

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

1875-1925

A HISTORY AND A SURVEY



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“To all true Theosophists, in every country and of every race, for they called it forth, and for them it was recorded.”

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PREFACE

There exists nowhere a collected and authentic recital of the Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth century. Yet, although a scant half century has elapsed since the foundation of The Theosophical Society at New York City, the work there begun has spread into all portions of the civilized world, until the word Theosophy is a familiar term to every educated mind. The teachings known under that name have been more or less investigated and adopted by millions, while its more earnest students who have accepted it as a complete and satisfactory explanation of all the problems of life, here and hereafter, are numbered by thousands in every country and of every race.

In an indirect but none the less powerful manner the teachings of Theosophy have profoundly affected the ideas and ideals of the race on the great questions of ethics, of morality, of religion, philosophy and science, so that today it may be truly said that there is nothing worthy of the consideration of the human mind that has not been leavened by the injection of Theosophical leaven. It is not too much, therefore, to affirm that the direct and indirect influence of Theosophy upon humanity in the course of a single generation has been greater than that of any other system ever promulgated, during as many centuries as the Theosophical Movement numbers decades. And the Movement can as yet scarcely be said to have passed the stage of its germinal impulsion.

The record of the Theosophical Movement is scattered through thousands upon thousands of pages of books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets and other documents. Many of these are extremely controversial in character, many inaccurate, many contradictory and confusing. The attempt to study, digest, collate and compare the im-

mense literature of the subject is a monumental undertaking. The writers have spent many years in connection with the work of the Theosophical Movement, and their opportunities and facilities have been greater than most. Yet they know only too well the impossibility of doing anything like justice to the subject, or of affording satisfactory replies to all questions of the sincere student of its complexities. The very nature of the subject forbids. For Theosophy, the Theosophical Movement, and the real and true Theosophical Society have, each of them, an esoteric as well as an exoteric side, and the latter can never be fully grasped and understood but through the former.

Some of this hidden side can be touched upon, some documents referred to, some indications submitted, some deductions offered for the consideration of the reflective mind, but for by far the most important portion of the esoteric aspect the student must rely upon his own intuition: for the hidden side of Theosophy can only be arrived at through the hidden nature of the student himself.

Still another difficulty that confronts alike the writers and the sincere student is the fact that many of those who were active in the lifetime of the parent Theosophical Society are still living and now prominent, both in the public eye, and as leaders and exponents of the many conflicting theosophical and occult societies that have sprung up in the past twenty-five years, since the death of the original society. All these antagonistic organizations have their devoted adherents, their own particular tenets and claims of pre-eminence and successorship. The situation exactly parallels that of the early centuries of Christianity. Rival pretensions to apostolic succession, to knowledge, to authority, and to the possession of the keys to the teachings of the Founders confront the inquirer. The danger is imminent that if a better knowledge and understanding of the real teachings of Theosophy, the real mission of the Theosophical Movement, and the real facts in connection with the history of the Parent Theosophical Society, are not made available for

all those who may become interested, the fate that has long since overtaken Brahminism, Buddhism and Christianity will inevitably befall the great Message of H. P. Blavatsky.

For all the reasons expressed and implied, an accessible record of the facts, as accurate a survey of their significance and bearing on the present and on the future as possible, is of the utmost moment to all sincere students and to all earnest enquirers. Themselves members of none of the existing organizations, but profoundly convinced of the surpassing value of the noble philosophy of Theosophy, the writers are moved to this attempt to aid the unimpeded flow of the great stream of the Theosophical Movement, not so much by any belief in their own especial ability as by the conviction that that flow is being impeded and corrupted by the partisanship and pretensions of the leading exponents of the existing societies. It is therefore addressed, not to any society or societies, but to all true Theosophists, whether members of any of the existing organizations or of none, and to all true enquirers everywhere, who may be willing to accept truth wherever it may be found, and to defend it, even looking popular prejudice—and their own—straight in the face.

For the rest, it may be added that the SYLLABUS which precedes the text will, it is hoped, be found, both by the general reader and the serious student, to be more satisfactory than an index. The abundant direct citations and the collateral references included in the text render superfluous a separate bibliography and will, it is thought, enable those so minded to verify at first hand every minor as well as major subject discussed.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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CHAPTER I

CHANNELS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

IN its larger aspect the Theosophical Movement is the path of progress, individually and collectively. Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there the great Movement is to be discerned. Organized religions, systems of thought, governments, parties, sects—all have their origins in efforts for the better co-operation of men, for conserving energy and putting it to use. They all in time become corrupted and must change, as the times change, as human defects come out, and as the great underlying Spiritual and Intellectual evolution compels such alterations.

Luther's Reformation must be counted as a part of the Theosophical Movement. Masonry has played a great and important part in it, and still does to some extent, for however restricted in application, however its great symbolism may have been forgotten or obscured, Masonry none the less stands for tolerance, for religious and intellectual liberty, for charity. The formation of the American Republic with its noble Declaration of Independence, its equality of all men before the law, its ideals of brotherhood and freedom from sectarian religious partialities must be accounted a great forward step in the Theosophical Movement. And with the abolition of human slavery in all the great Western nations during the course of the nineteenth century, another great step in the emancipation of the race must be acclaimed. The "divine right" of an orthodox God speaking through

a vested clergy was rebelled against in every voice raised against the Catholic hierarchy. The "divine right" of kings was overthrown by the American and French Revolutions. The "divine right" of one man or set of men to enslave another or others was the real issue involved in the American Civil War, and the emancipation of the serfs in Russia. Nationalism, socialism, universal suffrage, struggles between classes, between labor and capital, are all physical and metaphysical efforts toward freedom from bondage, however they may be mistaken, misguided, misled, perverted to selfish and destructive purposes and ends.

The principle of an underlying Spiritual and Intellectual evolution proceeding apace with its visible manifestation in physical effects, will disclose unerringly that the formation of the Society and the injection of the literature of Theosophy into the mind of the race must have been preceded and accompanied by collateral efforts and resultants. Those indirect preparations must necessarily be as varied as the varieties of human experience and belief regarding fundamental things. And those preparations do not issue in the first instance from any human invention or discovery, although the characters of certain individual human beings can be and must be the channels, conscious or unconscious, for the play of higher forces and the inspiration of higher Intelligence. The course of all evolution is first Spiritual, then Mental, then Personal to certain gifted individuals. From these latter it permeates gradually the race mind, impelling the whole mass forward and upward, in however slow or slight degree. "Evolution" appears as physical only to those who do not look beneath the surface of events. The real process of Nature is ever cyclic: from the highest to the lowest on the invisible side of Nature; correspondingly from the lowest to the highest on the visible side, as human vision is at present exercised in the fields of religion, philosophy and science.

Indirect but none the less potent and necessary concomitants of the spiritual and psychical aspects of the Theosophical Movement should therefore be looked for

in all directions. One of these was and is the great tide of interest in Oriental religions and philosophies. Until the work of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was well under way none but the conqueror, the merchant, the missionary and the philologist, each immersed in his own especial objects, had any concern with the Far East. The mass of the populations of the Western world were farther removed from the living East with its immense but alien wealth of metaphysical acquisitions, than from the dead and by-gone stores of ancient Greece and imperial Rome. Generally speaking, it was unknown and unsuspected that the great leaders of early European civilization, no less than their modern successors, had in fact derived their inspiration and their learning from the exhaustless treasury of Oriental thought and practice.

Beginning with Wilkins near the close of the eighteenth century, a series of translations of the ancient and venerated "Bhagavad-Gita" had successively been brought out in England, in Germany, in France and in the United States. The riches of the Vedanta philosophy had thus to some extent become accessible to aspiring minds in the West. Copies came into the possession of Thoreau and Emerson. Emerson's fame as a lecturer and writer and the nobility of his character made of him one of the most potent vehicles for the dissemination of the great and timeless ideas of the East. Through his life and work countless younger minds were given a freer range and truer basis, and by so much freed from the sterile and narrow dogmas of sectarian Christianity. Religion was seen by many not to be confined nor due to sects or special revelations. The celebrated "Brook Farm Community" spread far and wide transcendental aspirations and increased the thirst for freedom from the bondage of prevailing ideas.

Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" was published in 1879, and read by hundreds of thousands in Europe and America. Myriads of minds gained for the first time some true idea of the noble ethics and philosophy of Buddhism, and were amazed to find that for centuries antedating the time of Jesus his moral teachings had been

imparted in their plenitude, coupled with a philosophy unknown to the Christian world at any time. Scholarly men began to give some heed other than purely scholastic to Oriental experience as embodied in its age-old literary remains. Despite the general contempt for "heathen" people and the exclusiveness of ignorance that had so long obtained, Western explorers began in earnest to adventure in search of the hereditary metaphysical possessions of the Orient, much in the same fashion as other Western adventurers had long exploited by conquest or by theft the physical treasures of the sacred East. Wilson's translation of the "Vishnu Purana" and Dr. Max Müller's edition of the "Sacred Books of the East," were part of the fruitage thus made accessible in the West.

When Charles Darwin's great work, "The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection," appeared in 1859, a powerful voice was raised against the deeply imbedded ideas of miracle and special creation by an omnipotent personal God, as engraved by centuries of dogmatic theologies. Mr. Darwin's work was not intended as an attack either on revealed religion or the dead-letter creeds, but was limited to the presentation of an immense accumulation of ascertained facts in natural history, and to the submission of inferences drawn with inescapable logic from the facts thus far amassed. It was perhaps the most brilliant example in history of sustained inductive reasoning. It showed and proved physical man to be no "special creation," but an evolutionary part of the "natural order of things." "The Origin of Species," and its supplement, "The Descent of Man," published in 1871, were purely scientific works in the best sense of the term. The "Darwinian theory" was received by the educated world with profound interest, followed by a tidal wave of revulsion as its bearing and effects upon current Christian dogmas and interpretations of the Bible were perceived. It was attacked on every hand and its author was subjected to every form of ridicule, slander and calumny that religious bigotry, ever the most fertile in malice and malevolence, could invent. Never-

theless, as scientific students verified its compilations of physical facts and tried conclusions with its logic, the theory gained headway in spite of all the storms of opposition. Its author lived to see his facts admitted, his conclusions accepted and adopted in whole or in part, even by his detractors. Corrupted and grotesquely distorted as the Darwinian theory has been in the intervening years, and however limited in its view of "evolution" from the standpoint of Occult philosophy, it none the less remains to this day the greatest advance in scientific hypotheses since the time of Newton, and aided largely in making possible the presentation of the triple evolutionary scheme outlined in the "Secret Doctrine." Whatever the defects of the Darwinian theory, they are due to no lack of honesty, zeal nor industry on the part of its great author, but rather to the limitations of his mode of research and to the inherent defect of all inductive reasoning. So immense has been the effect of the Darwinian theory of evolution on the ideas prevailing without question a generation ago, that it is very difficult for the average mind of today to realize how this theory of physical evolution could ever have been questioned, denied, opposed, vilified.

In his "History of Civilization in England," a work foremost among the contributory factors we are discussing, Mr. Henry T. Buckle sums up these lessons of the past which, in our opinion, are equally a prophecy of the future of Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement, however unconscious Mr. Buckle may have been of the immense reach of the spiritual and intelligent Agencies at work behind the scenes of human life. In the first volume of his work, which appeared in 1857, Mr. Buckle writes (p. 257):

Owing to circumstances still unknown there appear from time to time great thinkers who devoting their lives to a single purpose are able to anticipate the progress of mankind, and to produce a religion or a philosophy by which important events are eventually brought about.

But if we look into history we shall clearly see that, although the origin of a new opinion may be thus due to a single man, the result which the new opinion produces will depend on the condition of the people among whom it is propagated. If either a religion or a philosophy is too much in advance of a nation, it can do no present service, but must bide its time until the minds of men are ripe for its reception. . . . Every science, every creed has had its martyrs. According to the ordinary course of affairs, a few generations pass away, and then there comes a period when these very truths are looked upon as common-place facts, and a little later there comes another period in which they are declared to be necessary, and even the dullest intellect wonders how they could ever have been denied.

The student of Theosophy knows that the "circumstances still unknown" to Mr. Buckle, but which he intuitively recognized to exist, are in fact due to the *Karmic* provision of Spiritual and Intellectual evolution. Under Karmic Law, at transitional periods in the cyclic progression of Humanity, great Adepts restore to mankind through both direct and indirect channels some of the Wisdom once "known," but which in the lapse of time has become lost or obscured during the complexities of physical and personal evolution. For it must not be overlooked by the student that these Elder Brothers are themselves a part of the very stream of evolution in which we belong. As such, They take an active, albeit undisclosed and but too often unperceived, share in the government of the natural order of things. And although this part of the operation of cyclic law is often delayed and defied by the ignorance and prejudice of mankind in general, each rise and fall of civilizations is succeeded by a regeneration and further progression.

Other constructive factors in the preparatory work of the Theosophical Movement in our time may be seen in the great and sudden leap (from the standpoint of racial

and national cycles) in invention, discovery, trade, the means and methods of transportation, manufacture, and utilization of all the raw materials in Nature—all making in one way and another for inter-dependence, inter-communication, inter-respect in the great human family, and the consequent breaking down of the barriers of Nature, of human insularity and separateness: a harrowing of the soil, whether by the means of war or peace, as a necessary prelude for once more sowing in that soil the seeds of Brotherhood. And in the political field the great careers of Abraham Lincoln, of John Bright, of Mazzini, and many others, all made for the Rights of Man, as opposed to the forces of reaction.

In an iconoclastic sense an equally necessary and valuable pioneer work in the breaking of the molds of fixed ideas into which human thought forever tends to crystallize, can be discerned in the work of such men as Robert G. Ingersoll in America, Charles Bradlaugh in England, and, in the church, by such men as Charles Kingsley and W. E. Channing. Whether apparently pursuing the path of agnosticism, of a purely socialistic and materialistic altruism, or of a liberalized orthodoxy, the efforts of all these commanded a wide following and broke to a large extent the hold of bigotry and intolerance. Philosophical speculations like those of Herbert Spencer, the esthetic spirit of men like Ruskin, the rebellious mind of Carlyle, the insubordination to the harrow of conventional ideas of writers like Dickens, George Eliot, Balzac, Tolstoy, Walt Whitman, and many others, all aided in the pioneer work of the Theosophical Movement. They may all be said to have fought for the unrestricted domain of the individual conscience, the larger outlook upon human life and human duty, as opposed to the *ipse dixit* of any "thus saith the Lord." All these individual and collective factors, some, perhaps, dimly conscious of the germinal force at work within themselves, others aware only of the travail without issue of human existence—all were of value. All that in any way has made, or that makes, possible the arousal of serious attention to the Second and Third Objects of the Parent Theosophi-

cal Society, all that facilitates the revolt of the mind and conscience from creedal exclusiveness, all that might turn men from the sordid materialism of a one-life existence devoted to the pursuit of physical well-being—all this is truly a concurrent part of the Theosophical Movement, and necessary to any attempt at the practical realization of its First Object—Universal Brotherhood, the life of service as opposed to the life for self.

The ideas represented by such terms as revealed religion, a favored people, a personal God, miracles, heaven gained by an "act of faith," a "vicarious atonement," selfish personal salvation—the fetters forged by many centuries of ecclesiastical usurpation of authority over the ignorant mind and conscience: all these veritable Bastilles of moral and mental tyranny were under assault or siege during a large part of the nineteenth century. Their *lettres de cachet* no longer sufficed to imprison or outcast the individual mind, to forfeit the reputable estate of the individual rebel against the "established order." If the mind of the race could not be said to have been in revolution against spiritual and mental intolerance, it was none the less true that everywhere could be found sincere and reverent-minded men in outspoken rebellion against the dominant and dominating ideas of centuries. The "millennium" of sectarian religion was drawing to a close. Agnosticism, infidelity, bold questioning of the foundations hitherto esteemed inviolate, were no longer branded with the brand of infamy by the all-powerful sects, because the sects were no longer all-powerful. A spirit of liberty, often of license mistaken for liberty, was abroad in Europe and America. Even in India the Brahmo-Somaj of Ramohun Roy and his successors had begun to undermine the ancient walls of creed and caste.

Spiritualism had perhaps more to do than any other single factor in producing among millions that transitional state of mind into which the granite ideas of centuries had begun to disintegrate. This Ishmael among faiths, under many names and proscriptions, is as old as the history and tradition of the race. In its modern

form it began with the mediumistic manifestations of the Fox sisters at Rochester in New York State, U.S.A., in 1848. In the ensuing twenty-five or thirty years it spread, in spite of the most relentless opposition of the orthodox Christian sects, despite the ridicule of scientific students and the incredulity of the general public, despite also the real or pretended exposures of many of the most noted mediums, until its believers were numbered by millions in America, England, France, and in lesser numbers in other countries. Most celebrated of the mediums following the Fox sisters were the Americans, Andrew Jackson Davis, his disciple Thomas Lake Harris, P. B. Randolph, Daniel Dunglas Home, the Davenport brothers, Henry Slade, Mrs. Emma H. Britten, and the Eddy brothers. All these were accused of fraud times without number, and some of them were made the victims of persecution. Nevertheless, the genuineness, variety and extent of their phenomena were attested by numbers of famous investigators of the highest character. Notable among those who from sceptical experimenters became convinced believers in the reality of the manifestations were Dr. Robert Hare of Philadelphia, Epes Sargent, Judge Edmunds, the noted lawyer, Dr. Robert Chambers, Col. Olcott, and many other men of mark in America. In England Profs. William Crookes, Alfred Russel Wallace, Lodge, C. C. Massey, Lord Borthwick, Lord Lindsay, Sergeant Cox, and other men of the highest standing accepted the evidences after searching tests. In Germany the famous Prof. Zöllner held prolonged sittings with Slade and others and published his conclusions and theories in the work, "Transcendental Physics," dealing with the phenomena as a problem in the "fourth dimension." In France the Emperor Napoleon and his wife, and in Russia the Czar and his consort became the firm friends and followers of Mr. D. D. Home. The papers of the Russian savant, Dr. A. Aksakoff, show how profound was his interest in the new phenomena. Leon-Denizarth-Hippolyte Rivail, author of numerous popular and educational scientific texts for French

schools, became so interested in the phenomena and so convinced of their value in establishing communication with discarnate intelligences, that he devoted his entire time to study and experiments. In order that the prejudices thus aroused should not interfere with his established writings and reputation he adopted the pseudonym of "Allan Kardec," by which he is now almost universally known. Contrary to the general supposition, Allan Kardec was not himself a medium. All his experiments were conducted at second hand. He published two books of enormous circulation, the "Book of Spirits," and the "Book of Mediums," both of which were translated into English. The French editions alone of "Le Livre des Esprits" attained a circulation of more than one hundred and twenty thousand copies in the twenty years following the publication of the "revised edition" in 1857. It was Allan Kardec who, more than any other, made systematic efforts to establish a philosophy of Spiritualism from the communications he obtained through carefully chosen mediums.

The spread of Spiritualism was greatly facilitated by a number of factors. It required no education, no study, no moral discipline, on the part either of the medium or the believer. Its phenomena were not essentially antagonistic to religion, and the communications received more often than otherwise repeated the platitudes of the churches. In fact nearly every noted medium or reputable proponent of the phenomena was still more or less orthodox in his acceptance of the fundamental dogmas of the Christian creeds. To the bereaved who might be more or less sceptical or indifferent to orthodox teachings regarding after-death states, Spiritualism made a profound appeal, for it offered the prospect of immediate assurance and consolation. To the materialistic and the curious-minded it offered a fascinating subject for facile experimentation. Nor can it be doubted that in the increasing dilemma of many, due to the Darwinian theory of physical evolution, Spiritualism offered an attractive middle ground of experimental evidence that enabled them, without too great sacrifice of cherished religious

convictions or logical common-sense, both to hold on to hereditary Christian ideas and to accept the theory of "evolution." And in this compromise many were doubtless moved by the example of Prof. Wallace, co-originator with Mr. Darwin of his theory. Prof. Wallace was himself a Spiritualist and a believer in Christianity, even if not altogether orthodox in his faith.

In a single generation Spiritualism, from being a pariah both as to its phenomena and its many theories, became almost respectable. Modern science, hitherto deaf, dumb and blind towards everything but the empirical acquisition of physical facts and hypotheses based on them, began, reluctantly and suspiciously, but still began, to take note of the phenomena of the metaphysical, which, if true, compelled the admission of other factors than "force and matter" as the causative agencies of the phenomenal world. But the general attitude of scientific students towards Spiritualism affords a curious parallel to the attitude of the theologians toward Darwinism: first derision and contempt, then wholesale denial and opposition, then grudging acceptance in part.

Into this mighty arena of contending forces entered H. P. Blavatsky with her Theosophical Society and her first public exposition of Theosophy. Looking backwards from the safe distance of the intervening years, something of the significance of the mighty struggle between orthodox Christianity and modern materialistic science, between both these and the changeling, Spiritualism, can now be discerned in the light of history—a light necessarily denied all the active combatants except H.P.B. herself. That she saw and foresaw what was and was to be, and was herself under no illusions, is very clearly indicated in the Preface of "Isis Unveiled" alone, without going deeper into the abundant evidences. Bitterly as theology and science might be opposed to each other with spear and trident, each was, at the last quarter of the nineteenth century, equally hostile to the new combatant, Spiritualism, armed with its net of weird phenomena and strange theories. Alone, friendly to all the gladiators, but without a solitary un-

derstanding ally among them, H.P.B. came equipped with an unknown knowledge and an unknown purpose which must serve her for both sword and shield. It was too much for her to hope, however vast the reconstructive forces loosed by her in the world of public opinion, that those forces, their source, their scope and their significance, would be grasped by any but the very few. Nor did she expect that their effect on the mind of the race would be altogether and immediately constructive, however beneficent her purpose might be. Nor could she look for other than a hostile and retardative reception at the hands of vested and mercenary interests, the ignorant and the dogmatic, the predatory and contentious. Although her aim was to elevate the mind of the race, her method could only be to deal with that mind as she found it, by trying to lead it on, step by step; by seeking out and educating a few who, appreciating the majesty of the eternal Wisdom-Religion and devoted to "the great orphan—humanity," could carry on her work with zeal and wisdom; by founding a society which, however small its numbers might be, would inject into the thought of the day the ideas, the doctrines, the nomenclature of the Wisdom-Religion.

