masters the *Padris* had prepared. Well, and I kicked and clamoured to be allowed to go into Court to punish the villains and prove them liars. And now, I know better. I have learned, at my expense, that there is neither justice nor truth, nor charity for those who refuse to follow in the old tracks. I have learned the whole extent and magnitude of the conspiracy *against the belief in the Mahatmas*; it was a question of life or death to the Missions in India, and they thought that by killing *me* they would kill Theosophy. They very nearly succeeded. At any rate they have succeeded in fooling Hume and the S.P.R. Poor Myers! and still more poor Hodgson! How terribly they will be laughed at some day."

But it was not really this particular matter of the attack on her and the Society by the missionaries which caused her—and

[1] *Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 99.

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not only she, but the Masters also—to leave India to its Karmic fate. The real truth was that the Theosophical Society had failed as a living spiritual example of Universal Brotherhood. We have a glimpse of this in a letter from K. H. to Sinnett [1] :—

"You must have understood by this time, my friend, that the centennial attempt made by us to open the eyes of the blind world—has nearly failed: in India—partially, in Europe—with a few exceptions—absolutely. There is but one chance of salvation *for those* who still believe: to rally together and face the storm bravely. Let the eyes of the most intellectual among the public be opened to the foul conspiracy against theosophy that is going on in the missionary circles, and in one year's time you will have regained your footing. In India it is: either Christ or the *Founders* (! !) Let us stone them to death! They have nearly finished killing one—they are now attacking the other victim—Olcott. The padris are as busy as bees. The S.P.R. has given them an excellent opportunity of making capital of their ambassador.—Mr. Hodgson fell quite easily a victim to false evidence; and the scientific *a priori* impossibility of such phenomena helping, the reality of the phenomena he was sent to investigate and report upon is utterly and totally discredited. He may plead as an excuse the personal disappointment he felt, which made him turn in a fury against the alleged authors of the 'gigantic swindle'; but there is no doubt that if the Society collapses it will be due to him. We may add the praiseworthy efforts of our mutual friend of Simla (A. O. Hume) who has not, however, resigned,—and those of Mr. Lane Fox. What Society could withstand in its integrality the effects of two such tongues as those of Messrs. H. and L. F.! While the former, taking into his confidence every theosophist of note, assures him that since the beginning of the Society *not one of the letters* alleged to have come from the *Masters* was *genuine*. Mr. L. Fox goes about preaching that he is only carrying out the wishes of the Master (M.) in acquainting the theosophists with all the defects of the T. S. and the mistakes of its Founders whose Karma it is *to betray the* sacred trust they have received from their Gurus.

"After this you will, perhaps, blame less our chelas for detesting the Europeans at H.Q., and saying that it is *they* who have ruined the Society. . . . They declined (though the reason they gave was another one)—to receive our instructions through Subba Row and Damodar, the latter of whom is hated by Messrs. L. Fox and Hartmann. Subba R. resigned and Damodar went to Tibet. Are our Hindus to be blamed for this? . . . It is an old truism that none of you have ever formed an accurate idea of either the 'Masters' or the laws of Occultism they are guided by. . . . We were expected to allow the Occult forces to be treated in the same manner as their rind—physical

[1] Mahatma Letters, p. 362. This letter is dated "Summer, 1884", but as it refers to Hodgson's "Investigations" which were made at the end of 1884, it must be an 1885 letter.

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forces in nature. We are taken to task for not giving out to every man of learning who had joined the T.S. the fruits of the researches of generations of occultists who had all devoted their lives to it, and who had as often lost them in the great struggle of wrenching her secrets, from the heart of Nature. Unless we did that—Occultism could not be recognised; it has to remain within the limbo of magic and superstition, spiritualism—in the sight of some—*fraud* in the opinion of others. . . . What grumblings, what criticisms on *Devachan* and kindred subjects for their incompleteness and many a seeming contradiction! Oh, Blind fools! They forget—or never knew—that he who holds the keys to the secrets of *Death* is possessed of the keys of *Life*. That could everyone become a *creative God* in this race, acquiring knowledge so easily that there would be no necessity for a 6th and 7th races? And that we, we should have perverted the programme of BEING, garbled the accounts in the Book of Life, defeated in a word the ETERNAL WILL?

"My friend, I have little if anything more to say. I regret deeply my inability to satisfy the honest, sincere aspirations of a few chosen ones among your group—at least for the present. Could but your L.L. (London Lodge) understand, or so much as suspect, that the present crisis that is shaking the T.S. to its foundations is a question of perdition or salvation to thousands; a question of the progress of the Human Race or its retrogression, of its glory or dishonour, and for the majority of this race—*of being or not being*, of annihilation, in fact—perchance many of you would look into the very root of evil, and instead of being guided by false appearances and scientific decisions, you would set to work and save the situation by disclosing the dishonourable doings of your missionary world."

We may perhaps discern in this last paragraph a forecast of the stupendous disaster of the Great War. If the Theosophical Society had succeeded in its original intention, if it had become *a living example of Universal Brotherhood*, the teachings of Theosophy in their scientific, philosophical, and spiritual aspects would doubtless have obtained a world-wide recognition and acceptance such as would have made the Great War an impossibility. But human nature is—well, what it is, and neither the Theosophical Movement, notwithstanding its thousands of adherents, nor the Christian Church, notwithstanding its millions, was able to prevent the great catastrophe and its aftermath, which was doubtless "a question of perdition or salvation to thousands; a question of the progress of the Human Race or its retrogression, of its glory or dishonour".

What is the position to-day? If the Christian Church was unable to prevent War in 1914, it is still less able to prevent it to-day. No one disputes that since the War the Church has

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almost completely lost any little hold that it formerly had on the community. In England it is hopelessly divided against itself on fundamental questions of doctrine, while the great mass of the community never think of entering a Church.

As for the Theosophical Movement, it continues *as a Movement* to gain adherents, but it has no corporate unity. Numerous Sections here and there are doing good work; but even these are, in most cases, pledged to some *individualistic* aspects and claims. As for the original Society of Adyar, although its leaders proclaim vehemently the principle of Universal Brotherhood, their practice appears to be precisely the opposite. They have forced, and are forcing out, one by one, Lodges and Groups who refuse to bow the knee to the autocratic powers that have a strangle-hold upon it. Most of the individuals and Groups who have been thus forced out are making an effort to promulgate the original teachings as contained in the literature left to us by H. P. Blavatsky; this movement being known as the "Back to Blavatsky Movement". It has as yet, however, no corporate unity such as could make it a power in the world; nor does there appear to be any likelihood of this being accomplished in the immediate future, owing to the individualistic basis referred to above on which many of the Groups insist. Human nature is, in fact, much the same to-day as when the crisis occurred as set forth in the Mahatma letter from which I have quoted above.

To conclude this chapter I cannot do better than to give a few extracts from a letter which H. P. B. addressed "To My Brothers of Aryāvarta" in 1890, setting forth the reasons why she did not return to India. It was reprinted in *The Theosophist*, January, 1922:—

"It is not solely on account of bad health that I do not return to India. Those who have saved me from death at Adyar, and twice since then, could easily keep me alive there as They do me here. There is a far more serious reason. A line of conduct has been traced for me here, and I have found among the English and Americans what I have so far vainly sought for in India.

"In Europe and America, during the last three years, I have met with hundreds of men and women who have the courage to avow their conviction of the real existence of the Masters, and who are working for Theosophy on *Their* lines and under *Their* guidance, given through my humble self.

In India, on the other hand, ever since my departure, the true spirit of devotion to the Masters and the courage to avow it has steadily dwindled away. At Adyar itself, increasing strife and

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conflict has raged between personalities ; uncalled for and utterly undeserved animosity—almost hatred—has been shown towards me by several members of the staff. There seems to have been something strange and uncanny going on at Adyar, during these last years. No sooner does a European, most Theosophically inclined, most devoted to the Cause, and the personal friend of myself or the President, set his foot in Headquarters, than he becomes forthwith a personal enemy to one or other of us, and what is worse, ends by injuring and deserting the Cause. . . .

" One of the chief factors in the reawakening of Āryāvarta which has been part of the work of the Theosophical Society, was the ideal of the Masters. But owing to want of judgment, discretion, and discrimination, and the liberties taken with Their names and *Personalities*, great misconception arose concerning Them. I was under the most solemn oath and pledge never to reveal the whole truth to anyone, excepting to those who, like Damodar, had been finally selected and called by Them. All that I was permitted to reveal was, that there existed somewhere such great men ; that some of Them were Hindus ; that They were learned as none others in the ancient wisdom of Gupta Vidyā, and had acquired all the Siddhis, not as these are represented in tradition and the ' blinds ' of ancient writings, but as they are in fact and nature ; and also that I was a Chela of one of Them. . . .

" Their chief desire was to preserve the true religious and philosophical spirit of ancient India ; to defend the Ancient Wisdom contained in its Darshanas and Upanishads against the systematic assaults of the missionaries ; and finally to reawaken the dormant ethical and patriotic spirit in those youths in whom it had almost disappeared owing to college education. Much of this has been achieved by and through the Theosophical Society, in spite of all its mistakes and imperfections. . . .

" In 1884, Colonel Olcott and myself left for a visit to Europe, and while we were away the Pādri-Coulomb ' thunderbolt descended '. I returned in November, and was taken most dangerously ill. It was during that time and Col. Olcott's absence in Burma, that the seeds of all future strifes, and—let me say at once—disintegration of the Theosophical Society, were planted by our enemies. What with the Patterson-Coulomb-Hodgson conspiracy, and the faint-heartedness of the chief Theosophists, that the Society did not then and there collapse should be a sufficient proof of how it was protected. . . .

" As for myself, who can charge me with having acted like an imposter ? With having, for instance, taken one single pie from any living soul ? With having ever asked for money, or even with having accepted it, notwithstanding that I was repeatedly offered large sums ? Those who, in spite of this, have chosen to think otherwise, will have to explain what even my traducers of even the Pādri class and Psychical Research Society have been unable to explain to this day,

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viz., the motive for such fraud. They will have to explain why, instead of taking and making money, I gave away to the Society every penny I earned by writing for the papers; why at the same time I nearly killed myself with overwork and incessant labour year after year, until my health gave way, so that but for my Master's repeated help, I should have died long ago from the effects of such voluntary hard labour. . . .

"If, I say, at that critical moment, the members of the Society, and especially its leaders at Adyar, Hindū and European, had stood together as one man, firm in their conviction of the reality and power of the Masters, Theosophy would have come out more triumphantly than ever, and none of their fears would have been realised, however cunning the legal traps set for me, and whatever mistakes and errors of judgment I, their humble representative, might have made in the executive conduct of the matter. . . .

"Well, I left, and immediately intrigues and rumours began. . . . I saw I was not wanted, and remained in Europe in spite of my ardent desire to return to India. How could I do otherwise than feel that all my labours had been rewarded with ingratitude, when my most urgent wishes to return were met with flimsy excuses and answers inspired by those who were hostile to me?

"The result of this is too apparent. You know too well the state of affairs in India for me to dwell longer upon details. In a word, since my departure, not only has the activity of the movement there gradually slackened, but those for whom I had the deepest affections, regarding them as a mother would her own sons, have turned against me. While in the West, no sooner had I accepted the invitation to come to London, than I found people—the S.P.R. Report and wild suspicions and hypotheses rampant in every direction notwithstanding—to believe in the truth of the great Cause I have struggled for, and in my own *bona fides*. . . .

"Either I have stated the truth as I know it about the Masters and teach what I have been taught by them, or I have invented both Them and the Esoteric Philosophy. . . . You should not need my presence among you to convince you of the truth of Theosophy, any more than your American brothers need it. A conviction that wanes when any particular personality is absent is no conviction at all. . . .

"If, then, my Hindū brothers really and earnestly desire to bring about the regeneration of India, if they wish to ever bring back the days when the Masters, in the ages of India's ancient glory, came freely among them, guiding and teaching the people; then let them cast aside all fear and hesitation, and turn a new leaf in the history of the Theosophical Movement. Let them bravely rally round the President-Founder, whether I am in India or not, as around those few true Theosophists who have remained loyal throughout, and bid defiance to all calumniation and ambitious malcontents—both without and within the Theosophical Society." H. P. Blavatsky.

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CHAPTER XIII

WORK IN EUROPE, 1885–1888. THE WRITING OF "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

WE find Mme. Blavatsky arriving at Torre del Greco in April 1885, and she remained there until August, recuperating her health, living quietly with her *chela*, Bowajee D. Nath —often referred to in her letters as "D. N."—and Miss Mary Flynn.

In the published volume of H. P. B.'s *Letters*, there are several dated from Torre and addressed to Mr. Sinnett, to Mrs. Sinnett, to Mrs. and Miss Arundale, and to Mohini. There is much in these Letters that is extremely interesting in the light which they throw upon the various characters connected with the Theosophical Society at this time of the Coulomb-Missionary crisis; but even more so in their revelation of the sufferings which H. P. B. herself had to endure in the apparent wreck of her hopes for the success of her mission to the world. The pathetic and heart-broken letter which she wrote to Mrs. Sinnett, and from which I have already quoted in Chapter VII, page 105, was written from Torre. This letter is dated July 23rd (page 101), and I give a few more extracts here :—

"I hope you will forgive me for delaying my answer for more than a week; but I had work to finish for the papers, and *had* to do it for vile cash and lucre, as the burden of poor Mary Flynn and Babajee is now upon me also, and I have to work for my living, or rather for *ours*. And I write so slow now! One hour pen in hand, two hours in bed my sight getting dim, heart faint (physically), and fingers stiff. Ah, well, it's my Karma; and I have nothing to say. . . . Do not fight for me, my kind, dear Mrs. Sinnett, do not defend me; you will lose your time and only be called a confederate, if not worse. You would hurt yourself, perhaps the *Cause*, and do *me* no good. The mud has entered too deeply into the hapless individual known as H. P. B., the chemicals used for the dye of slander were, or rather are, too strong, and death herself, I am afraid, shall never wash away in the eyes of those who do not know me, the dirt that has been thrown at, and has stuck on the personality of the 'dear old lady.' Ah, yes; the 'old lady' is a *clean* thing to look at now; an honour to her friends, and an ornament to the Society, if anything. Alone the 'Occult World' has the key to the situation and *the* truth. But the *Occult World* is at a discount now, even at the Headquarters. The poor Colonel has it securely locked up for the present under a

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triple key, at the very bottom of his poor, weak heart, and dares not for the time being, have it on his tongue. A reaction, and an exaggeration with him, as usual. He has stuffed the S.P.R. with what could not but appear to the majority *cock and bull* stories and had fights with me for asking him not to take *them* as arbiters, not to have anything to do with the *Dons*; and now when their arbitration had such a glorious end for us, he got frightened out of his wits and has become a Brahmin, a regular Subba Row for secrecy. He forgets that 'they who shall deny me before men, I shall deny them before my (Tibetan) father.' He does not deny the Masters, of course, but he is mortally afraid to pronounce even their names except in strict privacy. Ah! If he had but half that reticence and discretion, when he thrust the Lord Buddha on His wheels, before the intuitional gathering of the Psychic Research Meeting! But it is too late. *Consummatum est*. . . .[1]

"Those who *do* know me, and have had a glimpse of the *inner* creature—are a few dozens. But if you divide these into those who *do* believe but are afraid of losing caste; those *who know*, but whose interest it is to appear uncertain; and again those whom *our* phenomena kicked out of the saddle—like the spiritualists—and broke the head of their own hobbies—what remains? A dozen or two of individuals who like yourself have the COURAGE of being *honest with themselves*, and the still greater one of showing they *do* have it, under the nose and in the face of the idiots and the selfish of the age! . . .

"Never, never, shall you or even could you, realise with all your earnestness and sympathy for me, and your natural keen perceptions—all I had to suffer for the last ten years! What could people know of me? The exterior carcase fattened on the life-blood of the *interior* wretched prisoner, and people perceived only the first, never suspecting the existence of the latter. And that 'first' was charged with ambition, love of cheap fame, mercenary objects; with fraud and deceit, cunning and unscrupulousness, lying and cheating—by the average outsider; with insincerity and untruthfulness, suspected even of passing off deliberately *bogus* phenomena—by my best, my dearest friends. Bound up, as I was, from head to foot by my pledge, an oath involving my future life—aye, even *lives*—what could I do since I was forbidden to explain *all*, but insist on the truth of the little I was permitted to give out, and deny simply the unfair charges?"

Her next move, in August, was to Würzburg, where she took apartments in the Ludwig Strasse, No. 6; and it was here that the serious work of writing *The Secret Doctrine* was commenced. Miss Flynn did not go with her to Würzburg, but returned to England, but Bowajee accompanied her, and a Swiss maid whom

[1] The allusion here is to a *gauche* action on the part of Col. Olcott at a meeting of the Society for Psychical Research, where he made an exhibit of an absurd little Indian toy Buddha mounted on wheels, and appears to have made a very inappropriate speech.

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she obtained whilst staying for a week at St. Cergues *en route*. Bowajee left her later on to go to London with Miss Arundale and Mohini, these two having paid a visit to H. P. B. at Würzburg in September.

Her first letter from Würzburg is addressed to Mr. Sinnett, and dated 19th August, 1885 (page 106). It is a very long one and deals principally with the injustice of the S. P. R. Report, a preliminary announcement of which had then been made, though the full Report was not published until December.

"Please read—and if you have, owing to some unaccountable reason, failed to remark this before—judge now. On page 452 (July *Report*) Prof. Sidgwick read the following statement (See para. 5th) about their disclaiming 'any intention of imputing wilful deception to Col. Olcott.' Following this—there comes the question of envelopes in which the Mahatmas writing was found—which *might* have been previously opened by me or others. Letters from the Masters received at Adyar when I was in Europe '*might*' have been 'in all cases', arranged by Damodar, etc., etc. The disappearance of the *Vega* packet 'can easily be accounted for' by the fact of a venetiated door *near* Babula's room—a door by the by, which was hermetically covered and nailed over—(walls and door) with my large carpet, if you remember, etc., etc. But we shall suppose, that the *Vega* packet *was* made 'to evaporate' *fraudulently* at Bombay. How then shall Mr. Hodgson, Myers & Co. account for its immediate, instantaneous reappearance at Howrah Calcutta, in the presence of Mrs. and Col. Gordon, and of our Colonel, if the said Colonel is so obviously *immaculate* that the Dons of S. P. R. felt bound to offer him public excuses? One thing is obvious: either Col. Gordon, or Mrs. Gordon, or Col. Olcott was one of them at that time my confederate, or they, the gods of S. P. R. are making fools of themselves. Surely no sane man with sound reasoning, acquainted with the circumstances of the 'Vega case', or the broken plaster portrait case, or Hübbe Schleiden's letter received in the German railway while I was in London, and so many other cases—shall ever dare to write himself down such an ass as to say that while *I am a full blown fraud and all my phenomena tricks*, that the Colonel is to be charged simply with 'credulity and inaccuracy in observation and inference!!" (p. 108.)

H. P. B. does here, in fact, lay her finger upon one of the weakest parts of the S. P. R. Report. Col. Olcott, Col. and Mrs. Gordon, General Morgan, A. O. Hume, Mr. and Mrs. Sinnett, and numerous other Europeans, not to mention many native gentlemen of irreproachable character, must have been H. P. B.'s *confederates*, not her *dupes*, in order to account for the phenomena recorded in the *Occult World* and in the S. P. R. Report. Yet

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Mme. Coulomb in her accusations does not implicate a single one of these, not even Damodar. H. P. B. goes on to say (p. 109) :

" ' Barkis is willing ',[1] dear scientific friends, to assume that *Isis Unveiled*, and all the best articles in the *Theosophist*, as every letter from both Mahatmas—whether in English, French, Telugu, Sanskrit, or Hindi, were written by Madame H. P. Blavatsky. She is willing to have it believed that for more than twenty years ' without being even so much as a medium ', she has bamboozled the most intellectual men of the century, in Russia, America, India, and *especially in England*. Why *genuine* phenomena, when the author herself, of the 1,000 *bogus* manifestations on record before the world—is such a living, incarnated phenomena, as to do all that and much more ? "

Speaking of Mme. Coulomb, she says (p. 110) :—

" She began building her plan of treachery in 1880, from the first day she landed at Bombay with her husband, both shoeless, penniless and starving. She offered to sell *my secrets* to the Rev. Bowen of the *Bombay Guardian*, in July 1880, and she sold them actually to the Rev. Patterson in May, 1884. But those secrets were ' open letters ' for years. Why should I complain ? Has not Master left it to my choice, to either follow the dictates of Lord Buddha, who enjoins us not to fail to feed *even a starving serpent*, scorning all fear lest it should turn round and bite the hand that feeds it—or to face *Karma* which is sure to punish him who turns away from the sight of sin and misery, or fails to relieve the sinner and the sufferer. I know her and tried my best not to hate her, and since I always failed in the latter, I tried to make it up by sheltering and feeding the vile snake. I have what I deserve, not for the sins *I am charged with* but for those which *no one* —save Master and myself know of. Am I greater, or in any way better, than were St. Germain, and Cagliostro, Giordano Bruno and Paracelsus, and so many other martyrs whose names appear in the Encyclopedias of the 19th century over the meritorious titles of *charlatans* and *imposters* ? It shall be the *Karma* of the blind and wicked judges—not mine."

Then follows an interesting paragraph with reference to the Mahatmas and the Maha Chohan :—

" No ; it is not ' the Brothers ' policy of covering up ' such evidence . . . of their existence '—but that of the MAHA CHOHAN, and it is Mahatma K.H.'s *Karma*. If you have never given a thought to what may be His sufferings during the *human* intervals of His Mahatmaship —then you have something yet to learn. ' You were warned '—says

[1] How the Dickens did H. P. B. get hold of " Barkis is willing " ?

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His Chohan—and He answers—' I was '. Still He says He is glad He is yet no Mejnoor, no dried up plant, and that had He to suffer over and over again—He would still do the same for He knows that real good for humanity has come out of all this suffering and that such books as ' Esoteric Buddhism ' and ' Karma ' would not have been written for years to come had He not communicated with you, and had not orders been given to me to do what I have done—stupidly sometimes as I may have carried them out. . . . Remember only that He suffers more, perhaps, than any one of us. . . . For myself—I am resolved to remain *sub rosa*. I can do far more by remaining in the shadow than by becoming prominent once more in the movement. Let me hide in unknown places and write, write, write, and teach whoever wants to learn. Since Master forced me to live, let me live, and die now in relative peace. It is evident He wants me still to work for the T. S. since He does not allow me to make a contract with Katkoff—one that would put 40,000 francs at least in my pocket—to write exclusively for his journal and paper. He would not permit me to sign such a contract last year in Paris when proposed, and does not sanction it now for—He says—my time ' shall have to be occupied otherwise '. Ah, the cruel, wicked injustice that has been done me all round ! Fancy, the horrid calumny of the ' C. C. M.' and Patterson whose statement that I *sought to defraud* Mr. Jacob Sasoon of Rs. 10,000, in that Poona business, has been allowed to go uncontradicted even by Khandalowalla and Ezekiel, who know as well as they are sure of their existences that this special charge, at any rate, is the most abominable, lying calumny ; whatever the value of the Rama Singa's phenomenon ! Why should my best friends allow me to be so vilified ? Why should the Report of the *Defence Committee* have been suppressed and *declared by Olcott in print* to have been stopped ? Is it not, as Patterson says—a direct confession that the Committee had committed a mistake, found me after all *guilty*—and thus stopped the defence ? Who of the public knows, that after having worked for, and given my life to the progress of the Society for over ten years, I have been forced to leave India—*a beggar*, literally a beggar depending on the bounty of the *Theosophist*—(my own Journal, founded and created with my own money ! !) for my daily support. I—made out to be a *mercenary* imposter, a *fraud* for the sake of money when I never asked or received one pie for my phenomena, when thousands of my own money earned by my Russian articles have been given away, when for five years I have abandoned the price of *Isis* and the income of the *Theosophist* to support the Society. And now—I am generously allowed Rs. 200 monthly from that income to save me from starvation in Europe, and reproached for it by Olcott in *nearly every letter*. Such are *facts*, my dear Mr. Sinnett. Had not the poorest Society in India—or rather four members of that poorest Society in the N. W. P.—hearing I was cold and penniless, and without any means landed at Naples, sent me each of them *two months of their pay* (in all Rs. 500)—I could not have

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come here. None of the Hindu Societies are allowed to know my true position. Truth and facts are concealed from them, lest they should revolt, and show angry feelings for the Colonel. When they begin to clamour too loudly for me, they are told that it is *I* who refuse to come back!! It is only now that they begin suspecting the truth. Luckily Katkoff sent me 4,000 fs. he owed me, and now I am all right for a time, and I shall now send back the 500 rupees, for they are all four poor men. Pardon me for saying all this and showing myself so selfish. But it is a direct answer to the vile calumny, and it is but right that the theosophists in London should know of it, to enable them to put in a word of defence for me. Solovyoff is so indignant that he sent in his resignation to the S. P. R. He wrote a long letter to Myers, and now the latter answers him, supplicates and begs him not to be *so severe* on them, not to resign, and askes him whether he still maintains that what he saw at Elberfeld was not a hallucination or a fraud; and finally begs him to come and meet him at Nancy—where he shall prove to him my *guilt*! Solovyoff says that since he is placed by their *Report* as so many others, between choosing to confess himself either a lunatic or a confederate—he considers it as a *slap on the face*, a direct insult to him, and answers Myers, *demanding* that his letter should be published and resignation made known. He intends stopping here at Würzburg with me for a month or so, with his wife and child. There are others too in Paris and Petersburg who intend to withdraw from membership of the S. P. R.

Sinnett quotes a considerable portion of this letter in his *Incidents*.

The reference to Solovyoff in this letter is important, as it confirms incidentally what is made clear by his letter of the 8th October, which I have given in full in the Appendix hereto, page 298, namely, that during his stay at Würzburg—from about the middle of August to the end of September—he was an entire believer in H. P. B.'s *bona fides*, and a vigorous defender of her character and her cause.