CHAPTER II

THE PARENT THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth century was publicly inaugurated with the founding of the Theosophical Society at New York City.

By birth a Russian of noble family, Madame Blavatsky had been a wanderer for more than twenty years in many lands, oriental and occidental. She had twice or thrice been in the Americas, North and South, before coming to New York in July of 1873. She lived in retirement there and in Brooklyn for more than a year. In October of 1874 she journeyed to the Eddy farmhouse near Chittenden, Vermont, and there made the acquaintance of Col. Henry S. Olcott.

Colonel Olcott was an American and had acquired his title in the American Civil War. He had been agricultural editor of the *New York Tribune*, had written many articles for various publications on many subjects, had been admitted to the bar, and was at the time a well-known lawyer, with a very wide acquaintance among prominent men. For many years he had been a Spiritualist. Interested in an account he had seen of the manifestations taking place through the mediumship of the Eddy brothers, he had visited Chittenden in July and written an account of what he had witnessed for the *New York Sun*. This article was copied and commented on in many publications. In September Col. Olcott returned to the Eddy place under commission to investigate the phenomena and report on them to the *New York Graphic*. It was while he was engaged in this congenial work that Madame Blavatsky arrived at Chittenden.

Although Madame Blavatsky apparently took no part in the proceedings other than as a visitor and interested witness, Col. Olcott noted that the phenomena

changed greatly in character and variety immediately after her arrival. He was so impressed by what he saw and by his conversations with Madame Blavatsky that he followed up the acquaintance after her return to New York.

At the request of Madame Blavatsky he introduced to her a young lawyer of his acquaintance named William Q. Judge. Mr. Judge was of Irish parentage, and had been brought by his family to America while still a boy. From his earliest years he had been markedly religious in temperament, and, as he grew older, had delved in religions, philosophies, mystical writings, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, and kindred subjects. He was many years younger than either Madame Blavatsky or Col. Olcott, who were born, respectively, in 1831 and 1832, while Mr. Judge's birth date was 1851. Both Col. Olcott and Mr. Judge became pupils of Madame Blavatsky and passed all their available time in her company.

In the winter of 1874-5 Madame Blavatsky was in Philadelphia, where she made the acquaintance of several noted Spiritualists. With them and Col. Olcott she attended the *séances* of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes and others. Certain sceptical investigators having attacked in the press the genuineness of the Eddy and Holmes phenomena, and questioned the *bona fides* of any mediumship, both Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky replied vigorously, defending the fact of mediumship itself, and urging the necessity for impartial investigation of the claims of Spiritualism, both as to its philosophy and its alleged facts. This was Madame Blavatsky's first appearance in print in the English language. The peculiarities of her style of expression, the boldness of her statements, the apparent range of her knowledge on the subject, all conspired to attract the attention of Spiritualists, investigators, and the public generally.

In January, 1875, Col. Olcott's book, "People From the Other World," was issued, describing in detail the Eddy and Holmes phenomena, and giving a curiosity-provoking account of Madame Blavatsky. Whatever opinion any reader may form of the marvels described,

or of Col. Olcott's comments and conclusions, there can be no question of his good faith. Nor, as the book was written during the very period of the occurrences, can there be any question that it reflects accurately the opinions and state of mind of Col. Olcott at the time.

On Madame Blavatsky's return to New York from Philadelphia she took apartments at 46 Irving Place. The wonders recited by Col. Olcott and her own letters to the newspapers had drawn so much attention to her that her rooms became a center of attraction. Nearly every evening was given over to visitors. One of the newspaper reporters dubbed her apartment "the lamasery," and the name quickly became current as typifying the flavor of mystery surrounding her and the subjects discussed at her *soirées*. To these evening gatherings came Spiritualists, Kabalists, Platonists, students of modern science and of ancient mysteries, the profane, the sceptical, the curious and the seekers after the marvelous. Colonel Olcott and Mr. Judge were nearly always present, and, after the departure of the casual visitors, would remain far into the night immersed in study and discussion.

In their many conversations she told them more or less of her travels and their purpose. Amongst other experiences she had endeavored unsuccessfully to establish a group at Cairo, Egypt, in 1871, to investigate the rationale of mediumship and its phenomena. Moved by what he had seen and heard, no less than by his ardent desire to explore more deeply the phenomena which fascinated him, Col. Olcott had proposed, as early as May, 1875, to form a secret "miracle club" for the production and examination of phenomena. Colonel Olcott's own account, written many years after the event, states that the "miracle club" plan failed because the expected medium could not be obtained for the experiments he desired to conduct. The fact that he was so fascinated by the phenomena privately performed by Madame Blavatsky in exposition of her theories, that he thought her "infallible" and her Masters "miracle workers," would indicate that the "expected medium" was none other

than Madame Blavatsky herself, and that the failure of his attempt was due to her refusal, then as thereafter throughout her career, to lend herself to the production of phenomena under his or anyone's directions, or for the purposes he and others desired.

On the evening of September 7, 1875, a talk was given in Madame Blavatsky's apartment by a Mr. G. H. Felt, who had been a student of Egyptian mysticism, and who professed to be able to control "elementals." While the assemblage was discussing the talk, Col. Olcott wrote on a slip of paper which he handed to Mr. Judge these words: "Would it not be a good thing to form a society for this kind of study?" Mr. Judge read the paper, passed it to Madame Blavatsky, who nodded assent, and then Mr. Judge proposed that the assemblage come to order and that Col. Olcott act as chairman to consider the proposal. Another meeting was arranged for the following evening at Madame Blavatsky's rooms and at that time sixteen persons gave in their names as being willing to join in founding a society for Occult study. Other meetings were held at Col. Olcott's law offices, and at the residence of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten in furtherance of the proposed society. On September 13 the name, The Theosophical Society, was chosen. On October 16 a preamble and by-laws were adopted. On October 30 additional names were added to the list of "Founders," and Officers and a Council were elected. The principal Officers were Col. Olcott as President, Madame Blavatsky as Corresponding Secretary, and Mr. Judge as Counsel. On the evening of November 17 a formal meeting was held at Mott Memorial Hall, 64 Madison Avenue. Colonel Olcott delivered an "Inaugural Address" and 500 copies of this address were ordered electrotyped "for immediate distribution."

Thereafter, stated meetings continued to be held from time to time; various talks and lectures were given, much discussion ensued and many plans for experimentation in phenomena were proposed. Neither Madame Blavatsky nor Mr. Judge took any active part in the meetings after the first few sessions. The former busied

herself in correspondence, in communications to the press, in discussion with the steady stream of visitors to "the lamasery," and in the writing of "Isis Unveiled." Mr. Judge, occupied with the necessities of his daily living, gave his evenings to study under Madame Blavatsky's direction and instruction. Colonel Olcott alone was active in the meetings of the Society. Additional Fellows were admitted from time to time, both Active and Corresponding, and great efforts made to procure phenomena. Mr. Felt's promised revelations failed to materialize and after a time he left the Society, as did most of the other early members when it was found that the expectations aroused were not fulfilled. Very early in the history of the Society Mr. Felt had exacted a pledge of secrecy regarding the disclosures he had promised to make, and this was signed, at his and Col. Olcott's request, by most of the attendant Fellows. It was this pledge which was many years later published in the *New York Herald* as the original pledge of secrecy of the Theosophical Society, and afterwards incorporated in "Hours With the Ghosts," by Henry Ridgely Evans, published by Laird & Lee, Chicago, in 1897. The material for the *Herald* attacks was supplied by Mr. Henry J. Newton, one of the original Founders, who had been elected Treasurer of the Society at its inception. He was a well-known and ardent Spiritualist who became bitterly hostile to the Society after the publication of "Isis Unveiled." Others among the Founders were Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten and her husband Dr. Britten. Both were Spiritualists and Mrs. Britten was herself a versatile medium, very widely known as the author or reputed author of "Ghostland," "Art Magic," "Nineteenth Century Occultism," and other writings. She had also been active in the investigations conducted by the London "Dialectical Society," a few years previously. Another Spiritualist Founder was Mr. C. C. Massey, an English barrister and well-known writer for British spiritualist publications. On his return to London after the formation of the Society, he interested a number of others, among them the famous

W. Stainton Moses ("M.A. Oxon."), and Miss Emily Kislingbury, at that time Secretary of the British Spiritualist Association. The British Theosophical Society was established in 1876, with Mr. Massey as its first President. The members of the British Society were accepted as "Corresponding Fellows" of the Parent Society, but were not formally recognized until the summer of 1878, when John Storer Cobb, the then Recording Secretary, journeyed to London for the purpose, under commission from the Parent Society. With the exception of Miss Kislingbury nearly all the original and early London Fellows later became antagonistic. Both in London and New York nearly the entire membership consisted of Spiritualists. As phenomena were not forthcoming, as the teachings of Madame Blavatsky came to be recognized as fatal to the theory that mediumistic communications are messages from departed human beings, the great majority of Spiritualist members either silently dropped out or became the most active enemies of the new Society.

Another early Fellow was Dr. Alexander Wilder, the learned Platonist, who remained friendly to the Society and its purposes throughout his life. It was he who read the manuscript of "Isis Unveiled" and recommended its publication to Mr. J. W. Bouton. He also wrote most of the prefatory article "Before the Veil," which precedes Chapter I of Volume 1 of "Isis." In other ways, also, he was helpful to Madame Blavatsky and her mission, and his services were often gratefully referred to by her. Other early members were Rev. J. H. Wiggin, a Unitarian clergyman, Dr. Seth Pancoast of Philadelphia, a lifetime student of the Kabbala, and Major-General Abner W. Doubleday, U. S. Army, retired. General Doubleday remained a consistent and devoted member of the Society to the day of his death. He became President *pro tem.* after the departure of Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott for India, and spent much of his time in correspondence and other activities in behalf of the Society. Some unique manuscripts and rare books given by him to the original library of the

New York Society are in the possession of the writers. One of his last services was to present the Society with a complete file of the first six volumes of *The Theosophist*, completely indexed in manuscript prepared and written out by himself.

Through the labors of Madame Blavatsky, Corresponding Fellows were obtained in many lands. In this way the Ionian Theosophical Society was established at Corfu in 1877. Other activities by correspondence resulted in an affiliation with the Arya Samaj, a Hindu association originally formed for the revival of interest in the ancient scriptures and philosophical systems of India. It was presided over by the Swami, Dayanand Sarasvati, well known in his native country. Joint diplomas were issued to many Fellows of the T.S. as members of "The Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of Aryavart" (the ancient designation of India). This alliance endured until 1881, when it was ruptured and the Swami and his partisans became violent opponents to the T.S. in India. A very full account of the various difficulties is contained in the "Extra Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for July, 1882.

As originally constituted the Theosophical Society was entirely democratic in its by-laws and organization. All Officers were elective. Changes in by-laws, whether by substitution or otherwise, had first to be submitted in writing at a stated meeting at least thirty days prior to a vote, and then ratified by the affirmative action of two-thirds of the Fellows present. All nominations for Fellowship were required to be in writing, to be endorsed by two Fellows in good standing, and approved by the Council. Three classes of Fellows were provided for: Active, Corresponding and Honorary, whose nature is sufficiently indicated by their designations. The earlier Societies established after the foundation of the Parent body adopted its preamble and made additional rules and by-laws not in conflict, to suit themselves. Inter-course between the various Societies was more or less desultory and informal, but all Fellows received their diplomas from the Parent Society until branch Societies

began to be formed in India, when diplomas were signed by Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. In America diplomas were signed after 1878 by Gen. Doubleday as President *pro tem.*, and by Mr. Judge as Recording Secretary, until 1883, after which date diplomas were signed in the first instance in India or America as exigency might require, until 1885, after which time H.P.B. being in Europe, Mr. Judge in America, and Col. Olcott in India, all regular diplomas were signed in the first instance by Col. Olcott as *de facto* President of all the Theosophical Societies. Diplomas, when issued, were recognized as valid certificates of Fellowship by all lodges wherever situated.

No formal Convention of all the Societies was ever held during the existence of the Parent body, but in India a species of gathering or "Anniversary Convention" was held as early as 1880, and thereafter annually at the end of each year. These were attended by delegates from the Indian and Ceylon Lodges and by occasional visitors from Europe and America. No Sections were organized during the first ten years of the Society's history.

The Parent Theosophical Society had three declared Objects, and these were formally adopted by all subsequently formed Societies except a few of the Indian branches. Those Objects were:

I. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color;

II. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

III. The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

Assent to the First Object only was required of all Fellows, the remaining Objects being set forth as subsidiary and optional. Originally, and until as late as 1885, a form of initiation, several times changed, was used for the induction of new members, and the proceedings of the several Societies were quasi-private.

In the beginning the Parent Society and the other Theosophical bodies had no literature of their own. The Kabbala, translations of Plato, Oriental philosophies and religions, the Spiritualist publications, the numerous writings of Christian mystics, and the existent Western works on magic, hypnotism, mesmerism and related subjects supplied the only material for study.

Madame Blavatsky had begun the composition of "Isis Unveiled" in 1874, and this work she continued steadily, subject to the multifarious interruptions and activities occasioned by her increasing acquaintance and the labors incident to her work as Corresponding Secretary of the new Society. In order to be near at hand in the preparation of "Isis" for the press, Col. Olcott and his sister, Mrs. Mitchell, took rooms in the same building with Madame Blavatsky's apartment. Most of the proofs of "Isis" were read by him, and the arrangement of the text is his. Both Col. Olcott and H.P.B. were greatly hampered by the lack of works of reference, by attendant circumstances, and by special difficulties. English was a foreign tongue to H.P.B. and had never been acquired by her except in a colloquial sense in childhood. She was entirely unfamiliar with current literary usages or the exigencies of the printer's art. On his side Col. Olcott had but the slightest acquaintance with many of the subjects treated; was totally ignorant of most of the languages ancient and modern necessarily referred to, and the authors and authorities whose statements were quoted and discussed. The almost endless ramifications of theologies, philosophies and other writings referred to were for the most part unknown to him, and in many cases no exact equivalents or corresponding terms existed in English to convey the desired meanings and interpretations. A further difficulty developed in Madame Blavatsky's having occasion to rewrite large portions of the text, or to incorporate new matter in the proofs, even after the stereotype plates were cast. When the many obstacles are considered, it is remarkable that so few errors exist in the work as finally published by Mr. J. W. Bouton of New York in

the early autumn of 1877. Two editions of "Isis" were immediately exhausted, and new editions followed from the original plates for many years. An edition of "Isis" was also issued many years later by Mrs. Tingley's Theosophical organization from the original Bouton plates, with additional matter. Still another edition of "Isis" reset throughout has been published by the same organization. An entirely new edition was also issued in London in 1907 by the Theosophical Publishing Society, affiliated with Mrs. Besant's Theosophical organization.

Some corrections of the more glaring errors in the original Bouton editions of "Isis" were made at various times by Madame Blavatsky, in *The Theosophist*, *The Path* and *Lucifer*, but the original plates, not being owned by her, could not be corrected.

"Isis Unveiled" having been completed and the Society in America being on as firm a footing as possible, active preparations began to carry its propaganda to other countries where beginnings had already been made. Accordingly, a little over a year after the publication of "Isis," Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott sailed for India as a "committee" of the Society. A fortnight's stay was made in London, arrangements were made at Paris for the immediate formation of "The Theosophical Society of French Spiritists," and the two Founders proceeded on their way, arriving at Bombay, India, February 16, 1879.

Almost at once accessions to the Society began in India, both among English residents and Hindus. Learned members of the various sects and castes, pundits, professors of the various schools of Hindu philosophy, Indian rulers, writers, lawyers, gave their adhesion to the Society. Among noted English Fellows in India were Major-General Morgan, British Army, retired, and his wife; Mr. A. O. Hume, late Secretary to the Government of India; and Mr. A. P. Sinnett, editor of the leading pro-Government organ, the Allahabad *Pioneer*. In October of 1879 Madame Blavatsky began the publication of *The Theosophist*. The magazine soon attained a wide

circulation not only in India, but in Europe and America as well. In 1881 Mr. Sinnett's book, "The Occult World," was published at London. It was subsequently republished in America, and passed through many editions. It was followed in 1883 by "Esoteric Buddhism," which circulated as extensively. In India, "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy, No. 1," was issued in 1882, and "No. 2" a year later. In 1881 Col. Olcott published his "Buddhist Catechism," a work which was later adopted as accurate by both the Northern and Southern wings of the Buddhist faith, and which speedily passed through a score of editions and is still being published. In the period from 1879 to 1884 there were established in India and Ceylon an even hundred Theosophical Societies. For the first time in recorded history, some approach to fellowship in a common society with a common aim was brought about amongst members of sects and castes which from time immemorial had considered it a sin and a degradation to meet and mingle on equal terms.

Correspondence with the Parent, the British and the French Societies, and with H.P.B., resulted in the formation of several additional Societies in America and Europe in the first decade of the Movement. Thus the "St. Thomas" Society in the Danish West Indies was formed in 1881, the "Post Nubila Lux" Society at The Hague, Holland, the "Odessa Group" in Russia in 1883, the "Scottish" at Ayre, the "Germania" at Elberfeld, in 1884. The Queensland Society in Australia was formed in 1881. In the United States the first Society established after the Parent body was the Rochester T.S., organized in July, 1882, by the efforts of Mrs. J. W. Cables. The first publication in America devoted to Theosophical subjects was *The Occult Word*, the first number of which was issued by Mrs. Cables in April, 1884. The "Pioneer" T.S. was formed at St. Louis in the summer of 1883, and the "Gnostic" at Washington, D. C., in 1884.

Madame Blavatsky's first work was with the Spiritualists. When her powerful voice was raised in their

defense, when she demanded that their wonders should be investigated with an open mind, their claims examined impartially, she was hailed as a friend, as an ally, as a champion of the new dispensation. When it was noised about through the indiscreet but well-meant laudations of Col. Olcott that she was herself a medium *par excellence*, she was acclaimed as a prophet. Her *soirées* and her Society were crowded with the rush of seekers demanding a sign. But when she refused to produce the hoped-for marvels; when in her conversations and letters to the press she hinted at other and truer explanations of the phenomena than "communications from the dead"; when she uttered veiled warnings regarding the dangers of mediumship, she was listened to with surprise, with incredulity, with suspicions. And when at last "Isis Unveiled" was issued, a fierce revulsion set in, increasing as the years went on. She was denounced by some Spiritualists as a traitor to the "cause," and slandered by others as a mere cheating trickster, not even an honest medium. Nearly every Spiritualist who had entered the Society departed from it, and she was generally regarded quite as much the foe of Spiritualism as of orthodox religion or materialistic science. It is of more than passing significance that in every case the chief enemies of H.P.B. and her teachings, both within and without the original Theosophical Society and the many organizations which still employ that name, have been persons who were Spiritualists, or whose natural tendencies have been in that direction. All the many attacks upon her name and fame throughout all the years can be traced back to their source either in Spiritualists or those addicted to mediumship and its practices.

What, then, were her earliest expositions of Theosophy, which sufficed on the one hand to provide the material for the growth and study of the members of the Theosophical Society, and, on the other hand, drew upon her devoted head from the very first, a series of attacks which, gradually increasing in range and intensity, culminated in the tremendous explosions of 1884-5? No student of the Theosophical Movement can afford to

neglect the most painstaking examination of "Isis Unveiled." To a summary of its most important contents we may now turn our attention profitably, the collateral and accompanying circumstances having been outlined.

CHAPTER III

"ISIS UNVEILED"

"ISIS UNVEILED" is stated on its title page to be "a master-key to the mysteries of ancient and modern science and theology." In the body of the work there are said to be seven of these keys to the mysteries of Nature and of Man, of which one only is given. The volumes are dedicated to "The Theosophical Society which was founded to study the subjects on which they treat."

By correlating the work to the Three Objects of the Society a clear light may be had on the method of treatment employed. Volume 1 has for its general subject "Science," and in that respect relates strictly to the Third Object. Volume 2 is entitled "Theology," and relates to the Second Object. But as both science and theology relate to the great objects of human inquiry, the treatment is inter-woven and inter-blended throughout. As all inquiry presents two general poles, the ascertainment of facts and the consideration of their meaning and relations, so "Isis" takes up the acquisitions of modern scientific research and the theories and hypotheses built up to account for ascertained physical phenomena; the revelations and claims of the various religions, particularly the Christian, are examined, and their theologies (or theories to account for metaphysical phenomena) are analyzed.

The work is necessarily addressed to the most open-minded of the race, and the method pursued is necessarily adapted to the limitations of those minds. It is not so much the introduction of new evidence that is attempted, as the partial presentation of an entirely new (to Western minds) hypothesis to explain the evidence that already exists in the general fund of human experience.