But if this was the case—as indeed is clearly proved—then his highly coloured and dramatic account in *A Modern Priestess of Isis* of his conversations, scenes, and "confessions" with H. P. B. at Würzburg are shown to be absolutely untrue. There is no possibility of reconciling his statements about these with the *fact* of his letter of the 8th October. Even Mr. Leaf, the translator of *A Modern Priestess*, has to acknowledge in his Preface to the work that: "This letter does, so far as I can judge, imply a real inconsistency with Mr. Solovyoff's narrative." Now the genuineness of the letter is not denied by Solovyoff; but he says in excuse for it that it was written in a "bantering

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tone" (p. 344). But even Mr. Leaf—who has swallowed a good deal which will not bear examination—cannot swallow that. He says (p. xv): "I confess that I am not satisfied with his own explanation that the whole letter is merely bantering. In fact under the circumstances the 'bantering tone' itself requires explanation."

But what Mr. Leaf does not see, or else deliberately ignores in the interests of the S. P. R. on whose behalf he made the translation of the work, is: that this "real inconsistency" destroys the whole fabric of Solovyoff's account of his experiences and state of mind at Würzburg. And if this is destroyed, and proved to be a tissue of lies, what credit can be given to the rest of the book?

Another proof that Solovyoff is lying all through is to be found in what he says on page 174, that he continued to receive letters from H. P. B. after he had left Würzburg, "first in Paris and afterwards in St. Petersburg," but that he did not answer them.

"I thought I had had enough, and that a correspondence with a lady who 'had passed seven years in Tibet' could bring me neither profit nor satisfaction. . . . I kept silence, but still she wrote."

Yet we have his acknowledged letter of the 8th October, from Paris to give the lie to this.

On page 97 we find him shamelessly confessing that he would cause Mme. Blavatsky to regard him as a friend whilst all the time he would collect proof enough to ruin her.

"Let her look on me as a friend, in other words as her blind and absolute dupe: for if she got into her head the faintest suspicion of my object, of course I should attain nothing whatever."

Now this was in October or November 1884. But on page 301 we find a quotation from a letter of his to Mme. Jelihovsky, dated November 9th, 1884, in which he says:—

"I never play a double game with any one, and in proof of it I may quote some phrases from her (H. P. B.'s) letters. . . . She knows that I really love her, and that I am her friend."

Really! Then what about the statement just above quoted?

Solovyoff's statement on page 169 that H. P. B. asked him at Würzburg to arrange for her in St. Petersburg to be appointed as a secret agent of the Russian Government in India is such an obvious and palpable lie in view of what we know of her relations with India, and of the fact that at that time her whole

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heart and mind and energies were concentrated on the work of writing *The Secret Doctrine*, that one wonders which can have been the biggest fool: Solovyoff to have put this in his book, or Mr. Leaf and the S. P. R. to have swallowed it. The paragraph is so glaringly *journalese* as well as incredible that I must really quote it in full:—

"Look here, this is what it is," she began; "you are soon going to St. Petersburg; now do undertake a very important business of the greatest benefit to Russia. I wish to propose myself as a secret agent of the Russian Government in India. To promote the triumph of my country over those vile English I am capable of anything. I hate the English Government in India, with its missionaries; they are all my personal enemies, thirsting for my destruction. That alone is reason enough why I should throw my whole soul into the struggle with them. And that I can do them immense harm in India is certain; and I alone can do it, no one else is capable of the task. My influence on the Hindus is enormous; of that I can easily produce as much evidence as you will. At a sign from me, millions of Hindus will follow me. I can easily organise a gigantic rebellion. I will guarantee that in a year's time the whole of India would be in Russian hands. Only they must give me the pecuniary means—I don't want much. You know how I am in this respect. And they must put it in my power to penetrate into India through Russia—for I can't go back there any other way, since this affair of the Coulombs and the missionaries—and I will bring about one of the greatest events in history. I proposed the same thing before when Timasheff was still minister; but I did not receive any answer. But now, now it is much easier for me; I can arrange the whole thing in a year. Help me in such a patriotic cause."

Anyone who can believe that H. P. B. ever said *that* is capable of believing any or every fishing story that was ever told, and ought to have a special gold medal of the Order of Credulity struck for him.

Solovyoff's whole work is obviously written in a melodramatic style calculated to catch the popular taste and the popular prejudice, or to be—as Mr. Henry Sidgwick says in his Prefatory Note—an "entertaining narrative". But that the S. P. R. should have accepted it in all seriousness only shows how far *a priori* conclusions and prejudices had blinded them to all sense of proportion, truth, and decency. The mere fact that Solovyoff's statements are absolutely *ex parte*, and unsubstantiated in any manner whatsoever, is contrary to every principle which they themselves have insisted on in connection with all such matters before they can be placed on their records, altogether apart

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from the fact that it carries its own proof of its worthlessness and untruth. It is of no use whatever to the biographer as a presentation of the life, character, and work of H. P. Blavatsky. Mr. Baseden Butt in his recent work *Madame Blavatsky* has dealt with Soloyvoff's book much more in detail than I have done here; and he makes its worthlessness even more clear. How Solovyoff must have grinned to see the S. P. R. accepting so readily his lies in his "entertaining narrative", in order to bolster up their own rotten "Report"!

The following details of H. P. B.'s life at Würzburg will make still more evident the impossibility of crediting Solovyoff's account of his doings and relations with her during that period.

In the first place, during his stay she had a succession of visitors staying with her—her aunt, Mme. Fadeef, Mr. and Mrs. Sinnett, Miss Arundale, Mr. Mohini M. Chatterji, and subsequently the Countess Wachtmeister. Mr. Sinnett records in his *Incidents* (p. 302) his visit to Würzburg in September, but he makes no mention of Solovyoff. In his *Early Days of Theosophy in Europe* he says (p. 83) :—

"Mme. Blavatsky only stayed a few months at Torre del Greco and then went on to Würzburg. She was never left alone, and her principal reliance during the period that followed, was on the Countess Wachtmeister, whose devoted care of her never slackened. My wife and I went to see her at Würzburg in the course of our autumn tour in 1885. She was staying at 6 Ludwigstrasse. We, of course, went to a hotel, though after a day or two my wife went to stay with the O. L. at Ludwigstrasse while I engaged a single room for myself somewhere else. Mme. Fadeef was staying with her at the time, and also 'the Solovyoffs' as I find from the Diary. The O. L. then regarded Solovyoff as a friend, though he turned into an enemy later on."

"The Solovyoffs" is put into inverted commas because of a scandal which I need not repeat here.

Countess Wachtmeister joined H. P. B. at Würzburg at the end of October, under circumstances narrated in her book *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and "The Secret Doctrine"*, from which I shall have to quote mainly for the details as to the actual writing of *The Secret Doctrine*, and H. P. B.'s subsequent residence at Ostend. Before I do this, however, and narrate in her own words the remarkable manner in which she was first drawn to H. P. B. at Würzburg, and afterwards devoted her whole life to her and to the cause of Theosophy, I must quote the letter which she wrote to Mr. Sinnett from Würzburg. It is not dated, but appears to have been written in January

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or February, 1886, and is indirectly interesting in the Solovyoff matter as making no reference whatever to his previous visit.

When or how H. P. B. discovered Solovyoff's defection is not at all clear. The first reference to him as an enemy, in her letters to Sinnett, is in Letter LX, but there is no date on this letter. From the fact, however, that she says in it (p. 157) " Do not hurry with the publication (of her *Memoirs*) and leave me time to see you at Ostende ", shows that it must have been after she had decided to move from Würzburg to Ostende : that is to say in March at the earliest. In this letter she speaks of " Solovyoff or some other blackguard " (p. 143). I think this letter is misplaced in the Series, and should come after Letter No. LXXX (p. 192) in which she mentions, apparently for the first time, the idea of going " to somewhere on the shores of France ". This letter is dated March 3rd and in it she refers to Solovyoff as, " Solovyoff the *Iago* of Theosophy and of myself " (p. 193), also (p. 192) :—

" Solovyoff has turned out a dirty gossip, a meddler, and a bully. He . . . sold me like a Judas, without cause or warning ; went to Petersburg, got intimate with my sister and her family, set every one of them against me, learnt all he could of the dirty gossips of old . . . returned to Paris, sold us all, etc."

Countess Constance Wachtmeister was an English lady, but the widow of a Swedish Count. She had numerous friends abroad as well as in England, and property in Sweden, and it was no easy matter for her to give up everything for the sake of Theosophy. She was a natural clairvoyant, and had investigated the phenomena of Spiritualism from 1879 to 1881, with the result, as she says, that, " While I was forced into acceptance of the facts observed, I was wholly unable to accept the current Spiritualistic interpretation of these facts." She then came across *Isis Unveiled*, *Esoteric Buddhism*, and other Theosophical works, and in 1881 became a member of the Theosophical Society. Subsequently in 1884 she made the acquaintance of H. P. B. at the Sinnetts' in London, but was not particularly attracted at that time by her personality. The following is her letter to Mr. Sinnett above referred to. It is quoted by him in his *Incidents*, page 317 :—

" Dear Mr. Sinnett,—Last autumn, having left Sweden to spend the winter in a more congenial climate, and hearing that Mme. Blavatsky was suffering, ill and lonely at Würzburg, I offered to spend some time with her, and do what I could to render her position more comfortable, and to cheer her in her solitude. My acquaintance with

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H. P. Blavatsky was a very slight one. I had met her casually in London and Paris, but had no real knowledge or experience in regard to herself or her character. I had been told a great deal against her, and I can honestly say that I was prejudiced in her disfavour, and it was only a sense of duty and gratitude (such as all true students of theosophy should feel towards the founder of a society, which, notwithstanding all its drawbacks, has been of great benefit and service to numbers of individuals), which caused me to take upon myself the task of alleviating her troubles and sorrows to the best of my ability.

" Having heard the absurd rumours circulating against her, and by which she was accused of practising black magic, fraud, and deception, I was on my guard, and went to her in a calm and tranquil frame of mind, determined to accept nothing of an occult character and coming from her without sufficient proof; to make myself positive, to keep my eyes open, and to be just and true in my conclusions. Commonsense would not permit me to believe in her guilt without proof, but if that proof had been furnished, my sense of honour would have made it impossible for me to remain in a society, the founder of which committed cheating and trickery, therefore, my frame of mind was bent on investigation, and I was anxious to find out the *truth*.

" I have now spent a few months with Mme. Blavatsky. I have shared her room, and been with her morning, noon, and night. I have had access to all her boxes and drawers, have read the letters which she received and those which she wrote, and I now openly and honestly declare that I am ashamed of myself for having ever suspected her, for I believe her to be an honest and true woman, faithful to death to her masters and to the cause to which she has sacrificed position, fortune, and health. There is no doubt in my mind that she made these sacrifices, for I have seen the proofs of them, some of which consisted of documents whose genuineness is above all suspicion.

" From a worldly point of view Mme. Blavatsky is an unhappy woman, slandered, doubted, and abused by many; but looked at from a higher point of view, she has extraordinary gifts, and no amount of vilification can deprive her of the privileges which she enjoys, and which consist in a knowledge of many things that are known only to a few mortals, and in a personal intercourse with certain Eastern adepts.

" On account of the extensive knowledge which she possesses and which extends far into the invisible part of na ure, it is very much to be regretted that all her troubles and trials prevent her giving to the world a great deal of information, which she would be willing to impart if she were permitted to remain undisturbed and in peace. Even the great work in which she is now engaged, " The Secret Doctrine ", has been greatly impeded by all the persecutions, offensive letters, and other petty annoyances to which she has been subjected this winter; for it should be remembered that H. P. Blavatsky is not herself a full grown adept, nor does she claim to be one; and that, therefore, in

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spite of all her knowledge, she is as painfully sensitive to insult and suspicion as any lady of refinement in her position could be expected to be.

" ' The Secret Doctrine ' will be indeed a great and grand work. I have had the privilege of watching its progress, of reading the manuscripts, and of witnessing the occult way in which she derived her information. I have latterly heard among people who style themselves ' Theosophists ', expressions which surprised and pained me. Some such persons said that ' if it were proven that Mahatmas did not exist, if would not matter ', that theosophy were nevertheless a truth, etc. etc. Such and similar statements have come into circulation in Germany, England, and America ; but to my understanding they are very erroneous, for, in the first place, if there were no Mahatmas or Adepts—that is to say, persons who have progressed so far in the scale of human evolution, as to be able to unite their personality with the sixth principle of the universe (the universal Christ), then the teachings of that system which has been called ' Theosophy ' would be false ; because there would be a break in the scale of progression, which would be more difficult to be accounted for than the absence of the ' missing link ' of Darwin. But if these persons refer merely to those Adepts who are said to have been active in the foundation of the ' Theosophical Society ', they seem to forget that without these Adepts we would never have had that Society, nor would ' Isis Unveiled ', the ' Esoteric Buddhism ', the ' Light on the Path ', the ' Theosophist ', and other valuable theosophical publications ever have been written ; and if in the future we should shut ourselves out from the influence of the Mahatmas and be left entirely to our own resources, we should soon become lost in a labyrinth of metaphysical speculation. It must be left to science and speculative philosophy to confine themselves to theories and to the obtaining of such information as is contained in books. Theosophy goes farther, and acquires knowledge by direct interior perception. The study of Theosophy means therefore *practical development*, and to attain this development a guide is necessary who knows that which he teaches, and who must have attained himself that state by the process of *spiritual regeneration.*

" After all that has been said in these ' Memoirs ' about the occult phenomena taking place in the presence of Mme. Blavatsky, and how such phenomena have been a part and parcel of her life, occurring at all times both with and without her knowledge, I need only add that during my stay with her, I have frequently witnessed such genuine phenomena. Here, as in every other department of life, the main point is to learn to discriminate properly, and to estimate everything at its true value.—Yours sincerely,

CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER, F.T.S."

The following is Countess Wachtmeister's account in Chapter III of her work, *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and " The*

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Secret Doctrine" as to the singular manner in which she came to visit H. P. B. at Würzburg, and in consequence to devote the rest of her life to her and to the cause of Theosophy :—

"In the autumn of 1885 I was making preparations to leave my home in Sweden in order to spend the winter with some friends in Italy, and, incidentally, to pay Mme. Gebhard a promised visit at her residence in Elberfeld.

"It was while I was engaged in putting my affairs in order, in view of my long absence, that an incident occurred, not indeed singular in my experience, but out of the normal. I was arranging and laying aside the articles I intended to take with me to Italy, when I heard a voice saying :—'Take that book, it will be useful to you on your journey.' I may as well say at once that I have the faculties of clairvoyance and clairaudience rather strongly developed. I turned my eyes on a manuscript volume I had placed among the heap of things to be locked away until my return. Certainly it seemed a singular and inappropriate *vade mecum* for a holiday, being a collection of notes on the 'Tarot', and passages in the *Kabbalah* that had been compiled for me by a friend. However, I decided to take it with me, and laid the book in the bottom of one of my travelling trunks. . . . I arrived at Elberfeld, where I met with a cordial and affectionate greeting from Mme. Gebhard. The warmth of heart and steady friendship of this excellent woman were for years a source of comfort and support to me, as they were also to Mme. Blavatsky. . . .

"The time was drawing near for me to pass on into Italy. My friends never ceased pressing me to join them there, and at last the date of my departure was fixed.

"When I told Mme. Gebhard that I must leave her in a few days, she spoke to me of a letter she had received from H. P. B., in which she deplored her loneliness. She was ill in body and depressed in mind. Her sole companions were her servant and an Indian gentleman who had accompanied her from Bombay. 'Go to her', said Mme. Gebhard, 'she needs sympathy, and you can cheer her. For me it is impossible, I have my duties, but you can befriend her if you will.'

"I thought the matter over. Certainly it was possible for me to comply with the request at the risk of disappointing my friends in Italy, but their plans would not be greatly disarranged, and I decided at length that if H. P. B. desired my company I would go to her for a month before starting for the South. Thus, as she had predicted, and within the period she named, circumstances seemed to be drawing me back to her.[1]

"Mme. Gebhard was genuinely pleased when I made known my decision to her, and showed her a letter I had written to 'the Old

[1] This sentence refers to a previous meeting between the Countess and H. P. B. in which the latter had predicted that before two years had passed the Countess would have devoted her whole life to Theosophy. That appeared at the time to be an utter impossibility. (See *Reminiscences*, p. 14.)

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Lady' in Würzburg, suggesting that if she cared to receive me I would spend a few weeks with her, as Mme. Gebhard had said she was in need of care and companionship. The letter was despatched, and we waited eagerly for the reply. When at last it lay open upon the breakfast table there was much excitement in regard to its contents, but anticipation soon turned into consternation on Mme. Gebhard's part and disappointment on mine, when we found nothing more or less than a polite refusal beneath the seal—Madame Blavatsky was sorry, but she had no room for me; besides, she was so occupied in writing her *Secret Doctrine* that she had no time to entertain visitors, but hoped we might meet on my return from Italy. The tone was civil enough, and even amiable, but the intention seemed to be to convey to me unmistakably that I was not wanted.

"Mme. Gebhard's face fell as I read the letter aloud. To her, evidently, it was incomprehensible. As for me, after the first natural disappointment at the frustration of plans arrived at not without difficulty, I set my face hopefully southward.

"My luggage was soon ready, and a cab was actually waiting for me at the door when a telegram was put into my hands containing these words:—'Come to Würzburg at once, wanted immediately.—Blavatsky.'

"It may easily be imagined that this message took me by surprise, and in blank amazement I turned to Mme. Gebhard for an explanation. But she was frankly delighted and radiant. Evidently all her thoughts, all her sympathies, were with her 'Old Lady'.

"'Oh, she *does* want you, you see, after all,' she cried. 'Go to her, go'. There was no resisting. I let my secret inclinations find excuse in the pressure of persuasion, and instead of taking my ticket to Rome I took one to Würzburg, and was soon travelling onwards to work out my Karma.

"It was evening when I reached Mme. Blavatsky's lodgings, and as I mounted the stairs my pulse was a little hurried while I speculated upon the reception which awaited me. I knew nothing of the causes which had dictated this change at the very eleventh hour. The field of possibilities was wide enough to afford free scope for my imagination, which now pictured to me a serious and sudden illness as the cause of the telegram, and now amused me with the anticipation of a third change of mind that would land me in Rome after all within thirty-six hours. The event was equally removed from both these extremes.

"Mme. Blavatsky's welcome was a warm one, and, after the first few words of greeting, she remarked, 'I have to apologise to you for behaving so strangely. I will tell you the truth, which is, that I did not want you. I have only one bedroom here, and I thought that you might be a fine lady and not care to share it with me. My ways are probably not your ways. If you came to me I knew that you would have to put up with many things that might seem to you intolerable

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discomforts. That is why I decided to decline your offer, and I wrote to you in that sense; but after my letter was posted Master spoke to me and said that I was to tell you to come. I never disobey a word from Master, and I telegraphed at once. Since then I have been trying to make the bedroom more habitable. I have bought a large screen which will divide the room, so that you can have one side and I the other, and I hope you will not be too uncomfortable.'

"I replied that whatever the surroundings to which I had been accustomed might have been, I would willingly relinquish them all for the pleasure of her companionship. I remember very well that it was then, on going into the dining-room together to take some tea, that she said to me abruptly, as of something that had been dwelling on her mind :—' Master says you have a book for me of which I am much in need.'

'No, indeed,' I replied, 'I have no books with me.'

'Think again,' she said, 'Master says you were told in Sweden to bring a book on the Tarot and the *Kabbalah*.'

"Then I recollected the circumstances that I have related above. From the time I had placed the volume in the bottom of my box it had been out of my sight and out of my mind. Now, when I hurried to the bedroom, unlocked the trunk, and dived to the bottom, I found it in the same corner I had left it when packing the box in Sweden, undisturbed from that moment to this. But this was not all. When I returned to the dining-room with it in my hand, Mme. Blavatsky made a gesture and cried, 'Stay, do not open it yet. Now turn to page ten and on the sixth line you will find the words. . . .' And she quoted a passage.

"I opened the book which, let it be remembered, was no printed volume of which there might be a copy in H. P. B.'s possession, but a manuscript album in which, as I have said, had been written notes and excerpts by a friend of mine for my own use, yet on the page and the line she had indicated I found the very words she had uttered.

"When I handed her the book I ventured to ask her why she wanted it.

"'Oh' she replied, 'for *The Secret Doctrine*. That is my new work that I am so busily engaged in writing. Master is collecting material for me. He knew you had the book, and told you to bring it that it might be at hand for reference.'

"No work was done that first evening, but the next day I began to realise what the course of H. P. B.'s life was, and what mine was likely to be while I stayed with her."

A few excerpts from the Countess's book may now be given to complete the picture of the life at Würzburg, and the process of writing *The Secret Doctrine* :—

"The description of a single day will serve to give an idea of the routine of her life at this time.

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" At six o'clock I was awakened by the servant coming with a cup of coffee for Mme. Blavatsky, who, after this slight refreshment, rose and dressed, and by seven o'clock was at her desk in the sitting room.

" She told me that this was her invariable habit, and that breakfast would be served at eight. After breakfast she settled herself at her writing desk, and the day's work began in earnest. At one o'clock dinner was served, whereupon I rang a small handbell to call H. P. B. Sometimes she would come in at once, but at other times her door would remain closed hour after hour, until our Swiss maid would come to me, almost with tears in her eyes, to ask what was to be done about Madame's dinner, which was either getting cold or dried up, burnt, and utterly spoiled. At last H. P. B. would come in weary with so many hours of exhausting labour and fasting; then another dinner would be cooked, or I would send to the Hotel to get her some nourishing food. At seven o'clock she laid aside her writing, and after tea we would spend a pleasant evening together.

" Comfortably seated in her big arm chair, H. P. B. used to arrange her cards for a game of Patience, as she said to rest her mind. It seems as if the mechanical process of laying her cards enabled her mind to free itself from the pressure of concentrated labour during the day's work. She never cared to talk of Theosophy in the evenings. The mental tension during the day was so severe that she needed above all things rest, and so I procured as many journals and magazines as I could, and from these I would read the articles and passages, that I thought most likely to interest and amuse her. At nine o'clock she went to bed, where she would surround herself with her Russian newspapers and read them until a late hour. . . .

" At this time I learned little more concerning *The Secret Doctrine* than that it was to be a work far more voluminous than *Isis Unveiled*, that it would consist when complete of four volumes and that it would give out to the world as much of the esoteric doctrine as was possible at the present stage of human evolution. ' It will, of course, be very fragmentary ', she said, ' and there will of necessity be great gaps left, but it will make men think, and as soon as they are ready more will be given out. But ', she added after a pause, ' that will not be until the next century, when men will begin to understand and discuss this book intelligently '.

" Soon, however, I was intrusted with the task of making fair copies of H. P. B.'s manuscript, and then of course I began to get glimpses of the subject matter of *The Secret Doctrine*. . . .

" The circumstances which, perhaps, more than any other attracted my attention and excited my wonder when I began to help Mme. Blavatsky as her amanuensis, and thus got some glimpses of the nature of her work upon *The Secret Doctrine*, was the poverty of her travelling library. Her manuscripts were full to overflowing with references, quotations, allusions, from a mass of rare and recondite

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works on subjects of the most varied kind. Now she needed verification of a passage from some book only to be found in the Vatican, and again from some document of which only the British Museum possessed a copy. Yet it was only verification she needed. The matter she had—however she may have gained it—certainly she could not have procured her information from the handful of very ordinary books she carried about with her. . . .

"Another incident of frequent occurrence came under my notice from time to time, and marks another mode in which guidance and aid were given to H. P. B. in her work. Often, in the early morning, I would see on her writing table a piece of paper with unfamiliar characters traced upon it in red ink. On asking her what was the meaning of these mysterious notes, she replied that they indicated her work for the day.

"These were examples of the 'precipitated' messages which have been the subject of so much heated controversy, even within the ranks of the Theosophical Society, and of endless unintelligent ridicule without. . . . It is, perhaps, little to be wondered at that such messages should, in the present state of ignorance in regard to the possibilities of psychic phenomena, be received with suspicion. The best that could be hoped from the average man or woman would be a suspension of judgment, accompanied by a willingness to learn and investigate. But when we come to examine H. P. B.'s own behaviour in presence of these messages, we get an incontrovertible proof of her *bonâ fides*. To her they came direct, and the injunctions they contained were always met by her with submission and obedience, even when she would have preferred to act otherwise.

"How often, then, did I grieve over reams of manuscript, carefully prepared and copied, and, at a word, an intimation from the Masters, consigned to the flames—stores of information and commentary that it seems to me would be of priceless value to us now that we have lost our Teacher. . . .

"One day a temptation came to her in the form of a large yearly salary if she would write for the Russian papers. She might write, she was told, on occultism or any other subject which pleased her, if she would only contribute to their columns. Here was a promise of comfort and ease for the remainder of her life. Two hours labour every day would be ample to satisfy all demands made on her time; but then no *Secret Doctrine* would be written. I spoke of a compromise, and asked her if it would not be possible for her to accept this engagement, and, at the same time, continue her Theosophical work. 'No—a thousand times no!' she answered. 'To write such a work as *The Secret Doctrine* I must have all my thoughts turned in the direction of that current. It is difficult enough even now, hampered as I am with this sick and worn-out old body, to get all I want, how much more difficult then, if I am to be continually changing the currents into other directions. I have no longer the vitality or the

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energy left in me. Too much of it was exhausted at the time when I produced my phenomena.'

" ' Why, then, did you make these phenomena ? ' I asked her.

" ' Because people were continually bothering me,' she replied. ' It was always, " Oh, do materialise this," or " do let me hear the astral bells," and so on, and then I did not like to disappoint them. I acceded to their request. Now I have to suffer for it ! ' So the letter was written to Russia containing the refusal of the splendid offer, and one more sacrifice was made in order that the Theosophical Society might live and prosper."

In a letter to Mr. Sinnett at this time, H. P. B. describes the way in which the matter for *The Secret Doctrine* was disclosed to her in the Astral Light in a similar manner to what happened when she was writing *Isis Unveiled* [1] :—

" There's a new development and scenery, every morning. *I live two lives again.* Master finds that it is too difficult for me to be looking consciously into the astral light for my S.D., and so, it is now about a fortnight, I am made to see all I have to as though in my dream. I see large and long rolls of paper on which things are written and I recollect them. Thus all the Patriarchs from Adam to Noah were given me to see—parallel with the Rishis ; and in the middle between them, the meaning of their symbols—or personifications. Seth standing with Brighu for first *sub*-race of the Root race, for inst : meaning *anthropologically*—first *speaking* human sub-race of the 3rd Race ; and *astronomically*—(his years 912 y.) meaning at one and same time the length of the solar year in that period, the duration of his race and many other things—(too complicated to tell you now.) Enoch finally, meaning the solar year when our present duration was settled, 365 days—(" God took him when he was 365 years old ") and so on. It *is* very complicated but I hope to explain it sufficiently clear. I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or *Preamble*, Prologue, call it what you will. Just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of *Dzyan* and the Secret Book of ' Maytreya Buddha ', *Champai chhos Nga* (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction. I was ordered to do so, to make a rapid sketch of what *was* known historically and in literature, in classics and in profane and sacred histories—during the 500 years that followed it : of *magic*, the existence of a Universal Secret Doctrine known to the philosophers and Initiates of every country, and even to several of the Church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others, who had been initiated themselves. Also to describe the Mysteries and some rites ; and I can assure you that the most extraordinary things are given out now, the whole story

[1] See page 161, *supra*.

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of the Crucifixion, etc., being shown to be based on a rite as old as the world—the Crucifixion on the *Lathe* of the Candidate—trials, going down to Hell, etc., all Aryan. The whole story hitherto unnoticed by Orientalists is found even exoterically, in the Puranas and *Brahmanas*, and then explained and supplemented with what the *Esoteric* explanations give. Mr. Sinnett, dear, I have *facts* for 20 volumes like *Isis*; it is the language, the cleverness for compiling them, that I lack."[1]

In March, 1886, H. P. B. decided to make a move from Würzburg to Ostende in order to spend the summer there with her sister and niece, it being arranged that she should break the journey for a short visit to the Gebhards at Elberfeld. She left Würzburg May 15th, accompanied by Miss Kislingbury, who had been paying her a visit, and by her maid, the Countess going to Austria for a change. At Elberfeld, however, she had the misfortune to slip on a parquet floor and sprain her ankle and hurt her leg; and this delayed her removal to Ostende for some little time. She wrote to the Countess from there [2]:—

"My old leg goes a little better, pain gone, but it is entirely helpless, and heaven knows *when* I will be able to walk with it even as superficially as I did before. Dear kind Mrs. Gebhard! she *does* nurse me, and is kind enough to find that I am a great deal better tempered than I used to be before! *Et pour cause.* There are no traitors in the field as there were then."

She appears finally to have arrived at Ostende at the commencement of August, with her sister, Mme. Jelihovsky and her niece, and settled in comfortable apartments to resume her work on *The Secret Doctrine*. Countess Wachtmeister joined her later on, and she had numerous visitors from England and from various Continental towns—Mr. Sinnett, Mrs. Anna Kingsford and Mr. Edward Maitland, Monsieur Gaboriau, Mr. Eckstein from Vienna, Mr. A. Gebhard, Dr. Ellis, Dr. A. Keightley, Mr. Bertram Keightley, and many others.

The Keightleys came with an invitation from a London Group for her to go and live in England, and this she finally consented to do. It was arranged that she should spend the Summer (1887) with the Keightleys at Norwood, in a small house called *Maycot*, and she went there on the 2nd May, and theosophical activities immediately began to move rapidly. *The Blavatsky Lodge* was quickly formed, consisting at first of 14 persons. There was also formed a *Theosophical Publishing*

[1] *Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 194.

[2] *Reminiscences*, p. 61.

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Company for the purpose of publishing *The Secret Doctrine* and other works. £200 was subscribed to start a new Theosophical Magazine, *Lucifer*, and £500 to publish *The Secret Doctrine*.

Maycot was soon found to be too small for all the activities and visitors, and arrangements were made to furnish a house, No. 17 Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill. The move to this residence was made in October, and the work of completing *The Secret Doctrine* as well as other developments proceeded rapidly. She was able to have a great deal of assistance in preparing *The Secret Doctrine* for the Press, and also in the publication of *Lucifer*, from a number of brilliant young scholars and others who now gathered round her—the two Keightleys, Mr. E. D. Fawcett, Dr. Carter Blake, Mr. Richard Harte, Mr. G. R. S. Mead and others.

Col. Olcott paid a visit to England in September 1888, and his impressions of H. P. B. and her surrounding at that time were communicated to *The Theosophist* (October 1888) as follows :—

" The President found Mme. Blavatsky in bad health, but working with desperate and pertinacious energy. An able physician told him that the fact of her even being alive at all was in itself a miracle, judging by all professional canons. Her system is so disorganised by a complication of diseases of the gravest character that it is a simple wonder that she can keep up the struggle : any other being must have succumbed long ago. The microscope reveals enormous crystals of uric acid in her blood, and the doctors say that it is more than likely that one hot month in India would kill her. Nevertheless, not only does she live, but she works at her writing desk from morning to night, preparing ' copy ' and reading proofs for *The Secret Doctrine* and her London Magazine *Lucifer*. Of her greatest work over three hundred pages of the two volumes were already printed when Col. Olcott arrived, and both volumes will probably appear this month. From all he heard from the competent judges who had read the MS., the President was satisfied that *The Secret Doctrine* will surpass in merit and interest even *Isis Unveiled*.

" Mme. Blavatsky is living at 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, with three Theosophical friends, among them her devoted guardian nurse and consoler, the Countess Wachtmeister of Sweden, who has attended her throughout all her serious illnesses for the past three years."

To conclude this chapter I cannot do better than to give Mr. Bertram Keightley's account of the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*. I take it from the Countess Wachtmeister's *Reminiscences*, page 89 ff. He says :—

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"The first I saw of *The Secret Doctrine* manuscript was on a visit paid to H. P. B. at Ostende, at the very beginning of the year 1887. I had gone over to urge upon H. P. B. the advisability of coming to settle in London for the purpose of forming a centre for active work in the cause of Theosophy. There were six of us in all who felt profoundly dissatisfied with the deadness which seemed to pervade the Society in England, and we had come to the conclusion that only H. P. B. could give efficient aid in restoring the suspended animation of the movement, and initiating active and wisely directed work.[1]

"During the few days I then spent at Ostende with H. P. B., she asked me to look over parts of the MSS. of her new work, which I gladly consented to do. Before I had read much it grew plain that *The Secret Doctrine* was destined to be by far the most important contribution of this century to the literature of Occultism; though even then the inchoate and fragmentary character of much of the work led me to think that careful revision and much re-arrangement would be needed before the manuscript would be fit for publication.

"On a second visit a week or two later, this impression was confirmed by further examination; but as H. P. B. then consented to come and settle in or near London as soon as arrangements could be made for her reception, nothing further was done about it at the time.

"Not long after my return to England we learnt that H. P. B. was seriously ill, in fact that her life was despaired of by the physicians in attendance. But, as usual, she disappointed the medical prophets and recovered with such marvellous rapidity that soon after we were able to make arrangements for her coming to England.[2]

"The move was effected without any untoward event, though the packing up of her books, papers, MSS., etc., was a truly terrible undertaking, for she went on writing till the very last moment, and as sure as any book, paper, or portion of MSS. had been carefully packed away at the bottom of some box, so surely would she urgently need it, and insist upon its being disinterred at all costs. However, we did get packed at last, reached Maycot, and before we had been two hours in the house, H. P. B. had her writing materials out and was hard at work again. Her power of work was amazing; from early morning till late in the evening she sat at her desk, and even when so ill that most people would have been lying helpless in bed, she toiled resolutely away at the task she had undertaken.[3]

"A day or two after our arrival at Maycot, H. P. B. placed the whole of the so-far completed MSS. in the hands of Dr. Keightley and myself, instructing us to read, punctuate, correct the English, alter,

[1] Readers should note this as against Sinnett's efforts to laud himself and deprecate H. P. B.'s work, and the results of her presence in London, in his *Early Days of Theosophy in Europe*.

[2] The illness here referred to is the one I have described in Chapter VII, p. 118.

[3] And this was the "charlatan and imposter" of the S. P. R. Report. I say this was the *real* H. P. B.—W. K.

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and generally treat it as if it were our own—which we naturally did *not* do, having far too high an opinion of her knowledge to take any liberties with so important a work.

"But we both read the whole mass of MSS.—a pile over three feet high—most carefully through, correcting the English and punctuation where absolutely indispensible, and then, after prolonged consultation, faced the author in her den—in my case with sore trembling, I remember—with the solemn opinion that the whole of the matter must be re-arranged on some definite plan, since as it stood the book was another *Isis Unveiled*, only far worse, so far as absence of plan and consecutiveness were concerned.

"After some talk, H. P. B. told us to go to Tophet and do what we liked. She had had more than enough of the blessed thing, had given it over to us, washed her hands thereof entirely, and we might get out of it as best we could.

"We retired and consulted. Finally we laid before her a plan, suggested by the character of the matter itself, *viz*, to make the work consist of four volumes, each divided into three parts: (1) the Stanzas and Commentaries thereon; (2) Symbolism; (3) Science. Further, instead of making the first volume to consist, as she had intended, of the history of some great Occultists, we advised her to follow the natural order of exposition, and begin with the Evolution of Cosmos, to pass from that to the Evolution of Man, then to deal with the historical part in a third volume treating of the lives of some great Occultists; and finally, to speak of Practical Occultism in a fourth volume should she ever be able to write it.[1]

"This plan we laid before H. P. B., and it was duly sanctioned by her.

"The next step was to read the MSS. through again and make a general re-arrangement of the matter pertaining to the subjects coming under the heads of Cosmogony and Anthropology, which were to form the first two volumes of the work. When this had been completed, and H. P. B. duly consulted, and her approval of what had

[1] It will be seen from this statement that the third volume—the lives of some great Occulists—was already written at this time, since it was proposed to make it the first volume. The MSS. of this volume, however, appear to have mysteriously vanished either before or after H. P. B.'s death; the present third volume being merely a fragmentary compilation by Mrs. Annie Besant from various papers and MSS. left by H. P. B. Mrs. Besant and Mr. G. R. S. Mead also "revised" in a most unauthorised manner the first two volumes in a third edition published in 1893. There are in this edition over 8,000 alterations of the original edition, with many omissions. In particular the following reference to the third and fourth volumes which is given in the Preface of the original edition, is omitted.—"The third volume is entirely ready; the fourth almost so." Dr. Keightley also confirmed this in *The Theosophist* for July, 1889, where he states:—"The third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* is in MS. ready to be given to the printers." Many of us would like to know what became of the MS. of the third volume—not to mention so much as was completed of the fourth. Fortunately we now have an exact facsimile of the original edition of volumes I and II in an American edition in which the original text is reproduced by a photographic process: and students will much prefer to have that, notwithstanding its defects in some respects in literary style, rather than the mutilated third and subsequent editions.

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been done obtained, the whole of the MSS. so arranged was type-written out by professional hands, then re-read, corrected, compared with the original MSS., and all Greek, Hebrew, and Sanscrit quotations inserted by us. It then appeared that the whole of the Commentary on the Stanzas did not amount to more than some twenty pages of the present work, as H. P. B. had not stuck closely to her text in writing. So we seriously interviewed her, and suggested that she should write a proper commentary, as in her opening words she had promised her readers to do. Her reply was characteristic: 'What on earth am I to say? What *do* you want to know? Why it's all as plain as the nose on your face!!!' We could not see it; she didn't—or made out she didn't—so we retired to reflect.

"The solution was this:—Each sloka of the stanzas was written (or cut from the type-written copy) and pasted at the head of a sheet of paper, and then on a loose sheet pinned thereto were written all the questions we could find time to devise upon that sloka. In this task Mr. Richard Harte helped us very considerably, a large proportion of the questions put being of his devising. H. P. B. struck out large numbers of them, made us write further explanations, or our own ideas—such as they were—of what her readers expected her to say, wrote more herself, incorporated the little she had already written on that particular sloka, and so the work was done.

"But when we came to think of sending the MSS. to the printers, the result was found to be such that the most experienced compositor would tear his hair in blank dismay. Therefore Dr. Keightley and myself set to work with a type-writer, and alternately dictating and writing, made a clean copy of the first parts of Volumes I and II.

"Then work was continued till parts II and III of each volume were in a fairly advanced condition, and we could think of sending the work to press.

"It had originally been arranged that Mr. George Redway should publish the work, but his proposals not being financially satisfactory, the needful money was offered by a friend of H. P. B.'s, and it was resolved to take the publication of *Lucifer* into our own hands. So the Duke Street office was taken, and business began there, the primary object being to enable the T. S. to derive the utmost possible benefit from H. P. B.'s writings.

"Of the further history of *The Secret Doctrine* there is not much more to say—though there were months of hard work before us. H. P. B. read and corrected two sets of galley proofs, then a page proof, and finally a revise in sheet, correcting, adding, and altering up to the very last moment:—result: printer's bill for corrections alone over £300.

"Of phenomena in connection with *The Secret Doctrine*, I have very little to say. Quotations with full references, from books which were never in the house—quotations verified after hours of search,

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sometimes, at the British Museum for a rare book—of such I saw and verified not a few.

"In verifying them I found occasionally the curious fact that the numerical references were reversed, *e.g.* p. 321 for p. 123, illustrating the reversal of objects when seen in the astral light. But beyond such instances of clairvoyant vision I have no further phenomena directly bearing upon the production of *The Secret Doctrine* to record.

"Finally I must not omit the valuable assistance which was rendered by Mr. E. D. Fawcett. Before I went to Ostende he had been in correspondence with H. P. B., and later on he also worked with and for her on the book at Lansdowne Road. He supplied many of the quotations from scientific works, as well as many confirmations of the occult doctrines derived from similar sources. It would not be right in giving any account of how *The Secret Doctrine* was written to omit to mention his name, and as I have not done so in the proper chronological sequence, I repair the omission now.

"Of the value of the work, posterity must judge finally. Personally I can only place on record my profound conviction that when studied thoroughly but not treated as a revelation, when understood and assimilated, but not made a text for dogma, H. P. B.'s *Secret Doctrine* will be found of incalculable value, and will furnish suggestions, clues, and threads of guidance, for the study of Nature and Man, such as no other existing work can supply."

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CHAPTER XIV

FINAL YEARS. 1888–1891

WE have seen that when Col. Olcott visited H. P. B. in London in September, 1888, he found her "working with desperate pertinacious energy" at the completion of her *magnum opus, The Secret Doctrine*, notwithstanding that, by all the laws of pathology and medical science, it was a miracle that she was alive at all.

That she was kept alive by occult means because her work was not yet completed is absolutely certain. We may remember her own words to Mrs. Sinnett :—

"My dearest Mrs. Sinnett—my heart is broken—physically and *morally*. For the first I do not care ; Master shall take care it shall not burst, so long as I am needed ; in the second case there is no help."

And so it appears that she was still needed, for she had yet three years of work in front of her before she could lay down her tortured physical body.

"I was ready" she says in the same letter, "to shed the last drop of life in me, give up every hope, for the last shred of—I shall not say happiness—but rest and comfort in this life of torture, for the cause I serve and [as] for every *true* Theosophist."

And this she did. She held on for another three years, when every day—every hour one might almost say—she longed for the word from her Master that now at last she might abandon the physical shell in which she had suffered and endured so much.

What a comment this is on all those vile slanderers who had endeavoured to belittle her work and her motives, and who had never failed to seize on and distort every little incident that appeared to lend itself to a misconstruction, and to present her in the light of an imposter and a charlatan.

What was the work that she had still to accomplish ? We get a hint of it in the passage I have just quoted. We have seen already that "the effort to open the eyes of a blind world" had failed—so far as the world at large was concerned. The Theosophical Society itself as "A Brotherhood of Humanity, a real Universal Fraternity ; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds"—had failed. But there were still a *few* who could receive further training to carry on the work after her

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departure, and were even possibly aspirants for the high venture to which she had pointed the road. For the sake of these *few* she lived on that she might give them further help and encouragement. She gave them *The Voice of the Silence*—" Dedicated to the Few ". She formed her inner Group of students: called at first the *Esoteric Section of the T.S.*, and subsequently *The Eastern School of Theosophy*. To these she gave certain *Instructions* not contained in her other writings, but some of which were afterwards published in Mrs. Besant's third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. It is doubtful whether these ought to have been published; but in any case they were given in the first instance more as a test than for their intrinsic value.

In *The Theosophist* for July 1889 there appeared the following account of H. P. B.'s labours at this time, written by Dr. Archibald Keightley :—

" Madame Blavatsky continues to labour as ceaselessly as ever, and under conditions of such physical disability as render not simply her working, but actually her living marvellous. I may say as a physician and not simply upon my own authority, but as a fact known to some of the leading medical practitioners of London, that never before has a patient been known to live even a week under such conditions of renal disorder as have been chronic with her for very many months past. Lately they have been somewhat modified by the action of strychnia, of which she has taken a little over six grains daily. Very frequently she has attacks of cerebral apoplexy, but without any treatment known to medical science wards them off and goes on, firmly confident as ever that her present life will not end before its work is fully accomplished. And in that work she is indefatigable. Her hours of labour are daily from 6.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., with only a few minutes' interruption for a light meal just before the sun reaches the meridian. During that time she devotes a great deal of her time to preparing the instructions for the Esoteric Section, giving out such knowledge as is permitted her to impart and its members are capable of receiving. Then the editorial labour connected with the production of her magazine *Lucifer* devolves entirely upon her. And she also edits the new French Theosophical monthly magazine *La Revue Theosophique*, published by the Countess d'Adhemar.

" The third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* is in MS. ready to be given to the printers. It will consist mainly of a series of sketches of the great Occultists of all ages, and is a most wonderful and fascinating work. The fourth volume, which is to be largely hints on the subject of practical occultism has been outlined but not yet written."

The reference in the above to the third and fourth volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* is interesting in view of the fact that these

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were never published, and that the MSS. appears to have mysteriously disappeared. There is no record of their having been condemned or destroyed by H. P. B. herself.

During th s period she not merely wrote *The Voice of the Silence*, but also *The Key to Theosophy*, and the *Theosophical Glossary*. It is, however, *The Voice of the Silence* that really puts the final touch to her great mission. It was published in September, 1889. This work is undoubtedly only for "*the few*." It is both too mystical and too practical for the many. If this should appear to be a somewhat paradoxical statement, we may consider Professor Royce's statement in his well-known work *The World and the Individual* (Vol I, p. 80.).

"That the mystic is dealing with experience, and trying to get experience quite pure and then to make it the means of defining the real, is what we need to observe. That meanwhile the mystic is a very abstract sort of person, I well admit. But he is usually a keen thinker. Only he uses his thinking sceptically, to make naught of other thinkers. He gets his reality not by thinking, but by consulting the data of experience. He is not stupid. And he is trying, very skilfully, to be a pure empiricist. Indeed, I should maintain that the mystics are the only thorough-going empiricists in the history of philosophy."

The Voice of the Silence in its *mystical* aspects points to a transcendent achievement that can only appeal to those whose mystical intuition and vision far outreaches the common hopes and fears and limitations of the formal mind or intellect; and it points to the goal of this achievement as being *the finding of the* SELF, and in the finding of that SELF the finding of the ONE REALITY which underlies all this phenomenal world, and which it is the vain effort of the metaphysician, working only with the formal mind, to define. This of course is the underlying principle of all Mysticism, though it is sometimes expressed in terms of Christian Mysticism as the finding of God.

Another quotation from Professor Royce may be helpful here:

"Mysticism is a practical doctrine. It observes at once that you merely express your own need as knower when you thus regard the object as existent. Mysticism asks you hereupon to define your needs in an absolutely general way. What do you want when you want Being? Mysticism replies to this question, as the sage Yâjnavalkya replies, in the Upanishads, to the question of his wife Maitreyî: *You want yourself*,—the Self in its completion, in its fulfilment, in its final expression. In brief, when you talk of reality, you talk of self-possession, of perfection, and of peace. And that is, therefore, all

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that you mean by the Being of the world or of any type of facts. Being therefore is nothing beyond yourself. You even now hold it within you, in your heart of hearts." (Ibid. p. 185.)

And so in *The Voice of the Silence* we find :—

" Behold ! thou hast become the light, thou hast become the Sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art THYSELF the object of thy search : the VOICE unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities, exempt from change, from sin exempt, the seven sounds in one, the VOICE OF THE SILENCE."

But having thus found the SELF by means of the *practical* effort known as the PATH, there is presented to the Victor the choice of two further Paths. He has now the right to " don the Dharmakâya robe and cross to the other shore." This would mean that he would " leave behind every possible relation with, or thought for this earth." On the other hand he can renounce this great reward for the sake of further help for Humanity. He can " don Nirmânakâya's humble robe " and so become one of the " Buddhas of Compassion " who have renounced the bliss of Nirvana to remain " *invisible* to uninitiated mankind, to watch over and protect it." He forms one of the stones in " The Guardian Wall. Built by the hands of many Masters of Compassion, raised by their tortures, by their blood cemented, it shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow."

" Now bend thy head and listen well, O. Bôdhisattva—Compassion speaks and saith : ' Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer ? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry ? '

" Now thou hast heard that which was said.

" Thou shalt attain the seventh step and cross the gate of final knowledge but only to wed woe—if thou would'st be Tathâgata, follow upon thy predecessor's steps, remain unselfish till the endless end."

" Thou art enlightened—Choose thy way."

The Voice of the Silence is too *practical* for the many because :—

" Four higher roadways be. Only those feet
May tread them which have done with earthly things."

How many of us can say that we have " done with earthly things " ? Not in the sense that we are disgusted with life, and ready to commit suicide, or are longing for rest and peace, but

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that we have seen their worthlessness in the light of a higher knowledge, a more glorious life, and are ready to "enter the PATH" that leads to the supreme achievement, and can still live *in* the world and yet not be *of* the world.

It is of the practical steps on that PATH that *The Voice of the Silence* speaks—albeit in mystical language. It is but an outline, and the details must be filled in by the student from other sources. It is an outline of that "Road" to which H. P. B. referred when she wrote the words which I have quoted on the Dedication page of this work :—

> "There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind —but yet a road; and it leads to the Heart of the Universe."

If, then, we ask, what is the sum and substance of H. P. Blavatsky's message to the world?—we find the answer to be, in the first instance that she disclosed once more to a world which had forgotten it, the fact of the existence of a supreme degree of knowledge or *Gnôsis*, going back—as Louis Claude de Saint Martin told us over one hundred years ago—"to the prime beginning of things", and which "has always been known to some among mankind."[1]

This ancient *Gnôsis* has its representatives to-day: and what Saint Martin wrote one hundred years ago might just as well have been written by H. P. Blavatsky :—

> "Thence have I my evidence, and thence my conviction upon truths the search after which engrosses the entire universe. After this avowal, if I am accused of disseminating an unknown doctrine, at least I must not be suspected of being its inventor."

Yet, *mirabile dictu*, H. P. Blavatsky has been accused of being the inventor not merely of the Mahatmas, but of the whole fabric of *The Secret Doctrine*, etc.

In giving to the world once more a glimpse of this forgotten knowledge, she disclosed an unlimited vista of human attainment, and she disclosed it in an open manner such as had never before been so freely given in *exoteric* teachings.

Thus we have in Theosophy, in the first instance, a system of thought or philosophy which will take the student, *who is prepared to receive it*, far beyond anything that is or can be taught in our academies, either scientific, philosophical, or religious. This teaching must be grasped intuitively rather than intellectually; but at the same time it is given in a form which

[1] See Appendix, page 304 *infra*.

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enables every new advance in scientific knowledge to be appreciated as confirmation of the principles involved. Moreover, on such subjects as the constitution of matter, the nature of electricity, the age of the earth, the biological evolution of man, etc., *The Secret Doctrine* outlines teachings now commonly accepted, but which at the time that work was written had hardly even been guessed at ; and it outlines many things which science and archaeology has yet to discover and confirm.

Theosophy thus presented as a system of thought raises us without any very great effort to a high and detached level from which we can view life more *cosmically*, more in its wholeness, and which consequently frees us from the littlenesses of those personal and selfish interests which for the most part influence and govern the beliefs and actions of mankind. In religion we are freed from the interminable strife of creeds and sects and dogmas ; for we are able to grasp an underlying spiritual truth which is independent of any of these. We are able to see how each and all of these are perversions of the one central truth, or inadequate attempts within the limitations of the human mind, and of human experience at certain epochs, to set forth those *mystical* spiritual experiences which necessarily transcend the intellect—where, indeed, the *exoteric* doctrine has not been the deliberate perversion of a priestcraft arrogating to itself a supreme power over the soul and future destiny of the individual, in order that through fear and superstition it might exercise a *temporal* power.

The One Central Principle of Theosophy, both Ancient and Modern, is THE DIVINE NATURE OF MAN, expressed in the ancient *Upanishads* by the aphorism THAT ART THOU. This is also the central teaching of the Christian Scriptures ; and has been taught by certain Christian mystics, but has always been a heresy for Ecclesiastical Christianity. Speaking of this central doctrine, Professor Max Müller says in his most excellent exposition, *Theosophy, or Psychological Religion* (p. 105) :—

" If we ask what was the highest purpose of the teaching of the Upanishads we can state it in three words as it has been stated by the greatest Vedânta teachers themselves, namely, T a t t v a m a s i. This means Thou art that. *That* stands for what I called the last result of Physical Religion which is known to us under different names in different systems of ancient and modern philosophy. It is Zeus or the Εἷς Θεὸς or τὸ ὄν in Greece ; it is what Plato meant by the Eternal Idea, what Agnostics call the Unknowable, what I call the Infinite in Nature. This is what in India is called Brahman, as

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masculine or neuter, the being behind all beings, the power that emits the universe, sustains it and draws it back again into itself. The *Thou* is what I called the Infinite in Man, the last result of Anthropological Religion, the Soul, the Self, the being behind every human Ego, free from all bodily fetters, free from passions, free from all attachments. The expression Thou art that, means Thine Ātman, thy soul, thy self is the Brahman. . . . This is the gist of what I call *Psychological Religion*, or Theosophy, the highest summit of thought which the human mind has reached."