In the course of the work it is demonstrated over and over again that the dogmas of the sects are not only mutually contradictory and destructive, but, as well, that sound philosophical principles, correct logic and the proved facts of modern science are in direct and overwhelming opposition to the claims and pretensions of theology. The same method of examination is also applied to the "working hypotheses" of modern science, and the various theories are tested out by comparison, one with another, all with the facts of experience. It is conclusively established that, no more than theology, can the philosophy of modern science stand the light of searching investigation. The believer in theology or science is furthermore shown by masses of indisputable testimony that certain facts exist and always have existed, which are in themselves absolutely destructive alike of the claims of orthodox religion and materialistic science; that these facts have been persistently overlooked, ignored or denied, both by the votaries of "revealed religion" and of modern "exact science"; yet that these disregarded facts have at all times been uniformly testified to by the noblest minds of the race no less than by the common belief of mankind. Side by side, therefore, with the introduction of the affirmative evidence of these facts is placed the testimony of the ages as to their bearing on the great subjects of religion, philosophy and science, and the inference is drawn that there has always existed, from the remotest times, a system whose teachings in regard to Nature and to Man are inclusive of all things and exclusive of nothing. This system Madame Blavatsky denominates the Hermetic philosophy, or Wisdom-Religion, and declares that her work and mission are a "plea for the recognition of the Wisdom-Religion as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology." The work itself is the evidence that she uses the word "plea" in its strictly legal and forensic sense. "Isis" contains the testimony, the analysis of the evidence, the arguments, and the citations of principles, laws and precedents. The work is "submitted to public judgment" upon its inherent

reasonableness as to its conclusions, its verifiable accuracy as to the facts, and not upon any assumed authority.

Turning ever and anon from the purely inductive method which characterizes the work generally, Madame Blavatsky submits some of the principal tenets of the Wisdom-Religion, which she names THEOSOPHY, and shows that there is more than ample ground, from evidence accessible to the general student, to justify the statements she makes, that the Wisdom-Religion underlies and antedates every religion, every philosophy, every system of thought, every science known to mankind, and that all these have in point of fact sprung from periodical impartations of portions of the Secret Doctrines by its Adept custodians.

"Isis" is in no sense put forward by its writer as an inference, a revelation, or a speculation, although the burden of its mighty contents is necessarily largely assumed to prove that the existence of Adepts and a Wisdom-Religion is the unavoidable inference from the testimony; the prior missions and messages of great Adepts the indubitable source of the great religions and the common belief in gods, saviors and redeemers; their teachings regarding the "mysteries" the real fountain whence have been drawn the materials for the philosophical and ethical treatises of the great writers of all times. She shows that everywhere, from the remotest antiquity, there are abundant indications that the arts and sciences as re-discovered in our times, were known and practiced by the "wise men of old"; furthermore, that much was "known" to the ancients concerning certain sciences and arts now "unknown" even to the most advanced science and scientists of our day. And although popular religion, philosophy and science became in time polluted with purely human speculations and fancies, "Isis" shows that they all started originally as clear and unadulterated streams from the mother source. What was originally a teaching depending on knowledge and inspiration degenerated in time into mere dogmas and speculations; what was originally a Teacher of primeval

truths became in time an object of veneration and worship as a god or a divine incarnation.

With these considerations in mind something may be grasped of the epochal importance of Madame Blavatsky's first great work, and of the leading statements of Occultism embodied in it. Although "Isis Unveiled" has been before the world for nearly half a century few, even among Theosophists, have as yet assimilated more than a few crumbs from this "storehouse of thought."

The plan of the work is early stated. The object is not to force upon the public the personal views or theories of the author, nor does it aim at creating a revolution in some department of thought:

It is rather a brief summary of the religions, philosophies, and universal traditions of human kind, and the *exegesis* of the same, in the spirit of those *secret doctrines*, of which none—thanks to prejudice and bigotry—have reached Christendom in so unmutated a form as to secure it a fair judgment. Hence the unmerited contempt into which the study of the noblest of sciences—that of the *spiritual man*—has gradually fallen.

In undertaking to inquire into the assumed infallibility of Modern Science and Theology, the author has been forced, even at the risk of being thought discursive, to make constant comparison of the ideas, achievements, and pretensions of their representatives with those of the ancient philosophies and religious teachers. Things the most widely separated as to time have thus been brought into immediate juxtaposition, for only thus could the priority and parentage of discoveries and dogmas be determined. In discussing the merits of our scientific contemporaries, their own confessions of failure in experimental research, of baffling mysteries, of missing links in their chains of theory, of inability to comprehend natural phenomena, of ignorance of the laws of the causal world,

have furnished the basis for the present study. Especially we will review the speculations and policy of noted authorities in connection with those modern psychological phenomena [Spiritualism] which began at Rochester and have now overspread the world. *We wish to show how inevitable were their innumerable failures, and how they must continue until these pretended authorities go to the Brahmins and Lamaists of the far Orient, and respectfully ask them to impart the alphabet of true science.*

Deeply sensible of the Titanic struggle that is now in progress between materialism and the spiritual aspirations of mankind, our constant endeavor has been to gather into our several chapters, like weapons into armories, every fact and argument that can be used to aid the latter in defeating the former. Sickly and deformed child as it now is, the materialism of Today is born of the brutal Yesterday. Unless its growth is arrested it may become our master. To prevent the crushing of these spiritual aspirations, the blighting of these hopes, and the deadening of that intuition which teaches us of a God and a hereafter, we must show our false theologies in their naked deformity, and distinguish between divine religion and human dogmas. Our voice is raised for spiritual freedom, and our plea made for enfranchisement from all tyranny, whether of SCIENCE or THEOLOGY.

The work plunges forthwith into the comparison of the ancient Occult tenets both with modern theological dogmas and modern scientific theories. Some of the tenets laid down are as follows:

I. The pre-existence of *spiritual* man clothed in a body of ethereal matter, and with the ability to commune freely with the now unseen universes.

II. An almost incredible antiquity is claimed for the human race in its various "coats of skin," and the great

doctrine of Cycles of Destiny (Karma) is emphasized, as well as that these Cycles do not affect all mankind at one and the same time, thus explaining the rise and fall of civilizations and the existence at one and the same time of the most highly developed races side by side with tribes sunk in savagery.

III. A double evolution, spiritual and intellectual as well as physical, is postulated whose philosophy alone can reconcile spirit and matter and cause each to demonstrate the other mathematically.

IV. The doctrine of the *Metempsychosis* of the spiritual and mental Man is given as the key which will supply every missing link in the theories of the modern evolutionists, as well as the mysteries of the various religions. The lower orders of evolution are declared to have emanated from higher spiritual ones before they develop. It is affirmed that if men of science and theologians had properly understood the doctrine of Metempsychosis in its application to the indestructibility of matter and the immortality of spirit it would have been perceived that this doctrine is a sublime conception. It is demonstrated that there has not been a philosopher of any note who did not hold to this doctrine of Metempsychosis as taught by the Brahmins, Buddhists, and later by the Pythagoreans and the Gnostics, *in its esoteric sense*. For lack of comprehension of this great philosophical principle the methods of modern science, however exact, *must end in nullity*.

V. The ancients knew far more concerning certain sciences than our modern savants have yet discovered. *Magic* is as old as man. The calculations of the ancients applied equally to the *spiritual* progress of humanity as to the physical. Magic was considered a divine science which led to a participation in the attributes of Divinity itself. "As above, so it is below. That which has been will return again. As in heaven, so on earth." The revolution of the physical world is attended by a like revolution in the world of intellect—the spiritual evolution proceeding in Cycles, like the physical one. The great kingdoms and empires of the world after reach-

ing the culmination of their greatness, descend again, *in accordance with the same law by which they ascended*; till, having reached the lowest point, humanity re-asserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended.

VI. Too many of our thinkers do not consider that the numerous changes in language, the allegorical phrases and evident secretiveness of old Mystic writers, who were generally under an obligation never to divulge the solemn secrets of the sanctuary, might have sadly misled translators and commentators. One day they may learn to know better, and so become aware that the method of extreme necessarianism was practiced in ancient as well as in modern philosophy; that *from the first ages of man, the fundamental truths of all that we are permitted to know on earth were in the safe keeping of the adepts of the sanctuary; that the difference in creeds and religious practice was only external; and that those guardians of the primitive divine revelation, who had solved every problem that is within the grasp of human intellect, were bound together by a universal freemasonry of science and philosophy, which formed one unbroken chain around the globe.*

The first chapter of Volume 1, from which we have extracted the several statements which we have here numbered for their better massing and comprehension, closes with a forecast, drawn from the study of the past:

The moment is more opportune than ever for the review of old philosophies. Archaeologists, philologists, astronomers, chemists and physicists are getting nearer to the point where they will be forced to consider them. Physical sci-

ence has already reached its limits of exploration; dogmatic theology sees the springs of its inspiration dry. Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. *The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin*, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof that

“If ancestry can be in aught believed,
Descending spirits have conversed with
man,
And told him secrets of the world
unknown.”

If we turn now to the twelfth and last chapter of Volume 2 of “Isis,” we shall be confronted with an introductory paragraph, also prophetic at the time of its writing, now all too truly a matter of both theosophical and profane history. She there says:

It would argue small discernment on our part were we to suppose that we have been followed thus far through this work by any but metaphysicians, or mystics of some sort. Were it otherwise, we should certainly advise such to spare themselves the trouble of reading this chapter; for, although nothing is said that is not strictly true, they would not fail to regard the least wonderful of the narratives as absolutely false, however substantiated.

The chapter follows with a recapitulation of the principles of natural law, covered by the fundamental propositions of the Oriental philosophy as successively eluci-

dated in the course of the work. She states them in numbered order as follows:

I. There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law—eternal, immutable, ever-active. This “immutable law” is frequently referred to throughout the volumes under such terms as cycles, the “law of compensation,” Karma, “self-made destiny,” and so on. Its mode of operation is incessantly discussed in treating of the rise and fall of civilizations, successive races of men, earth transformations, the three-fold principle of evolution, Spiritual, Mental, and Physical; the compound nature of man and the universe; and in such terminology as pre-existence, metempsychosis, transmigration, reincarnation, evolution, transformation, permutation, emanation, immortality, and after-death states and conditions. Constant effort is made to keep before the reader the unvarying principle that spiritual and mental evolution proceeds apace with physical manifestations, and stands to physical evolution in the relation of cause to effect. This is all summarized in the second proposition.

II. Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective Nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing Nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit*, source of all forces, alone eternal and indestructible. The lower two constantly change; the higher third does not. This universal postulate is then applied specifically to human nature and evolution in the third proposition.

III. Man is also triune: he has his objective, physical body, his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third—the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity. The argument throughout the two large volumes of “Isis” is always that such mergence or union is possible and is the underlying purpose of all evolution; that such beings as Jesus, Buddha and others had in fact arrived at this consummation, and

that the real mission of the Founders of all religions is to point mankind to the purpose of Mental and Spiritual evolution, and give the directions and conditions precedent to the “perfectibility of man.” Such exalted beings are by H. P. Blavatsky variously called the sages, the Adepts, the Great Souls of all time. Their knowledge of Nature and of Nature’s laws is called in its entirety the Wisdom-Religion, and its practical exemplification is summarized in the fourth proposition.

IV. and V. Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over Nature’s forces may be acquired by the individual while still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice. Granting that great powers exist in Nature, and that the conscious control over these powers may be attained by the incarnated being through metaphysical means, it follows that such control may be exercised beneficently or maleficiently. Arcane knowledge misapplied is sorcery, or “Black Magic”; beneficently used, true Magic or Wisdom. In either case it constitutes Adeptship, whether of the *Right-* or the *Left-hand* Path. This is the fifth proposition, and the text of the two volumes contains almost numberless direct and indirect references to celebrated characters in history, tradition and myth who exemplified the two characters of Adeptship.

VI. This proposition sets forth that Mediumship is the opposite of Adeptship. Whereas the Adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies, the Medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences. There is no more important practical theorem in the whole work. Many, many pages are devoted to discussion of the characteristics, tendencies, practices and fruits of mediumship. Its phenomena, objective and subjective, are dealt with at length. Spiritualism, or mediumship, is shown to have been prevalent in all ages, no matter under what names known, and its recurrence, whether in individual cases or amongst masses of men, is shown to be subject to cyclic law, now more generally known to The-

osophical students under its Sanskrit designation of Karma. In Mediumship, as in Adeptship, it is shown that there are two polar antitheses, dependent on the moral character of the medium for the quality and range no less than the effects, good or bad, of its exercise.

The remaining numbered propositions of the last chapter of Volume 2 will be considered in other connections later on,¹ but their essential nature and implications are contained in the following sentences, without the basic apprehension of which no inquiry into Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement can be fruitful of understanding, however it may afford information:

To sum up all in a few words, Magic is spiritual Wisdom; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. *One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will.* The adept can stimulate the movements of the natural forces in plants and animals in a preternatural degree. Such experiments are not obstructions of nature, but quickenings; the conditions of intenser vital action are given.

The adept can control the sensations and alter the conditions of the physical and astral bodies of other persons not adepts; he can also govern and employ, as he chooses, the spirits of the elements. *He cannot control the immortal spirit of any human being, living or dead, for all such spirits are alike sparks of the Divine Essence, and not subject to any foreign domination.*

The restrictions with which the information conveyed in "Isis" is hedged about, both from the standpoint of the teacher endeavoring to impart and the inquirer endeavoring to learn, and the dangers, known or unknown to the latter, are indicated towards the close of the chapter:

¹ See Chapter XXXIII.

By those who have followed us thus far, it will naturally be asked, to what practical issue this book tends; much has been said about magic and its potentiality, much of the immense antiquity of its practice. Do we wish to affirm that the occult sciences ought to be studied and practiced throughout the world? Would we replace modern spiritualism with the ancient magic? Neither; the substitution could not be made, nor the study universally prosecuted, without incurring the risk of enormous public dangers.

We would have neither scientists, theologians nor spiritualists turn practical magicians, but all to realize that there was true science, profound religion, and genuine phenomena before this modern era. We would that all who have a voice in the education of the masses should first know and then *teach* that the safest guides to human happiness and enlightenment are those writings which have descended to us from the remotest antiquity; and that nobler spiritual aspirations and a higher average morality prevail in the countries where the people have taken their precepts as the rule of their lives. We would have all to realize that magical, i.e., spiritual powers exist in every man, and those few to practice them who feel called to teach, and are ready to pay the price of discipline and self-conquest which their development exacts.

Many men have arisen who had glimpses of the truth, and fancied they had it all. Such have failed to achieve the good they might have done and sought to do, because vanity has made them thrust their personality into such undue prominence as to interpose it between their believers and the *whole* truth that lay behind. The world needs no sectarian church, whether of Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, Swedenborg, Calvin, or any other. There being but ONE Truth, man requires but one church—the Temple of God within

us, walled in by matter but penetrable by any one who can find the way; *the pure in heart see God. The trinity of nature is the lock of magic; the trinity of man the key that fits it.* Within the solemn precincts of the sanctuary the SUPREME had and has no name. It is unthinkable and unpronounceable; and yet every man finds in himself his god.

Besides, there are many good reasons why the study of magic, except in its broad philosophy, is nearly impracticable in Europe and America. Magic being what it is, the most difficult of all sciences to learn experimentally—its acquisition is, practically, beyond the reach of the majority of white-skinned people; and that, whether their effort is made at home or in the East. Probably not more than one man in a million of European blood is fitted—either physically, morally, or psychologically—to become a practical magician, and not one in ten millions would be found endowed with all these three qualifications as required for the work. Unlike other sciences, a theoretical knowledge of formulæ without mental capacities or soul powers, is utterly useless in magic. The spirit must hold in complete subjection the combativeness of what is loosely termed educated reason, until facts have vanquished cold human sophistry.

The concluding pages of "Isis" recite that those best prepared to appreciate Occultism are the Spiritualists, although, through prejudice, they have hitherto been the bitterest opponents to its introduction to public notice. She sums up thus:

Despite all foolish negations and denunciations their phenomena are real. Despite, also, their own assertions they are wholly misunderstood by themselves. The totally insufficient theory of the constant agency of disembodied hu-

man spirits in their production has been the bane of the Cause. A thousand mortifying rebuffs have failed to open their reason or intuition to the truth. Ignoring the teachings of the past, they have discovered no substitute. We offer them philosophical deduction instead of unverifiable hypothesis, scientific analysis and demonstration instead of indiscriminating faith. Occult philosophy gives them the means of meeting the reasonable requirements of science, and frees them from the humiliating necessity to accept the oracular teachings of "intelligences," which as a rule have less intelligence than a child at school. So based and so strengthened, modern phenomena would be in a position to command the attention and enforce the respect of those who carry with them public opinion. Without invoking such help, spiritualism must continue to vegetate, equally repulsed—not without cause—both by scientists and theologians. In its modern aspect it is neither a science, a religion, nor a philosophy.

With this outline of the teaching of Occultism as contained in "Isis Unveiled"; its overwhelming arraignment out of the mouths of their own exponents, of the religion, science and philosophy of the day; its outspoken treatment of dogmatic Christianity, of materialistic hypotheses, of the phenomena and theories of Spiritualism, the student can begin to comprehend the enormous difficulties faced by H.P.B. in gaining a foothold for the Theosophical Society and a hearing for her teachings of Theosophy. Her task was not that of a teacher in a kindergarten: to meet and lead plastic and unsullied minds eager with interest, unburdened with preconceptions, into new and delightful paths of occupation and learning. Far from it. Rather it was that of the alienist in a mad world, its insane inhabitants soaked through and through with their several illusions, each profoundly certain of the truth of his own particular

mania, profoundly convinced of the hallucination of all others; each looking at the phenomena of life through the distorted lenses of fundamental misconceptions. Regardless of names and forms, she had to reckon with the fact, from the standpoint of the teachings of Occultism, that everywhere, the men of the Western world were fast fixed in false beliefs, taking that to be the Eternal which is not eternal; that to be Soul which is not soul; that to be Pure which is impure; that to be Good which is evil. She had to destroy while seeming to create, to create while seeming to destroy.

Looking back from the present basis of tolerated if not accepted ideas, it is only by the contrast that the supreme miracle of her wisdom can be even faintly sensed. The *identity* of man with the Supreme Spirit; the doctrine of Cycles, the law of Compensation; Spiritual and Intellectual as well as physical evolution; *inherent* immortality, metempsychosis; the Spiritual Brotherhood of all beings, Adepts as the culmination of the triple evolutionary scheme in Nature; Spirit and Matter as the eternal dual presentment of evolving Consciousness, the polar aspects of the One Essence—all these great and supreme ideas she and none other restored to a vital place in human thought. The *words* existed—mummified forms from the by-gone Past, wrapped in the thousand cerements of the sects. As in the Talmudic legend, she breathed upon the clay, breathed into it the breath of life. Or, better, as in the story of Joseph, she made the dead come forth from the tomb, clothed in the habiliments in which the living dead had buried him against a far-off impossible resurrection.

Much has been written by Theosophists—those who owe their all to her and her work—that the H.P.B. of 1875 was not the H.P.B. of later days; that she, like themselves, was but a student, stumbling, halting, groping, finding her way through failures and mistakes; that it was only in later years that she came to learn of this, of that, of reincarnation among other matters; that many contradictions will be found in "Isis" when compared with her final teachings.

The inquirer into facts and philosophies has but to read "Isis," to annotate its teachings, to compare them with all her subsequent multifarious writings to see and know for himself that the teachings of "Isis" are her unchanging teachings; that not in jot or in tittle is there a contradiction or a disagreement in all she ever wrote; that in "Isis" are the foundational statements of Occultism. All her later writings are but extensions, ramifications, the orderly development and unfolding of what is both explicit and implicit in "Isis Unveiled." Study and comparison will do more: it will give the student a solid and impregnable standard from which to survey the real nature and character of the Avatar of the nineteenth century; a criterion by which, as well, truly to measure the understanding, the nature and the development of those disciples, students and followers of H.P.B. of whom she might well have repeated in the words of Blake on "certain friends":

I found them blind; I taught them how to see;
And now they neither know themselves nor me.

The facts being ascertained, and some faint perception of their significance being grasped, the student needs no interpreter to tell him that obstacles, opposition, misunderstanding, contumely, hatred and misrepresentation were unavoidable concomitants of every step in the progress of the Theosophical Society, no less than in the path of her whose mission it was to be its "presiding deity." The chief of these difficulties have now to be considered.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY DAYS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

At first glance the Objects of the Theosophical Society might be assumed to be in themselves so manifestly beneficial and, negatively speaking, so entirely harmless as at once to commend them to the good-will if not to the active support of all men everywhere. To draw this conclusion, however, is unfortunately to be blind to the lessons of human history; is to be ignorant of the forces which dominate the operations of human consciousness.

Selfishness, in one or another of its countless forms, is and at all times has been the prevailing keynote of human action. Many have been the attempts to form enduring associations having for their prime object the realization of an actual nucleus of universal brotherhood among men. To unite firmly a body of men in brotherly love bent on pure altruistic work has been the dream of many high-souled men and women. Whatever of progress and amelioration has been achieved for the race from time to time has been due to such efforts. But in their durable purpose they have all failed of the great object, and humanity is today waiting as vainly as ever for the accomplishment of the most holy and most important mission that has ever commanded the devotion of the savior, the philanthropist and the martyr. Disruptive pressures from without, disintegrating forces from within, have in the end made mock and havoc of every attempt to embody practically what all men reverence as the noblest of ideals. Yet the ideal persists, though its successive incarnations wither and decay.

It cannot, then, be supposed that H. P. Blavatsky was in ignorance or misconception of the gigantic task she set for herself in the endeavor to create among men a Society which should have for its primary purpose the

formation of a nucleus of actual Brotherhood. Nor is it to be imagined that she was indifferent to or unacquainted with the causes of all former failures in that direction. The Second and Third Objects of the Society have their real foundation in her understanding of the causes of all failures among men to achieve their heart's ideal. So long as men find occasion for frictions and antagonisms, rather than grounds for union and harmony, in what they believe and practice in the name of religion, so long will they be fundamentally at variance. So long as their ideas of knowledge—of true science—are confined to mere bodily existence, so long will all attempts at brotherhood degenerate into sordid search for material well-being, for physical and intellectual progress and development only. Faith and knowledge, instead of being natural allies, will pursue opposed courses, religion and science take mutually destructive paths, the ideal and the practical seem to be separated by an impassable gulf.

All these things are clearly, if succinctly, indicated in the Preface to the first volume of "Isis Unveiled." Never in all her vast outpour of teaching and practical example did Madame Blavatsky place on record anything of more enduring and far-reaching worth than the propositions and implications of this Preface. After dedicating "these volumes to the Theosophical Society, which was formed in New York, A. D. 1875, to study the subjects on which they treat," her first words are an affirmation of the existence of Masters, of the Wisdom-Religion, of her own intimate acquaintance with Them and with Their philosophy:

The work now submitted to public judgment is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science.

Here is implied the existence of an actual Brotherhood of living men, of perfected human beings who have become such through self-induced and self-devised exertions; herein is affirmed the perfectibility of man, the possibility of a fraternity of peace and good-will through

the means and the example afforded by acquaintance with and study of these Adepts and their science. Centuries of sectarian theological teachings that man is a poor miserable sinner, inherently imperfect and never by any possibility to become perfect save through an act of faith in a vicarious Saviour; centuries of materialism in thought and action on a one-life basis—over against these deeply imbedded and dominating ideas is set, sheer and clear, the *fact of Masters*; not as some far-off, remote abstraction, some longed-for but impossible ideal, some unique and special creation of a favoring God, but veritable Divine Beings who have reached physical and mental, no less than moral and spiritual, perfection *under Law*. Here is the tremendous assurance that the realization of Brotherhood is not an impossibility to any man who will follow the path They show, by creating in and of himself the conditions precedent to the acquisition of Their knowledge and nature.

What those conditions precedent are is indicated in the succeeding sentences:

It is offered to such as are willing to accept truth wherever it may be found, and to defend it, even looking popular prejudice straight in the face. It is an attempt to aid the student to detect the vital principles which underlie the philosophical systems of old.

All men are willing to accept truth, but each is predisposed to determine for himself the terms and conditions upon which he will base his acceptance. Each man holds, consciously or unconsciously to himself, certain fundamental ideas as to Deity, Nature and Man. He will, by consequence, accept only so much of truth as may conform to those ideas, modifying or rejecting all else. As those fundamental conceptions proceed from human ignorance and partialities, the true vital principles which *underlie* the race-old systems of thought must be detected. That cannot be for any man so long as he clings to forms of religion and philosophy which separate instead of

unite mankind in the bonds of true fraternity. The Second Object, the study for comparative purposes of the various religions and philosophies, will lead to the perception of the common vital principles upon which all faiths are founded. In this comparative study the searcher for truth must emulate the plan and purpose of "Isis," which is written "in all sincerity. It is meant to do even justice, and to speak the truth alike without malice or prejudice. But it shows neither mercy for enthroned error, nor reverence for usurped authority. Toward no form of worship, no religious faith, no scientific hypothesis has its criticism been directed in any other spirit. Men and parties, sects and schools are but the mere ephemera of the world's day. ΤΑΥΡΑ, high-seated upon its rock of adamant, is alone eternal and supreme." Unless the inquirer adopts and maintains the spirit of "Isis," he cannot rid himself of prejudice, of preconception, of bias and self-interest—the real barriers to knowledge and to Brotherhood.

The Third Object runs current with the following clauses of the noble Preface:

We believe in no Magic which transcends the scope and capacity of the human mind, nor in "miracle," whether divine or diabolical, if such imply a transgression of the laws of nature instituted from all eternity. Nevertheless, we accept the saying of the gifted author of "Festus," that the human heart has not yet fully uttered itself, and that we have never attained or even understood the extent of its powers. Is it too much to believe that man should be developing new sensibilities and a closer relation with nature? The logic of evolution must teach as much, if carried to its legitimate conclusions. If, somewhere, in the line of ascent from vegetable or ascidian to the noblest man a soul was evolved, gifted with intellectual qualities, it cannot be unreasonable to believe and infer that a faculty of perception is also growing in man, enabling

him to descry facts and truths even beyond our ordinary ken.

He who would pass behind the "veil of Isis," and learn to fathom the mysteries of Nature and of Man, must boldly take his stand in advance of the science of our times and proceed to the study of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man. The quoted sentences postulate the omnipresent existence of immutable Law; do away with the idea of miraculous intervention in human or mundane affairs; affirm the inherent capacity of the mind of man for such development of its faculties as shall enable him to penetrate the arcana of being; to understand, and understanding, control the phenomena of Nature and of his own consciousness, without which true Brotherhood must forever remain a longed-for but inaccessible Utopia.

The Second and Third Objects thus constitute the ways and means by which alone the great First Object may be consummated. Viewed from the standpoint of religions which teach that enduring happiness is possible only beyond the grave, or from that of a science which inculcates that earthly existence and earthly knowledge are all that are accessible to man, all the Objects of the Theosophical Society are alike futile, because impossible of attainment. Considered from the basis of the ordinary man those Objects are equally useless or unsatisfactory, because they all imply and require the giving up of objects and possessions counted valuable; at best in exchange for something remote and intangible, yielding no personal or selfish benefit; at worst the loss of what one holds dear without any return but failure.

Here, then, the Preface predicates the true and enduring foundation for the seeker's faith and efforts. The philosophy of the Adepts is given:

They showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid. For the first time we re-

ceived the assurance that the Oriental philosophy has room for no other faith than an absolute and immovable faith in the omnipotence of man's own immortal self. We were taught that this omnipotence comes from the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Soul—God! The latter, they said, can never be demonstrated but by the former. Man-spirit proves God-spirit, as the one drop of water proves a source from whence it must have come. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God!

Every attempt to establish a religion on the fundamental conception that man is inherently fallible and sinful, every attempt to understand Nature on the theory that man is inherently mortal and finite, must end in failure. But once the stand is taken that there is an *immortal self* in man, its limitless potentialities for knowledge and power (true religion and true science) follow; the Three Objects of H. P. Blavatsky seem no longer a vain attempt at hitching of the earthly wagon to the firmamental lights; a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood becomes the one thing to be striven for, because seen to be eternally possible and eternally desirable; the immortal is substituted for the mortal as basis and as structure, as object and as subject.

The fact of Adepts grasped, the fact of the Wisdom-Religion recognized, he only is in any real sense a Fellow of the real Theosophical Society who sets out to perform the work of clearance standing in the way of his own realization of both. By the study of the Wisdom-Religion of these Elder Brothers says H.P.B., "science, theology, every human hypothesis and conception born of imperfect knowledge, lost forever their authoritative character" in her sight. The same result must take place in the student, else the Second and Third Objects of the Society have been misconstrued in their purpose, will fail of their mission with him, and the First Object be as far off as ever from realization by him. Unless this position

is assumed it will remain hidden from him, as she says it always has been hidden, "from those who overlooked it, derided it, or denied its existence." Encouragement is offered to prosecute the search and the effort, and the explanation made of her mission at this time in the words, "the day of domineering over men with dogmas has reached its gloaming. The drift of modern thought is palpably in the direction of liberalism in religion as well as in science. Each day brings the reactionists nearer to the point where they must surrender the despotic authority over the public conscience, which they have so long exercised and enjoyed."

Nevertheless, she well realized that all the forces of reaction, within as well as without the Society, would fight to the death against the hearing and the spread of the ideas she came to impart. So she says, prophetic at the time, facts of history now:

To show that we do not at all conceal from ourselves the gravity of our undertaking, we may say in advance that it would not be strange if the following classes should array themselves against us:

The Christians, who will see that we question the evidences of the genuineness of their faith.

The scientists, who will find their pretensions placed in the same bundle with those of the Roman Catholic Church for infallibility, and, in certain particulars, the sages and philosophers of the ancient world classed higher than they.

Pseudo-scientists will, of course, denounce us furiously.

Broad Churchmen and Freethinkers will find that we do not accept what they do, but demand recognition of the whole truth.

Men of letters and various *authorities*, who hide their real belief in deference to popular prejudices.

The mercenaries and parasites of the Press,

who prostitute its more than royal power, and dishonor a noble profession, will find it easy to mock at things too wonderful for them to understand; for to them the price of a paragraph is more than the value of sincerity. From many will come honest criticism; from many—cant. But we look to the future. We repeat again—we are laboring for the brighter morrow.

Once a clear apprehension is gained of what is actually implied in the Three Objects of the Theosophical Society, and of what is involved in the attempt to apply them, the student will have no difficulty in determining how absolutely dependent the Society was for its life and sustenance on the teachings imparted by H. P. Blavatsky, if it were not to fail utterly as a vehicle of Brotherhood, whatever other success it might incidentally achieve. The same understanding will make plain that external and internal difficulties were inseparable from its every effort toward even a measurable and partial realization of those objects.

The effect upon the Spiritualists has already been foreshadowed in a general way. Convinced as they were of the reality of metaphysical phenomena; multitudinous, conflicting and oftentimes grotesque as were the theories formulated or accepted to account for them, the "forces of reaction," that is to say, of pre-conception and bias, had already ascribed all these phenomena to the agency of "disembodied human spirits." When, then, philosophical principles and logical deductions, as well as the uninterrupted line of teaching of all the sages of the past, were applied to the manifestations, and it was pointed out that they could not proceed from the rational moral elements of once-living men, the Spiritualists almost without exception rose in arms. They were all "looking for truth," but not in that direction.

One may soberly ask himself, after a careful study of "Isis Unveiled": What is there in that work but the conscientious, painstaking and stupendous presentation of facts, principles, arguments and analogies to explain con-

sistently and irrefutably the source and rationale of the phenomena called Spiritualistic? What is there to arouse the opposition, the anger, the malevolence of anyone, let alone one seeking truth "wherever it may be found" in regard to mysterious and ill-explained happenings—happenings so recently brought to the attention of mankind in the mass that the three parts of that mankind reject as absurd and incredible the events themselves? Here is a metaphysical phenomenon worthy of the utmost consideration: the rejection of evidence and testimony from verifiable living sources in favor of the blind acceptance of unverifiable theories, speculations and "communications" at variance with the whole order of Nature and the whole history of human experience. Madame Blavatsky was assailed and pursued by Spiritualists with a persistency of misrepresentation equaled only by that of the religionists and pseudo-scientists of the day. Surely, if they had approached the séance room and the medium in the same spirit that H.P.B.'s communications were received, they would, according to their own unvarying experience, have received nothing at all; yet what she had to say, when contrasted with the best that has ever been recorded from any "spirit," was a thousand times more logical, more consistent, more philological, more explanatory and more easily verifiable.

In the earlier years of the Society in the West the bulk of the opposition to its teachings came from the Spiritualists. The teachings of H.P.B. were as yet so alien to rooted inherited ideas in religion and science that her Society attracted but little attention except among the Spiritualists and hence the weight of the opposition came from the same quarter.

In India, where the conditions were altogether different, the obstacles arose from another source. There, in spite of the rigid sects and castes, the religious faith and philosophy of the people (apart from the Mohammedan element of the population), was deeply akin to the message the Founders had to bring. For they but brought back to their source the ancient teachings, stripped of their outward, human garments, the accretions of the mil-

lenniums of interpreters and priests. What they had to say appealed alike to Brahmin, Buddhist, Jain and Parsi, once the barriers of creedal exclusiveness were passed. In the earlier and precarious days the alliance hitherto formed by correspondence with the Swami, Dayanand Saraswati, and his Arya Samaj, was of the utmost assistance in this respect. A visit was made to Ceylon and there the Buddhist high priest, Sumangala, a noble and enlightened man, received H.P.B. as a fellow devotee of the great founder of the Buddhist faith. He admitted Col. Olcott to membership in the Buddhist congregation and was at pains to favor their mission. A couple of years later Col. Olcott's "Buddhist Catechism" aided in producing a veritable revival of Buddhism and gained for him and his Society the enduring friendship, not only of enlightened Buddhists, but of the other faiths of the ancient East. Almost immediately after their arrival Col. Olcott began lecturing throughout India, and his clear expositions, his great tact, his intuitive understanding of and sympathy with the Oriental mind made the establishment of branches phenomenally successful.

Damodar K. Mavalankar, a native Brahmin youth of high caste, met H.P.B. and recognizing in her his *Guru*, forsook family, fortune and all worldly prospects to become her devoted follower, pupil and servant. *The Theosophist* was founded by H.P.B. within less than a year after the arrival in India. Contributions were invited and obtained from Hindu writers of ability and repute on the various subjects afforded by Eastern philosophy and religion, and these, with H.P.B.'s own articles, soon made of the magazine a forum which attracted attention far and wide. Shortly after the establishment of *The Theosophist*, H.P.B. made the acquaintance of T. Subba Row, an orthodox Brahmin, a lawyer, a man of ability, immense erudition and great influence. His friendship and attachment to the Society paved the way for many accessions. His contributions to the pages of *The Theosophist* were models of literary and philosophic excellence.

These activities quickly drew the notice and aroused

the ire of the missionaries of the various Christian sects established in India. Almost immediately rumors began to circulate that H.P.B. and Col. Olcott were disreputable characters, practically forced into exile from their own land. A sinister purpose was alleged to be behind their Society, and that purpose the overthrow of British rule in India. H.P.B. was said to be an immoral woman, a Russian spy, and Col. Olcott her dupe and her abettor. Nothing could have been better calculated to prejudice their mission, and nothing could have been more difficult to counteract and disprove. The Government set a watch upon their every movement and for months the spies of the secret service dogged their every step. In the end, however, nothing of an objectionable nature was discovered, and Col. Olcott was able to submit to the central authorities indubitable documentary proof of the antecedent good character and repute of himself and his colleague. Fortunately, also, within the first year, the Founders met Mr. A. P. Sinnett, editor of the *Allahabad Pioneer*, a strong pro-Government organ, and Mr. Allan O. Hume, late Secretary to the Government. Both of these gentlemen had been interested in spiritualistic manifestations, and learning something of the nature of H.P.B. and the scope of her teachings, became members of the Society and active in its behalf. They busied themselves in removing all misconceptions as to the nature and purpose of the Theosophical Society, the authorities became friendly, and the reaction speedily brought the Society to the favorable attention of many well-known English residents.

Other stories were circulated that H.P.B. and Col. Olcott were "godless," atheists as well as "infidels," and their purpose equally to destroy the Hindu religions as well as the Christian and make of India a land of materialism. The pages of *The Theosophist* as well as its "Supplements" during the earlier years show how unbrokenly and in what varied fashion the opposition to the Society and its teachings continued. One device was the importation of the Rev. Joseph Cook, then a widely known American clergyman and lecturer, who

came to India ostensibly on a tour, but whose lectures were almost uniformly devoted to such misrepresentations of Theosophy, the Society and its Founders as would have done honor to a hired mercenary. He was repeatedly challenged to meet the Theosophists in debate, but always avoided any such direct issue. Finally, he was publicly denounced in a signed card published by a British army officer, and thereafter speedily departed the country. A similar stratagem was employed in the case of the Rev. Moncure D. Conway, who, while in India, visited the headquarters and was cordially received there by H.P.B. He afterwards published articles in leading magazines of America and England in disparagement of Theosophy and the work of the Society and declared that H.P.B. had admitted to him in his interview with her that her phenomena were all "glamour," hence fraudulent. Once or twice, in unguarded moments, the assailants of the Theosophists laid themselves open to proceedings which enforced public retractions, but in general the assaults were too cunningly made to permit of redress or rebuttal. So much for the general course of antagonism to the Society's progress.

The first serious ripple within the Society occurred when Dr. George Wyld, President of the London Lodge, resigned his Fellowship and became extremely antagonistic. Dr. Wyld was a well-known and highly educated man, a Christian and a Spiritualist. When he came to learn that the teachings of H.P.B. were opposed to the theories of "spirit communion," and to all ideas savoring of a "personal God," he attacked her, her "Masters" and her Theosophy with equal violence.

Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford then became President of the British Society. Though she remained friendly to H.P.B. and sympathetic toward the general Objects of the Theosophical Society throughout her life, Dr. Kingsford had very pronounced ideas of her own. These are embodied in her work, "The Perfect Way, or the Finding of Christ," originally delivered as a series of lectures before a private audience during the summer of 1881, and published in book form in 1882. A "psychic" and

strongly colored with Christian mysticism, it appeared to Mrs. Kingsford that the Society was devoting too much attention to purely oriental teachings, which she considered to be more or less anti-Christian and tainted with a materialistic bias. Together with Mr. E. Maitland (associated then as thereafter with her in her teachings), Dr. Kingsford issued in 1883 a pamphlet "Letter to the Fellows of the London Lodge," containing a severe arraignment of some of the statements embodied in Mr. Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism." A good deal of more or less acrimonious discussion followed and finally, very early in 1884, T. Subba Row published, with the approval of Madame Blavatsky, a pamphlet for private circulation among the Fellows. This pamphlet contained some "Observations" on the various questions raised and in it Subba Row discussed the general teachings outlined in "Esoteric Buddhism." He defended the book as a whole, while admitting the justice of some of the criticisms, which he explained by reciting Mr. Sinnett's unfamiliarity with the Occult tenets, and by correcting some of Mr. Sinnett's erroneous deductions and expositions. To Subba Row's pamphlet in turn Mr. C. C. Massey gave attention in a seventy-page booklet bearing the title, "The Metaphysical Basis of Esoteric Buddhism." Mr. Massey's booklet was on the whole an ably argued support of the position taken by Dr. Kingsford, and, in addition, embodied some criticisms and complaints on his own account of Madame Blavatsky's policy. He charged her with teaching, first one thing and then another on the same subject, and of countenancing opposing views propounded by her pupils and followers. In due sequence, also, Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland returned to the fray and published a "Reply" to Subba Row, reiterating and further fortifying their earlier criticisms and objections.

Mr. Massey's charges against H.P.B. really originated from an article in *The Theosophist*. As early as June, 1882, she had published certain questions addressed to her by "Caledonian Theosophist" on the apparent lack of consistency and uniformity in some of the statements

in "Isis Unveiled" as compared with later articles in *The Theosophist* supposedly emanating from the same source. To these queries, published under the title of "Seeming Discrepancies," H.P.B. had replied in an Editorial Note, closing her explanation with the words: "But there never was, nor can there be, any radical discrepancy between the teachings in 'Isis' and those of this later period, as both proceed from one and the same source—the ADEPT BROTHERS." In the English Spiritualist publication *Light*, for July 8, 1882, "C. C. M." (C. C. Massey) took up "seeming discrepancies" and more or less directly charged H.P.B. with equivocation in her reply to "Caledonian Theosophist." He instanced that in "Isis" the subject of Reincarnation was treated in a manner not reconcilable with her later writings on the same topic. To this challenge H.P.B. replied in *The Theosophist* for August, 1882, denying any contradictions in teachings, but stating that much in "Isis" was preliminary only, therefore incomplete, but not in actual conflict with anything subsequently given out. Various other articles appeared thereafter in *Light*, in *The Theosophist*, and in other publications in English and in French on this mooted subject of the Theosophical doctrines on "reincarnation." Arguments, speculations, charges and counter-claims were adduced by different writers, but H.P.B. held her peace. Not until 1886 did she break silence on the much discussed passages in "Isis," Volume 1, pp. 346-51 *et circa*. This will be considered in its proper sequence.¹

Another fruitful occasion for external attack and internal disturbance arose out of the publication of Mr. Sinnett's book, "The Occult World." This work contains extracts from letters of the Master "K. H." to Mr. Sinnett and an unnamed friend who was, in fact, Mr. A. O. Hume. In one of these letters the Master took occasion to refer to Spiritualistic ideas and theories. In 1883 Mr. Henry Kiddle, highly reputable and well-known American lecturer on Spiritualism, published in *Light* a communication in which he claimed and proved that Mr.

¹ See Chapter IX.