My readers will readily have recognised by this time that this is the central teaching put forward in H. P. Blavatsky's works. To her belongs the credit of having given to the XIXth century a new literature of the ancient *Gnôsis* ; no longer wrapped up in allegory and symbol—though there is a very great deal in the *Secret Doctrine* which must not be taken too literally—but clearly stated in its fundamental principles, and in many of its details, and thereby giving us the key to the ancient scriptures and allegories.

As to the actual existence of this ancient Wisdom or *Gnôsis* and its Initiates, very little more can be said than what I have already placed before my readers. The deepest secrets of Nature and of Man's inner oneness with THAT have assuredly been known to a *few* from the earliest ages ; but these few have been known to the multitude rather as a tradition than as an actuality. Their existence will sooner or later be known to those who have sufficiently progressed to be worthy of their notice. It is an axiom as old at least as Hermes that " When the pupil is ready the Master will be found." It needs very little knowledge of the nature and attainments of these high Adepts to realise that it was, and still is, impossible for them to live openly in the world. It is sufficient that those who are worthy to do so will certainly come to know them in due course, but in the meanwhile must remain satisfied with such proof of their existence as is furnished by the records of all ages, or by the experience of more fortunate individuals to-day, or is given them by their own intuition. What a wealth of information we should have had on this subject if H. P. B.'s projected third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, " in MSS. ready to be given to the printers ", had seen the light. Had " the blind world " proved itself too unworthy to receive it ? The scepticism with which the direct evidence of the existence of the Masters to-day had been received would almost warrant the assumption that this was the cause of the withdrawal of the work, whatever may have been the method of disposing of the MSS.

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As for the Gnôsis itself, scholars are only just beginning to appreciate its ancient source and character. A quotation from Philo Judaeus (early first century) bearing upon this has already been given.[1]

The Christian Scriptures are the latest (perverted) form of the ancient myths and allegories in which this ancient Gnôsis was presented from time to time by its custodians. Thus St. Augustine tells us that :—

"That which is called the Christian Religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which already existed began to be called Christianity."

Origen, one of the initiated Church Fathers, wrote :—

"Who is so foolish as to believe that God, like a husbandman, planted a garden in Eden, and placed in it a tree of life, that might be seen and touched, so that one who tasted of the fruit by his bodily lips obtained life? Or, again, that one was partaker of good and evil by eating that which was taken from a tree? And if God is said to have walked in the garden in the evening, and Adam to have hidden under a tree, I do not suppose that anyone doubts that these things figuratively indicate *certain mysteries*, the history being apparently but not literally true. . . . Nay, the Gospels themselves are filled with the same kind of narrative."

And yet it has been precisely this *literalising* of the narrative which has been the basis of Christian dogma for nigh on two thousand years, and is still so even to-day! Is it any wonder, then, that the re-statement of the ancient Gnôsis which H. P. Blavatsky gave to "a world which blindly believes that it has outgrown it," should find its bitterest antagonist in the Christian Church, and with the Christian missionaries, who continue to teach the literal narrative as "Gospel Truth"?

When *Isis Unveiled* was published, scholars were only just beginning to investigate the origins of Christianity, which at that time were taken very much for granted. There is no need to emphasise the uncertainty and obscurity of the matter to-day.

At that time also scholars were only just beginning to get hold of some of the Sacred Books of the East; but even so were more intent on their outward form and literary interest than with the spiritual meaning. As for practical Occultism, although its principles were known to a few special students of the *Kabalah*

[1] See page 41 *supra*.

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and other works, it was practically unknown and unrecognised in any literature available for the public.

H. P. Blavatsky changed all that. It is hardly possible even now to make any adequate estimate of the immense revolution in the minds of hundreds of thousands which has been effected by her writings, either directly or indirectly. What we know as the Modern Theosophical Movement, as apart from any particular or individual Society which has been the direct offspring of that Movement, is now so widespread, and its literature is so extensive, that sooner or later it must be recognised by historians as having modified most profoundly the thought of the Western world in the present age.

To take one example only: What did the Western world know of the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma before H. P. Blavatsky popularised them? They had been taught for ages in the East—but then, what did the West imagine could be taught it by the East? Reincarnation was ridiculed in the popular press when it was first put forward as a central teaching of Theosophy. To-day it is no longer a subject for ridicule; it has found acceptance in all kinds of literature, and by innumerable individuals who see in it the only rational explanation of the inequalities of life, or which is consonant with our sense of justice, or which can come into line with the evolutionary process of mankind.

We must, then, give H. P. Blavatsky the credit of having popularised this teaching, as well as other Eastern doctrines with regard to the nature and constitution of Man which modern psychical research is gradually confirming. She put into our hands a key to the facts of our life and consciousness, whether physical, psychical, or spiritual which—though it necessarily leaves many problems unsolved—gives us a new outlook on life, and braces us to a new effort and a renewed faith in the supreme possibilities of our nature.

This faith and these possibilities seemed indeed at the end of last century to be in the greatest danger of being altogether lost in the materialism of Science on the one hand, and on the other by means of the scepticism of the Biblical narratives and doctrines which our scientific discoveries inevitably induced. Great and widespread as has been the acceptance of the Theosophical teachings, still, the world at large is as yet unable to appreciate the partial disclosure of the Ancient Wisdom which H. P. Blavatsky was commissioned to make known; and even those who in her own time had to some extent been able to appreciate

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it, and who formed the exoteric body of the Theosophical Society, had been unable to subordinate their *personal* interests and likes and dislikes to such an extent as to place before the world a living example of the principle of Brotherhood based on the central teaching of the *Divine Nature of Man.*

And so H. P. Blavatsky, realising to the full this failure, fell back in the closing years of her life on the hope that "*the few*" would be strengthened and encouraged by the further teachings which she could give to them. Were these few also afterwards failures in the sight of the Masters ? It is no part of my task here to indicate the subsequent course of events, much less to deal with individual cases.

H. P. Blavatsky's work in her physical body came to an end on the 8th May, 1891. She passed away peacefully, sitting in her large arm-chair, after a short illness complicated by bronchial trouble causing great exhaustion and inability to take nourishment.

The physical shell was cremated at Woking on the 11th May ; the present writer being one of those who participated in the simple ceremony.

A fine appreciation of her work and character was published shortly afterwards under the title of *In Memory of H. P. Blavatsky, by Some of Her Pupils.* It should be read by all those who desire to have a just and adequate understanding of her phenomenal personality

Let us glance for a moment at the nature of that PATH of attainment which is presented in theosophical teachings. Humanity as a whole must tread this path slowly and painfully, for it is the natural course of its evolution through long cycles of gradual progress in the mass. These cycles are outlined in the exoteric teachings as *Races* and *Rounds* ; our present humanity being the fifth Race of the fourth Round or major cycle. There are therefore two more Races for humanity to accomplish on this Globe before passing on to another one on a higher plane, and this will still take several million years. Humanity is now developing *Mind* in the form of intellect. The next Race will develop to the full those *psychic* faculties which are now gradually coming into evidence in so many people, but at the same time these faculties must be *spiritualised.* Not the astral plane to which these faculties are at present mostly confined, but the Buddhic plane is the real plane for the manifestation of the sixth Race, overshadowed more immediately as it will then be by the seventh, the Atmic, or truly spiritual man. Broadly speaking we

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may say that what the temptations of the physical body and world are now to the normal man striving to attain to a spiritual quality of life, so will be the temptations of the astral or psychic faculties and world to the normal man of the sixth race. The great temptation is to use these faculties and powers for individual and selfish ends; but then this would be black magic—or at least it is what is known now as black magic, though at that time it will be no more 'magic' than are our physical faculties and powers to-day.

But each of these stages overlap by thousands of years; and at each stage there are the laggards, the average men, and *the few* who are ahead of the Race, and even of the Round. Plato and Confucius, we are told,[1] were fifth Round men, and Gautama Buddha a sixth Rounder.

Thus it appears that the individual need not wait for the slow progress of Humanity as a whole. He can step out from the ruck, and force his evolution to almost any extent. But in doing this he has to overcome difficulties and dangers of a nature not even understandable by the average man of to-day. He has first of all to overcome his own lower nature, to conquer *himself*, and this implies very much more than mere moral rectitude or religious fervour.

"Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey.

"Strangle thy sins, and make them dumb for ever, before thou dost lift one foot to mount the ladder.

"Ere thy Soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out, the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection.

"Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.

"Before that Path is entered, thou must destroy thy lunar body, cleanse thy mind body, and make clean thy heart."

After this essential foundation of right motive, right conduct and the complete conquest of the lower animal and psychic nature: progress on the Path involves the training of the Mind in "the kingly science" of *Raja Yoga*. What this involves is best apprehended by a study of the standard Eastern work on the subject, the *Yoga Aphorisms* of Patanjali. It involves in the first instance the recognition that the Mind is not the Self but the instrument of the Self, and moreover that it is the Mind which is the *creator* of "the great illusion" of the phenomenal world. Thus the *Voice of the Silence* tells us:

[1] Mahatma Letters, p. 84.

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"Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the *rajah* of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakens illusion.

"The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.

"Let the Disciple slay the slayer."

Here again, at this stage, difficulties and dangers are met with which it is impossible even to outline here. Occult forces, occult *intelligent* powers are met with, many of which are deadly inimical to the progress of the individual and the race. At each stage also there is the subtle and still more subtle temptation to revert to the "left hand path"; to use powers and knowledge for selfish enjoyment and ends.

"The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet. The path that leadeth on, is lighted by one fire—the light of daring, burning in the heart. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain. The more he fears, the more that light shall pale.

"No light that shines from Spirit can dispel the darkness of the nether Soul, unless all selfish thought has fled therefrom, and that the pilgrim saith: 'I have destroyed the cause: the shadows cast can, as effects, no longer be.'

"Ere thou canst near that goal, before thine hand is lifted to upraise the fourth gate's latch, thou must have mastered all the mental changes in thy Self and slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and insidious, creep unasked within thy Soul's bright shrine.

"If thou would'st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thy own creations, the children of thy thoughts, unseen, impalpable, that swarm round humankind, the progeny and heirs to man and his terrestrial spoils. Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void. O fearless Aspirant, look deep within the well of thine own heart, and answer. Knowest thou of Self the powers, O thou perceiver of external shadows?

"If thou dost not—then art thou lost.

"For, on Path fourth, the lightest breeze of passion or desire will stir the steady light upon the pure white walls of Soul. The smallest wave of longing or regret for Maya's gifts illusive, along *Antaskarana*—the path that lies between thy Spirit and thy self, the highway of sensations, the rude arousers of *Ahankara*—a thought as fleeting as the lightning flash will make thee thy three prizes forfeit—the prizes thou hast won."

There are many more aphorisms in *The Voice of the Silence* indicating the subtle difficulties and dangers which increase the further the individual progresses on the Path; that Path being nothing more than a falling back stage by stage on our inner

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nature until the one immutable, eternal SELF is reached. Three aphorisms from another Eastern work, *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom*, attributed to Shankara Acharya, may be quoted here in confirmation of the above.[1]

"By destroying the lower self completely, by putting an end to the many delusive forms it creates, and by discerning the true hidden Self, realizing, 'That am I', the seeker finds the Real."

"Even when the potent 'I' has been uprooted, if it be evoked again by dwelling on it even for a moment in the imagination, it will come to life and cause a hundred distractions, like a storm-driven cloud in the season of the rains."

"Holding down the enemy, the 'I', let no opportunity be given to the imagination to dwell on sensuous things; for this gives new life to the 'I' as water to a parched lemon tree."

But all these teachings thus given out in writing are *exoteric*. They constitute a philosophy rather than a practical system of training. The real occult training must be undertaken under the direction of a Master or *Guru*. This need not discourage the aspirant if perchance he does not appear as yet to have consciously come into communication with such a teacher. He may rest assured that every effort is noted by those who watch over the progress of the Race, and who are only too anxious to recruit their ranks from those aspirants who can reach the necessary stage of development in the first instance without their direct aid. "When the pupil is ready the Master will be found." The very fact of striving to attain along the lines of the exoteric teachings is in fact the first step on the Path. It may have to be carried on through more than one incarnation. No one but a Master himself can judge when the pupil is ready. There are many disabilities which intervene. The earnest seeker who may desire more information should read carefully the Section of *The Mahatma Letters* which deals with Probation and Chelaship —and understand.

This PATH has been indicated in all ages, and by every great teacher, but never so clearly and explicitly as to-day in Theosophical literature. It is the *Tao* of Lao-tze. It is "the Noble Eightfold Path" of Gautama Buddha. It is "the straight and narrow way" of the Nazarene Teacher—"and few there be that find it."

It is the return of the individual to his Divine Source, the realisation of his inmost divine nature. It is the full

[1] See Charles Johnston's translation, pp. 54, 55.

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realisation of that "Sonship" which is represented in the Christian Scriptures as the *Christ*. It is the "Christ in You."

"Throw out of work the body's senses, and thy Divinity shall come to birth",—says the Hermetic Philosophy. And again :—

"If, then, thou dost not make thyself like unto God, thou canst not know Him. For like is knowable to like alone.

"Make, then, thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness which transcends all measure ; leap forth from every body ; transcend all Time ; become Eternity ; and thus shalt thou know God."

And Ruysbroeck :—

"By what path do we go forth to seek the Lord ? By the way of perfect likeness and fullest union. . . . Entering into and transcending itself, traversing all worlds of being, surpassing all creatures, the soul meets God in its own depths."

And the *Upanishad* :—

"What that subtle Being is, of which this whole Universe is composed, that is the Real, that is the Soul, That art thou O S'vetaketu."

It is no new doctrine, therefore, which H. P. Blavatsky once more put before the world which had forgotten it, or had overlaid it with doctrines and dogmas born of the vain imaginings of the lower mind, and the products of priestcraft and superstition. Let those who are able—receive it. For the rest—it is, as we have said, the goal of Humanity through ages and ages of evolution.

"So is the Eightfold Path which brings to peace :
By lower or by upper heights it goes,
The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All
Will reach the sunlit snows."

All—yes ; but assuredly each one has it in his own power to reach the goal sooner rather than later. Moreover, not merely are there those who have already attained—the Christs and the Buddhas—but all along the road are those who pass from stage to stage, yet hold out helping hands to those still lower than themselves.

Great as are the powers, and knowledge, and attainments of those known to-day as the Mahatmas, compared with our ignorance and weaknesses, they have not yet attained to the supreme goal, and perchance that is relatively as far off for them as their

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position may appear to be for us. They themselves have, as we have already seen, their Chiefs or *Chohans*.

"We are not Gods, and even they, our Chiefs—*they hope*." [1]

"The individuality, to run successfully its seven-fold downward and upward course has to assimilate to itself the eternal life power residing but in the seventh (principle), and then blend the three (fourth, fifth and seventh) into one—the sixth. Those who succeed in doing so become Buddhas, Dhyan Chohans, etc. The chief object of our struggle and *initiations* is to achieve this union while yet on this earth. Those who will be successful have nothing to fear of during the fifth, sixth and seventh rounds. But this is a mystery. Our beloved K.H. is on his way to the goal—the highest of all beyond us on this sphere." [2]

Such is in brief outline the teaching which that Great Soul, H. P. Blavatsky, endeavoured to the best of her ability to place before the world. We have seen how nobly she struggled with her physical disabilities, with circumstances and trials which would undoubtedly have swamped a lesser nature.

If the effort which I have here made to place the *Real H. P. Blavatsky* before those who will take the trouble to read this work, is successful to some extent in reversing that common and ignorant verdict of imposter and charlatan which passes so easily from mouth to mouth, I shall not consider that my labour has been in vain.

I will hope also that this work may serve to remind the great body of Theosophists the world over, of the immense debt which they owe to the one and only real *Founder* of the Movement in its outer aspects. That it will serve to draw them together once more to work on the basis of the fundamental principles which Those who were—and are—behind the Movement had in view originally; which they indicated so plainly through their outer Agent; and which should be the incentive of both the individual and the body-corporate to follow her noble example of one pointed devotion—setting aside all *personal* considerations and claims.

"The path by which to Deity we climb,
Is arduous, rough, ineffable, sublime."

Let those who would adventure on the PATH that leads to Adeptship, and to "the Heart of the Universe," take heed of the warning which I have quoted from *The Light of Asia* at the commencement of this work.

[1] Mahatma Letters, p. 210. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

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But let them also take heart from the noble words of H. P. Blavatsky, which I give on my Dedication page:

> "*There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer.*
> *There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through.*
> *There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount.*"

These words she wrote from her own experience; and dauntless courage, spotless purity, and strong intellect may sum up the characteristics of the Real H. P. B., the Great Soul of the woman (or man) known in her (or his) outer *personality* as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF MADAME BLAVATSKY

1831 (July 30/31). Born at midnight at Ekaterinoslow, in the Province of that name, in Russia.
1842. Taken charge of by her Grandmother at Saratow.
1844. First journey abroad with her Father.
1845. Went with her Father to London to take music lessons.
1848 (July 7th). Married to General Blavatsky.
1848 (October). Left her husband, boarded a steamer at Poti, and sailed for Constantinople.
1849/50. Travelled in Europe.[1]
1851 (August 12th). Met her Master M. in London for the first time.
1851. Went to America, Quebec, New Orleans, Texas, and Mexico.
1852 (end of). Arrived in India via the Cape and Ceylon.
1853. Tried to get into Tibet, but failed.
1853. Went to Java and Singapore, and from thence to England.
1853 (end of). Went to America, New York, Chicago, the Far West, and San Francisco.
1855. Went from America to India via Japan and the Straits.
1856. Travelled in India, and got into Tibet.
1858. Sailed from Madras to Java, and from thence to Europe.
1858. Resided in France and Germany, and then returned to Russia.
1859. Terrible illness at Rougodevo.
1860 (Spring). Went with her Sister to their Grandparents at Tiflis.
1861 and 1862. Residing at Tiflis.
1863. Visited various places in the Caucasus. Serious illness at Ozoorgetty and Tiflis.
1863 (end of). Went to Italy.
1863/67. Travelled in Europe.
1867 (November 3rd). Present at the battle of Mentana, and was wounded.
1867 (November). Went to India.
1867/70. India and Tibet. Her family heard nothing of her.
1870 (end of). Left India and returned to Europe via Suez Canal. Short time in the Piraeus. Took passage for Spezzia and was blown up in the vessel. Went to Alexandria and Cairo.
1871. Residing in Cairo. *Société Spirite* formed.
1872. Left Egypt and returned to her family at Odessa.
1873 (March). Went to Paris, and was ordered by her Master to go to New York. Arrived there July 7th.
1874 (September). Went to Chittenden and met Colonel Olcott.
1875 (November 17th). Theosophical Society inaugurated in New York. In the early part of the year H. P. B. was living at Philadelphia, and commenced to write *Isis Unveiled*.

[1] See remarks on page 39, with reference to the uncertainty of some of the dates from 1848 to 1873.

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1876. New York activities. Second marriage.
1877. *Isis Unveiled* published.
1878. American divorce (25th May). Sailed for Bombay with Col. Olcott, via London (17th December).
1879. Left London for India (17th January). Arrived at Bombay (16th February).
1879 (December). First visit to the Sinnetts at Allahabad.
1879 (October). First number of *The Theosophist* published.
1879 (April). Tour in the North West Provinces.
1880 (May 7th). Went with Col. Olcott to Ceylon. Left on the 13th July.
1880 (May 25th). H. P. B. and Col. Olcott " took *Pânsil* " in Ceylon.
1880 (September). H. P. B. and Col. Olcott visited the Sinnetts at Simla.
1880 (December 30th). Took possession of new Headquarters in Bombay.
1881. Visited the Sinnetts at Allahabad, and went to Simla as the guest of A. O. Hume.
1882. Tour in various parts of India with Col. Olcott.
1882 (October). Seriously ill, but went to Sikhim and Tibet and was cured by her Master.
1882 (December 17th). Headquarters of the Theosophical Society moved from Bombay to Adyar, Madras.
1883 (September). Visit to General Morgan at Ootacamund.
1883 (September). Visit with Col. Olcott to Pondichéry.
1883 (December 15th). Annual Convention of the T.S. at Adyar.
1884 (February 20th). Went with Col. Olcott and others to Marseilles.
1884 (March 27th). Went to Paris. Went to London meeting of the London Lodge, April 7th. Returned to Paris April 13th.
1884 (June 27th). Went to London as the guest of the Arundales.
1884 (August 16th). Went to Elberfeld as the guest of the Gebhards.
1884 (December). Returned to Adyar. Annual Convention of the T.S.
1885 (March 31st). Left India, and never returned.
1885 (April to August). Residing at Torre del Greco, Italy.
1885 (August). Went to Würzburg. Stayed one week at St. Cergues *en route*. In October the Countess Wachtmeister joined her at Würzburg. Writing *The Secret Doctrine*.
1886 (May 15th). Left Würzburg for Ostende, staying with the Gebharts at Elberfeld *en route*.
1886 (August). Settled at Ostende.
1887 (Spring). Nearly died, and was cured by the Master.
1887 (May). Went to London, to reside at " Maycot," Norwood.
1887 (October). Removed to 17 Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill.
1888. Vols. I and II of *The Secret Doctrine* published.
1888 (October). Esoteric School of Theosophy formed.
1889. Removed to 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood.
1889. *The Key to Theosophy* and *The Voice of the Silence* published.
1891 (May 8th). H. P. Blavatsky left her physical body, which was cremated at Woking on the 11th.

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APPENDIX

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE 1885 REPORT

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH*

First Published October, 1927.

* This Appendix may be obtained separately in pamphlet form from The Blavatsky Association, 26, Bedford Gardens, London, W.8, under the title of *Was She a Charlatan?* Price 1s. 6d.

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PREFACE

I HAVE been asked by the Council of the BLAVATSKY ASSOCIATION to write for them a concise analysis of the 1885 Report of the Society for Psychical Research "on the phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society"—otherwise, the phenomena associated with the personality of Mme. H. P. Blavatsky.

I have undertaken to do this with great reluctance and distaste—but nevertheless with a somewhat strong inner urge—for several reasons. In the first place, the Report is now practically out of date, and it seems rather late in the day to write about it at all ; so much has happened since then in the spread of the Theosophical Movement which Mme. Blavatsky inaugurated that the conclusions of the Report, and the prophecies which the Committee who drew it up ventured to make, are already falsified ; whilst psychical research has itself made such progress as to place the phenomena on a much more credible basis to-day than was the case forty years ago.

At the time the Report was issued Mme. Blavatsky had not written *The Secret Doctrine, The Key to Theosophy,* or *The Voice of the Silence.* Moreover, we have recently come into possession of a large volume of *The Letters of the Mahatmas to A. P. Sinnett,* and also the letters of Mme. Blavatsky herself to Mr. Sinnett. These throw a flood of light upon many incidents which were previously obscure.

In the second place, the Report has only an indirect bearing on the *teachings* of Theosophy : these teachings being what I was in the first instance—and am to the last—interested in ; the phenomena, and even the personality of the teacher being to me at that time of quite secondary importance ; as, indeed, they must necessarily be to-day for all those whose lives have been so profoundly influenced by these teachings, and who did not know Mme. Blavatsky personally. Moreover, as Mahatma 'M' says in one of his letters to A. P. Sinnett (p. 262) : "If our philosophy is wrong a *wonder* will not set it right." And we might paraphrase this and say : If the philosophy is right, a *bogus* wonder will not make it wrong.

The S.P.R. Report cannot to-day—nor indeed did it at that time—make any difference to those for whom *Theosophy,* the *Ancient Wisdom Religion,* has been the great TRUTH which has not

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merely presented the only rational solution of the more intellectual problems of life, but which has also appealed to their deeper intuitions in a strange, mysterious manner, as if it were the recovery of a knowledge attained in far back incarnations, and now happily once more discovered.

In the third place, the H. P. Blavatsky whom I knew personally was certainly not the "accomplished impostor" presented to us in the S.P.R. Report; and I was absolutely unacquainted with the Mme. Blavatsky presented to us in Solovyoff's book, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, to which I shall make a short reference later on, since the S.P.R. saw fit, ten years after their own Report was issued, to endeavour to bolster up their case by sponsoring Solovyoff's book: their Report by itself having entirely failed to bring about the collapse of the Theosophical Movement.

If such a personality as is presented in these two documents ever existed, she must have utterly vanished by the time I came to know the author of *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*, etc.

Nevertheless, the Report and the book are even now sometimes quoted as having definitely *proved* that the psychic phenomena associated with Mme. Blavatsky were entirely fraudulent; and also that the Masters or Mahatmas from whom she claimed to have received her teachings were her own invention, and do not, in fact, exist.

I shall show that the Report does not *prove* by any evidence that would be accepted in a court of law either the one or other of these assumptions. As for Solovyoff's book—that shall speak for itself later on.

I have found, on making a close analysis of the Report for the purpose of this monograph, that there are several vital discrepancies in it which previous critics on behalf of Mme. Blavatsky appear to have overlooked; and it may be as well for the sake of posterity, as also for our present purpose, since Mme. Blavatsky will undoubtedly be for posterity one of the most notable characters of the nineteenth century—"the sphinx of the nineteenth century"—to place on record in a concise form a critical survey of this damnatory Report. The only other concise criticism at present available is that of Mrs. Annie Besant, published in 1907 under the title of *H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters of the Wisdom*. The replies which were made to the Report at the time it was published are more or less scattered in books and magazines.

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The attacks which are made to-day on the character and work of the founder of the Theosophical Movement emanate principally from so-called 'Christian' and 'Spiritualistic' sources; but it is seldom that the teachings themselves are impugned. It is apparently thought by these detractors that if they only throw sufficient mud at the woman who gave the teachings to the world they are thereby amply discrediting the teachings themselves. But if any one wishes to prove that Shakespeare wrote bad plays, or Wagner bad music, he surely does not do so by endeavouring to prove that the one was once a poacher and the other an immoral man.

I have often been aghast at the freedom with which some of these detractors, even so-called 'dignitaries' of the Church, have not hesitated to slander and vilify a dead woman by repeating statements which have been amply refuted over and over again, and which in any case the recognised code of decent respect for the dead—not to mention the Karmic Law, "judge not that ye be not judged", and, for all those who call themselves Christians at all events, the precepts and example of Jesus Christ Himself—should have prevented them from doing. When these detractors have been challenged to show—apart from the promulgation of the teachings which they dislike—what *evil* Mme. Blavatsky did, they have been silent.