Sinnett's published extract was in large part made up of unacknowledged quotations from an address of Mr. Kiddle's delivered in the summer of 1880 (a year prior to the publication of "The Occult World") before a Spiritualist camp meeting at Mount Pleasant, New York. He published in "deadly parallel" the germane portions of his address as printed at the time in several papers, and the quotations from the Master's letter in "The Occult World." Mr. Kiddle's letter was, of course, very widely copied in Spiritualist publications and the secular press, and numerous Spiritualists and other commentators made merry over the discomfiture of the Theosophists. The vaunted "Adepts," it seemed, were not above stooping to "borrow" without credit from ordinary human exponents of doctrines these "Masters" professed to consider erroneous and false. In many quarters the episode was quite sincerely believed to be not only proof of plagiarism, but a complete exposure of H.P.B. and her pretended Adepts. The existence of Masters and of a Wisdom-Religion was derided; they were ascribed to the inventive imagination of Madame Blavatsky by some and by others called as much a plagiarism from the ideas of Eliphas Lévi as the "Master's letter" was a plagiarism from Mr. Kiddle. The trust of the Theosophists in the good faith of H.P.B., in the source of her teachings, and in her teachings, was considered to rest upon a basis more unsubstantial and more discreditable than the belief of the Spiritualists in their mediums, "guides" and "controls." Madame Blavatsky's phenomenal powers were either laughed at as mere humbugging devices or ascribed to the same character as mediumship. The defenders of the orthodox sects and the disbelievers in psychical manifestations of any kind made haste to avail themselves of the ammunition provided by Mr. Kiddle's "revelation," and used it with equal zeal to discredit both the Theosophists and the Spiritualists. Much feeling grew up out of the "Kiddle incident" and much of whatever amicable relations existed between the various Spiritualist and Theosophical exponents was dissipated by it. In the Theosophical Society, and among those

friendly to it, a good deal of doubt sprang up, on the theory that where there was so much smoke there must be some fire. H.P.B. remained silent as the proverbial sphinx, but in time several cautiously worded articles appeared in *The Theosophist* and in other friendly publications, from Subba Row and others, defending the *bona fides* of Mr. Sinnett, of the Masters, and testifying from personal physical as well as psychical relations with them to the actual existence of Adepts as living and perfected men, with phenomenal powers over space, time and matter. Subba Row's article, in particular, contained some guarded statements on the subject of the precipitation of Occult letters. He also referred to the manifest discrepancies in the extracts published in "The Occult World," as indicating that in the process of "precipitation" some mistakes of omission or of commission had occurred. This article also was widely commented on, and the explanations hinted at were accepted of course by Theosophists with relief, a few others with reserve, but for the most part by antagonists with sarcastic comments on the *ex post facto* nature of the explanations. Finally, in 1884, in the fourth edition of "The Occult World," Mr. Sinnett added an Appendix containing the Master's own reply to his letter of inquiry on the subject. The explanation given was received by many as not only wholly satisfactory in itself, but as containing some most valuable hints on Occult processes; by others as merely a further effort on the part of the Theosophists to extricate themselves from an embarrassing situation. As the "Kiddle incident" the matter has long since been forgotten or has never been heard of by present-day students, but it has an important bearing on the "Coulomb case," on the "Report" of the Society for Psychical Research, on the charges made a decade later against Mr. Judge, and on the whole subject of the phenomena of "precipitation," and the so-called "Occult letters." We shall treat the matter more fully at a later period of the Theosophical Movement.²

The troubles over the Kiddle matter, the charges of

² See Chapters XXVI and XXX.

contradictory teachings on the subject of "reincarnation," the disputes existing in the London Lodge as a result of the broadsides of pamphlets on the materialistic trend of "Esoteric Buddhism," all occurred contemporaneously and were added to by sharp dissensions among the French Fellows. Practically all the members of the Society in France were Spiritualists, and believers in "reincarnation" and other subjects as developed by Allan Kardec. As the Theosophical teachings were at variance, both in theory and practice, with the Kardec philosophy, the zeal of the proponents of the respective views threatened to disrupt the Paris Lodge as well as the British. These and other reasons impelled H.P.B. and Col. Olcott to make a visit to Europe. They accordingly sailed from India early in 1884. The Paris difficulties were first adjusted and a new impetus given both to the Society and the Movement. It was while at Paris on this occasion that V. V. Solovyoff sought and made the acquaintance of H.P.B., became a Fellow of the Society and, for the time being, an assiduous worker and student. Mr. Judge had come over from America to meet the Founders. He spent some time with H.P.B. in France and then went on to India, returning to America *via* London, where he met Col. Olcott again, late in the year. After their Paris stay H.P.B. and Col. Olcott proceeded to London. Much time and effort were given to straightening out the difficulties in the London and Paris Lodges, to meeting the Fellows of the Society, and in receptions to inquirers. An immense interest was excited by the presence in England of H.P.B., and it was at this time—the summer of 1884—that the Society for Psychical Research began its investigations of the Theosophical phenomena. To this we must now turn our attention.

CHAPTER V

THE S.P.R. AND THE THEOSOPHICAL PHENOMENA

THE first serious modern attempt to investigate metaphysical phenomena in a quasi-scientific spirit was that made by the London Dialectical Society. At a meeting of the Council of that Society in January, 1869, a Committee was appointed "to investigate the Phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations, and to report thereon."

The Committee, composed of thirty-four well-known persons, passed nearly eighteen months in its investigations. It held fifteen sittings of the full Committee, received testimony from thirty-three persons who described phenomena occurring within their own personal experience, and procured written statements from thirty-one others. The Committee also appointed from its membership six subcommittees who undertook first-hand investigations by experiments and tests. The Committee sent out letters inviting the attendance, co-operation, and advice of scientific men who had expressed opinions, favorable or adverse, on the genuineness of Spiritualistic phenomena.

On July 20, 1870, the full Committee rendered its unanimous Report to the Council, with request for publication of the Report under the approval of the Society. The Council received and filed the Report, discharged its Committee with a vote of thanks, but declined to accede to the request for publication of the Report. In consequence the Committee unanimously resolved to publish its Report on its own responsibility. Two editions of the Report were printed to supply the demand for copies, and at the time caused a very great discussion.

The Report is drawn with great conservatism. The

statement of facts ascertained and conclusions reached by the Committee is, condensed, as follows:

The Committee specially invited the attendance of persons who had publicly ascribed the phenomena to imposture or delusion. On this the Report says:

Your Committee, while successful in procuring the evidence of believers in the phenomena and in their supernatural origin, almost wholly failed to obtain evidence from those who attributed them to fraud or delusion. A large majority of the members of your Committee have become actual witnesses to several phases of the phenomena without the aid or presence of any professional medium, although the greater part of them commenced their investigations in an avowedly sceptical spirit.

The Committee recites that the reports of the several subcommittees "substantially corroborate each other." The Report concludes:

Your Committee, taking into consideration the high character and great intelligence of many of the witnesses to the more extraordinary facts, the extent to which their testimony is supported by the reports of the subcommittees, and the absence of any proof of imposture or delusion as regards a large portion of the phenomena, the large number of persons in every grade of society and over the whole civilized world who are more or less influenced by a belief in their supernatural origin, and the fact that no philosophical explanation of them has yet been arrived at, deem it incumbent upon them to state their conviction that the subject is worthy of more serious attention and careful investigation than it has hitherto received.

It has been fifty years since the above Report was issued. In that period unnumbered thousands have re-

peated the investigations of "the phenomena alleged to be spiritual manifestations," great numbers of books have been issued, arguments and theories pro and con have been multiplied, but no advance whatever in actual knowledge has been gained. It remains today, as it remained then, that "no philosophical explanation of them has been arrived at" outside the propositions advanced by H. P. Blavatsky in "Isis Unveiled."

Viewing the moderation, the accuracy and the dispassionateness of the Committee's report of facts ascertained and conclusions reached, it should be of interest to the student of human nature in the light of the teachings of Theosophy, to observe the reception accorded the Report of the Committee by the moulders of public opinion in press and science. The *London Times* called the Report "a farrago of impotent conclusions, garnished by a mass of the most monstrous rubbish it has ever been our misfortune to sit in judgment upon." The *Pall Mall Gazette* declared, "It is difficult to speak or think with anything else than contemptuous pain of proceedings such as are described in this report." The *London Standard* commented, with unconscious verisimilitude, as follows: "If there is anything whatever in it beyond imposture and imbecility, there is the whole of another world in it." The *Morning Post* swept the whole matter aside in one contemptuous sentence: "The Report which has been published is entirely worthless." The *Saturday Review* pronounced the subject "one of the most unequivocally degrading superstitions that have ever found currency among reasonable beings." The reviewer of the *Sporting Times* made these dispassionate remarks: "If I had my way, a few of the leading professional spiritualists should be sent as rogues and vagabonds to the treadmill for a few weeks. It would do them good. They are a canting, deceiving, mischievous lot. Some of their dupes are contemptibly stupid—insane, I should say." Professor Huxley, who had spoken slightly of the manifestations, wrote, in reply to the Committee's invitation to participate: "It would be little short of madness for me to undertake an investigation of so deli-

cate and difficult a character, the only certain result of which would be an interminable series of attacks from the side from which I might chance to differ. I hope that I am perfectly open to conviction on this or any other subject; but I must frankly confess to you that it does not interest me." Professor Tyndall's attitude is indicated by this quotation from his "Fragments of Science": "The world will have a religion of some kind, even though it should fly for it to the intellectual whoredom of Spiritualism."

While the Dialectical Society Committee was engaged in its investigation, Prof. William Crookes, later to become the most notable scientist of his generation but then just beginning to attract the attention of the Fellows of the Royal Society, had determined on his own account to study the phenomena privately. His bold and unqualified statements of the results achieved, his cautious discussion of the many theories to account for the phenomena he witnessed, were first printed in the numbers of the *Quarterly Journal of Science* for 1870-2, and published in book form in 1874, with the title, "Researches into the Phenomena of Spiritualism." His researches were undertaken in a truly scientific spirit, in the public interest, and his results described with a sincerity, a courage and candor that in any other field would have received, as they merited, the highest commendation. But upon his head, as in the case of Darwin, was heaped every abuse, and against his scientific repute every calumny was spread, that could be devised by the reactionists of religion and science.

In 1875 was published "The Unseen Universe," an attempt primarily to reconcile the Darwinian theory with the tenet of a "revealed religion," and containing a discussion of ancient religions, Spiritualism, and immortality in relation to the phenomena of the visible universe. In less than a year the work passed through four editions. Numerous other books and continuous discussion in the press throughout the period from 1870-80 marked the steady increase of interest in metaphysical phenomena, and betokened the growing unrest of the genera-

tion. The formation of the Theosophical Society and its rapid progress was like a Gulf stream in the vast ocean of public discussion. The teachings embodied in "Isis Unveiled" and *The Theosophist* and put in popular form in "The Occult World" and "Esoteric Buddhism" might be likened to the sudden upheaval of a new land in the midst of that ocean, offering its compelling attraction to adventurous explorers.

It was in such circumstances that the Society for Psychological Research was established early in 1882 by a number of well-known persons, among them Prof. F. W. H. Myers, Mr. W. Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon), and Mr. C. C. Massey, all members of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society. The preliminary announcement of the new Society declared that "the present is an opportune time for making an organized and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical, and Spiritualistic." Committees were to be appointed to investigate and report upon such subjects as telepathy, hypnotism, trance, clairvoyance, sensitives, apparitions, etc. The announcement stated that "the aim of the Society will be to approach these various problems without prejudice or prepossession of any kind, and in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has enabled science to solve so many problems, once not less obscure nor less hotly debated."

With such a broad and just prospectus and such an inviting field for its efforts, the new Society almost immediately attracted to its Fellowship some hundreds of men and women of reputation and ability in their several fields. By 1884 the Society had made numerous investigations, had begun the publication of the voluminous reports of its *Proceedings*, and was firmly established in the public confidence as a serious scientific body engaged in the methodical and unbiased investigation of the disputed phenomena.

Meantime Mr. Sinnett had removed to London, his published books had been read by thousands, he had been elected Vice-President of the London Lodge, and was

the center and inspiration of eager investigations and experiments in the line of the Third Object of the Theosophical Society. Rumors and circumstantial stories were afloat regarding "astral appearances," "Occult letters" and other phenomena connected with the mysterious "Brothers" supposed to be the invisible directors behind the Theosophical activities. When Col. Olcott arrived in London early in the summer of 1884, followed a little later by H.P.B., interest rose to a genuine excitement. This excitement, coupled with the fact that a number of members of the Society for Psychical Research were also Fellows of the Theosophical Society, made it natural and plausible for the S.P.R. to turn its attention to the new and inviting possibilities at hand. Accordingly, on May 2, 1884, the Council of the S.P.R. 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." Out of this beginning grew the famous "exposure" that for a time threatened the ruin of the Theosophical Society.

The S.P.R. Committee as originally constituted consisted of Profs. E. Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, F. Podmore, and J. H. Stack. To these were subsequently added Prof. H. Sidgwick, Mrs. Sidgwick, and Mr. Richard Hodgson, a young University graduate.

The Committee held meetings on May 11 and 27 at which Col. Olcott was present and replied to numerous questions, narrating the details of various phenomena of which he had been witness during the years of his connection with H.P.B. Mohini M. Chatterji, a young Hindu who had accompanied the Founders from India, was questioned on June 10. On June 13 Mr. Sinnett repeated to the Committee his observations on the phenomena described in his "Occult World." During the summer the meetings of the Cambridge Branch of the S.P.R. were attended on several occasions, by invitation, by Col. Olcott, Chatterji, and Madame Blavatsky. On these occasions, says the preliminary Report, "the

visitors permitted themselves to be questioned on many topics." Additional evidences were obtained by the Committee from many sources, testifying to a wide range and variety of phenomena through the preceding ten years, in America and Europe as well as in India. All the witnesses were persons of repute and some of them well known in England and on the Continent. In the autumn of 1884 the Committee published "for private and confidential use" the "first report of the Committee." This Report, now very rare, is a pamphlet of 130 pages. The first thirty-three pages are devoted to the formal recital of the basis and nature of the investigations made, the Committee's comments on the various questions raised, the conclusions tentatively arrived at, and two notes, one relating to the Coulombs and the other, by Prof. Myers, giving a brief digest of the Theosophical views and explanations of the phenomena enquired into. The remaining ninety-seven pages consist of XLII Appendices, giving the substance of the evidence obtained from the many witnesses.

The phenomena investigated by the Committee were chiefly (1) "astral appearances" of living men; (2) the transportation by "Occult" means of physical substances; (3) the "precipitation" of letters and other messages; (4) "Occult" sounds and voices. The appendices contain the details of numerous occurrences of the kinds indicated, the sources of the testimony and the names of the scores of witnesses, with comments of the Committee on the character and validity of the testimony as to its sufficiency and bearing, and not upon the good faith of the witnesses themselves, all of whom are regarded as reputable. In the earlier portion of the Report the Committee says that in considering evidences of abnormal occurrences it "has altogether declined to accept the evidence of a paid medium as to any abnormal event." It goes on to say, "in dealing with these matters, it is admitted that special stringency is necessary, and one obvious precaution lies in the exclusion of all the commoner and baser motives to fraud or exaggeration." But with regard to the Theosophical exponents it says,

"we may say at once that no trustworthy evidence supporting such a view has been brought to our notice."

Although the witnesses expressly state that the Theosophical phenomena are not of the kind familiarly known as mediumistic, and although Madame Blavatsky expressly declined to produce any phenomena for the consideration of the Committee as her purpose was to promulgate certain doctrines, not to prove her possession of Occult powers, the Committee's basis of treatment of the phenomena, and its theories to account for them, were the familiar ones employed in Spiritualistic investigations. Nevertheless, the Committee recognized that there were three points calling for the greatest care on its part. The first of these is "that it is certain that fraud has been practiced by persons connected with the Society." This refers to the charges brought by the Coulombs, who were members of the Theosophical Society, against Madame Blavatsky; to the "Kiddle incident," and to certain "evidence privately brought before us by Mr. C. C. Massey." On this matter the Committee says that it suggests, "to the Western mind at any rate, that no amount of caution can be excessive in dealing with evidence of this kind."

The second point raised by the Committee is that "Theosophy appeals to Occult persons and methods." Accustomed to dealing with mediums and mediumistic manifestations, where the moral and philosophical factors have no bearing, accustomed to believe that where there is reticence there must be fraud, the Committee does not like the idea made plain at all times by H.P.B. that the subject of Occult phenomena, their production and laws, will not be submitted to scientific exploitation, but will only be made known to those who qualify themselves under the strictest pledges of secrecy and discipleship.

Finally, the Committee recognizes that

Theosophy makes claims which, though avowedly based on occult science, do, in fact,

ultimately cover much more than a merely scientific field.

This, also, is not agreeable to the Committee, which remarks:

The history of religions would have been written in vain if we still fancied that a Judas or a Joe Smith was the only kind of apostle who needed watching. . . . Suspicions of this kind are necessarily somewhat vague; but it is not our place to give them definiteness. What we have to point out is that it is our duty, as investigators, in examining the evidence for Theosophic marvels, to suppose the possibility of a deliberate combination to deceive on the part of certain Theosophists. We cannot regard this possibility as excluded by the fact that we find no reason to attribute to any of the persons whose evidence we have to consider, any vulgar or sordid motive for such combination.

These frank expressions of the Committee are illuminating as to its own basis and motives, and equally illuminating when contrasted with the fair promises made in the preliminary announcement of the formation of the S.P.R. They become still more clear when viewed in the light of the Preface to "Isis Unveiled," with its statement in advance of the kind of opposition its author would be called upon to face.

In spite of its suspicions, its doubts, its fears, its mental reservations occasioned by its own ignorance of the laws governing metaphysical phenomena; by the absolute refusal of H.P.B. to disclose the processes of practical Occultism; by the atmosphere of mystery surrounding the whole subject of the hidden "Brothers" and their powers; by the charges of fraud laid by the Coulombs at the door of H.P.B.; by the undisclosed "evidence privately brought before us by Mr. C. C. Mas-

sey"—in spite of all these disturbing equations, the testimony amassed by the Committee was so absolutely overwhelming as to the *fact* of the alleged phenomena that the Committee found itself compelled to make certain admissions, as follows:

It is obvious that if we could account for all the phenomena described by the mere assumption of clever conjuring on the part of Madame Blavatsky and the Coulombs, assisted by any number of Hindu servants, we could hardly, under present circumstances, regard ourselves as having adequate ground for further inquiry. But this assumption would by no means meet the case. The statements of the Coulombs implicate no one in the alleged fraud except Madame Blavatsky. The other Theosophists, according to them, are all dupes. Now the evidence given in the Appendix in our opinion renders it impossible to avoid one or other of two alternative conclusions: Either that some of the phenomena recorded are genuine, or that other persons of good standing in society, and with characters to lose, have taken part in deliberate imposture.

Accordingly, the Committee expressed the following conclusions:

On the whole, however (though with some serious reserves), it seems undeniable that there is a *prima facie* case, for some part at least of the claim made, which, at the point which the investigations of the Society of Psychical Research have now reached, cannot, with consistency, be ignored.

The Committee decided to send one of its members to India to investigate the charges made by the Coulombs, to interview the numerous witnesses to phenomena testified to by Hindus and Europeans in India, and report

on the results of such examination. Mr. Richard Hodgson was the member chosen. His report is the foundation and superstructure of the celebrated "exposure" embodied in Volume 3 of the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. Before considering Mr. Hodgson's report, it is necessary to review the antecedent and surrounding circumstances and events, the main features of which are wrapped up in the connection of the Coulombs with the Theosophical Society.

In the year 1871, Madame Blavatsky was voyaging on a vessel which was wrecked by an explosion. Along with other passengers she was landed in Egypt, destitute of money or belongings. She made her way to Cairo and there met Madame Coulomb, an English woman then unmarried and conducting a lodging house. Madame Coulomb was moved by the misfortunes and distress of the wanderer, received her into her house, supplied her necessities and advanced her funds until H.P.B. could communicate with her family.

Madame Coulomb was mediumistic, intensely interested in Spiritualism, and the more so because she had but recently lost a brother with whom she was anxious to "communicate." Finding that H.P.B. possessed a fund of lore and experience in matters Occult, Madame Coulomb besought her to aid in procuring the longed-for communications, as, from her experience, they could not consciously be obtained except through another. Finding that others in Cairo were also interested in the mysterious phenomena with which all the Western world was then dabbling in one way and another, H.P.B. took advantage of the opportunity, and endeavored to form a Society for investigation and experiment. It speedily developed that curiosity and the thirst for phenomena, not the desire for philosophy and understanding, were at the bottom of all the would-be investigators' zeal, and H.P.B. dropped the matter. The Society went to pieces as soon as she did so. H.P.B. was in Egypt in all nearly a year, returning to Russia in 1872. From there, in the spring of 1873, she went to Paris, and thence to New York, returning to India early in 1879.

Madame Coulomb married in Egypt. After a succession of misfortunes the Coulombs went to India, and then to Ceylon. Their misfortunes pursued them and they were living in direst penury when they heard of the arrival of H.P.B. and Col. Olcott in India and the interest attendant upon their activities. Madame Coulomb at once wrote to H.P.B., recalling the Cairo acquaintance, detailing her circumstances and asking for help. To this letter H.P.B. replied with expressions of sympathy, but stating that she herself was in little better plight personally than the Coulombs, and describing her mission and purposes in India. Madame Coulomb wrote again avowing the interest of herself and husband in the Society, and pleading for help. To this appeal H.P.B. answered that if the Coulombs so desired they could come to headquarters and share such fortunes as might befall the Founders. Accordingly, the Coulombs made their way to India, arriving early in 1880. They took the pledges of membership and entered the Theosophical Society. During the ensuing four years Madame Coulomb acted as housekeeper, and, as she was acquainted both with French and Italian, and the labors were great and the workers few, she assisted in translations and in foreign correspondence. M. Coulomb was made general utility man around the premises. He acted as gardener, as carpenter, as librarian, and also assisted in some of the correspondence. The Coulombs were made entirely free of the premises and the work at headquarters. At first they professed the utmost gratitude for the succors given them, and the liveliest interest and sympathy in the work of the Society. As affairs progressed, they became acquainted with numerous visitors and inquirers, European and Hindu, at headquarters. Dissatisfied and discontented with the comparatively insignificant and menial rôle played by themselves, they felt that they were not receiving their just dues. Greedy, weak by nature, and anxious to become financially independent, it appeared to them that Madame Blavatsky was receiving an attention and prominence to which she was no more entitled than themselves. In addition, the Coulombs were

Christians of the narrowest kind, superstitious to a degree, and in fact wholly out of sympathy and accord with the aims and teachings of the Founders.

Within a couple of years Madame Coulomb tried to extort or beg money from wealthy persons interested in the Society, notably from the native prince, Harrisinji Rupsinji. This coming to the knowledge of H.P.B., she reproved Madame Coulomb sternly. To others of the visitors and residents at headquarters Madame Coulomb whispered tales of her own powers and of her ability to find "hidden treasures." To others she intimated that Madame Blavatsky's powers were from the "evil one." The Coulombs were more or less constantly in communication with the establishments of the missionaries near by, and Madame Coulomb, in particular, was in constant frictions and disputes over religious matters and opinions with resident chelas and members of the Society. Col. Olcott took her to task for these needless difficulties on several occasions. In general, however, the Coulombs were looked upon as harmless meddlers, their misfortunes caused them to be viewed with charity, and the known gratitude of H.P.B. for help received from Madame Coulomb at a time of need reconciled the Theosophists to the annoyances and disturbances occasioned by their presence and officiousness at headquarters.

Just prior to the departure of H.P.B. and Col. Olcott for Europe in February, 1884, a Council was appointed to take charge of affairs at headquarters during the absence of the Founders. Among the Council were Dr. Franz Hartmann, Mr. St. George Lane-Fox, and Mr. W. T. Brown, with whom, particularly Dr. Hartmann and Mr. Lane-Fox, the Coulombs had been in almost constant wrangles. These desired to dispense with the Coulombs altogether, but on the prayers of Madame Coulomb H.P.B. permitted them to remain as hitherto, and, in order to remove sources of disagreement as much as possible, gave the Coulombs "authority" to do the housework, to have charge of the upkeep of the premises, and to keep her own rooms in order.

The Founders away, fresh fuel for the fires of discord was soon heaped on the ashes of discontent. The Coulombs refused to accept any orders or obey any instructions from the resident members of the Council; they refused all access to H.P.B.'s apartments and declared that H.P.B. had placed them in independent control of her quarters and the conduct of the household. On the other hand, the members of the Council living at headquarters, having no liking for the Coulombs and distrusting them utterly were more or less harsh and contemptuous towards them, communicating with them only by letter, and refusing to eat with them, or to eat the food provided by Madame Coulomb. They charged Madame Coulomb with extravagance, waste, and with personally profiting out of her handling of the domestic funds, and set about auditing and checking her daily expenditures. Vain, sensitive, and without doubt smarting under their grievances, real and imaginary, the Coulombs planned revenge in dual fashion. They wrote to H.P.B., reciting their wrongs, asserting their own loyalty and innocence of any wrong-doing, and making sundry charges against the Council members. At the same time the Council members were also writing the Founders their side of the disputes, and telling circumstantially the actions of the Coulombs and the insinuations being whispered about by them against the good faith of the Theosophists and H.P.B. While this war of charges and recriminations was going on by mail, the Coulombs were busy fortifying themselves for their ultimate treachery by constructing false doors and sliding panels in the so-called 'Occult room' in H.P.B.'s apartments so as to give such an appearance of mechanical contrivance as might support charges of fraud in the phenomena taking place at headquarters. To our mind, after weighing well all the circumstances of this unhappy period, there is no room for doubt that the Coulombs were already in active conspiracy with the missionaries and were carefully following able but sinister instructions in their course of conduct. By temporizing with the resident members of the Council, by their written

denials and protestations to H.P.B. and Col. Olcott, they were gaining the time needed to perfect the *mise en scène* for their subsequent accusations.

Both H.P.B. and Col. Olcott wrote the Coulombs and the Council, endeavoring to patch up the rancors and bitternesses engendered, and appealing to all for the sake of the Society and its work, to exercise mutual forbearance and tolerance. But the evil forces at work were too favored of circumstance. The Council members at last forced their way to the quarters of H.P.B., discovered what had been going on there, talked severally with the Coulombs, and summoned them before the meeting of the Council to answer charges of bad faith, of treachery, of false stories about H.P.B. and the phenomena at headquarters. The Coulombs neither affirmed nor denied the statements made in the several affidavits read concerning their behavior, and declining to produce any evidence to support their allegations, were expelled from the Society and ordered to leave the premises. Legal proceedings were then threatened to eject them, and in the wrangling St. George Lane-Fox struck M. Coulomb, who had him arrested and fined for assault and battery. The Coulombs offered, during the disputes and negotiations, to leave the country and go to America if paid 3,000 rupees and given their passage. This was refused. Finally, on the direct approval of H.P.B., to whom both the Coulombs and the Council members had appealed, and after the Coulombs had threatened to her that if she did not support them in their contentions they would expose her, the Coulombs were compelled to leave the premises. This took place at the end of May, 1884.

The Coulombs went at once to the missionaries by whom they were received with open arms. They were given money and their living was provided them. In the ensuing three months the plans of battle were perfected for the assault which it was hoped would once and for all destroy the reputation of H.P.B., and in the ruin of her good repute, ruin the Theosophical Society. In the September and succeeding issues of the *Christian College Magazine* were published with extended comments a

series of letters purporting to have been written by H.P.B. to Madame Coulomb which, if genuine, showed H.P.B. to have been a conscienceless and heartless swindler, her phenomena plain frauds, her Society a collection of dupes, her Masters a mere invention, her teachings a myth of the imagination.

The facts, so far as publicly disclosed, may be found as represented by the various interests involved, in the *Christian College Magazine* articles entitled "The Collapse of Koot Hoomi"; in Madame Coulomb's pamphlet issued at the time in India and republished in London by Elliott Stock "for the proprietors of the Madras *Christian College Magazine*," under the title "Some Account of My Intercourse with Madame Blavatsky from 1872 to 1884, by Madame Coulomb"; in Dr. Franz Hartmann's pamphlet, "Observations During a Nine Months' Stay at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, Madras, India," published in the fall of 1884; in the "Report of the Result of an Investigation into the Charges against Madame Blavatsky," by the Committee of the Indian Convention; in the Report of the Indian Convention of the Theosophists held at the close of December, 1884; in Mr. Sinnett's book, "Incidents in the Life of H. P. Blavatsky"; in Col. Olcott's "Old Diary Leaves," and in numerous articles pro and con at the time and during succeeding years in many Theosophical, Spiritualist, Christian, and secular publications. The facts as herein given are those derived from the immense accumulation of literature on the subject, after the most careful and painstaking comparison and weighing.

We may now consider the effect of the Coulomb disclosures and the missionary use of them, both on the Theosophists and on the Society for Psychical Research.

CHAPTER VI

THE REPORT OF THE S.P.R.

THE Preliminary Report of the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research was drawn up in the midst of the excitement occasioned by the Coulomb accusations and the missionary attacks in the *Christian College Magazine* of Madras, India.

Immediately the charges were cabled to England Madame Blavatsky took steps to protect the good name of the Theosophical Society. On September 27, 1884, she handed to Col. Olcott as President her resignation as Corresponding Secretary, but under pressure from leading members of the Society in England Col. Olcott refused to accept her withdrawal. At the same time H.P.B. addressed a letter to the *London Times* which was published in that paper in its issue of October 9.

The letter follows:

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 recognise, 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 a fabrication.

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.

With regard to the suggestion that I attempted to promote the "financial prosperity" of the Theosophical Society by means of occult phenomena, I say that I have never at any time received, or attempted to obtain, from any person any money either for myself or for the Society by any such means. I defy anyone to come forward and prove the contrary. Such money as I have received has been earned by literary work of my own, and these earnings, and what remained of my inherited property when I went to India, have been devoted to the Theosophical Society. I am a poorer woman to-day than I was when, with others, I founded the Society.

—Your obedient Servant,

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

On October 23, the *Pall Mall Gazette* published a long interview with H.P.B. in which her denial of the authorship of the letters attributed to her by the Coulombs is reiterated, the facts of the Coulombs' bad faith given and attention called to the further fact that two letters attributed by the Coulombs to Gen. Morgan and Mr. Sassoon had already been conclusively proved to be forgeries.

On the opposing side the attack was pressed with vigor and all possible capital made of the Coulomb accusations, with, of course, a renewal of every old and exploded charge against H.P.B., her teachings, and her Society. The Christian sects, the Spiritualist publications, the space writers in the daily press to whom any sensation was so much material for "copy," regardless of the merits of the case, all joined in the fray.

Immediate preparations were made by the Founders to return to India. Colonel Olcott arrived at headquarters in November. H.P.B. stopped off in Egypt to obtain information in regard to the Coulombs and did not reach India till December. On her arrival she was

met and presented with an Address signed by some three hundred of the native students of the Christian College, expressing gratitude for what she had done for India, and disclaiming any part or sympathy in the attacks of the *Christian College Magazine*.

The Convention of the Society in India met at headquarters near the end of December. From the first H.P.B. had insisted that the Coulombs and the proprietors of the *Christian College Magazine* must be met in Court by legal proceedings for libel. The future of the Society, the *bona fides* of her teachings, she declared were wrapped up in the assaults made upon her own reputation, and if her good name were destroyed both the Society and Theosophy would suffer irreparable injury. For herself, she avowed, she cared nothing personally, but the fierce onset was in reality directed against her work, and that work could not be separated in the public mind from herself as its leading exponent. To destroy the one was to inflict disaster on the other.

Colonel Olcott was between Scylla and Charybdis, both in himself and in relation to the Society to which he was wholly devoted. His close and long personal friendship and spiritualistic relations with Mr. W. Stainton Moses and Mr. C. C. Massey, both of whom believed that H.P.B. had been the agency both for genuine and spurious phenomena, undoubtedly affected him powerfully. His relations with Mr. Sinnett were concordant in Theosophical views, and he knew that Mr. Sinnett had similar ideas to his own regarding the nature of H.P.B. On his return to India he found that Mr. A. O. Hume, formerly a responsible Government official and, next to Mr. Sinnett, the most influential friend of the Society in India, had become infected with doubts and suspicions and believed that, while some of H.P.B.'s phenomena were undoubtedly genuine, others had been produced by collusion with the Coulombs. Colonel Olcott speedily found, also, that the more prominent Hindu members of the Society, while willing to speak politely in favor of H.P.B., were a unit in opposition to legal proceedings in which religious convictions and subjects sacred to

them would be dragged in the mire of merciless treatment by the defendants' attorneys in an alien Court. On every hand he was urged to consider that psychical powers and principles could be proved only by actual production of phenomena in Court—a thing forbidden alike by their religious training and the rules of Occultism. Others argued that a judgment, even if obtained, would be valueless before the world, since the mischief was already done; those who believed the phenomena fraudulent would still think so, judgment or no judgment; those who believed them genuine would continue to hold that view if the matter were allowed to drop; while an adverse judgment would forever brand H.P.B. and destroy the Society beyond any hope of resuscitation.

But H.P.B. stood firm for legal prosecution of the defamers, declaring her faith in Masters and her own innocence; that They would not countenance disloyalty and ingratitude, and that, if worst came to worst, it were better for the Theosophists to be destroyed fighting for what they held to be true than to live on by an inglorious and ignominious evasion of the issues raised. Torn by his fears and doubts, Col. Olcott took what was doubtless to him the only possible road. He proposed a compromise which was in effect a betrayal; he demanded that H.P.B. place the matter in the hands of the Convention and abide by its decision; threatening, if this were not done, that he himself and the others with him would abandon the Society and leave it to its fate. H.P.B. acceded to the demand made. Accordingly, at the Convention a Committee was appointed, and this Committee unanimously reported as follows:

Resolved—That the letters published in the *Christian College Magazine* under the heading "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 Madame Blavatsky, therefore it is the unanimous opinion of this Committee that Madame Blavatsky should not prosecute her defamers in a Court of Law.

The report of the Committee was unanimously adopted by the Convention. This action was received by the Indian press and that wedded to sectarian interests with prolonged jeers and contumely leveled against H.P.B., her followers and her Society. By the great majority of public journals and intelligent minds it was considered to be the tacit admission by Theosophists that the Coulomb charges were true.

The blow was well-nigh mortal to the body of H.P.B. Defenseless and undefended, her life was despaired of by her physician. During the succeeding three months she was rarely able to leave her bed. Finally, toward the end of March, yielding to the solicitations of the few who still remained devotedly loyal to her, she prepared to leave India and go to Europe. On the 21st of March she addressed a formal letter to the General Council, once more tendering her resignation as Corresponding Secretary, and closing her communication with these words:

I leave with you, one and all, and to every one of my friends and sympathizers, my loving farewell. Should this be my last word, I would implore you all, as you have regard for the welfare of mankind and your own Karma, to be true to the Society and not to permit it to be overthrown by the enemy. Fraternally and ever yours—in life or death.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

Her resignation was accepted by the Council with fulsome compliments, even as the cowardly action of the Convention and its Committee had been accompanied with brave words.

Mr. Richard Hodgson, chosen by the Society for Psy-

chical Research to continue in India the investigations begun in England, arrived at headquarters in December, passed three months in pursuing his inquiries and returned to England in April, 1885. He was, therefore, present in India during all the typhoons of fierce attack and all the period of wavering defense. He witnessed the bold confidence of the accusers and observed the timid, the cautious, the doubting and fearing attitude and actions of Col. Olcott and other leading Theosophists. Had there been no other influence at work upon his mind, these alone, we think, would have been more than ample to persuade him that Theosophy, the Theosophical Society, the "Adept Brothers" and their teachings were, with the phenomena of H.P.B., nothing but a vast fraud devised and perpetrated for some secret purpose.

Mr. Hodgson's report of his investigations was submitted to the Committee of the S.P.R., by them endorsed, and at the General Meeting of the Society on June 24, 1885, Prof. Sidgwick of the Committee read its Conclusions. Certain difficulties developing, the ensuing six months were spent by Mr. Hodgson in revising and re-vamping his report. In the interval it became common knowledge that the report of the Committee and the S.P.R. would be entirely adverse to the Theosophical phenomena. As in the Coulomb case, the machinery of assault was prepared in secrecy and silence. No opportunity was given the Theosophists to inspect Mr. Hodgson's report, no chance offered for correction, criticism, objection, or counter-statement, while during all the long interval the most injurious damage was being inflicted through the public knowledge of what the findings would be, and while the Theosophists could only await the production of charges of whose essential nature they knew nothing and to which, therefore, no reply was possible.

The Conclusions of the Committee and the full text of Mr. Hodgson's report were finally embodied in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., Volume 3, pp. 201-400, issued in December, 1885.

The essential conclusions of the Committee are embodied in the following extracts:

After carefully weighing all the evidence before them, the Committee unanimously arrived at the following conclusions:

(1) That of the letters put forward by Madame Coulomb, all those, at least, which the Committee have had the opportunity of themselves examining, and of submitting to the judgment of experts, are undoubtedly written by Madame Blavatsky; and suffice to prove that she has been engaged in a long-continued combination with other persons to produce by ordinary means a series of apparent marvels for the support of the Theosophic movement.

(2) That, in particular, the Shrine at Adyar, through which letters, purporting to come from Mahatmas were received, was elaborately arranged with a view to the secret insertion of letters and other objects through a sliding panel at the back, and regularly used for this purpose by Madame Blavatsky or her agents.

(3) That there is in consequence a very strong general presumption that all the marvelous 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.

(4) That after examining Mr. Hodgson's report of the results of his personal inquiries, they are of the 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.

Accordingly, they think it would be a waste of time to prolong the investigation.

With reference to Madame Blavatsky herself, the Committee say:

For our own part, we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history.

The preliminary and final reports of the Committee should be taken together. The former is to be found only in private collections and a few large libraries, but the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, Volume 3, may be consulted in nearly every library of any consequence in England and America. Every student of Theosophical history ought to read, digest and collate this report for himself. Such a careful and first-hand examination and comparison will prove to him as nothing else can the monstrous injustice and infamy of the S.P.R. investigation and report.

Miscarriages of justice are frequent even in controversies involving only ordinary physical events, and where surrounded and safeguarded by all the jurisprudence, principles and practice embodying the accumulated experience of the race in the determination of moot and disputed issues. How much greater, then, the risk of mistaken or false judgment in cases not so protected, and where the issues to be decided not only do not lie within the general experience of the race, but by most men are believed to be impossible and therefore incredible; where the very facts themselves to be investigated, as well as the laws and principles by virtue of which alone their possibility can be assumed, lie outside the knowledge or experience of the investigators themselves; and where it is recognized that the admission or establishment of these laws, principles, and phenomena will work

a revolution in every department of human thought and action. Bearing these considerations and the concomitant circumstances in mind the real facts and the real issues may be understood from a study of the reports of the Society for Psychical Research alone.

In the first place, the investigation was entirely *ex parte*. The Committee laid out its own course of procedure, determined its own basis, admitted what it chose, rejected what it chose, reported what it chose of the evidence—subject to no supervision, no correction, no safeguards to insure impartiality, or afford redress if bias were exercised. Of its own motion and decision it constituted itself court, judge, and jury; at its pleasure it finally took upon itself the rôle of prosecutor without allowing or permitting to those it thus constituted defendants to its proceedings any right of cross-examination or rebuttal. That which began ostensibly as a mere inquiry into the evidences available concerning the Theosophical phenomena degenerated into a criminal prosecution, in which a verdict of “guilty” was pronounced upon H. P. Blavatsky—without a hearing, without appeal, without recourse for the victim. Had the Committee been a duly and legally constituted Court, its procedure would have been without a parallel in English history save in the “bloody assizes” of the infamous Jeffreys.

But in fact the Committee was that of a rival society whose objects, methods, and purposes were diametrically opposed to the objects and principles proclaimed by H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society for ten years preceding the investigation. The Society for Psychical Research was interested in phenomena solely and only as phenomena; was moved by mere scientific curiosity. It specifically disclaimed any interest in philosophical research, any concern in Occult laws, any regard for the moral factor, in its equations. The Theosophical Society and H.P.B., on the contrary, specifically avowed the primary Object of its existence was the moral factor of Universal Brotherhood, its second Object the serious study and comparison of religions and

philosophies, and its third object the investigation of *laws* and *powers* as yet unexplained and misunderstood; not phenomena at all, save as these might be incidental and illustrative.

These differences were recognized by the Committee. The preliminary report says:

The difference between The Theosophical Society and the Society for Psychical Research is . . . almost diametrical. The Society for Psychical Research exists merely as a machinery for investigation. . . . The Theosophical Society exists mainly to promulgate certain doctrines already formulated, those doctrines being supported by phenomena which are avowedly intended and adapted rather for the influencing of individual minds than for the wholesale instruction of the scientific world.

What the Committee's attitude was in regard to the *moral factor*, and its attitude toward the "certain doctrines already formulated" for the promulgation of which the Theosophical Society "mainly exists" are shown by its own reports. In the preliminary report the statement is made, "The Theosophical Society was founded . . . for certain philanthropic and literary purposes, with which we are not now concerned." In the final report the statement is made: "The Theosophical Society was founded *ostensibly* for certain philanthropic and literary purposes . . . with these doctrines (or so-called 'Wisdom-Religion') the Committee have, of course, no concern."

It should be understood in connection with the use of the word "ostensibly" above, that not a shred of evidence is introduced or claimed to be introduced that the Theosophical Society ever had any other objects than its proclaimed ones.

The Committee took enough note of the Theosophical doctrines to recognize at the beginning their enormous import:

The teaching . . . comprises a cosmogony, a philosophy, a religion. With the value of this teaching *per se* we are not at present concerned. BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WERE IT WIDELY ACCEPTED A GREAT CHANGE WOULD BE INDUCED IN HUMAN THOUGHT IN ALMOST EVERY DEPARTMENT. TO TAKE ONE POINT ONLY, THE SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL RELATIONSHIP OF EAST TO WEST WOULD BE FOR THE TIME IN GREAT MEASURE REVERSED. "EX ORIENTE LUX" WOULD BE MORE THAN A METAPHOR AND A MEMORY; IT WOULD BE THE EXPRESSION OF ACTUAL CONTEMPORARY FACT.

Why was the Committee "not concerned in the value of this teaching?" Was it because the West or the Committee already possessed abundant knowledge as to the existence of superphysical phenomena and the laws and processes by which such phenomena are produced? Here is what was proclaimed in the prospectus of the S.P.R. in 1882:

The founders of this Society fully recognize the exceptional difficulties which surround this branch of research; but they nevertheless hope that by patient and systematic effort some results of permanent value may be attained.

And the Committee itself admits in the preliminary report that the evidence for these phenomena "is of a kind which it is peculiarly difficult to disentangle or to evaluate. The claims advanced are so enormous, and the lines of testimony converge and inosculate in a manner so perplexing that it is almost equally hard to say what statements are to be accepted, and what inferences as to other statements are to be drawn from the acceptance of any."

To have concerned itself seriously with Madame Blavatsky's teachings, to have investigated and studied the principles and processes she inculcated would have called for a self-sacrificing devotion that no member of the

Committee had any zest for. There was advertising value in "investigating" H.P.B. and her phenomena; immediate and safe profit and advantage in arguing such opinions and speculations as accorded with their own preconceptions and theories and not in direct opposition to the "cosmogony, philosophy and religion" of the times, nor counter to prevailing ideas of the complete superiority of "the spiritual and intellectual relationship" of the *West* to the *East*. The Committee had no appetite in a direction that *might* result in making "*ex oriente lux*" something more than "a metaphor and a memory." What other rational inferences can be drawn from the Committee's own statements?

Realizing that the whole investigation was *ex parte*, and a farce as well, because it refused to enter into any study of the stated principles under which the phenomena were possible, the next question is concerned with the *competency of the Committee* to inquire into the Theosophical phenomena or weigh the value of the evidence amassed.