My own association with Mme. Blavatsky commenced in 1888, after the S.P.R. Report had been published nearly three years. She was then permanently settled in London—the headquarters of the enemy—and had gathered round her a devoted and highly intellectual group of workers in the cause of Theosophy.

I never saw her perform any phenomena, nor did I ever ask her to perform any. I did not see how any of the phenomena she was reputed to have performed could be any evidence of the truth of the teachings, though they might possibly have gone to prove the existence of the Masters, as also the fact that every individual possesses unknown and undeveloped psychic faculties and powers. This, as I have said above, has since been amply proved by psychical research itself. I did consider, however, in spite of the S.P.R. Report, that her phenomenal powers had been fully testified by a very large number of credible witnesses. I naturally held in reserve a great many conclusions when I first made her acquaintance; but I have never seen any reason to go back on my first favourable impressions; and I have since then made the philosophy which I learnt from her the basis of all my own literary work during the last thirty-five years.

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For the purpose of this monograph I have made a much closer study and analysis of the S.P.R. Report than I had previously done. I not merely find nothing therein to modify my previous conclusions, but more and more as I have proceeded with that analysis I have perceived that the Report is a colossal example of *suppressio veri, suggestio falsi.*

The Report is drawn up with such a plausible appearance of exhaustive investigation that it is difficult for those who have not a more extended knowledge of the facts than is presented therein to recognise the specious nature of the 'evidence' put forward, and how much has really been suppressed. But I do not see how any one can make a really critical study of it without recognising the fact that it is simply a brief for the prosecution. The history of our law courts is full of cases which show how easily a prosecution can twist circumstances and events into an apparently damning indictment.

But even further than that, the Committee of the S.P.R closed the case after receiving Mr. Hodgson's Report of his visit to India; in other words, the Committee closed the case after hearing the speech of the counsel for the prosecution. On page 205 they say: "After examining Mr. Hodgson's Report of the results of his personal inquiries, they are of opinion that the testimony to these marvels is in no case sufficient, taking amount and character together, to resist the force of the general presumption above mentioned." This 'presumption' was: "That all the marvellous narratives put forward as evidence of the existence and occult power of the Mahatmas are to be explained as due either (*a*) to deliberate deception carried out by or at the instigation of Madame Blavatsky, or (*b*) to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention on the part of the witnesses."

Well, if they had stopped there, and had left every one to form their own opinion from the Report, there might have been less to be said. But as a matter of fact they go far beyond this in the last paragraph of their statement, and definitely brand Mme. Blavatsky as an impostor. Moreover, they never gave her or any one else a chance of seeing the Report and replying to it before they published it. They did not even submit to the defence the alleged forged letters from Mme. Blavatsky to Mme. Coulomb on which so much of their 'evidence' rests. What would be thought of such a procedure in a court of law?

A detailed analysis of the Report would fill a large volume, and certainly would not be read to any extent; nor do I suppose

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for one moment that it would serve to convince those who do not wish to be convinced. I shall therefore confine myself in this monograph to showing as concisely as possible, in the first place, that the Report *proves* nothing by any evidence that would be accepted in a court of law; and that in fact it is simply a mass of conjectures and theories, in many cases too absurd to be considered for a moment; and in the second place I shall show that even if fraud could be said to have been proved in one or two instances, the sweeping inferences which are drawn therefrom go far beyond their legitimate bearing, and do not in any case touch the great work which Mme. Blavatsky accomplished in the literature which she gave to the world in *Isis Unveiled, The Secret Doctrine, The Key to Theosophy,* and *The Voice of the Silence.* It is by that literature and its gradual acceptance as being a fresh inflow of spiritual teaching at a time when the world was drifting into materialism, and not by the S.P.R. Report, that H. P. Blavatsky will be judged by posterity. And though for a long time to come there must necessarily be many who cannot accept the teachings contained in her works, and who will doubtless continue to denounce these teachings because they may appear to run counter to their own religious or other prejudices, yet I may perhaps hope that this analysis will do something to check the reckless use of the S.P.R. Report as if it were an infallible document. I trust also that it will help to dissociate entirely the phenomenal and merely personal aspects of Mme. Blavatsky's life from the teachings and literary work which she gave to the world, and which will most assuredly as time goes on place her name amongst those of the world's great light-bringers.

If, as is most probable, when all is said and done, those who *wish* to accept the conclusions of the S.P.R. Report will still continue to do so, then we must say to them: Very well, you have still to account for the greatest of all the phenomena, the production by this same woman whom you denounce as a fraud and a charlatan of the literature I have named; and more particularly the production by a broken-down worn-out woman, who ought physically to have died years previously, of that great work *The Secret Doctrine.* This was perhaps the greatest wonder of all in the life of this wonderful woman. We have it on indisputable evidence that she was at least three times restored to life, when practically dead, by the direct presence and action of her Master. This, and her own indomitable will to write *The Secret Doctrine,* and to carry her work through to the farthest

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possible point before giving in, kept her not merely alive, but at her desk from morning to night in spite of a continuous physical martyrdom. You have either to solve the psychological problem as to how Mme. Blavatsky the 'charlatan' could be the same *person* as the Mme. Blavatsky who wrote that work, or else you must fall back upon some double personality theory, and acknowledge that there is no connexion whatever between the one person and the other; between the phenomena which you say were fraudulent, and which the Society for Psychical Research did *not* witness, and the greater phenomenon of *The Secret Doctrine* which stands visibly before your eyes.

But there is possibly even a greater difficulty than that for critics and detractors to solve. How is it that notwithstanding the S.P.R. Report Mme. Blavatsky was able to settle in London, and to gather round her a devoted band of men and women of character, of public standing, and scholarly and literary ability?

Perhaps the best answer of all to anything that can be said or written in reply to the S.P.R. Report is the symposium issued soon after Mme. Blavatsky's death in 1891, and entitled *In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, by Some of Her Pupils.* There are twenty-three personal records in that book, besides other matter to which one can pass from the S.P.R. Report and Solovyoff's book as one might pass after stumbling in the darkness of a primeval forest through slimy bogs into brilliant sunshine, and find one's feet on firm ground.

I can only instance two cases from this symposium, since they bear directly upon the question of the validity of the S.P.R. Report. These two cases are those of Mrs. Annie Besant and Mr. Herbert Burrows. It is well known that these two were closely associated in Socialistic work and agnostic propaganda. To join the Theosophical Society, as they did together in 1889, was practically to turn their backs on all their past efforts and their present associates. Yet they took the step *because of the teachings.* This is what Mr. Burrows says of his early impressions of H. P. Blavatsky:

"I caught glimpses of a lofty morality, of a self-sacrificing zeal, of a coherent philosophy of life, of a clear and definite science of man and his relations to a spiritual universe. These it was which attracted me—not phenomena, for I saw none. . . . Quickly I learned that the so-called charlatan and trickster was a noble soul."

Well, before Mme. Blavatsky would accept these two as

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members of the Theosophical Society she told them to go and read the S.P.R. Report. This is what Mr. Burrows says of this in another place (*Isis Very Much Unveiled*, p. 81):

"We read it separately, analysed it—and joined. I brought to it my Civil Service training, what business faculties I had, and a fair knowledge of the laws of evidence. I am a sceptic by nature, and I was then a materialist, and the honest conclusion that I came to was that the case for the prosecution was far too weak to warrant a conviction. That opinion I still hold. I suppose that nine out of ten people who talk glibly about the Report have never seen even the covers of it."

I may add to the above one more testimony, a quite recent one. Mr. G. R. S. Mead, the well-known scholar, and for seventeen years editor of *The Quest* Quarterly Review, was intimately associated with Mme. Blavatsky during the last three years of her life, having given up his profession of teaching to work with her. This is what he says in *The Quest*, April 1926:

"Whatever else Yelena Petrovna was . . . she was not, within my experience at any rate, the vulgar trickster and charlatan of hostile popular legend. I do not of course know what happened when I was not there; but then nearly all of her accusers are equally in the same boat."

I wish to add here that all that I am saying in this analysis to *discredit* the S.P.R. Report does *not* mean that I unhesitatingly accept each and all of the phenomena dealt with in that Report as having actually occurred as testified by those who witnessed them. I am no more in a position to prove that they *did* than Mr. Hodgson was to prove that they *did not*; and as I have said above, I do not really concern myself as to whether they did or did not.

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THE REPORT: INTRODUCTORY

The following is quoted from the *Proceedings* of the Society, Part IX, December 1885, p. 201 ff. This number of the *Proceedings* also contains the full Report made by Mr. Richard Hodgson after his visit to India, November 1884 to April 1885, and which is mainly the subject of the criticism contained in the following pages:

"In May 1884 the Council of the Society for Psychical Research appointed a Committee for the purpose of taking such evidence as to the alleged phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society as might be offered by members of that body at the time in England, or as could be collected elsewhere.

"The Committee consisted of the following members, with power to add to their number: Messrs. E. Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, F. Podmore, H. Sidgwick, and J. H. Stack. They have since added Mr. R. Hodgson and Mrs. Sidgwick to their number."

After stating that the Committee had the opportunity of examining Col. Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky, as well as several other members of the Society, the Report goes on to say (p. 203):

"In December 1884 the Committee considered that the time had come to issue a preliminary and provisional Report. . . . The conclusion then come to was expressed as follows: On the whole (though with some serious reserves) it seems undeniable that there is a *primâ facie* case, for some part, at least, of the claim made, which, at the point which the investigations of the Society have now reached, cannot, with consistency, be ignored."

Accordingly, Mr. R. Hodgson was sent to India to continue the investigations. Mr. Hodgson's instructions were: in the first place to ascertain if possible the genuineness of the letters said to have been written by Mme. Blavatsky to M. and Mme. Coulomb, portions of which had been published in *The Madras Christian College Magazine* for September and October 1884; or whether, as stated by Mme. Blavatsky and other Theosophists, these letters were forgeries.

M. and Mme. Coulomb, it may be explained here, had previously occupied a position of trust at the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society in Bombay and Madras, but were

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expelled in May 1884 for very substantial reasons, which will appear later on (p. 281).

In the second place, Mr. Hodgson was instructed (p. 204):

" by cross-examination and otherwise to obtain evidence which might assist the Committee in judging of the value to be attached to the testimony of some of the principal witnesses; that he should examine localities where phenomena had occurred, with a view to ascertaining whether the explanations by trickery, that suggested themselves to the Committee, or any other such explanations, were *possible*; and in particular, as already said, that he should, as far as possible, verify the statements of the Coulombs with a view to judging whether their explanations of the phenomena were *plausible*. For it is obvious that *no value for the purpose of psychical research* can be attached to phenomena where persons like the Coulombs have been concerned, if it can be *plausibly* shown that they *might* themselves have produced them: while at the same time, their unsupported assertion that they did produce them, cannot be taken by itself as evidence " (*Italics* mine).

With this latter paragraph I am in full agreement; but I must remark here, in the first place, that the Report does not contain a single scrap of evidence which would be accepted in a court of law as proof that the phenomena *were actually produced* as stated by the Coulombs; and in the second place, that there is altogether lacking in the Report any evidence that Mr. Hodgson *did* subject the Coulombs to the severe examination required, " where persons like the Coulombs are concerned." Indeed, I may say here, and I shall show later on, that when the whole Report is boiled down and strained out there is not a single witness, according to Mr. Hodgson, in the whole case whose evidence is worth anything *except the Coulombs*!

In quoting the above paragraph I have italicized the words '*possible*', '*plausible*', and '*might*', for this reason: the proof that a certain explanation of a phenomenon is *possible* or *plausible* is not proof that it *did* take place in that manner. There is a vast difference between mere assumption and actual proof, and though we may agree that " for the purposes of psychical research " a phenomenon cannot be said to be of any evidential value when a purely physical explanation is *possible*, that is quite a different matter from branding a woman as a fraud and a charlatan on the basis of these ' possible ' or ' plausible ' explanations.

In this respect, therefore, the Committee went far beyond the limits of what they themselves professed to be their objective, viz. to ascertain whether there might be ' possible ' or ' plausible ' explanations of the phenomena which would put them out of

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court for the purpose of psychical research. The utmost verdict of the S.P.R. should have been, 'not proven'; with every one left free to form their own opinions from the Report itself and the replies which were published thereto. These replies ought in fact to have appeared with the Report. Without them it is simply a statement for the prosecution, with an endeavour to twist every incident and every witness into a prejudged verdict. Unfortunately those who read (?) the Report, seldom if ever have the replies before them.

The pages of the Report are almost as freely besprinkled with 'if', and 'might', and 'possibly', and 'probably', etc., etc., as there are full-stops on a page.

One very general misconception about the Report which appears to prevail among those who make use of it, even in the present day, may be corrected here. It would appear, from what I have already quoted from the Report itself as to its scope, that neither Mr. Hodgson nor any member of the Committee witnessed the actual phenomena with which the Report deals. The phenomena themselves took place from one to four years before Mr. Hodgson went to India.

Now the Report is entitled: "REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INVESTIGATE PHENOMENA CONNECTED WITH THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY."

But:

(1) The Society never investigated the phenomena.
(2) It delegated the work to a Committee.
(3) The Committee never investigated the phenomena.
(4) The Committee delegated the work to Mr. Hodgson to investigate the evidence for phenomena which had taken place years previously.
(5) Mr. Hodgson, therefore, did not investigate the phenomena.

Consequently, the very title on the Report is misleading, for "the phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society" were not investigated at all. What was investigated was simply the evidence of persons said to have witnessed the phenomena; and what the Committee really endeavoured to do—as is shown by the words of the Report itself—was to find 'plausible' theories whereby the genuine nature of the phenomena could be explained away. To what lengths this *plausibility* goes will appear in due course.

The Report is by no means an easy one to assimilate in all its

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details; the real *inwardness* of it—perhaps I should rather say the real *shallowness* of it—is so wrapped up in a mass of 'plausible' assumptions that it is not easy to disentangle the really important from the spurious and irrelevant matter.

One can very well understand that a reader already prejudiced against Mme. Blavatsky, or against Theosophy itself, would not merely accept with satisfaction, but without any critical judgment, the seemingly 'plausible' conclusions of the Committee, but would also readily be able to pick out here and there sentences which lend themselves to a cheap and vulgar ridicule. I do not suppose that one in ten of Mme. Blavatsky's critics and detractors who have quoted from this Report have taken the trouble to read it from beginning to end, much less to analyse it, or to apply to it the recognised principles of legal evidence.

It is, in fact, only by patient and detailed analysis that the evidence—or rather the lack of any real evidence—for the conclusions formed, the bias of the investigator, and the irrelevancy of many of the conclusions, are brought to light. I may go further and say, that but for my own intimate knowledge of much that has been left out of the Report I should not have been able to appreciate or evaluate its spurious character.

Apart from that, however, when one patiently endeavours to evaluate the weight of evidence on the one side or the other, the amazing conclusion dawns upon one that, *according to the Report* the only credible witnesses are the witnesses for the prosecution. The manner in which Mr. Hodgson endeavours to discredit the theosophical witnesses, the trifling inconsistencies which he lays hold of and magnifies for this purpose, will be shown presently; but there is an entire absence from the Report of any similar effort to discredit the evidence of the Coulombs, who, of all the witnesses, are the most to be distrusted, since their evidence was given out of revenge, and they were paid by the missionaries for their Judas betrayal of their benefactor, Mme. Blavatsky.

As a final instance of the way in which all evidence for the defence was treated, I may say that the letters which Mme. Coulomb said she had received from Mme. Blavatsky, and which Mme. Blavatsky said were forgeries, were withheld by the Committee of the S.P.R., and neither Mme. Blavatsky nor any other Theosophists were ever allowed to see them.[1]

[1] See H. P. B.'s *Letters*, p. 114.

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THE REPORT: MR. HODGSON

Mr. Richard Hodgson, B.A., was a young man of whose qualifications for the task entrusted to him by the S.P.R. it is not possible to say anything except what one may judge from the Report itself. He appears to have had an unlimited amount of self-confidence, and we must at least credit him with a considerable capacity for painstaking detail; but he does not appear to have had any acquaintance with the laws of evidence, and still less with the nature of the occult phenomena with which he was called upon to deal. Psychical research at that time had not accumulated the evidence for the *possibility* of the genuineness of the phenomena which is available to-day. In *The Occult Review* for April 1923 Mr. Ralph Shirley, the editor, writes as follows:

"It was many years after this (S.P.R. Report) when the S.P.R. came to learn, in the case of Eusapia Palladino, that even consistent trickery may go hand in hand with occult phenomena which will stand the most rigid investigation, and found themselves compelled to recant in Eusapia's favour an earlier adverse decision. But in the case of Mme. Blavatsky, a far more complex character and a far more remarkable personality had to be dealt with, and neither Mr. Hodgson nor probably any other members of the Society in question were equal to tackling so profound a psychological problem."

Mr. Sinnett, in his reply to the S.P.R. Report,[1] points out also that Mr. Hodgson was totally unfamiliar with the native mind in relation to the occult matters with which Theosophy was dealing; that they strongly resented any attempt by Europeans to obtain admittance into the inner arcana of Eastern Occultism, and would in fact do all in their power to throw dust in the eyes of "an exceedingly self-reliant young man from England attempting the investigation of occult mysteries by the methods of a Scotland Yard detective." This will largely account for Mr. Hodgson having found the native witnesses so unreliable: witnesses in respect of whom, as Mr. Sinnett says, he should have been particularly on his guard. Mr. Hodgson went to India in November 1884, and returned to England in April 1885 (p. 203).

Mr. Hodgson's examination of witnesses, and the whole

[1] See *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 306.

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method of his procedure is so absolutely one-sided that we cannot admit his preliminary claim to be completely impartial; nor can we admit that his acceptance of telepathy as a proved fact constituted any qualification or 'safeguard' (p. 208) against prejudice. As a matter of fact he does not once mention telepathy as a possible explanation of some of the phenomena, though Mrs. Sidgwick does so when she wishes to *discredit* a certain phenomenon (see p. 395).

Let us see, however, to what extent Mr. Hodgson's own statements are to be relied on.

On pp. 357, 358 of the Report we find a statement by Mr. Mohini M. Chatterji to the effect that on one occasion when with Mme. Blavatsky he had heard the direct voice of one of the Masters speaking from another part of the room, and that he had heard Mme. Blavatsky speaking at the same time, so that it could not have been ventriloquism on her part. Commenting on this Mr. Hodgson says: "Concerning this incident, I need only remind the reader of the hollow in the wall, which was near the corner of Mme. Blavatsky's room. The confederate *may have been* [*italics* mine] Babula, previously instructed in the reply, and with a mango leaf in his mouth to disguise his voice." Really! How very simple, how very 'easy' to explain the matter away thus! It is a good sample of all his 'explanations'; but what is it worth as *evidence* of fraud? Less than nothing, for it is a *suggestio falsi*. The joke of the matter is that the phenomenon did not take place at Adyar, where Mme. Blavatsky's room had a "hollow in the wall" and a confederate who could speak "with a mango leaf in his mouth". *It took place at Darjeeling*.[1] But then of course there *might have been* more confederates and more mango leaves there! They appear according to Mr. Hodgson's account to have existed all over India, whether Mme. Blavatsky was on the spot or thousands of miles away. We shall come across one presently even riding out of Tibet into Sikkhim to personate a Mahatma.

That Mr. Hodgson's own statements are not to be relied on may be further shown in one very important matter. I shall in fact show that in this case we must—if we apply Mr. Hodgson's own methods and language—accuse him of "a wilful and deliberate falsehood" (p. 230). This is a phrase which he uses in connexion with the evidence of Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar, a witness he particularly desires to discredit, and which related to the question

[1] See A. P. Sinnett's *The "Occult World" Phenomena and the S.P.R.* George Redway. 1886.

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as to who had charge of the keys of Mme. Blavatsky's rooms when she was at Ootacamund in 1883. On one occasion Mr. Damodar had said the keys were in his possession; on another occasion he said that they were in the possession of the Coulombs. It is the first of these statements that Mr. Hodgson characterises as a "wilful and deliberate falsehood".

Now, it so happens that this same question as to the possession of the keys of Mme. Blavatsky's rooms comes up later in the Report with reference to the interval between Mme. Blavatsky leaving Adyar in February 1884 and the dismissal of the Coulombs in the following May. This interval is the one during which the Theosophical Board of Control said that M. Coulomb had constructed the various contrivances in the Occult Room and in Mme. Blavatsky's room which were afterwards asserted by them to have been used for the production of bogus phenomena. It is Mr. Hodgson's endeavour to show—as counsel for the prosecution—that M. Coulomb could not have constructed these contrivances during the time stated. This is what he says (p. 340)—the *italics* are mine:

"Now it would appear that after Mme. Blavatsky's departure from head-quarters in 1884, the Occult Room and the Shrine *were in charge of Mr. Damodar* (see Appendix XI); and moreover *it is apparently not denied* by the Theosophists that workmen were about on the terrace during the interval assigned to M. Coulomb for his secret work, and *according to Mr. Damodar* the door of the stairs was at all times open. If M. Coulomb under these circumstances could, without the knowledge of any persons at head-quarters, have constructed the double-backed cupboard, the panel in the boarding, the sideboard panel, and the aperture into the recess, he would have performed a feat which I should find much more difficult of explanation than all Mme. Blavatsky's phenomena together."

Very well. Let us see what this apparently crushing statement is worth.

In the first place, he says that the keys of the Occult Room and the Shrine were in charge of Mr. Damodar after Mme. Blavatsky's departure. Turning, however, to p. 280 of the Report, I find him saying: "The reader will remember that the contrivances for trickery were investigated (by the Board of Control) *when M. Coulomb gave up the keys of Mme. Blavatsky's rooms on May 17th or 18th.*" Also in a 'Mahatma' letter which I have quoted later (p. 282), and which Mr. Hodgson says was "no doubt written by Mme. Blavatsky", it is stated that: "They

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[the Coulombs] are sole masters of the top story. They alone have full entrance to and control of the premises." Again, on p. 217 Mr. Hodgson says definitely: "When Mme. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott left Madras to come to Europe in 1884 M. and Mme. Coulomb were left in complete charge of Mme. Blavatsky's rooms." Finally, on p. 222 he says: "The panels in the wardrobe and in the teak-wood door were shown by M. Coulomb to the Board of Control *when he gave up the keys of Mme. Blavatsky's rooms in May* 1884."

So then, Mr. Hodgson, it appears that, like your own condemnation of Mr. Damodar's evidence, you can say one thing at one time and exactly the opposite at another time as may suit your purpose. Shall we then apply to you the same words that you have used about Mr. Damodar in a like case? Well, at all events we shall say that it absolutely discredits your contention that M. Coulomb could not have constructed the appliances for evidence of trickery at the time stated; and it also, to say the very least of it, reflects most seriously upon the reliability of your statements in general. We shall in fact apply to you the words which you have applied to Col. Olcott in another place: "The testimony of Col. Olcott (Mr. Hodgson) himself I found to be fundamentally at variance with fact in so many important points that it became impossible for me to place the slightest value upon the evidence he had offered" (p. 210). This statement of yours concerning Col. Olcott has not the slightest value in view of your own lack of truth, and plain intention to discredit every witness for the defence.

With regard to the rest of the paragraph I have quoted, I need merely say that notwithstanding that he has found Damodar such an untruthful (?) witness, he can, it appears, quote him and accept his word whenever it suits his purpose to do so.

Here is another case of Mr. Hodgson's truthfulness (?). On p. 220 we find him saying:

> "Moreover, the Occult Room, *when I first received permission to inspect it*, had been considerably altered; its walls were covered with fresh plaster, and I was informed by Mr. Damodar that all traces of the alleged 'machinations' of the Coulombs in connexion with the Shrine had been obliterated. This was not true, for the bricked frame and the aperture into the recess still existed."

Now if this means anything it means that the aperture existed *when he first visited the room*; and here again he makes the

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unfortunate Damodar to be a liar. On turning to p. 228 we find him stating the following:

"Now with respect to the sideboard aperture and the recess, these were, as I afterwards found, still in existence when I arrived at Adyar, though Mr. Damodar stated to me that the recess had been blocked up. This last statement of Mr. Damodar's I can regard only as a deliberate misrepresentation."

Very good. So far the paragraph confirms the one on p. 220 above quoted. But he goes on to say:

"Had I known that the recess still existed, I should of course myself have endeavoured to enter, and should at once have discovered the untruth of Mr. Damodar's account of his own entrance." (That is to say that he was only able to enter with great difficulty.)

But this second part of the paragraph absolutely negatives the first part and the statement on p. 220 above, in which he says that these contrivances *did* exist when he first visited the room. Who then is here the liar, Mr. Hodgson or Mr. Damodar?

But what are we to think of the Committee of the S.P.R. itself? What sort of a critical analysis could they have made of Mr. Hodgson's Report to have overlooked the glaring inconsistencies I have now pointed out? It becomes more and more evident as we proceed that the case was so absolutely prejudged that all sense of proportion, of justice, or of truth had been obscured and placed in the background. As regards Mr. Hodgson's assertion that Mr. Damodar was a confederate with Mme. Blavatsky and the Coulombs, there is at least one letter in the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters which would negative this, and none which would support it. It is the letter No. 9 (p. 214) in which Mme. Blavatsky is represented as asking Mme. Coulomb to convey a letter to Damodar "in a miraculous way". But why so if Damodar was a confederate? Damodar's whole life and action in giving up his family and caste negatives all Hodgson's assertions about his dishonesty and complicity; and Mr. Hodgson himself acknowledges (p. 310) that he had deprived himself of substantial property and sacrificed his worldly prospects for the sake of Theosophy. Mr. Hodgson, however, in his usual conjectural manner, endeavours to furnish Mr. Damodar with motives far other than that of enthusiasm for the cause.