The whole history of Spiritualistic and allied phenomena without exception shows that the occurrences are *involuntary* on the part of the *medium*, both as regards their production and control, and that their rationale and processes are not understood either by mediums or investigators. On the other hand, absolutely every iota of evidence amassed by the Committee shows that the Theosophical phenomena were *voluntary*,—that is, consciously produced and consciously controlled by the operators, and those operators themselves claimed that the explanation of laws and processes could be acquired *only* through the Theosophical teachings. Nevertheless, the Committee and Mr. Hodgson steadfastly took the position that the Theosophical phenomena were of the same character as Spiritualistic manifestations, and were to be approached in the same way. Although the phenomena were admittedly *metaphysical* in causation, the Committee used only *physical* means of investigation, and rejected every hypothesis other than physical to explain them. Although in the preliminary report it was already

aware of the Coulomb accusations in regard to phenomena in India, of the "Kiddle incident" in connection with one of the "letters" in the "Occult World," and of the nature of Mr. Massey's "private evidence" in regard to another "Occult letter," yet the testimony to numerous other phenomena was so overwhelming, so unquestioned, that the Committee say it is "impossible to avoid one or other of two alternative conclusions:— Either that some of the phenomena recorded are genuine, or that other persons of good standing in society, and with characters to lose, have taken part in deliberate imposture." In the final report not a scintilla of evidence can be found to controvert this testimony, nor to impeach the "persons of good standing in society, and with characters to lose." They, at least, are not charged with having "taken part in deliberate imposture."

How, then, does the Committee explain the phenomena so overwhelmingly testified to? It says they were due "to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention on the part of the witnesses." For this wholesale "explanation," *nota bene*, not one particle of evidence is introduced or pretended to be introduced. It rests unequivocally, nakedly and unashamedly on the *ipse dixit* of the Committee; its only support their theories and speculations to account for phenomena that cannot otherwise be done away with. Where then was the "spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention"— "on the part of the witnesses," or on the part of the Committee and Mr. Hodgson?

It remains to be stated that neither the members of the Committee nor Mr. Hodgson were able themselves to produce any phenomena, nor were witness of any of the Theosophical phenomena. Nor did they claim for themselves any knowledge of their own as to how such phenomena could or could not be produced. All that they had originally set out to do was to secure the testimony of witnesses who had seen phenomena. The two reports show that with the single exception of the accusations of the Coulombs not a witness of the more

than one hundred whose testimony was obtained, but testified unequivocally and positively to the occurrence of phenomena under circumstances that for him precluded any other conclusions but that the phenomena were genuine. So much for the competency of the Committee to adjudge the *facts as testified to*.

Upon what, then, did the Committee rely for its conclusions? Upon the Coulombs; upon the "Kiddle incident"; upon Mr. Massey's "private evidence"; upon the "expert opinions" of Mr. F. G. Netherclift and Mr. Sims on handwritings; most of all on the "opinions" of Mr. Hodgson and others. The Coulombs and their charges have already been discussed. By their own story they were knaves, cheats, and extortioners, "accomplices" with plainly evident evil motives, whose story had no independent corroboration whatever outside the suspicions of Mr. Hodgson and others, and which was denied point-blank by H.P.B., contradicted point-blank by the testimony of scores of actual independent witnesses and investigators. "The Kiddle incident" has been given,¹ and whatever opinion may be formed in regard to it, there is no evidence whatever of fraud in connection with it, or of any bad faith on the part of Mr. Sinnett or H.P.B. or any other Theosophist. Mr. Massey's "private evidence" is given at p. 397 of the Report and anyone who reads it can determine for himself that, whatever of the mysterious and the unexplained there may be in connection with the matter, there is *no evidence whatever of any fraud on H.P.B.'s part*. As in many, many other cases, something occurred which Mr. Massey could not understand; his doubts were aroused; H.P.B. denied absolutely any wrong-doing, but refused as absolutely to explain the mystery; hence she was "guilty of fraud."

Mr. Hodgson and the Committee reached the conclusion that the "Mahatma letters" to Mr. Sinnett and others were in fact written by Madame Blavatsky—a conclusion only, be it noted. To fortify this opinion some of the letters were submitted to Mr. Sims of the British

¹ See Chapter IV.

Museum and to Mr. Netherclift, a London handwriting expert, along with samples of the writing of H.P.B. *In the first instance both Mr. Netherclift and Mr. Sims independently reached the conclusion that the Mahatma letters were not written by H.P.B.* This is one of the "certain difficulties" already spoken of as confronting Mr. Hodgson and the Committee. For if the Mahatma letters were *not* written by H.P.B., *who wrote them?* After his return to England, therefore, Mr. Hodgson found himself in a quandary on this phase of his report. He thereupon took the matter up again with the experts, and agreeably they reversed their opinion and decided that the letters *were* written by H.P.B.! Incredible as this may appear it is the fact as derived from the report itself. One who is at all familiar with the course of "expert testimony" as to handwriting knows that, at best, such testimony is but opinion, and often erroneous, even where not formed to suit the desires of the client. An example is furnished of the fallibility of "expert opinion" by this very Mr. Netherclift himself, for, a few years later, he was called as an expert witness in the celebrated case of Charles Stewart Parnell against the London *Times* for libel. In that case Mr. Netherclift swore positively that the signature to the famous "Pigott letters" was the handwriting of Mr. Parnell. Later on in the case Pigott himself confessed in open court that he had forged the signatures.

The earliest known Mahatma letter was one handed to Madame Fadeef, aunt of H.P.B. and widow of a well-known Russian General, in 1870, long before H.P.B. was known in the world, and long before the formation of the Theosophical Society. According to the written testimony of Madame Fadeef, whose good character no one questioned, the letter was handed to her in Russia by an Oriental who *vanished before her eyes*. She stated that, at the time, H.P.B. had been absent for years, no one of the family knew of her whereabouts, all their inquiries had come to naught, and they were ready to believe her dead when the letter relieved their anxieties by saying that she was in the care of the Mahatmas and

would rejoin her family within eighteen months. With regard to this first Mahatmic letter, which is given in the preliminary report, Prof. F. W. H. Myers, the leading member of the Committee, *himself certified as follows*: "*I have seen this letter, which certainly appears to be in the K. H. (Mahatma) handwriting.—F. W. H. M.*" Can anyone suppose that this Mahatma letter, written to relieve the pressing anxieties of loved and loving relatives, was "due to deliberate deception carried out by or at the instigation of Madame Blavatsky?" *If not, how account for it and the other Mahatma letters being in the same handwriting?*

Remains one more question for consideration: that of the "moral factor" of motive. The influences affecting the motives and conduct of the Committee, Mr. Hodgson, the Coulobms and others, have been indicated. In every case preconceptions, ignorance of Occult laws and processes; mysterious circumstances which they could not understand and which H.P.B. refused to elucidate; the baffling nature of the phenomena; self-interest; popular and sectarian pressures and prejudices—all combined to create uncertainties, doubts, suspicions, conjectures and inferences of fraud and deception. The *evidence*, that which was actually testified to, was overwhelmingly in support of the genuineness of the phenomena.

The motives of the *witnesses* are equally evident; they had nothing whatever to gain and everything to lose by their testimony. They were affirming the genuineness and reality of phenomena in which nine-tenths of humanity disbelieves, and which, if proved and accepted, would upset and destroy cherished and almost universally prevailing ideas in religion, science, and "almost every department of human thought and action." The most that could have been expected from the Committee in such circumstances was such a conclusion as that of the London Dialectical Society on the Spiritualistic phenomena. But the Theosophical principles and phenomena reach far deeper into the foundations of human consciousness. Unlike the Spiritualist manifestations and

theories, there is no room for reconciliation or compromise between Theosophical teachings and phenomena and the "forces of reaction," the established interests in church and science and human conduct. Bitter as was the opposition to Darwinism, malevolent as was the antagonism to the spread of Spiritualism and to such investigators of it as Prof. Crookes, these were as nothing to the fear and hatred inspired by H.P.B., her teachings and her phenomena. In the one case compromise, a middle ground, was possible. In her case it was instinctively recognized by all that no compromise was possible. Hence, the conclusions of the Committee were in fact foregone from the beginning.

In no one thing, perhaps, is the weakness of the S.P.R. investigation more fatally self-betraying than in the motives they assign to account for the "long-continued combination and deliberate deception instigated and carried out by Madame Blavatsky." That anyone, let alone a woman, should for ten or more years make endless personal sacrifices of effort, time, money, health, and reputation in three continents, merely to deceive those who trusted her, with no possible benefit to herself; should succeed in so deceiving hundreds of the most intelligent men and women of many races that they were convinced of the reality of her powers, her teachings, her mission as well as her phenomena, only to be unmasked by a boy of twenty-three who, by interviewing some of the witnesses and hearing their stories, is able infallibly to see what they could not see, is able to suspect what they could find no occasion for suspecting, is able to detect a sufficient motive for inspiring H.P.B. to the most monumental career of chicanery in all history—this is what one has to swallow in order to attach credibility to the elaborate tissue of conjecture and suspicion woven by Mr. Hodgson to offset the solid weight of testimony that the phenomena were genuine.

"No crime without a motive." What, then, was the motive attributed by Mr. Hodgson and the Committee to make credible their conclusion that she was "one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting im-

postors in history?" *She was a Russian spy, and her motive was to destroy British rule in India!*

It is interesting to observe the successive steps of the Committee's struggle with this question of the possible motive of H.P.B. In the preliminary report the Committee raises the question of "all the commoner and baser motives to fraud or exaggeration," and dismisses them: "*we may say at once that no trustworthy evidence supporting such a view has been brought under our notice.*" Next the Committee considers the possibility of "good" motives for bad conduct: "*Now we know, indeed, that the suspicions which the Anglo-Indian authorities at first entertained as to the political objects of the Theosophical Society have been abandoned as groundless.*" Next the Committee say, "But we can imagine schemes and intentions of a patriotic kind . . . we must be on our guard against men's highest instincts quite as much as their lowest."

In the final report Mr. Hodgson goes over the grounds of possible motives: "The question which will now inevitably arise is—*what has induced Madame Blavatsky to live so many laborious days in such a fantastic work of imposture? . . . I should consider this Report incomplete unless I suggest what I myself believe to be an adequate explanation of her ten years' toil on behalf of the Theosophical Society.*"

Was it egotism? "*A closer knowledge of her character would show such a supposition to be quite untenable.*"

Was she a plain, unvarnished fraud? "She is, indeed, *a rare psychological study, almost as rare as a 'Mahatma'!* *She was terrible exceedingly when she expressed her overpowering thought that perhaps her 'twenty years' work might be spoiled through Madame Coulomb.*"

Was it religious mania, a morbid yearning for notoriety? "I must confess that the problem of her motives . . . caused me *no little perplexity.* . . . The sordid motive of pecuniary gain would be a solution still less satisfactory than the hypothesis of religious mania. . . .

But even this hypothesis I was unable to adopt, and reconcile with my understanding of her character."

What, then, *was* the compelling motive that induced the labors of a Hercules, the sacrifices of a Christ, to carry on a career of deception worthy of the Prince of Deceivers himself? "*At last a casual conversation opened my eyes. . . . I cannot profess, myself, after my personal experiences with Madame Blavatsky, to feel much doubt that her real object has been the furtherance of Russian interests. . . . I suggest it here only as a supposition which appears best to cover the known incidents of her career during the past 13 or 14 years.*"

H. P. Blavatsky lived and died a martyr, physically, mentally, and in all that men hold dear; she forsook relatives, friends, ease and high social standing, became an expatriate and naturalized citizen of an alien land on the other side of the globe; she founded a Society to which she gave unremitting and unthanked devotion; she wrote "Isis Unveiled," the "Secret Doctrine," the "Voice of the Silence," all of which were proscribed in Russia; she became a veritable Wandering Jew devoted to the propagation of teachings and ideas hateful to the world of "reactionary forces"; she eschewed all concern with political objects of any kind, all attachment to "race, creed, sex, caste, or color," and her lifeblood formed and sustained a Society sworn to the same abstentions; she lived and she died in poverty—slandered, calumniated, betrayed by followers and foes alike; misunderstood by all; she never, from 1873 to the day of her death, set foot on Russian soil, an exile from family and country.

Why did she do these things? "*In furtherance of Russian interests!*"

CHAPTER VII

DIVISIONS AMONG THEOSOPHISTS—NEW PUBLICATIONS

It will easily be understood that the opening of the year 1885 found the Theosophists in India in the utmost disorder and disarray—assailed on all sides from without by triumphant enemies; prey to confusion and re-creminations within.

H.P.B. lay physically ill, wavering between life and death. Col. Olcott, availing himself of an invitation previously extended to him in recognition of his work for the revival of Buddhism, left almost immediately for a visit to the Burmese capital, Mandalay. On his arrival at Rangoon, *en route* to the court of Theebaw III, he was met by the leading Buddhist priests and dignitaries. Here he was cordially received and remained for a considerable time, holding conferences, giving lectures, and regaining his spirits in an atmosphere removed from the depressing situation at headquarters. Just as he was on the point of proceeding to Mandalay he received a telegram from Damodar urging his immediate return to India because of the apparently fatal turn in the condition of H.P.B.

It can scarcely be doubted that Col. Olcott's return to headquarters was impelled by what were to him still more urgent reasons, for he was at the same time in receipt of advices from his Hindu intimates that affairs were fast becoming desperate. He was advised that many Lodges were lapsing into dormancy, others threatening to dissolve; his General Council divided into two camps, with those opposed to him in the ascendant. The facts appear to have been that in addition to those few who had remained steadfastly loyal to H.P.B., numerous other European and some Hindu members had, by

reaction, felt to some extent the monstrous injustice done H.P.B. and were in the mood to make the President-Founder the scapegoat for the timidity and the lukewarmness of all. The sense of present and impending loss caused many to realize the fatal error of deserting H.P.B. and all knew that the Convention's action was directly due to the sanction of Col. Olcott. A determined movement had gained headway to limit his autocratic control and direction of the society's affairs, by making the Council an actual executive and responsible governing body, instead of as hitherto the mere cloak and instrument of the President's wishes. This spontaneous feeling was placed before H.P.B., and she had given her signature of approval in the following words: "Believing that this new arrangement is necessary for the welfare of the Society, I approve of it, so far as I am concerned."

Colonel Olcott, who had been foremost in the belief that it was necessary to abandon H.P.B. "for the honor of the Society" and to preserve it from shafts aimed at it through H.P.B., now felt himself stung to the quick by these evidences of defection and disaffection on the part of the members towards himself. After consultation with his friends he went straight to the mortally stricken H.P.B., as all thought her, and besought her to restore him to his former status and function. Clouded and piecemeal as are the published fragments of information concerning the events of those trying months, certain facts seem clear in the light of subsequent history. It would appear that Col. Olcott recognized and admitted his faults, promised to take a more loyal and consistent course in the future, and agreed to pursue a less arbitrary policy in his management of the Society. Knowing that his devotion to the well-being of the Society was constant and unswerving, whatever his mistakes due to his vanity and self-sufficiency, and always tolerant and generous to the last degree toward friend or foe, it is clear that H.P.B. accepted his repentance and professions and once more lent him her powerful protection. She withdrew her authorization of

the proposed changes, smoothed out the personal feelings aroused between Col. Olcott and his partisans and those opposed to his rulership, and left to him to make as of his own volition and accord the needful modifications of policy and conduct. This is the secret of the various notices in the "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for May, 1885, concerning the "Formation of an Executive Committee," the "Special Notification," and the "Special Orders of 1885." Likewise in these events will be found the explanation of Col. Olcott's visit to Mr. Hodgson and his effort to get that gentleman to take a more impartial if not more friendly attitude toward the Theosophical evidences and explanations connected with the phenomena, which Mr. Hodgson was investigating almost entirely from the standpoint of the Coulobms and the missionaries. Sincere and well-intentioned as this move of Col. Olcott's undoubtedly was, it could but serve, in view of all the circumstances, to increase and confirm the already acute suspicions of Mr. Hodgson; and this, as we have seen, is what in fact occurred. Col. Olcott also, in his new zeal, made strenuous and partly successful efforts to procure the writing and publication of articles favorable to H.P.B. and her phenomena in various Indian papers.

But knowing well the weaknesses as well as the virtues of her colleague, H.P.B. was under no illusions as to the final outcome. She knew Col. Olcott's self-esteem, his doubts, jealousies and suspicions; knew only too well the personal ambitions, rivalries and animosities with which the headquarters were rife. As appeared many years later, she addressed on April 11, 1885, a letter to Col. Olcott, in which she told him that no parole loyalty would suffice to repair the mischief that had been done; that she had willingly borne and would continue to bear in her own person the evil Karma engendered by him and by the Society, but that in deserting her the Society and its leaders were in fact deserting the Masters whose Agent she was; that she had done her best for them all, but that she could not avoid for them the harvest of their own mistakes and ingratitude.

This letter was written by H.P.B. from Aden, after she had left India. Colonel Olcott suppressed this letter and in all his voluminous writings never referred to it. It was preceded by her formal letter of March 21, addressed to the General Council, submitting her resignation, which was accepted. The published inter-change assigned the illness of H.P.B. as the cause of her severance of relations officially with the Society in India, and the same cause was given for her departure. This was all true but the deeper reason, the Occult basis, was the desertion by Col. Olcott and his associates of the paramount objectives of her Masters. This is shown by the acceptance of her resignation; by the letter of April 11, 1885, as mentioned; by the report of a conversation with one of the Mahatmas,¹ which report was also suppressed by Col. Olcott and never referred to by him, though partially coming to light many years later; and by Col. Olcott's course immediately following the resignation and departure of H.P.B. He at once set actively to work to make the Society independent of H.P.B. The June number of *The Theosophist* was prefaced at the head of the text with an italic insert accompanied by a "printer's hand" and reading as follows:

The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or declaration in this or any other Journal, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an official document.

In the same (June) number Col. Olcott published over his signature a leading editorial on "Infallibility," devoted to a disclaimer of any reliance by the Society on anyone's assumed powers, knowledge, or status, or that such reliance was in any way necessary for the Society's success or existence. This was all aimed at H.P.B. and her status as Agent of the Masters supposed to be behind the Theosophical Movement and the Theosophical Society. Indirectly, it was at the same time an assertion

¹ Some extracts from this letter and from the conversation mentioned are given in *The Theosophist* for October, 1907, pp. 9, 10, and 78.

of his own pre-eminence as the Head of the Society, since the only official documents were those issued by himself as President-Founder, or at his instructions.

Damodar K. Mavalankar, next to H.P.B., the most loved and the most envied of the Theosophists in India, and, aside from her, the only one of them generally known to be in constant active touch with the Masters, had been her faithful and devoted servant and indefatigable worker in the Cause. Much of her correspondence throughout the world had been carried on by him under her directions; visiting chelas at headquarters were largely cared for by him; the chief burden of the getting out of *The Theosophist* fell upon his shoulders; and he had shared with her the stigma of the Coulomb charges and Mr. Hodgson's investigating suspicions. He remained at Adyar for some time after the departure of H.P.B., doing what could be done for the few who possessed the elements of real loyalty and steadfastness. Towards the latter half of the year he left headquarters on a "pilgrimage," and was last publicly heard of near the Thibetan frontiers. By many he was thought to have perished of exposure, but there can be little doubt, from hints afterwards given by H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, that in fact he was called by the Masters into Their direct service and company. He thus received the reward of his undying devotion and his uncomplaining endurance of the tribulations consequent upon his human defects and mistakes. Of him the Master K. H. wrote, "Before he could 'stand in the presence of the Masters' he had to undergo the severest trials that a neophyte ever passed through." Damodar had first met H.P.B. early in 1879, had immediately forsaken everything that men hold dear to become her faithful servant and chela, and in the ensuing years of his probation had remained steadfastly loyal to her and her mission "without variableness or the shadow of turning." Of his subsequent fortunes, his present status, his future relations with the Theosophical Movement, the story remains untold; one of the unwritten chapters of the Second Section.

As the months went by it began to be apparent that the life of the Society in India could not be maintained by its venous circulation alone. The contents of *The Theosophist* deteriorated in quality; the circulation of the magazine diminished; numerous branches ceased to exist except on paper, the membership fell off in others; contributions and dues lessened; the Society was fast falling into mere discussion of the endless metaphysics of Hindu faiths and philosophies. On the other hand news began to permeate the Indian contingent that H.P.B. was being visited in her European retirement by staunch friends, corresponded with by an ever-increasing number of inquirers, supported by the adherence of new and notable persons. Colonel Olcott, who had ever a weakness for the acquaintance of the great and the near-great, began to take stock of the fortunes of war. Nor can it, we think, be doubted that as time went on, as her absence and his sense of loss of the old daily intimacy, the old strong and unfailing guidance of the "lion of the Punjab" grew more keen; as the truer and nobler side of his nature had opportunity to reassert itself—that side of his nature which had inspired him in the beginning to do as Damodar had done, to give up all to follow her in her unknown path—it cannot be doubted, we think, that Col. Olcott repented him of the mistakes and lukewarmness of the recent years, and endeavored so far as was in his power, short of a public disavowal of his erroneous course, to remedy his mistakes. And in this he was strengthened by the treatment accorded him by H.P.B. She chided him as little as might be; she continued unfailingly to send him articles for insertion in *The Theosophist*; she made a will bequeathing to him her entire interest in the magazine and making over its entire revenue to him; she encouraged by every means in her power every good effort, every good impulse that arose from him; she laughed at her own miseries and misfortunes, and made light of all obstacles in the way.

Colonel Olcott was supported and encouraged also by the good-will of those near at hand who had remained

steadfast in devotion to H.P.B. without withdrawing their countenance from him. All these factors had their compelling influence, and at the Indian Convention at the close of 1885 his public Address as President to the assembled delegates and visitors was marked by the expression of strong feeling and sincere declarations in respect to H.P.B. In this mood he was willing to retire as President to promote the solidarity and renewed life of the Society. Says the Report of the Convention as published in the "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for January, 1886:

The President being called away temporarily on business, and Major-General Morgan occupying the Chair, the following resolutions . . . were carried by acclamation with great enthusiasm:

Resolved, That in the event of the health of Madame H. P. Blavatsky being sufficiently restored, she be requested to resume the office which she has relinquished.

Resolved, That the charges brought against Madame Blavatsky by her enemies have not been proven, and that our affection and respect for her continue unabated.