Finally, as regards Damodar, it is recorded in Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol. III, p. 265) that on the 23rd April 1885 he set out on the final stages of his journey into Tibet to go to the

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Masters. This is what Col. Olcott says, after quoting the last entry in Damodar's *Diary*, saying that he was proceeding from Kabi alone:

"Here the Diary ends, and this is the last written trace of this devoted, high-minded, enthusiastic young Brahmin, whose record since joining H. P. B. and myself at Bombay is one of unbroken energy and unfaltering zeal in the cause of humanity. A nobler heart never beat in a human breast, and his departure was one of the hardest blows we ever received. As above remarked, he had almost broken down his constitution by incessant official work, and when leaving Adyar had begun to spit blood and show signs of a rapid decline. Yet, with undaunted courage, he undertook the hard journey across the Himalâyas, indifferent to the biting cold, the drifted snow, the lack of shelter and food, intent upon reaching the Guru whom he had first seen in his youth when lying on a sick bed, of whom he had lost sight for many years, but whom he recovered soon after joining the Theosophical Society, as his spiritual faculties developed, and he was able to seek him in the *sukshma sarira*. . . . The last that was seen of him by the coolies was when, with face turned towards the Tibetan frontier, he trudged painfully on and disappeared behind a turning of the road."

Well, was that the act of one who had played the part of a confederate to Mme. Blavatsky in the production of 'bogus Mahatmas'? Whether Mr. Hodgson knew of this incident before he published his Report or not I am unable to say. He would apparently be on his return voyage when it took place. But in any case such an incident as this goes a very long way towards the absolute falsification, not merely of what Mr. Hodgson has said about Damodar in his Report, but even of the whole Report itself.

With regard to Mr. Hodgson's acceptance of the evidence of the Coulombs, we find a strange absence in the Report of the meticulous analysis of their evidence, which Mr. Hodgson exhibits in the case of witnesses for the defence. From the fact that they were paid by the missionaries for their 'disclosures', as also that they were by self-acknowledgment fraudulent people, there should have been the greatest possible caution; but one would gather from the Report that there was not a single case in which the Coulombs were discovered in any way to have been unreliable witnesses, or to have contradicted themselves; and where their evidence is contradicted by theosophical witnesses it is invariably accepted in preference to that of the latter. Mr. Hodgson says on p. 20 that he has never trusted to any unverified statements of the Coulombs, but that "neither by frequent cross-examination

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nor by independent investigation of their statements *wherever circumstances permitted*, have I been able to break down any allegations of theirs which were *in any way material*."

One must note the reservations which I have italicised in this sentence. Mr. Hodgson does not give us any indication as to the number of times he has accepted their evidence where "circumstances" did *not* permit; and he is apparently the sole judge as to those in which their allegations "were in any way material". There is in the Report a strange absence of any mention of this "independent investigation of their statements". I can only find two mentioned. The first of these is in connexion with the so-called 'saucer phenomenon' (p. 218), in which a broken saucer is said to have been phenomenally repaired in the Shrine. Hodgson's explanation of this is, that a similar whole saucer was introduced into the Shrine through the back by M. Coulomb. This was the Coulombs' statement, and Mr. Hodgson endeavours to confirm it in the following manner. He says:

"The whole 'saucer' found in the Shrine was shown to me at Adyar at my request. I examined it carefully, and I also examined carefully the broken pieces of the saucer which Mme. Coulomb exhibited as those for which the whole saucer had been substituted. The two 'saucers' manifestly formed a pair."

He then goes on to say that he had ascertained that "two porcelain pin trays" had been purchased at a shop by Mme. Coulomb on the 3rd July, at least five weeks prior to the date of the phenomenon. He says that 'pin trays' better describes the articles than 'saucers'. Very well. The first question we should ask in a cross-examination is: How does Hodgson know that the saucer or pin tray shown to him at Adyar, and the pieces shown to him by Mme. Coulomb were the actual ones used in the phenomenon? We may legitimately make use here of Mr. Hodgson's method of arguing which runs through the whole Report. We shall therefore say: *Assuming* that the Coulombs were at the time collecting material for a subsequent charge of fraud against Mme. Blavatsky—and there is every reason to think that they were—what could have been easier for them than to have substituted, *after the event*, another saucer, to wit, one of the 'pin trays', for the whole one? Who was there to identify the saucer? The answer is, General Morgan and Damodar, the only other people present besides the Coulombs when the 'phenomenon' took place. There is no word to show that Hodgson took any trouble to obtain this absolutely necessary confirmation.

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We may remark further, with regard to this incident, that it was absolutely necessary in support of the Coulomb's assertion and Mr. Hodgson's theory that there should have been an opening at that time into the back of the Shrine from Mme. Blavatsky's room. This opening Hodgson has *assumed*, but cannot be said to have proved; whilst, on the other hand, there is a mass of evidence from various witnesses that such an opening did *not* exist. All this evidence Mr. Hodgson tries to explain away by one assumption or another of unreliability on the part of the witnesses.

But what finally disposes of the theory of fraud in this case is the letter which Mme. Coulomb herself wrote to Mme. Blavatsky describing the incident. Mme. Blavatsky was at the time at Ootacamund, and the only thing to connect her with the incident is in the forged letters, Nos. 2, 3, and 4 of the Report (p. 212). These letters, it may be observed, are not dated. On the 13th August Mme. Coulomb wrote to Mme. Blavatsky describing the incident, regretting the breakage of the saucer, and saying, among other things: "I verily believe I shall go silly if I stay with you. . . . I say you have dealings with *old Nick*." This is a view which Mme. Coulomb had expressed previously, as she was supposed to be a Christian! But would she have written thus had she been a confederate? Mr. Hodgson says: "It is easy to read between the lines of Mme. Coulomb's letter, even without her statement that Mme. Blavatsky told her to be prudent in what she wrote." Yes, it appears to be very easy for Mr. Hodgson to read much which exists only in his own imagination; but he does not explain why Mme. Blavatsky, who thus cautioned Mme. Coulomb as to being prudent in what she wrote, should herself have been so very *imprudent* as the forged letters would make her out to be.

The second incident in which Mr. Hodgson endeavours to establish outside confirmation is similar to the first, and refers to a pair of vases which Col. Olcott said he had received phenomenally. I shall not occupy space with the details, because Hodgson did not see the vases, which, he says, "had disappeared mysteriously"; insinuating that Mme. Blavatsky herself had made away with them.

Now Hodgson found that Mme. Coulomb had purchased *two* pairs of vases at a certain shop on the 25th May, and Olcott's entry in his diary shows that the 'phenomenon' happened on the 26th. But what is there to show that the vases which he received were the ones purchased by Mme. Coulomb? Nothing

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whatever but the word of the Coulombs; nor is there anything to show that these vases were purchased under instructions from Mme. Blavatsky.

Another case of the loose way in which Mr. Hodgson pieces together his 'evidence' is to be found on p. 260. He is trying to explain how one of the phenomena described by Mr. Sinnett in *The Occult World, might have been* fraudulently produced.

He begins by asking: "What arrangements would be necessary for the phenomenon if it was a trick? Mme. Blavatsky, *we may suppose*"—does so-and-so. Then in a foot-note he naïvely remarks: "M. Coulomb declares the arrangements were as here described." Indeed! And what 'independent investigation' has he to bring forward to support M. Coulomb's statement? None whatever. Not merely so, but it would appear that M. Coulomb made this statement *after being prompted by Hodgson*; for it is Hodgson who suggests the 'arrangements' in the first instance. But further than this: the 'arrangements' necessitated the *assumption* of a confederate at Mr. Sinnett's home eight hundred miles away; this confederate having previously been instructed to place a piece of broken plaster plaque in a drawer in Mr. Sinnett's room, and also a Mahatma letter in a *closed* telegram envelope. This latter he is *supposed* by Hodgson to have done, "*possibly* by careful manipulation of the eyelets which are used to fasten telegram envelopes in India; *possibly* by substituting eyelets slightly larger." But as regards this latter part of the 'arrangements' there is an utter absence of confirmatory evidence of the further suggestion that the 'confederate' who was to do these *supposed* manipulations was Mr. Bhavani Rao, who was at Mr. Sinnett's house at the time with Col. Olcott. Mr. Hodgson apparently does not dare to suggest that the confederate might have been Col. Olcott himself. Mr. Hodgson "can find no improbability in the supposition" that Bhavani Rao was the confederate. Very well: Hodgson is no doubt entitled to form what opinions he likes; but where is the *proof* in all this mass of suppositions? Is there any genuine psychical phenomenon whatever which cannot be, and which has not as a matter of fact been, explained away by one sceptic or another on a similar basis of *what might have been* the case? There is a vast difference between a *might have been* and a *was*. In the one case we are entitled to reserve our judgment; but we are certainly *not* entitled to level accusations of fraud as if we had definitely proved the case. If we are to say *was* we must have very definite

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proof, and of that proof—apart from the word of the Coulombs —there is a total absence in the S.P.R. Report.

One reads with ever-increasing disgust these conjectural phrases with which almost every page is freely besprinkled: 'it may have been'—'there is nothing which might not have been'—'it might well have been'—'it would appear'—'it is possible'—'what seems to have happened'—'probably'—'I think'—'we may suppose'—'she might have'—'cannot be regarded as at all unlikely'—'there might have been'—'she may have'—etc., etc. On one page (268) I find: 'inclined to explain'—'probably' (twice)—'may have' (seven times)—'seems to have'—'may not have'—'might have'. Is it any wonder that in the end Hodgson succeeded in persuading himself that all these suppositions were what really happened, so that he finally sticks at nothing, and rejects as 'unreliable', or else as 'deliberate lies', every scrap of evidence offered for the genuine explanation? Is it any wonder that, going altogether outside the limits of his own investigations, he finally takes his courage in both hands and declares his "unqualified opinion" that "*no genuine psychical phenomena whatever* will be found among the pseudo-mysteries of the Russian lady *alias* Koot Hoomi Lal Sing *alias* Mahatma Morya *alias* Mme. Blavatsky"?

Well! that 'puts the lid on' the matter with a vengeance! Every one who has testified to these phenomena is thus coolly written down as either a fool or a dupe—or perhaps worse—and this must include all the members of Mme. Blavatsky's own family who have testified to her extraordinary psychic powers from her childhood onwards.

To show to what lengths Mr. Hodgson can go—we might perhaps say, rather, to what depths he can descend—in his endeavour to discredit witnesses, we may instance the following:

It is tolerably well known that Mme. Fadéef, Mme. Blavatsky's aunt, has placed it on record that about the year 1870, when Mme. Blavatsky had not been heard of by her family for several years, and they were ready to believe that she was dead, she (Mme. F.) received in Odessa a letter in French, in the handwriting afterwards familiar as that of 'K.H.', telling her that her niece was alive, and would be restored to her family "before 18 new moons shall have risen". This letter is in fact the first 'K.H.' document on record, and is many years previous to any other similar communication. Mme. Fadéef goes on to say that this letter "was brought to me in the most incomprehensible

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and mysterious manner, by a messenger of Asiatic appearance, *who then disappeared before my very eyes*". (See p. 50 *supra*).

Commenting upon this on p. 292 of his Report Mr. Hodgson says:

"I think it not improbable that this document was written by Mme. Blavatsky in 1879 or 1880, when the idea of corresponding with one of the "Brothers" appears to have been first mooted. In weighing the statement of Mme. Fadéef that she received the document about the year 1870, we should remember that she is a Russian lady, and the aunt of Mme. Blavatsky, and that Mme. Blavatsky may have been influenced by political motives in the founding of the Theosophical Society."

In other words, because Mme. Fadéef is a Russian lady, and the aunt of Mme. Blavatsky—she is probably a liar!

Mr. Hodgson, it appears, afterwards became a convinced spiritualist; and I have no doubt that if this had been the case when he was 'investigating' Mme. Blavatsky's phenomena, he would have given a very different account of them, and would in all probability have put her down as a very powerful medium.

Mr. Hodgson's method of dealing with the overwhelming evidence for the existence of the Masters or Mahatmas given by those who had met with them in the flesh, is characteristic of all his other 'plausible' hypotheses. This is what he says on p. 245:

"I need not say much on the other alleged appearances of Mahatmas in either their ordinary physical or their 'astral' bodies. A confederate in disguise is generally an easy and sufficient explanation of them."

Really! We may of course agree that the explanation is 'easy' enough; but as for its being 'sufficient', we may ask here again: Would it be sufficient in a court of law without any *proof*? No doubt it is sufficient enough for any sceptic, but is it *true*? What proof has Mr. Hodgson to offer for his theory *in every case*? Not a scrap apart from the word of the Coulombs that on two or three occasions they had personated the Mahatmas at the head-quarters of the Society. Their mere word in this respect is absolutely valueless, and in any case it does not deal with the physical and 'astral' appearances of the Mahatmas at quite other places. I shall refer to one of these physical appearances later on (p. 303).

Is it believable that in such a mass of evidence as the Coulombs have given relative to phenomena which took place from one to four years previously there should have been no contradictions,

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no small slips even? Mr. Hodgson only records one instance of the latter (p. 219) where Mme. Coulomb says in reference to the 'saucer' incident that she gave two rupees eight annas each, instead of this amount for the pair. Instance after instance is given by Mr. Hodgson of the unreliability of witnesses for the defence on account of small slips like this. Mr. Sinnett complains bitterly in his published reply to the Report that Mr. Hodgson has discredited his evidence on account of a difference between ten and thirty seconds in reference to two different accounts of a certain phenomenon. Mr. Sinnett's remarks are worth giving here. He says of this discrepancy of a few seconds that:

"It is nevertheless the foundation of the major part of Mr. Hodgson's subsequent theorizing about my book (*The Occult World*). I am an inaccurate man; I must be given up; I have been shown to have told one story at one time and another at another about the same thing, and there is an end of me. And whatever I may say after this, even if the thing itself does not betray error, it is impossible to have confidence in so careless an estimator of seconds. And the picture Mr. Hodgson gives of himself opening a letter—doubtless with ready appliances of boiling water and all that may be wanted—his monstrous assumption that Mme. Blavatsky has "probably superior skill and practice" at such work—with water, it is to be presumed, always boiling in her pocket—is merely the beginning of the stupendous pyramid of extravagant conjecture which he builds, bottom upwards, upon the famous discrepancy of the seconds; and which men with reputations for intelligence to squander, are, marvellous to say, not ashamed to publish in the Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society." [1]

That is, as Mr. Sinnett says, a very good example of the way in which he has treated every witness *except the Coulombs*. The conclusion is inevitable: that Mr. Hodgson must have deliberately suppressed everything tending to discredit in the least degree the evidence of the Coulombs.

So much for the 'evidence', the reliability, the *truth* of the young man whose Report the S.P.R. accepted, apparently without even a critical examination on their part, and certainly without giving the defendant the slightest opportunity of examining it, or of replying, before they branded her as a fraud and a charlatan.

Can they be said to have done this in their zeal for TRUTH? Well, if so, then we may perhaps be allowed to say, *O sancta simplicitas!*

[1] *The "Occult World" Phenomena and the Society for Psychical Research*, by A. P. Sinnett, 1886, p. 17.

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THE REPORT: THE COULOMBS

The whole issue of Mr. Hodgson's Report turns practically on the truth or otherwise of the statements made by M. and Mme. Coulomb. These statements were, that they had assisted Mme. Blavatsky in causing bogus letters purporting to have come from the Mahatmas to appear apparently miraculously at various times and places, and more particularly in connexion with the 'Shrine' in the Occult Room at Adyar. They are also said to have impersonated the Mahatmas on some occasions when these were supposed to have made an 'astral' appearance.

Now with regard to the above I may remark at once that there is not in Mr. Hodgson's Report a single scrap of *direct* evidence in any single case in support of their statements. The evidence—if such it can be called—which Mr. Hodgson brings forward is entirely circumstantial and inferential.

We lay our finger here on what is perhaps the decisive factor which would cause us to discredit totally the evidence and statements of the Coulombs. It is this: According to Mr. Hodgson, almost every one at Theosophical head-quarters appears to have been implicated in some way or another in a conspiracy to defraud. It would appear to have been a sort of mutual deception society. Mme. Blavatsky is accused of having had innumerable confederates besides the Coulombs; indeed, she would seem, according to Mr. Hodgson, to have had these confederates not merely at head-quarters but all over India. Now, how is it that out of this army of confederates not a single one comes forward to support the statements of the Coulombs? Not merely so, but Mme. Coulomb in her published statement ("Some Account of my Intercourse with Mme. Blavatsky") does not even mention any one as being implicated in these deceptions. Is it credible that if Mr. Hodgson's wholesale suppositions as to confederates were true, Mme. Coulomb would not know of at least some of them, and have called them to her side in support of her statements? Is it credible that the missionaries would not also have bribed one or two of these, as they bribed the Coulombs, to sell their 'evidence'? According to Mr. Hodgson, Mr. Damodar was the principal confederate at head-quarters. How is it that Mme. Coulomb does not implicate him? Not merely so, but as I have already stated (p. 272), in

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one of the forged letters she is requested to convey to Damodar a Mahatma letter "*in a miraculous way*". Why so if Damodar was a confederate? Of the impossibility of his being a confederate I have already said sufficient on p. 273. The plain fact is, that the statements of the Coulombs rest entirely on their own word—except as regards the forged letters, with which I deal later on. Just imagine: out of the whole army of confederates not one to support them! Would the evidence of "persons like the Coulombs" have been accepted in a court of law without this support?

Well, then, the only evidence which they produce to support their statements consists of a number of letters said by them to have been written to Mme. Coulomb by Mme. Blavatsky, and which, if genuine, would undoubtedly appear to be decisive as to the matter of certain instructions given to the Coulombs to produce bogus phenomena. And even then we cannot account for Mr. Hodgson's supposed innumerable confederates. The genuineness or otherwise of these letters turns entirely on the question of the handwriting experts' evidence; but with that I shall deal later on. What I must now consider are the facts about the Coulombs themselves, and Mr. Hodgson's method of dealing with their evidence apart from the question of the letters.

The Report states (p. 203) that:

"M. and Mme. Coulomb had occupied positions of trust at the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society for some years, but had been expelled from it, in May 1884, by the General Council of that Society during the absence of Mme. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott in Europe."

The reasons for this expulsion are mentioned by Mr. Hodgson on pp. 278 ff, but are not given in full. I therefore give them here, premising that the Coulombs were cited to appear before the General Council on the 13th May 1884. The following were the charges laid against them as set forth in the official report of the meeting.[1]

I. It was shown by four affidavits, that Mme. Coulomb repeatedly said to members of the Theosophical Society as well as to outsiders, that the Theosophical Society had for its object the overthrow of the British rule in India.

II. Nine affidavits gave evidence that she said that the objects of the Society were inimical to what she believed to be true religion.

[1] See *Report of Observations*, etc., by F. Hartmann.

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III. Ten affidavits proved that Mme. Coulomb frequently said that the 'occult phenomena' occurring at head-quarters were frauds, while at other occasions she said they were the works of the devil.

IV. Four affidavits went to show Mme. Coulomb guilty of attempting to extort money from members of the Society.

V. Three affidavits proved that she had wasted the funds of the Society.

VI. All the affidavits showed her guilty of lying and backbiting.

VII. One affidavit proved her guilty of having grossly slandered H. P. B.

VIII. Two affidavits stated how she had dissuaded people from joining the Society.

IX. All the affidavits agreed unanimously, that her presence at the head-quarters was causing an immense waste of time, energy, money, and that her continuance there was against the interests of the T.S.

X. Letters proved that a blackmailing letter was sent to H. P. B. by Mme. Coulomb.

The charges against M. Coulomb were:

I. Aiding and abetting his wife in the above described machinations.

II. Disobedience to the orders of the Board of Control.

As the result of this Council Meeting—Mme. Coulomb having neither acknowledged nor denied any of the charges—the Coulombs were discharged.

This crisis appears to have been hastened by a 'Mahatma' letter addressed to Dr. Hartmann, and given to him by Damodar. Mr. Hodgson's theory about this letter is that it was 'no doubt' (p. 279) written by Mme. Blavatsky—who was then apparently in Paris—that it was posted to Damodar, and would reach him '*about*' April 26th, on which date he gave it to Dr. Hartmann. There is, however, not a scrap of proof of this, not even the calculation as to how it would reach Damodar *about* the 26th. Now this letter says:

"For some time already the woman [Mme. Coulomb] has opened communication—a regular diplomatic *pourparlers*—with the enemies of the cause, certain padris. She hopes for more than 2,000 rupees from them if she helps them ruining or at least injuring the Society by injuring the reputation of the Founders. Moreover, *when needed*, trap-doors *will be found*, as they have been forthcoming for some time. They are sole masters of the top story. They alone have full entrance to and control of the premises."

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The letter contains some further remarks which I need not quote here. Mr. Hodgson's theory about this letter is (p. 302) that Mme. Blavatsky wrote it and posted it from Paris to Damodar " in order to serve as a guard against the disclosure of the trick apparatus ". He says also : " The substance of the document is certainly much more suggestive of the cunning combined with the inevitable ignorance of Mme. Blavatsky in Paris, than of any divine wisdom or knowledge of the supposed ' Mahatma M ' in India."

What might suggest itself here, however, to an impartial reader is rather, I think, that in endeavouring to prove so much cunning and foresight on the part of Mme. Blavatsky, Mr. Hodgson cuts the ground from under his own feet. He proves far too much ; for such an accomplished impostor would certainly never have given herself away as she is represented to have done in the forged letters.

Now with the exception of the letter above quoted, in which it is stated that the Coulombs expected to receive 2,000 rupees from the padris for their ' exposure ', Mr. Hodgson does not mention or deal with this most important item in considering the motives of the Coulombs, and its bearing upon their testimony as reliable witnesses. That the Coulombs were paid by the Madras Christian College authorities is acknowledged ; though the exact amount that they received is uncertain. As to the morality of this transaction, we may leave our readers to decide for themselves.

Apart from the College authorities having obtained " the best evidence possible at Madras as to the genuineness of the hand-writing " of the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters (p. 208), they do not appear to have taken any steps towards ascertaining the reliability or truth of the statements made by the Coulombs. Mme. Coulomb appears, from her own statements, to have regarded, during the whole time that she was at head-quarters, the phenomena of Mme. Blavatsky as " the work of the devil ". Mr. Hodgson makes no attempt to dispute this ; but it is absolutely incompatible with the theory that Mme. Coulomb had herself produced so many of them by tricks.

Dr. Hartmann in his aforementioned pamphlet, *Report on Observations*, etc., thus describes Mme. Coulomb (p. 21) :

" A weird witch-like creature, with wrinkled features, a stinging look and an uncouth form. She seemed to consider it her especial purpose of life to pry into everybody's private affairs, pick up stray letters here and there, that were not addressed to her, probably for

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the purpose of studying the handwriting; she attempted to wriggle herself into the confidence of new-comers, and had a way of finding out their secrets by pretending to tell their fortunes by means of a pack of cards; while at the same time she would try to awaken the sympathies of strangers by her tales, how from a life of luxury she had sunk down to a position of servitude, and if she found a willing ear she would never hesitate a moment to insinuate that the whole Society was a humbug, the phenomena produced by fraud, and that 'she could tell many things, if she only wanted to do so'. If asked to explain herself she would say: 'My mouth is shut up, I cannot talk against the people whose bread I eat', and when she was told that the occult phenomena occurred even when Mme. Blavatsky was thousands of miles away, she would say that 'she knew what she knew'. . . . She had arrived at head-quarters penniless, and had been taken into the house by Mme. Blavatsky out of charity."

One of the 'stray letters' mentioned above which Mme. Coulomb would pick up and keep for future use was a fragment in Mme. Blavatsky's handwriting which appeared to give credence to the accusation that she was a Russian spy. This was duly passed on to Mr. Hodgson, and he publishes it on p. 317, and also gives it in facsimile. Alas for Mr. Hodgson's theory: this fragment was either a discarded portion of a translation which Mme. Blavatsky made at Mr. Sinnett's request for the *Pioneer* (of which he was at that time the editor) from Col. Grodekoff's *Travels in Central Asia*; or else it was possibly a part of a translation made for the Indian Government itself, for whom Mme. Blavatsky at one time did some work. Mme. Blavatsky herself said it was for the *Pioneer*.[1]

Dr. Hartmann's *Report of Observations*, it should be noted, was published in October 1884, before Mr. Hodgson visited India, and has therefore no reference to that visit or to the S.P.R. Report itself.

In December 1883, during the annual Convention of the T.S. at Adyar, Mme. Coulomb endeavoured to obtain a 'loan' of 2,000 rupees from Prince Harisinghji, who attended that Convention. In this she was unsuccessful. When Mme. Blavatsky left Adyar in February 1884 for Bombay *en route* for Europe, she visited Prince Harisinghji on the way. Mme. Coulomb had asked and had been granted permission to accompany her to Bombay, and she then made another effort to obtain this 'loan' from the Prince. The Prince complained at last to Mme. Blavatsky, who immediately put a stop to Mme. Coulomb's

[1] See Sinnett's *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 311.

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efforts. Dr. Hartmann, who was present, says: "Her [Mme. C'.s] fury knew no bounds, and her passionate outbursts of anger and jealousy were in no way soothed down by Mme. Blavatsky reproaching her for her unjust attempt at extortion." Whether this was an attempt to blackmail is not stated, but Mme. Coulomb evidently thought that she had some hold on the Prince to enable her to ask for such a 'loan'. Be that as it may, this appears to have been the turning-point in her rupture with the Society, for Dr. Hartmann says that when leaving the boat at Bombay after saying good-bye to Mme. Blavatsky, she turned to Babula, Mme. Blavatsky's servant, and said: "I shall be revenged on your mistress for preventing me from getting my 2,000 rupees."

Here again we may remark that if Mme. Coulomb had had such a powerful weapon of revenge as the forged letters disclose she might, and would, have held these over Mme. Blavatsky as a threat to prevent any rupture or interference with her plans.

General Morgan writes of Mme. Coulomb:

> "When we consider the characteristics of this woman, her eavesdropping, purloining of letters, her hatred of the members composing the Society, her swearing she would be revenged, her incessant espionage of Mme. Blavatsky, and those she might be talking with, the motive and manner of her concocting these letters is not difficult to understand."[1]

This, and a good deal more which could be said about the Coulombs, does not appear to enter at all into Mr. Hodgson's estimate as to their reliability as witnesses, or the truth of their statements.

[1] Reply to a Report of an Examination by J. D. B. Gribble.

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THE REPORT: THE 'SHRINE' PHENOMENA

The so-called Shrine was a wooden cupboard between three feet and four feet in width and height, and one foot or fifteen inches in depth, with a drawer below the cupboard portion, and with corner brackets. It was supposed to be in special occult communication by means of certain etheric or other currents with the Masters. It was hung, not fixed, against a double partition wall between the Occult Room and Mme. Blavatsky's private rooms, and there appears to have been a space about twelve inches in depth between the two portions of this double partition wall. There appears also to have been a space of some inches between the Shrine itself and the wall against which it was hung. The Shrine contained portraits of two of the Masters, and some other 'sacred' articles, and was an object of great veneration by the native *chelas*, though it does not appear to have been so to other natives who visited the place, nor to the Europeans at head-quarters.

Mr. Hodgson, in order to sustain his theories of fraud in connexion with this Shrine, had to prove first of all that the Shrine had a movable back; and in the second place that there was a hole in the party-wall at the back of the Shrine so that letters, etc., could be placed in it from Mme. Blavatsky's room.

I may note here, first of all, that Mr. Hodgson never saw the Shrine, for it had been removed and destroyed after the Coulombs were expelled, and before Mr. Hodgson reached India. The date appears to have been September 20th (see p. 220).

With regard to the back of the Shrine, and the possible existence of a movable portion, the evidence is very conflicting, though many witnesses assert that they had thoroughly examined the Shrine and had found the back to be solid. Mr. Hodgson endeavours to discredit these witnesses by showing that according to their own statements they had not made a sufficiently close examination. Well, let us see.

Mr. Hodgson says on p. 221:

"M. Coulomb states that he removed the Shrine just after it was originally placed against the wall, sawed the middle panel (at the back) in two, and attached a piece of leather behind to serve as a handle, so that the top portion could be easily pulled up. The junction

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between the two halves of the panel was, he says, hidden from those looking at the inside of the Shrine by a mirror which just covered it."

Now there is not a single mention of this mirror—which must have been three feet or four feet long—in any description of the Shrine by any of the numerous witnesses who examined it inside and outside. No one appears to have noticed it, and there is only M. Coulomb's word for it. Indeed, Mr. Hodgson himself says on p. 222, "M. Coulomb's statement as to the half panel cannot of course be verified, and must be taken for what it is worth." Precisely; but if it is worth nothing—as indeed is the case in face of the evidence of those above mentioned—the whole of Mr. Hodgson's case breaks down; for if there was no such access to the Shrine from the back, then that explanation of the Shrine phenomena, upon which Mr. Hodgson relies entirely, is absolutely discredited. And yet Mr. Hodgson builds up the whole of his case on this one assertion which he himself says "cannot be verified". After this he occupies page after page of his Report in an endeavour to show that there was a hole in the wall behind the Shrine: that is to say, in the wall in the Occult Room, forming one wall of the double partition between that room and Mme. Blavatsky's room.

It would occupy too much space here to go into an analysis of Mr. Hodgson's futile attempt to sustain his contention that there was such a hole. The whole weight of the evidence goes to show that there was no such hole at any time that it could have accounted for any of the Shrine phenomena. Further, it is absolutely certain from Mr. Hodgson's own showing, and from the evidence of the Board of Control, that no such hole existed when the Coulombs left; whereas it was absolutely essential in order to prove their case that such a hole should have existed. Mr. Hodgson very lamely endeavours to insinuate that the hole did once exist, but that M. Coulomb had himself filled it up. This is simply absurd, for his whole case rested on the existence of a through communication from Mme. Blavatsky's room to the interior of the Shrine. The contention of the Board of Control was, that M. Coulomb had not had time to complete this remaining piece of 'evidence' before his work was disturbed by them and he was dismissed. This is by far the most likely explanation.

Since this hole did not exist, all the evidence for a hole on the side of the partition in Mme. Blavatsky's room is superfluous, though Mr. Hodgson devoted many pages of his Report to it. There is no doubt that there was such a hole in Mme. Blavatsky's

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room when the Coulombs left (see p. 19 *supra*), and this undoubtedly strengthens the contention of the Board of Control just mentioned, and confirms what is said in the occult letter I have referred to on p. 282 that "when needed trap-doors will be found".

But as regards this we may note further that Mr. Hodgson admits that at the end of October or the beginning of November 1883 Mme. Blavatsky, in consequence of a doubt expressed by Mr. G—— concerning the panelled boarding which at that time existed on Mme. Blavatsky's side of the wall, had this panelling removed and a brick wall substituted. He contends, however, that after this had been done a sideboard was placed against the bricked part, that some of the bricks were removed, and that the sideboard had a movable back which would permit of access to the space between the two partitions constituting the wall. There is no doubt that this sideboard was placed there, and also that it had a movable back when examined by the Board of Control, as well—as already said—that there was a hole in the wall on this side of the partition, for these were disclosed "when the Coulombs gave up the keys of the rooms" on their dismissal in May 1884. But there is not a scrap of evidence to show that these contrivances were available for phenomena during the time that Mme. Blavatsky was in occupation of the rooms, or that they existed at that time. Besides, of what use would they have been without the corresponding hole in the other half of the partition wall behind the Shrine; and that, according to Mr. Hodgson's own account, certainly did not exist when these other contrivances were discovered.

There were some other contrivances in the way of sliding panels in the Occult Room which were supposed by Mr. Hodgson to have been used for bogus phenomena; but, according to his own admissions, at least one of these "could, when I saw it, be opened and shut only with considerable difficulty" (p. 339). Also Mr. J. D. B. Gribble, a gentleman who visited the headquarters in October 1884, practically on behalf of the Missionaries says:

"I was also shown two of the sliding doors and panels said to have been made by M. Coulomb after Mme. Blavatsky's departure. One of these is on the outside of the so-called occult room, and the other is on the outside of the sitting-room upstairs. Both of these have been made without the slightest attempt at concealment. The former is at the top of a back staircase and consists of two doors which open into a kind of bookshelf. This gives the idea of having been constructed so as to place food on the shelves inside without opening the

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door. The other contrivance is a sliding panel which lifts up and opens and shuts with some difficulty. *It is evidently of recent construction.* Certainly in its present state it would be difficult to carry out any phenomena by its means. In this case also there is no attempt at concealment. Neither of these two appliances communicate with the Shrine, which is situated on the cross-wall dividing the occult room from an adjoining bedroom. I was not allowed to see the Shrine" (see *A Report of an Examination*, etc., p. 29).

Mr. Gribble is slightly at fault in this last sentence in saying that he was not 'allowed' to see the Shrine, for, as we have seen, it was destroyed in September. That shows again how easily witnesses may make mistakes in their statements—mistakes which cannot really be taken as making them unreliable in respect of all their other evidence.

Now Mr. Hodgson endeavours to dispose of all this difficulty in the working of the panels by saying that: "Disuse for a few months, or a little grit, would, I think, account for this fact" (p. 223). Indeed. Are we really to accept such feeble statements as 'evidence' disposing of the case?

The real fact is, that whatever may have been the history of these sliding doors, sliding panels which 'lift up', holes in the wall, etc., etc., there is not a particle of evidence beyond the word of the Coulombs to show that any of the phenomena mentioned in connexion with the Shrine were ever produced by these means.

Setting aside the question of the forged letters, with which I shall deal immediately, and looking broadly at the question of the phenomena and Mr. Hodgson's method of dealing with the evidence for their genuineness, there is a very strong presumption that what Mr. Hodgson states as his final conclusion—*i.e.* that "no genuine psychical phenomena whatever will be found among the pseudo-mysteries of the Russian lady" (p. 317)—was in reality his starting-point. It was the *a priori* judgment that the phenomena were impossible, *therefore* no evidence for them could be valid, and every one who witnessed them was either consciously or unconsciously inaccurate or untruthful in his or her evidence. This is in fact what his whole energies are directed to showing, and he discredits the witnesses one by one on the most trivial grounds, and suggests alternatives to explain the phenomena which will not bear a moment's examination in face of the direct evidence, since some of the most important factors which cannot be explained away are deliberately omitted from the account, or ignored.

Mr. Hodgson not merely thus discredits the witnesses for the

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genuineness of the phenomena, but he appears to go to the other extreme in the case of the Coulombs, and to have accepted their evidence without any such incredulity as he exhibits in the case of the witnesses for the defence. At all events there is not in the Report the slightest indication that he applied to their evidence the same methods of meticulous analysis that he has applied to the others. It is absolutely inconceivable that the Coulombs should have been unimpeachable in their evidence, or that a cross-examination would not have convicted them of as many inaccuracies—not to say 'deliberate misrepresentations' —as Mr. Hodgson puts forward in connexion with the actual witnesses of the phenomena—*and of which he himself is guilty.*

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THE REPORT: THE HANDWRITING EVIDENCE

The letters said to have been written by Mme. Blavatsky to Mme. Coulomb, which were sold by her to the Missionary authorities, and some of which were published in the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, September and October 1884, and which would, if genuine, undoubtedly implicate Mme. Blavatsky in trickery in collusion with the Coulombs, were declared by Mme. Blavatsky to be forgeries.

The following is Mme. Blavatsky's letter to *The Times*, October 9th 1884 with regard to these letters.

"Sir,—With reference to the alleged exposure at Madras of a dishonourable conspiracy between myself and two persons of the name of Coulomb to deceive the public with occult phenomena, I have to say that the letters purporting to have been written by me are certainly not mine. Sentences here and there I recognize, taken from old notes of mine on different matters, but they are mingled with interpolations that entirely pervert their meaning. With these exceptions the whole of the letters are fabrications.

"The fabricators must have been grossly ignorant of Indian affairs, since they make me speak of a 'Maharajah of Lahore', when every Indian schoolboy knows that no such person exists."

The only evidence which the S.P.R. Report puts forward as to the genuineness of the letters is that of various handwriting 'experts', of whom the principal one was Mr. F. G. Netherclift —I beg Mr. Hodgson's pardon: he himself appears to have been the principal 'expert', for Mr. Netherclift gave it as his first opinion that certain letters submitted to him were *not* in Mme. Blavatsky's handwriting; but when Mr. Hodgson had returned to England, and had duly coached Mr. Netherclift, that gentleman obligingly altered his opinion (p. 282). We are naïvely told (p. 283) that Mr. Sims of the British Museum also changed his opinion under the same circumstances.

This fact of change of opinion is somewhat dishonourably set forth in the Report. On p. 204 the Committee—not Mr. Hodgson —say that Mr. Netherclift and Mr. Sims "came independently to the conclusion that the letters were written by Mme. Blavatsky". It is not till we reach pp. 282–3 in Mr. Hodgson's Report that we find the fact of the change of opinion of the 'experts'; so

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that any one reading only the first opinion of the Committee is misled not merely in respect of the suppression of this fact, but also in the employment of the word 'independently'; for whether these 'experts' formed their opinions independently of each other or not, they certainly did not do so independently of Mr. Hodgson.

But further than this: the Committee of the S.P.R. appear to have been in such a hurry to condemn Mme. Blavatsky that they actually accepted Mr. Hodgson's *conclusions*, and published them six months before Mr. Hodgson's Report was completed and published! The conclusions were announced by the Committee on the 24th June; the Report, as we have seen, was published in December. On p. 276 of the Report Mr. Hodgson says:

"I have now in my hands numerous documents which are connected with the experiences of Mr. Hume and others in connexion with Mme. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society. These documents, including the K. H. MSS. above referred to, did not reach me till August, and my examination of them has involved a considerable delay in the production of this Report." [1]

It is scarcely believable that a Society of 'honourable' men who had undertaken what was practically a judicial trial should have conducted it throughout in the manner in which this 'investigation' was conducted from beginning to end.

But there is perhaps even a greater stain on the reputation of the S.P.R. than this hasty promulgation of the verdict before even the evidence was completed, much less submitted to the defendant. This further stain is that neither Mme. Blavatsky herself nor any other witness for the defence was ever allowed to see the incriminating letters. How would such a proceeding have been treated in a court of law; and what credence can be given to evidence thus withheld from the defence?

Mr. Hodgson devotes more than twenty pages of his Report to a minute analysis and comparison of Mme. Blavatsky's handwriting with those of the reputed Mahatma letters, and he gives two sheets of fascimile reproductions to illustrate his conclusions that they are identical. *He does not give any analysis or comparison of the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters, nor does he give any fascimile reproductions.* The fact is hardly believable, for these are the letters on which the accusation of trickery is based; yet everything that could give the defence any chance of dealing with them

[1] See *The Occult World Phenomena and the S.P.R.*, by A. P. Sinnett.

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is rigorously suppressed! This fact by itself is quite sufficient from a judicial point of view to dismiss the whole case; but what can we say of the 'honourable' gentlemen of the S.P.R.?

In cases of forgery such as this the evidence respecting the paper on which the documents in question are written, and even the ink with which they are written, is of material importance. There is not in the Report a single scrap of evidence with respect to these, nor even a mention of it. We are, I think, entitled to assume that there were substantial reasons why these letters were withheld from the defence, and this question of the paper might very possibly have been one of them.

Another point with which Mr. Hodgson does not deal is the difference between the illiterate French which appears in the letters and the educated French which Mme. Blavatsky wrote.

Mr. Hodgson says on p. 208 that he had "circumstantial evidence offered by Theosophists in proof of their being forgeries". But that evidence he has suppressed; there is not a scrap of it in the Report. He merely says that he has 'considered' it. He gives pages of theosophical evidence in the Report in the matter of phenomena, to give the impression that he is being fair to both parties; but it does not take much perspicacity to perceive that he only does this when he thinks he can show a flaw in the evidence. But this suppression of everything in connexion with the forged letters is not merely dishonest but is legally fatal to their being accepted as genuine.

But what is Mr. Netherclift's evidence as an 'expert' worth? What is the evidence of any handwriting expert worth?

The *Evening Standard* for July 15th 1926 reported Mr. Justice Swift as having said in a case which he tried on that day:

> "There are no experts on handwriting, although I know some people who come here and claim to be handwriting experts."

The worthlessness of such 'expert' evidence has often been shown in legal cases, as well as the conflicts of opinion between the 'experts' themselves. As regards Mr. Netherclift's expertness, we find that Mr. Montague Williams, Q.C., says in his book: *Leaves of a Life* (Vol. II, p. 134), "I never was much of a believer in experts in handwriting. I have examined, and more frequently cross-examined, Chabot, Netherclift, and all the experts of the day, and have nearly always caught them tripping. In fact, in my opinion they are utterly unreliable."

As against Mr. Netherclift, however, we may place the opinion of Herr Ernst Schütze, Caligraphist to the Court of the Emperor

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of Germany. Some specimens of Mme. Blavatsky's handwriting, together with some letters from the Mahatmas, were submitted to him by Mr. G. Gebhard. Herr Schütze's opinion was in each and every case that there was "not the remotest similarity". [1]

Mr. J. D. B. Gribble was the 'expert' who examined the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters on behalf of the Missionaries, and gave it as his opinion that they were written by Mme. Blavatsky. But when he came to examine the 'K. H.' letters he gave it as his opinion that there was no resemblance. In his *Report of an Examination*, etc., p. 28, he says:

"On the 3rd of October I again went to Adyar, accompanied by a native gentleman. I explained that all that I was concerned in was the genuineness of the letters, and I asked if I could be shown some other Mahatma messages. Several were shown to me, some purporting to have been written by Koot Hoomi, some by another Mahatma, and others by a Chela. I certainly saw three different handwritings, and I am bound to say that in none of these did I notice any of the peculiar characteristics I have mentioned in the report. Koot Hoomi's handwriting is very peculiar, upright and somewhat round. It is not a running hand."

Any one can now examine this handwriting of K. H. in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, published in 1923, where a facsimile is given. The internal evidence in this inestimable volume is sufficient to show, without any disputable handwriting evidence, that they could not have been written by Mme. Blavatsky, though even in this matter there will doubtless be sceptics who wish to think, and therefore will think, the contrary.

It might be as well to conclude this criticism as to the value of the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters with the following letter from Mr. A. O. Hume, C.B., published in the Calcutta *Statesman* at the time of the 'exposure'. Mr. Hume was a high government official in India, and had been in the first instance deeply interested in the Theosophical teachings. He had witnessed several of the phenomena described in Mr. Sinnett's *Occult World*, and is repeatedly mentioned as an arch-sceptic in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*.

The following is his letter:

"Sir,—I have seen an article in the *Times of India*, referring to certain letters alleged to have been written by Mme. Blavatsky to Mme. Coulomb, and your brief notice of the same. I desire to warn your readers and the public generally against accepting these supposed

[1] See A. P. Sinnett's *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, Appendix.

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letters as altogether genuine. I can do this with the better grace that all connexion between myself, Mme. Blavatsky, Col. Olcott, Mr. Damodar, has long since ceased. I was unable to approve of many things in the conduct of the Society and its Journal, and hence, though still warmly sympathizing in its avowed objects, I have, for the last two years or more, been only a nominal member of the Theosophical Society. It is wholly without bias therefore that I advise all persons interested in the question to suspend their judgments as to the authenticity of these supposed letters. I will not now raise the question as to whether Mme. Blavatsky is capable of participating in foolish frauds, such as these letters would make her appear to have directed. All I desire to point out is this: *Mme. Blavatsky is no fool*; on the contrary, as all who know her, be they friends or foes, will admit, she is an exceptionally clever and far-sighted woman, with a remarkably keen perception of character. Would such a woman ever give a person like Mme. Coulomb the entire power over her future that the writing of such letters involves? Or, again, say she *had*, in some mad mood, written such letters, would she have come to an open rupture with the holder of them? Parts of the letters may be genuine enough; one passage cited has a meaning quite different from that in which the *Times of India* accepts it, and, believe me, Mme. Blavatsky is far too shrewd a woman to have ever *written* to any one anything that could convict her of fraud."

ALLAN HUME

Mr. Hodgson says on p. 274 of his Report that: "Latterly, and partly in consequence of the evidence I was able to lay before him (Mr. Hume), he came to the conviction that the letters in question were actually written by Mme. Blavatsky."

On p. 275, however, he says: "Mr. Hume's position at present is that, despite all the frauds perpetrated, there have been genuine phenomena, and that, though of a low order, Mme. Blavatsky really had and has Occultists of considerable though limited powers behind her; that K. H. is a real entity, but by no means the powerful and godlike being he has been painted, and that he has had some share, directly or indirectly—though what Mr. Hume does not pretend to say—in the production of the K. H. Letters."

Fortunately we have now in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* a means of forming a more correct estimate of the personality, powers, and claims of 'K. H.' than was the case at that time.

According to the editor of *The Christian College Magazine* (October 1884) Mme. Coulomb did not communicate with him until the 9th August; so that it would appear that it took her from the 18th May, when she was dismissed, to that date to

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prepare her forged documents. Is it likely that she would have wasted all that time if the documents had been genuine and already to her hand ?

The editor's statement is somewhat disingenuous. It does not preclude Mme. Coulomb's previous negotiations with the *padris*, which she had certainly had. The editor does not deny this; he merely says: " It is probable that, had there been any previous negotiations between Mme Coulomb and the *padris*, such as the Mahatma mentions, we should have heard of it."

But, in any case, why did Mme. Coulomb lose nearly three months before exploding her 'exposure' ?

Summing up the evidence as to the genuineness of these alleged Blavatsky-Coulomb letters we must say that on the following grounds we must conclude not merely that there is no proof of their being genuine, but that the weight of evidence goes to show that they were clever forgeries in which scraps of actual letters had been incorporated with spurious and compromising material:

(1) There is no evidence apart from that of the handwriting 'experts' that the letters were genuine.
(2) Handwriting 'expert' evidence is valueless.
(3) Mme. Coulomb is known to have been collecting for some years every scrap of stray writing or letters that she could get hold of.
(4) M. Coulomb's handwriting is said to have been very like that of Mme. Blavatsky.
(5) Mr. Hodgson does not give any facsimile reproductions of the letters in question.
(6) The Coulombs were known to have been very shady characters, and to have been desirous of revenging themselves for their dismissal.
(7) Mme. Coulomb's letters to Mme. Blavatsky do not substantiate the forged letters.
(8) Mme. Blavatsky as " an exceedingly clever fraud " would never have placed herself in the hands of the Coulombs as these letters represent.
(9) The Coulombs did not produce the letters till nearly three months after they left head-quarters.
(10) The letters were never submitted to the defence for examination.

This last fact would, apart from anything else, necessitate our rejection of the whole case as put forward by the S.P.R.

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M. SOLOVYOFF AND "A MODERN PRIESTESS OF ISIS"

As I have already mentioned (p. 258) the S.P.R. adopted this book of M. Solovyoff as being confirmatory evidence supporting the conclusions of their former Report ten years previously.

Why they should have done this unless they felt the weakness of that Report is not at all evident; indeed, they must assuredly have been lost to all sense of proportion—one might even say, to all sense of decency—to have sponsored a book like Solovyoff's, which not merely deals with the phenomena, and with M. Solovyoff's own personal relations with Mme. Blavatsky in the dishonest manner which I shall now indicate, but which also gives the most ludicrous caricatures of the personality of Mme. Blavatsky, Col. Olcott, and other theosophical personages. In these representations he gives details which are not merely intended as caricatures to give a journalistic spice to his work in order to catch the popular fancy and make it a saleable work, but he further descends to vulgar insinuations about Mme. Blavatsky of the vilest kind. He could of course rely upon the general ignorance of the Russian public, when the book was published in the first instance; but it is a book which the Committee of the S.P.R. certainly *ought* at that time to have recognised as a worthless melodramatic presentation, calculated merely to tickle the popular imagination and ignorant prejudice. They ought also to have recognised that the book was written for the express purpose of discrediting and slandering Mme. Blavatsky *after she was dead* by a man who was her bitterest enemy. It is but one more instance of their own willingness to strike by any means.

Now let us see what the book is worth.

We find (p. 97) that in October or November 1884 M. Solovyoff had already determined that:

> "Whatever came I would collect such proofs of all these deceptions as should be sufficient not only for me but for all these blind dupes (theosophists in Paris). I would no longer give way to the involuntary sympathy and pity, which, in spite of everything, still attracted me to Helena Petrovna. I would in the first place deal only with Mme. Blavatsky the thief of souls, who was trying to steal my soul too."

He then shamelessly confesses that in order that Mme. Blavatsky should have no suspicion that he was trying to ruin

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her, he would still pose as her friend. The sentence which I have quoted above we shall find, however, to be merely a blind to cover up the undoubted fact that at the time to which it refers he was an ardent believer. Now let us see.

Some *six months afterwards* (June 12th 1885) he wrote the following letter: [1]

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"The last two weeks have not passed in vain. Crookes and Sinnett have been here. I have made their acquaintance; but the thing is that all is now arranged and prepared to overwhelm, here at least—that is in the Paris press—all this rabble of Coulombs and all the asses, to what learned society soever they may belong, who could for a moment pay attention to her abominable pamphlet. The pamphlet has produced universal indignation here, and I have not even had to defend you to anybody—so that after all this dirty intrigue, they have only increased the sympathy felt for you. . . . Ah, if I could only see you." Your sincerely devoted and affectionate

VS. SOLOVYOFF

It will be seen that this letter has a direct reference to the Coulomb scandal. Taken in conjunction with the following letter it is impossible to credit that it was otherwise than a genuine expression of opinion at the time it was written. The following was written still later (October 8th 1885) (p. 288):

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"Which is the better, to write at random, or to hold one's tongue and work for the good of one's correspondent? . . . I have made friends with Mme. Adam, and talked a great deal to her about you; I have greatly interested her, and she has told me that her *Revue* is open not only to theosophy but to a defence of yourself personally if necessary. I praised up Mme. de Morsier to her, and at the same time there was another gentleman there who spoke on your behalf in the same tone, and Mme. Adam wished to make acquaintance with Mme. de Morsier, who will remain in Paris as the official means of communication between me and the *Nouvelle Revue*. Yesterday the meeting of the two ladies took place; our Emilie was quite in raptures. . . . In any case this is very good. To-day I passed the morning with Richet, and again talked a great deal about you, in connexion with Myers and the Psychical Society. I can say positively that *I convinced Richet of the reality of your personal power and of the phenomena which proceed from you.* He put me three questions categorically. To the first two I answered affirmatively; with respect to the third I said that I should be in a position to answer affirmatively

[1] See Appendix A in his book as translated for the S.P.R. by Mr. Walter Leaf, this Appendix being abstracts from a Pamphlet published by Mme. Blavatsky's sister, Mme. Jelihovsky, in reply to Solovyoff's book.

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without any trouble, in two or three months. But I do not doubt that I shall answer affirmatively, and then, you will see! there will be such a triumph that all the psychists will be wiped out. . . . Yes so it will be; for you did not treat me as a doll? . . . I start the day after to-morrow for St. Petersburg. . . . . What will happen?"

Yours cordially devoted
Vs. SOLOVYOFF.

Even Mr. Leaf has to admit with reference to this letter that: "This does, so far as I can judge, imply a real inconsistency in M. Solovyoff's narrative." There are numerous other 'inconsistencies' which can be pointed out, but I think that these will suffice here.

With regard to the phenomena, however, there are two respecting which M. Solovyoff published accounts which show that he accepted their genuineness at the time that they took place, but which he afterwards attempts to explain away. In *Light*, July 1884, there was published an account of a remarkable clairvoyant feat by Mme. Blavatsky which was witnessed and attested by six witnesses, M. Solovyoff being one of them. Solovyoff afterwards sent an account to the Russian journal *Rebus*. He finishes his account with the following words:

"The circumstances under which the phenomenon occurred in its smallest details, carefully checked by myself, do not leave in me the smallest doubt as to its *genuineness* and reality. Deception or fraud in this particular case *are entirely out of the question*" (see Sinnett's *Incidents*, p. 273).

The second case was one in which one of the Masters appeared to him astrally during the night at a hotel in Elberfeld when he was on a visit to H. P. B. Notwithstanding that Mme. Blavatsky told him the next morning that the Master had been to see him, he endeavours in his book to make out that the whole matter was an hallucination or a dream. The original account appears in full in the S.P.R. Report (p. 393); and it is most certainly that of a man who at the time fully believed in the genuineness of the visitation. Mrs. Sidgwick in commenting upon it on behalf of the S.P.R., rejects the theory of hallucination, and accepts that of dream, and afterwards naïvely remarks: "Since writing the above I have learnt that, *owing to events which have since occurred*, M. Solovyoff no longer regards his experience as affording evidence of occult agency" (*Italics* mine). In other words: if you have afterwards decided that a man is a liar, you must reject every previous incident in which he told you the truth!

So much for the value of M. Solovyoff's work. I have only

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dealt with a very small portion of it as bearing directly upon the S.P.R. Report. To illustrate fully its untruthful and scandalous nature would require numerous extracts which cannot be given here.

Mme. Blavatsky's own attitude towards M. Solovyoff may be very briefly illustrated by two short extracts from letters written by her to members of her own family.

In 1884 she wrote to her aunt, Mme. Fadéef:

"It's not long since I have come to London, but I have already got two such pitiful letters. The only thing he (Solovyoff) asks of me is to care for him and not forget him. He says he has never loved any one outside of his family as he loves poor old me" (*The Path*, New York, Vol. X, p. 76).

In 1885 she wrote to her sister, Mme. Jelihovsky:

"I am travelling with him (Solovyoff) in Switzerland. I really cannot understand what makes him so attached to me. As a matter of fact I cannot help him in the least. I can hardly help him to realize any of his hopes. Poor man, I am so sorry for him" (*Ibid.*, p. 108).

The real fact was that Solovyoff was of a neurotic, unbalanced and somewhat psychic nature; that he became violently imbued in the first instance with the idea of becoming a *chela*, and of thereby acquiring occult knowledge and phenomenal powers; that Mme. Blavatsky recognised his utter unfitness to take even the first steps in Occultism, but that nevertheless she gave him his chance, though she refused him the direct communications which he so eagerly desired. The result was inevitable, for it is an occult law which operates in all cases, of those who contact these occult forces, that the inner nature of the man comes violently to the surface, whether for good or for evil. In Solovyoff's case—as in others which could be given—it was the evil which predominated, and the result is seen in his repudiation of all that he once accepted, and his bitter attack on the woman who had endeavoured to save him from himself.

But what of the S.P.R. who fathered the English translation of this obviously venomous attack on a woman whose work becomes more and more appreciated as time goes on, and in which the author stands self-condemned as a liar? Mr. H. Sidgwick, who writes the Preface on behalf of the S.P.R., says that:

"Such English readers as were likely to be interested in learning anything more about Mme. Blavatsky would not so much desire additional proof that she was a charlatan—a question already judged and decided—but rather some explanation of the remarkable success of her imposture."

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This 'explanation' he finds in "Mr. Solovyoff's entertaining narrative".

"Entertaining"—yes. That is precisely what it was intended to be for those whose appreciation of the *entertaining* nature of a book increases in proportion as it is scandalous. But we should not have expected to find the learned members of the S.P.R. Committee in this category. It is simply amazing that any one with a reputation to lose should have lent their approval to a work of this nature; more particularly because its author waited till Mme. Blavatsky was dead before launching his attack.

In the recent case of Capt. Peter Wright *v.* Viscount Gladstone, Mr. Justice Avory said in his summing up:

"Lord Gladstone used the word 'coward'. The jury should ask themselves, 'Is not the man who slanders the dead a "coward"?' What is the difference between stabbing a man in the back—which is what a coward would do—and slandering a dead man in a way which it must be known would bring the greatest pain upon his descendants, knowing it would be almost impossible technically to disprove the charge."

That is practically the position in which the S.P.R. Council put themselves by fathering M. Solovyoff's scandalous book. And their plea for this publicity is that the book is 'entertaining'!

Mr. Sidgwick in his apology for thus publishing the book does not venture to guess "whether the Theosophical Society will last much longer". He evidently thinks that it will not. But at all events we can say to-day, that subsequent history has given the lie as to either this book having 'explained' the "remarkable success of Mme. Blavatsky's imposture"—i.e., Theosophy in all its aspects as she presented it to the world—or the S.P.R. Report as having "judged and decided" that she was a charlatan.

So intent have these learned fraud-hunters been to prove that Mme. Blavatsky's phenomenal powers could not be credited because they were altogether outside the range of their own experience at that time, that they have entirely overlooked the fact that the 'explanation' lay in the nature of the teachings, and not at all in the personality of the teacher.

It will readily be seen, indeed, that the blind confidence and conceit of these Psychical Researchers in their own judgments is almost pathetic; for they do not even hesitate to publish facts which flatly contradict their own conclusions, since they have 'no difficulty' in explaining away these facts as being either 'hallucinations', or 'impersonations', or—as a last resource—'*dreams*'.

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THE REPORT: CONCLUSIONS

I must now deal with the Conclusions put forward by the Committee of the S.P.R. These Conclusions involve the following questions:

(1) The question of fraud on the part of Mme. Blavatsky and others in the case of the particular phenomena dealt with in the Report.

With regard to this I may remark in the first place that every one is entitled to form his own opinion on the basis of the Report *provided they have genuinely studied and analysed that Report*, and have also made themselves acquainted with the evidence on the other side. How many who have so glibly quoted the conclusions of the Report have ever done this?

In the second place I would remark, that the conclusion that "no genuine psychical phenomena whatever will be found among the pseudo-mysteries of the Russian lady" (p. 317), is one which not merely goes far beyond the scope of the Report itself, but is absolutely negatived by innumerable witnesses of phenomena with which the Report does not deal at all. This, however, is Mr. Hodgson's personal statement. The Committee themselves are more guarded in their conclusions. They say (p. 205) "as to the correctness of Mr. Hodgson's explanation of particular marvels" they (the Committee) "do not feel called upon to express any definite conclusion". Really! But if Mr. Hodgson's 'explanations' cannot be definitely accepted, how on earth can the Committee pronounce any judgment at all—much less the sweeping condemnation of Mme. Blavatsky to which they have committed themselves?

The answer to this question is to be found in the fact that the case was so absolutely prejudged that the Committee are blind to the incongruities of their own statements.

(2) The question as to the existence or non-existence of the Masters or Mahatmas.

In respect of this the Committee say (p. 204) "There is consequently a very strong presumption that all the marvellous narratives put forward as evidence of the existence and occult power of the Mahatmas are to be explained as due either (*a*) to deliberate deception carried out by or at the instigation of Mme.

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Blavatsky, or (*b*) to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention on the part of the witnesses."

Here again I must remark that 'presumption' is not *proof*, and that when the Committee say "*all* the marvellous narratives", they go far beyond the scope of the Report. As a matter of fact *all* the narratives are not marvellous in any sense of the term; many are simple matter-of-fact meetings with the Mahatmas in the flesh. But then of course this can always be 'easily' explained away on the theory of a confederate.

The Report itself mentions one such narrative, that of Mr. Ramaswamier (p. 359), who recounts how he set out from Darjeeling to cross the frontier into Tibet in order "to find the Mahatmas—or DIE". When he had come into Sikkhim he was met by a solitary horseman, whom he immediately recognised as the Mahatma 'M', and with whom he then had a long talk.

As this meeting with the Mahatma could not be attributed to a 'dream'—it was between 8 and 9 a.m.—Mr. Hodgson can see "*no improbability in supposing* that the Mahatma was personated by one of Mme. Blavatsky's confederates". Really and truly, will not these fraud-hunters "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel". We may say here, indeed, that we could perhaps find no better example of the saying that 'extremes meet'. The extreme of incredulity in this case is simply the extreme of credulity; for they "see no improbability in supposing"—anything rather than the straightforward narrative, which clearly shows in this case that impersonation was out of the question.

But how in any case can the S.P.R. *disprove* the existence of the Masters, Adepts, or Mahatmas? The existence of Adepts and Initiates has been a matter well known to special students all through the ages, not merely in the East but also in the West. On the general principle of evolution we are bound to accept of their existence, even if we do not accept the evidence for the existence of the particular ones with whom Mme. Blavatsky worked. This, indeed, was the way in which Mme. Blavatsky represented the matter to me. She never asked me, nor any one else so far as I am aware, to set aside our personal doubts in the matter so far as one's own experience might not have confirmed that of others; much less did she—in Mr. Hodgson's words—ask any one to render "a profound obedience to the behests of imaginary Mahatmas".

Mme. Blavatsky only brought to the notice of the world in general the existence of a trans-Himalayan Centre; but the

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reception by the world in general of that information was not such as to encourage any other of the numerous Centres in other parts of the world to authorise a similar disclosure.

On this point I might refer my readers to the evidence of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803). What he says is so applicable both to Mme. Blavatsky herself and to *The Secret Doctrine* which she wrote, that I may be excused from quoting it here. It is to be found in Mr. A. E. Waite's work on "The Unknown Philosopher" (p. 82): [1]

"For such an enterprise as that which I have undertaken more than common resources are necessary. Without specifying those which I employ, it will be enough to say that they connect with the essential nature of man, that they have always been known to some among mankind from the prime beginning of things, and that they will never be withdrawn wholly from the earth while thinking beings exist thereon. Thence have I derived my evidence, and thence my conviction upon truths the search after which engrosses the entire universe. After this avowal, if I am accused of disseminating an unknown doctrine, at least I must not be suspected of being its inventor, for if it connect with the nature of man, not only am I not its inventor, but it would have been impossible for me to establish any other on a solid basis. The principles here expounded are the true key to all the allegories and all the mysterious fables of every people, the primitive source of every kind of institution, and actually the pattern of those laws which direct and govern the universe, constituting all beings. In other words, they serve as a foundation to all that exists and to all that operates, whether in man and by the hand of man, whether outside man and independently of his will. Hence, in the absence of these principles there can be no real science, and it is by reason of having forgotten these principles that the earth has been given over to errors. But although the light is intended for all eyes, it is certain that all eyes are not so constituted as to be able to behold it in its splendour. It is for this reason that the small number of men who are depositaries of the truths which I proclaim are pledged to prudence and discretion by the most formal engagements."

Mme. Blavatsky was the chosen agent during the last quarter of the nineteenth century by one particular Centre of "the small number of men who are depositaries of the truths" thus connected "with the essential nature of man"; and her phenomena merely disclosed a very small portion of that *essential nature.* The sequel showed very plainly that "it is certain that all eyes are not so constituted as to be able to behold it in its splendour".

[1] It is taken from *Des Erreurs et de la Verite,* Part I, pp. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10. Edition of 1782.

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Nevertheless, thousands did at least discern that the light was there, and set about the work of training themselves to perceive it more clearly. Hence the success of the Theosophical Movement inaugurated by Mme. Blavatsky, but by no means dependent upon her personality, admittedly defective in many respects for the work entrusted to her. On p. 263 of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Mahatma 'M' says:

"One or two of us hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionally, that the occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others—wiser as it would now seem—held differently, but consent was given for the trial. . . . In casting about we found in America a man to stand as leader—a man of great moral courage, unselfish, and having other good qualities. He was far from being the best, but (as Mr. Hume speaks in H. P. B.'s case), he was the best one available. With him we associated a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments. Combined with them she had strong personal defects, but just as she was, there was no second to her living fit for this work. We sent her to America, brought them together—and the trial began. From the first both she and he were given clearly to understand that the issue lay entirely with themselves."

For those who deny the existence of this higher knowledge—well: who can open the eyes of those who do not wish to see?

(3) The question as to whether the letters which Mme. Blavatsky asserted came from the Mahatmas did so in reality, or whether they were her own production.

It is not of so much importance here to deal with the comparatively trivial messages with which the Report is principally concerned, as with the mass of correspondence which Mr. Sinnett obtained, and on the basis of which he wrote *Esoteric Buddhism*. We are to-day fortunately in a much better position to form an opinion on this matter since the publication in 1923 of a Volume of these letters which were found among Mr. Sinnett's papers after his death, and from which the above abstract is taken. There are 129 letters in all. There is nothing to show how these were individually received, but there is a very great deal in them bearing upon the occult means of their production and delivery. This is too large a question to enter into here, and the reader must be referred to the letters themselves. A good deal of light will thereby be thrown upon the handwriting question.

But the real crux of the whole matter rests upon the internal evidence of the Letters. Are they of such a nature that Mme. Blavatsky could not possibly have been their author? To this

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question I must answer, that I do not see how any one with any knowledge of the circumstances in general, or of Mme. Blavatsky's characteristics and resources, can possibly think that she could have written them herself, consciously, 'out of her own head'. There may of course be exceptions in some of the Letters; but in the great bulk of them the internal evidence is of such a nature that it is impossible for me to think that Mme. Blavatsky could have been their original author.

There will doubtless be some sceptics who will boggle even at that. It is not a matter that can easily be proved; or perhaps it cannot be proved at all. Every one must form their own judgment. Here again, however, I must point out that whether Mme. Blavatsky did or did not write them wholly and fully and consciously, it is the *teachings* which they contain, the information itself, the philosophy, the cosmology, the anthropology, and the occult PATH of initiation therein set forth, which gives the value to these *Letters*—let their immediate source be what it may.

The *Letters* make no claim to be infallible. The circumstances under which many of them were dictated and transmitted make mistakes and errors almost inevitable, and doubtless any critic who wishes to disparage will find many points on which he can lay his hand. Moreover—as the Letters themselves state over and over again—the *whole teaching* cannot be given out, and many of the statements are deliberate 'blinds', concealing, and yet disclosing to the initiated, the inner truth.

These *Letters* are in fact a magnificent addition to our information respecting the fundamental principles and teachings of Theosophy as set forth in the literature which H. P. Blavatsky gave to the world. If these teachings are inherently sound, no attacks on the character of the teacher can make them otherwise. An acknowledgment of them in academic literature and circles can hardly be expected as yet; but any one who is acquainted with the change which is taking place even in the most conservative 'seats of learning' cannot fail to recognise that the new principles in science and philosophy are coming nearer and nearer with each re-adjustment to those laid down in *The Secret Doctrine*. In religion, the fundamental teaching of Theosophy is THE DIVINE NATURE OF MAN; or, in the words of the *Upanishads*, THAT ART THOU. To what extent Christian theology is approximating to that is too large a question to enter into here.

(4) Finally, Mr. Hodgson finds himself confronted with the question as to Mme. Blavatsky's *motive* for spending "so many laborious days in such a fantastic work of imposture" (p. 313).

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Well, as Theosophy is *not* "a fantastic work of imposture", the problem is of his own making. However, let us see what is his solution.

He rejects in turn the hypotheses of "religious mania", of "the sordid motive of pecuniary gain", and of "a morbid yearning for notoriety". Well, we must be thankful at all events that he has granted so much. But what remains? The greatest Mare's Nest of the whole of this wonderful Report: the theory that it was all done—*because she was a Russian spy*!

How or in what manner the phenomena which he has dealt with could further her plans in this respect he does not attempt to show; but perhaps it may be sufficient here to set one detractor against the other. M. Solovyoff deals very drastically with this wonderful discovery by Mr. Hodgson. On p. 114 of his book he says:

> "This (spy theory) he had to prove, and to prove exactly as he proved her fraudulent phenomena and all her other deceptions: yet he has no evidence of any sort, for it is impossible to regard as evidence the fragments he quotes from her writings, from which no serious man could draw a conclusion of the sort. . . . H. P. Blavatsky was not a spy."

Having thus so kindly cut the ground from beneath Hodgson's feet, he proceeds to do the same with regard to the finding of the Committee that Col. Olcott was not a party to Mme. Blavatsky's 'fraudulent phenomena'; but with that I need not deal.

Perhaps the one thing which somewhat redeems the character of the S.P.R. Committee is that they *did* exonerate Col. Olcott from any complicity in fraudulent representations or phenomena.

Thus Mr. Hodgson is left entirely 'in the air' as to any motive for this elaborate structure of fraud which he had endeavoured to erect with so many hypotheses as to what *might have been* the case.

However, with M. Solovyoff's testimony to the value of Mr. Hodgson's judicial faculty and reasoning powers I shall be content to conclude this survey and criticism of THE GREAT MARE'S NEST of the Report of the Society for Psychical Research in their attempt "to investigate the phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society".

Ex nihilo nihil fit.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have shown that the Committee of the S.P.R. "appointed to investigate the Phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society", never investigated the phenomena at all. That, moreover, they practically left the investigation of the *evidence* for the phenomena in the hands of one man, whose qualifications as Counsel for the prosecution may perhaps be admitted, but who otherwise showed himself to be utterly incompetent not merely to understand the nature of the phenomena and the psychological problem involved in the personality of Mme. Blavatsky, but also utterly lacking in any judicial faculty, and even in the power to form rational conclusions from the evidence before him.

I have shown further that the Committee actually, with the most indecent haste, adopted and promulgated Mr. Hodgson's conclusions before even his Report was completed; and that they not merely withheld from the defence the incriminating Blavatsky-Coulomb forged letters, but closed the case altogether on the basis of Mr. Hodgson's incomplete Report, and stigmatised the defendant as a fraud and a charlatan without giving her, or any one on her behalf, a chance of analysing the evidence put forward in the Report, and replying thereto.

I have shown also that ten years after the Report was printed in their *Proceedings*, the Society gave after *imprimatur* to an "entertaining" but scandalous and obviously untruthful book which was a further slander on a dead woman, who by that time at least might have been recognised as the pioneer of a great spiritual movement; whose literary work had been largely increased and widely acknowledged; and with whose teachings every advance in science, in philosophy, in archaeology, and anthropology is seen to come more and more into line.

One cannot, then, but speculate as to what would have been the result if the S.P.R., instead of thus rejecting and stigmatising on the most superficial grounds the wholly exceptional phenomena presented to them, had treated the matter sympathetically—albeit with every natural reservation of judgment—and had bestowed upon it the same amount of patient care and investigation which they afterwards bestowed upon certain mediums—Eusapia Palladino, for example. The haste with which they published their conclusions, indeed, shows quite clearly that the

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whole matter was prejudged. They had not the wit to see that even supposing fraud to have been proved in some cases, that only added to the interest of the problem as to how Mme. Blavatsky the 'fraud' could be the same *person* as 'H. P. B.', the pioneer of a great spiritual movement. At the very least it presented a psychological problem of the greatest possible interest: a problem of double personality if of nothing else. They had themselves absolved Mme. Blavatsky from all worldly motives of pecuniary benefit or even of notoriety; and Hodgson could only evolve out of his imagination a ridiculous 'Russian Spy' theory to account for all her laborious years of sacrifice.

If, then, they had treated the matter sympathetically, and had taken the testimony of Col. Olcott and others as to how *Isis Unveiled* was written (see *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, pp. 202 ff.); if instead of seeking for a 'fraud' they had recognised the *spiritual* nature of Mme. Blavatsky's work, and had sought for the source of her inspiration; if, indeed, they had merely taken her as an interesting *psychological* problem of an altogether exceptional nature; they might have discovered that the investigation led them to a rich mine of information which would have advanced the science of psychology by many decades, and would have thrown a vivid light on the problems of human personality in many of their phases both ordinary and extraordinary—from a normal point of view—not to mention higher possibilities of development and evolution which are known only to those who, having recognised these possibilities, have not turned away from the evidence offered, or the method of obtaining confirmatory proof in their own personal experience.

Eighteen years afterwards, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, one of the Committee responsible for the S.P.R. Report, published his voluminous work, *The Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. That work itself can be said to contain much which, had Mr. Myers been acquainted with it at the time of the Report, would certainly have led him to take a greater interest in, and altogether a different view of, the personality of Mme. Blavatsky. But what would the book itself have been if Mr. Myers had devoted to her the same amount of patient investigation and reservation of conclusions which he has given to other much less significant cases, even after fraud had been admitted as part of the problem?

Well: when all is said and done, what happens is always for the best. Perhaps we may be allowed, therefore, to make here some conjectures of our own as to why this thing happened as

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it did. In the first place, perhaps the world was not ready for the *official* recognition which might have resulted from the more sympathetic treatment which I have mentioned. Perhaps the world is not ready even yet. Perhaps the very fact of the S.P.R. Report being so adverse was part of a larger necessity, guarding against the premature disclosure of matters which humanity as a whole was then, and is as yet, unfitted to receive.

Plotinus tells us: "This, therefore, is manifested by the mandate of the mysteries, which orders that they shall not be divulged to those who are uninitiated. For as that which is divine cannot be unfolded to the multitude this mandate forbids the attempt to elucidate it to any one but him who is fortunately able to perceive it" (Enn. VI, 9, 11). There is plenty of evidence to show that the same 'mandate' is in force to-day. I have quoted on p. 304 the testimony of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin to the same effect. The *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* are full of the same warnings.

Physical science to-day recognises itself as being on the borderland of a revolutionary discovery as to the nature of inter-atomic energy; the discovery of a reservoir of energy of such a tremendous nature that when compared with it our present sources of energy are but playthings. Is humanity ready for that discovery? Most certainly not, for it would be immediately applied for destruction and war. But our modern scientists will never admit that there can be any Adepts in the world who know all about this inter-atomic energy, and who can use it for phenomena such as were some of those which Mme. Blavatsky exhibited; or that these Adepts have in fact penetrated far beyond the Ether of science into the arcane region of Primordial Substance, and the nature of the great World-process.

Well: so be it. God knows what would have happened if that knowledge had been indisputably demonstrated to the satisfaction of our learned Academies and Royal Societies. Perhaps, then, the S.P.R. Report served a useful and necessary purpose in holding back premature disclosures in this region of physics.

Psychical research similarly is just on the borderland of a tremendous discovery as to the inner nature and powers of what we know as *Mind*. Mind is not something which each individual possesses as a little bit of his own personality associated wholly with his thinking faculty and physical brain. Nothing can be manifested in the individual which is not *Cosmic* in its origin and nature, and Mind is a tremendous Cosmic Force, as well as a mode of Cosmic Substance, infinitely more potent than any mere

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physical force. Here is a danger, therefore, which far outweighs even the possible discoveries of physical science. Already there is a sufficient danger in the promiscuous dabbling by ignorant and untrained investigators in so-called *spiritualistic* phenomena, whilst hypnotism and psycho-analysis also lie on the borderland, and introduce elements of the most undesirable, not to say dangerous nature.

Here again the world is not ready; and who shall say what might have been the result if the S.P.R. had taken up seriously "the investigation of phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society".

Whilst, therefore, condemning the S.P.R. Committee for their hasty, prejudiced, unjudicial, and unjust condemnation of a pioneer in a region to which humanity as a whole must one day advance, but into which as yet only a few are advanced enough to enter, we must perhaps not regret on the whole that the S.P.R. Report served to turn aside from this deeper quest what we might call the orthodox or academic investigator; and that in so doing it perhaps saved the world—for the time being at all events—from the appalling disasters which result, both to the individual and to the race, from the misuse of occult forces.

Already at that time Mr. Sinnett had done more than enough by the publication of his *Occult World* to arouse an unhealthy interest in phenomena, in *wonders* for their own sake; for always and ever there are those who are seeking merely after signs and wonders. He himself was warned about this over and over again.

In a passage I have already quoted (p. 305) Mahatma 'M' says:

> "One or two of us hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionally, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others—wiser as it would now seem—held differently."

That was written in 1882, three years before the S.P.R. 'investigations': so that even at that time it would appear that the effort had been pronounced a failure. The S.P.R. Report only came as the culmination and seal of this failure—a failure, be it noted, only so far as the world at large was concerned.

Perhaps H. P. B. had already exceeded the powers entrusted her, and the S.P.R. Report was merely her Karma; but if this was the case it was due to the persistent demands of A. P. Sinnett and others for test phenomena, which they foolishly thought would convince the scientific world and the public, despite

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everything the Masters told them to the contrary. Perhaps Mme. Blavatsky, the 'shell' (see *Mahatma Letters*, p. 256) was actually made to appear as a fraud and a charlatan because "all this ought to have been limited *to an inner* and very SECRET circle" (see *Mahatma Letters*, p. 323). A careful study of *The Mahatma Letters* throws much light upon these inner matters which can only be hinted at here. But perhaps also, while Mme. Blavatsky, the outer personality, chafed and raged under the stigma placed upon her, the *real* H. P. B. regarded the whole matter with those calm, deep, far-seeing eyes which look out on us from her portraits as from a soul untouched by the passing shows and storms of this life: knowing that all that happens is in accordance with immutable LAW; and knowing also that her (his) mission involved the crucifixion of the lower personality; involved that to the undiscerning eyes of those who could see no deeper than the outer personality, that personality should even appear to be a fraud and a charlatan.

Even thus are the great secrets of Man's inner nature and powers guarded and protected from the unworthy seekers after signs and wonders, and from the premature discovery of those powers by such as would use them without any regard for moral and spiritual laws.

H. P. B. was a mirror, strongly and truly reflecting exactly what those who came to her were themselves in their own inner nature; and what they sought for, that they found.

The S.P.R. sought only for a fraud—and so, inevitably, they found one—or rather *made* one. And though there are some to-day who would perpetuate this verdict, yet the world-wide influence of this great pioneer becomes more and more firmly established with every passing decade, as more and more it is recognised that the TEACHINGS to which she directed our attention "*connect with the essential nature of Man*"—and the UNIVERSE.

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The end of "The Real H. P. Blavatsky".

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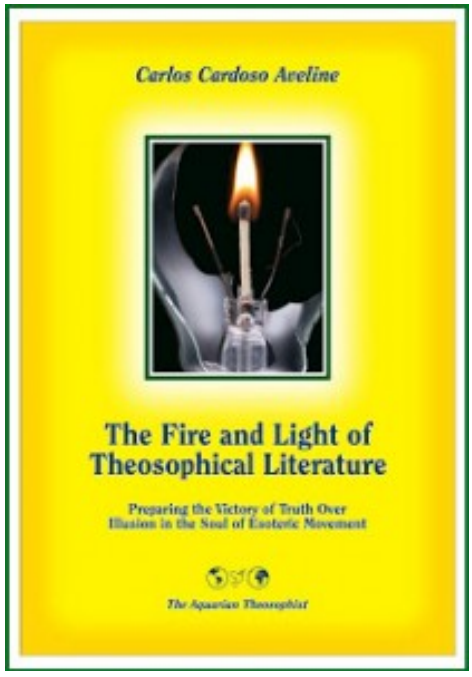

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