Whereas the Convention has heard with great sorrow from the lips of the President-Founder, Col. H. S. Olcott, the expression of his desire to retire to private life on account of his competency for his present duty being questioned by some, the Convention unanimously

Resolve: (1) That the President-Founder has by his unremitting zeal, self-sacrifices, courage, industry, virtuous life and intelligence, won the confidence of members of the Society and endeared himself to them throughout the world; and (2) that as this Convention cannot for one moment entertain the thought of his retiring from the Society which he has done so much to build up, and has conducted safely through vari-

ous perils by his prudence and practical wisdom, they request him to continue his invaluable services to the Society to the last.

This approach to real union, this united aim, brotherly feeling, and mutual support in the spirit of the First Object, as manifested by the Convention, had its immediate beneficial effect, and for the ensuing three years the Society in India shared in the prosperity of the Movement throughout the world—the rising tide after the S.P.R., attempt to wreck the Society. It is worth while for students to note that every storm that ever raged about the Society had its inception in neglect of the First Object and its practical application, brotherly loyalty and devotion; every recovery from wounds and losses was due to a return to the fundamental basis of the Society and the fundamental precept of the Second Section—instant readiness to "defend the life or honour of a brother Theosophist even at the risk of their own lives." Had this been borne in mind by those who were "quick to doubt and despair, who had worked for themselves and not for the Cause," had the consistent example set, no less than the precepts given, by H.P.B. been made the rule of action by those responsible for the policy and conduct of the Third Section—the Theosophical Society proper—the "solidarity in the ranks" of the Society would not only "have enabled it to resist all external attacks, but also have made it possible for greater, wider, and more tangible help to have been given it" by the First and Second Sections, "who are always ready to give help when we are fit to receive it."

H. P. Blavatsky left the headquarters and sailed from India at the beginning of April, 1885. Such was her physical condition that she had to be carried on board the vessel. Accompanied by her physician and an attendant she voyaged to Naples, Italy, where she remained for some months in sickness, poverty, and isolation. From there she removed in the summer to Würzburg, Germany, where she was visited and sustained by the devoted Gebhards of Elberfeld. Thither also came

the Countess Wachtmeister, widow of the late Swedish Ambassador to England. Countess Wachtmeister was an English woman by birth, a natural psychic who had been interested in Spiritualism and then in Theosophical phenomena. She had become a member of the London Lodge and had met H.P.B. at London the year before. Hearing of the distress into which H.P.B. was plunged, and convinced by her own experiences that the phenomena of H.P.B. were genuine, the Countess came from Sweden to visit her. What she saw and felt caused her to remain, and from then onwards the Countess gave herself up to the service of H.P.B., as friend, as companion, as amanuensis, as voluntary servant. To Würzburg came also friends and correspondents of Dr. Franz Hartmann, whose experience and intuition of the real nature of H.P.B. were always strong enough to keep him loyal despite the frictions of personalities between himself and others. Here came Dr. Hubbe-Schleiden, the noted German savant, who had met H.P.B. the year before at the Gebhards and who, like Dr. Hartmann, had absorbed enough of her philosophy to keep him energized for the remainder of his life in channels akin to the work of the Theosophical Movement. Came also the Russian writer, Solovyoff the younger, who had met H.P.B. in Paris the year before, and whose evil Karma it was subsequently to become tool and victim of the forces opposed to her and her work. During her Würzburg residence H.P.B. was also visited by Mr. and Mrs. Sinnett and others from London and Paris. Here also came many others moved by sympathy, by gratitude, by curiosity, by all the motives that affect mankind.

H.P.B. lived at Würzburg for nearly a year, alternating between long relapses and brief partial recoveries. During the whole period her labors never abated. Articles for *The Theosophist*, miscellaneous contributions to Russian periodicals for her daily bread, and a correspondence that daily increased, kept her busy. Many of her letters at this period were written by her volunteer helpers at her dictation or direction. During the

whole period, also, she was occupied with the vast burden of the composition of the "Secret Doctrine."

In May, 1886, her medical advisers once more insisted on a change of climate and surroundings if her life were to be prolonged. Accordingly, she removed to Ostend, Belgium, and here she lived in constantly increasing toil and turmoil. Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford and her associate, Mr. E. Maitland, visited her here, and here came many English and French Theosophists for making or renewing personal touch with her. Late in the winter and in the early spring of 1887, the physical state of H.P.B. once more became so desperate that her life was despaired of. Miss Francesca Arundale, Miss Kislbury, the two Keightleys, Archibald and Bertram, and other London Theosophists were anxious for her to remove to England where she could be better cared for. Madame Gebhard and Dr. Ashton Ellis, a young London physician and member of the London Lodge, were telegraphed for by Countess Wachtmeister. They came in all haste and were assiduous in their ministrations. This unstinted devotion once more pulled H.P.B. through the crisis. The Keightleys came over and urged the necessities of the English Theosophists for her presence among them. Yielding to the loving solicitations of these devoted friends and followers, the wanderer once more took ship, carried on board as before, and, physically a helpless and inert mass, was installed in a cottage in Norwood, where she passed the summer of 1887. In the autumn the house at 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, West, was taken by her friends and thither H.P.B. was removed to quarters specially prepared for her in the midst of an atmosphere of good-will and watchful consideration.

Thus surrounded and sheltered, H.P.B. measurably regained strength, though her health never became such as to exempt her from continuous physical suffering or to enable her to take needful exercise. It is doubtful if during the last six years of her life she had a single waking hour of complete relaxation, and it is certain that she rarely was able to go outside her domicile unaided.

Yet these six years were the ones of her stormy career most filled, not only with the trials and tribulations incident to the many attacks upon her name and fame, not only with the press and demands of claimants upon her time and attention, not only with the correspondence and work of the Theosophical Movement from day to day, but they were, as well, the most fruitful of enduring results for all mankind. It was during this period that the "Secret Doctrine," the "Key to Theosophy," "The Voice of the Silence," and the "Theosophical Glossary" were written; *Lucifer* was begun with its first issue dated September 15, 1887, and its monthly contents during the succeeding years contained a steady stream from the inexhaustible fountain of her wisdom.

The presence of H.P.B. in Europe resulted from the first in a revival of courage, confidence, and action on the part of those who had remained steadfast during the Coulomb charges, the S.P.R. investigation and report, and the succeeding blasts in the press. Work began in Germany and France with fresh vigor and new Lodges were formed in addition to the existing ones. Many new Fellows entered the Society, some of them persons of considerable reputation in other fields of effort. *The Sphinx* was begun in Germany, *Le Lotus* in France, and the study and discussion of subjects within the lines of the Three Objects went on apace. After the removal of H.P.B. to England, additional Lodges were established in Ireland, Scotland, in the larger cities of England, and the Blavatsky Lodge was formed in London. Here H.P.B. herself replied to questions on the "Stanzas" of the "Secret Doctrine" at a number of sessions. These questions and answers were stenographically reported and, when revised, were published as "Transactions 1 and 2 of the Blavatsky Lodge."

When the S.P.R. *Proceedings*, Volume 3, were published late in 1885, Mr. Sinnett, then President of the London Lodge, wrote a pamphlet "Reply" which was published early in 1886. He also wrote a strong letter to *Light*, the leading Spiritualist publication in England. His clear statements and wide repute went far to stem

the unfavorable tide of press comment consequent on the S.P.R. report. In the summer of 1886 his "Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky" was published by Redway. This book, with its partial disclosures of personal matters, its anecdotes and narratives of the most astonishing phenomena, its mysterious hiatuses, its pervading atmosphere of sincerity, candor, and common sense in the midst of the well-nigh incredible marvels recited, and above all, with its pictures of the living H.P.B. as a most fascinating and human being steadily giving herself, soul, mind, and heart to a cause sacred to her; a good-natured, unvengeful fighter undismayed and undaunted by the mountains of hatred and calumny heaped upon her—this book created a profound impression far and wide, and aroused a sympathy for this martyr to her convictions, and an interest in her teachings, that brought many into the ranks of the Society, and turned to good account the adverse findings of the S.P.R.

In the spring of 1885 was published "Light on the Path, written down by M. C." The initials stood for Mabel Collins, niece of the celebrated novelist. Mabel Collins was a psychic, a member of the London Lodge, and herself a novelist. "Light on the Path" was "written down" by its sponsor without previous knowledge or study of Eastern teachings. As originally published it was but a small pamphlet without the "Comments" subsequently published in *Lucifer* and incorporated in most of the later editions of "Light on the Path." The work created a veritable sensation and has probably been more widely circulated than any other single Theosophical publication. Its companion books, "The Idyll of the White Lotus," and "Through the Gates of Gold," have also been very widely read and studied. Many stories have been told, both by the reputed author and others, regarding the actual source of these writings. These will be discussed in their proper place.²

"Five Years of Theosophy," made up of articles reprinted from the first five volumes of *The Theosophist*,

² See Chapter XIII.

and "Man—Fragments of Forgotten History," by "Two Chelas of the Theosophical Society," were issued in 1885 by Reeves & Turner, London, and both passed through several editions. The "Two Chelas" are stated by Miss Francesca Arundale to have been Mohini M. Chatterji and Mrs. L. C. Holloway (*The Theosophist*, October, 1917).

Contemporaneously with the revival in India and the renaissance in Europe and England, the spiral upward path of the Movement produced a fresh and higher impulsion in the United States. Where in India the restrictions were such that practically the whole force of the Movement took the line of the Second Object, and in England and on the Continent the environment of thought and action naturally limited the major attention to the line of the Third Object, in America the chief stress from the beginning of the second decade was upon the great First Object.

In India the study and discussion of comparative religion and philosophy was the only possible open door to any arousal of interest among the members of the hitherto rigidly exclusive sects and castes. In England and Europe, given over to Christian sectarianism, scientific materialism, and Spiritualism, and with the binding fetters of caste and class exclusiveness hardly less rigid than in India, only the neutral ground of interest afforded by the Third Object gave a field in which to sow the seed of the Theosophical teachings. In America the Second and Third Objects had formed the magnet for the original organization and membership of the Society, and had been used by H.P.B. as the *raison d'être* for the writing and publication of "Isis Unveiled." Not till the second decade of the Society opened was it possible to re-start the work of the Movement in its direct public channel, the Society, on the real line, that of the First Object. The beginning of this was in the United States, at New York, in the Aryan Theosophical Society, the re-organization and re-incarnation of the parent Society of 1875. The presiding genius of the Aryan Society, and of the work of the Movement, esoteric and exoteric, in

the United States was Mr. William Q. Judge. With the second decade the work fell into its three streams with Mr. Judge in America, H.P.B. in Europe, and Col. Olcott in India. As we shall all too soon see, that which was intended to be the three great natural branches of the work of the Society, metaphysically as well as geographically, broke into alien organizations as well as alien purposes.

Mr. Judge had kept up an unbroken communion with H.P.B. and an unbroken accord with Col. Olcott during all the years from the time of the separation of the three Founders at the close of the year 1878 when H.P.B. and Col. Olcott departed for India. In the early summer of 1884 he had gone to France and passed some time with H.P.B., proceeded thence to India where he formed acquaintance with the leading Hindu members, completed his touch with Damodar and others connected with the First and Second Sections, and had returned to America near the close of the year. During the year 1885 he was busied with the rejuvenation of the Aryan Lodge, with the revival of interest among the scattered Fellows and the few existing Lodges in the United States. In April, 1886, he issued the first number of *The Path*, the magazine of which H.P.B. said and wrote: "It is pure Buddhi." Thenceforth *The Path* was the organ *par excellence*, not only of the American members of the Theosophical Society, but of the Theosophical Movement and the practical, devotional applications of the teachings of Theosophy. Within a year from the commencement of its publication the number of branches had tripled, and active study and propaganda had created a widespread interest in the press and in the public mind. The Board of Control appointed in 1884 by Col. Olcott, the President, at Mr. Judge's suggestion, for the facilitation of the routine of the American Branches and membership, continued until the summer of 1886. October 30 of that year, again at Mr. Judge's request to H.P.B. and upon her suggestion to Col. Olcott, the Board of Control met at Cincinnati, together with delegates either in person or by proxy from the American Lodges and

organized the "American Section of the Theosophical Society." In April, 1887, the first Convention of the newly formed Section met at New York City, a constitution and by-laws were adopted, officers chosen, and the first democratic organization embracing a number of independent Branches was effected in the Society's history. Mr. Judge was elected General Secretary of the American Section.

The American Section of the Theosophical Society was not an organization of the individual Fellows of the Society, but a federation of all the Branches, Lodges, or Societies in the United States. Each separate Society was autonomous in its own internal affairs, like the states of the American Union, but all were joined together in a single governing body with its own constitution, powers, and officers, similar to the Federal government, which was, in fact the model followed, both in the organization of the Parent Theosophical Society and of the American Section. The General Council in India was recognized, and the unity of the Society throughout the world in purpose and teaching was affirmed. At the same time the right to independence was placed on record in these words of Mr. Judge in his first formal Report, read at the second Convention at Chicago in April, 1888: "Of course the American Branches could have met together and formed themselves independently, but since we draw our real inspiration from India, it would seem unwise as well as disloyal to have failed to try and keep the orderly and regular succession." The prior *de facto* nature of the conduct of the Society's affairs, corresponding to that of the Confederation of the Thirteen Colonies before the adoption of the American Constitution, was also recorded in these words referring to the previously existing Board of Control:

That Board was therefore in charge of the interests of the movement here, and was in fact a continuation of the system of somewhat paternal and unrepresentative government which had up to that time prevailed.

The "somewhat paternal and unrepresentative government" continued to mark the conduct of affairs in India throughout, and in Europe until 1890, but in America the conduct of the Society was henceforth strictly democratic.

This Convention of 1888, while the second chronologically, was really the first from the standpoint of organized activity in America. It was attended by delegates in person or by proxy from all the active Lodges in the United States, by that time twenty-two in number; was signalized by letters of greeting from India, from the Council of the London Lodge, and by the attendance of Dr. Archibald Keightley as a formal delegate from the Blavatsky Lodge and the London Lodge, in both of which he was an officer. Dr. Keightley was also acting as the special representative of Madame Blavatsky, from whom he bore a long and important Letter to the Convention. This Letter was read to the assembled delegates and afterwards printed in the published "Official Report of Proceedings" issued by the American Section.

The autumn of 1888, the beginning of the fourteenth year of the Society's career, was marked by the most important event in its history, next to the organization of the democratic American Section, and was, in fact, the outcome of that epochal point: the public announcement and inauguration of the Esoteric Section, which must now be traced.

CHAPTER VIII

ESOTERIC AND EXOTERIC ASPECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL
MOVEMENT

HITHERTO we have been concerned with the survey of the Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth century from its public aspects: the recital of a series of events more or less in relation with each other and with the sum of human activities, together with such reflections on their bearings and significance as to us appear logical and consistent. An attempt has been made to show clearly that the vicissitudes both of the Theosophical Society and Madame Blavatsky's teachings of Theosophy were inevitable and but a repetition of the varying fortunes which have attended every former effort to introduce a system of thought and action at variance with the ideas, customs, and practices still firmly entrenched in the mind of the race. So far, all that we have discussed is accessible in all its detail to any inquiring student, and the ordinary mind will find nothing beyond the range of common observation and experience. The student will have both the advantage and the disadvantage of the familiar multitude of conflicting testimony and opinion that attends every inquiry into human affairs. He will find nothing that transcends the possibility of reconciliation or explanation on his habitual lines of thought, without greatly deranging his fundamental preconceptions regarding God, Nature, Man, and the course of evolution.

But, as we have early intimated,¹ the Theosophical Movement has an esoteric as well as an exoteric side, and here the Western student is without guide, chart, or compass, either in his own memorial experience or in any ac-

¹ See Chapter III.

credited testimony of the race to which he belongs. Not only so, but he will find himself confronted, both in himself and in the race, with a deeply imbedded incredulity which derides and despises the very possibility, even, of intellectual and spiritual evolution within and behind physical evolution. The student of the esoteric side of the Theosophical Movement has then literally to take the position of a Columbus. He has to postulate the existence of the spiritual and mental world or worlds, independent of and superior to our familiar universe, yet inter-penetrating it at every point, standing in relation to it as a cause to an effect, and, in man, almost inextricably interwoven and interblended in his embodied existence. He has to admit the fundamental assumption that spiritual and intellectual evolution is as much under Law in its processes and resultants as physical evolution, and that the latter is but the shadow and the reflex of the mental, as the mental is of the spiritual. He has to recognize the inevitable corollary of these propositions, that Life, individual as well as collective, is *continuous*, and that the infinite course of spiritual, mental, and physical evolution has produced Beings as much superior to man as man is superior to a black beetle—as was once speculatively suggested by Prof. Huxley—and, finally, that these Beings take an active part in “the government of the natural order of things.”

The student will find that Western religious history and Western tradition and myth do, indeed, present an immense literature dealing with gods, angels, demons, fairies, and so on, and with their relations to human beings and human affairs, but such beings and their interventions are regarded either as miraculous or fictitious, and belief in them rests either on the grounds of “revelation” or of mere opinions ingrained from childhood, or of some misunderstood personal psychological experience. Nowhere is there any philosophy, any scientific, any logical, any *historical* evidence or basis for the existence and action of superhuman and subhuman entities as the *product of evolutionary Law*. Such a theory or such a fact is as unknown or as derided in the West,

as foreign to its basic concepts, as the ideas of pre-existence, metempsychosis, reincarnation, Karma, *continuous* immortality—all integral and inseparable parts of the fundamental assumptions connected with the esoteric aspects of the Theosophical Movement. Only when all these are recognized, at least as a working hypothesis, does the expression, “the esoteric side of the Theosophical Movement,” become tolerable in any but a materialistic sense. The student is compelled to turn aside from the religion, philosophy, and thought of the day and familiarize himself with the recorded philosophy of Theosophy, if he is to view the facts of record in any other light than that of the well-nigh universal preconceptions of the Western race. It is only through the most careful and conscientious study and application of the teachings of Theosophy that the student can hope to penetrate beyond the visible aspects of the Theosophical Movement to the arcana of the intellectual and spiritual factors and forces which constitute the *Occult* side of that Movement.

The first direct affirmation of the existence of Adepts, Beings perfected spiritually, intellectually, and physically, the flower of human and all evolution, is, so far as the Western world is concerned, to be found in the opening sentence of “Isis Unveiled.” From beginning to end that work is strewn with evidences, arguments, and declarations regarding Adepts and their doctrines. Theosophy is declared to be a portion of Their Wisdom; its teachings are presented for the examination and study of the world and of the Fellows of the Theosophical Society.

As subsequently appeared from the repeated testimony of all three, before the publication of “Isis,” and even prior to the foundation of the Theosophical Society, H.P.B. had imparted many of her teachings to Col. Olcott and Mr. Judge, had convinced them of her phenomenal powers over matter, time, and space, and had accepted them as her pupils. More, through her intervention both of them had become assured of the existence of the Adepts, had received phenomenal visits from them, and

had made their pledges under the rules of Occultism direct to the Masters of the Great Lodge of Adepts. They had reached the determination to follow the guidance and instruction of H.P.B. and it was under her inspiration that the Theosophical Society was formed. Again, from the subsequent repeated statements of all three as to the events and relations of those earliest days, it is apparent that the connection between H.P.B. and Mr. Judge was of a different and deeper nature than the relation established with Col. Olcott—as will develop in the due course of our study. Nor were Col. Olcott and Mr. Judge her only pledged associates, though the names, duties, and activities of the others have never been publicly disclosed. But mention of the fact occurs in the “Introductory” of the “Secret Doctrine,” in *Lucifer*, Volume 3, p. 173, in various “E. S. T. Aids,” and in other places in Theosophical writings. And something of the nature and widespread activities of the Adepts apart from the Theosophical Society, is plainly to be discerned in an article in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* for January, 1880. This was written by an English publicist and embodies a very remarkable letter written by an unknown individual named as a “Turkish Effendi,” on the relations of Christianity and Islam.

The fact of these private teachings, of the intimate connection of the Adepts with the foundation and spread of the Theosophical Society, of an inner core of chelas or disciples as the active agents of the Adepts, both in the Society and the Movement, of the practical possibility of a direct connection with these Adepts and their chelas through Madame Blavatsky, was kept sedulously concealed until after the arrival of H.P.B. and Col. Olcott in India. A few Fellows suspected from occasional personal hints given them, or by inferences from the accessible teachings, that more might be learned. But H.P.B. turned a deaf ear to all prayers and entreaties in that direction, bidding the aspirants join the Society, to study the published literature, and apply themselves actively to the Objects of the Society.

In India the religious convictions of the inhabitants

are, quite in contrast with the West, the predominant factor in daily life. The spiritual and mental heredity of the populace is such that the teachings of Theosophy have in them nothing of the incredible or revolting to inherited ideas. Bound and fettered as they are by rigid castes and creeds, separated by alien tongues, crippled by an enormous percentage of illiteracy, abused by a priesthood which keeps them in subjection to gross idolatries and superstitions, ground by an ever-present poverty, the vast majority of the Indian populations are, nevertheless, deeply religious in feeling, of simple and kindly lives, imbued with the ideas of guardian spirits, of tutelary deities, of the near presence of the immortal and invisible, and of the sacredness of all life. The country is full of *Samnyasis*, *Sadhus*, and *Faquirs*, many of them men of the noblest and most self-sacrificing character who have exempted themselves from all restrictions of caste and worldly life and who wander the length and breadth of the land keeping alive the reverence and faith of the populace, practicing and inculcating the great virtues of all time. And among the educated classes are very many highly intelligent men profoundly versed in the philosophical teachings of the ancient sages, Rishis and Mahatmas.

Almost from the first moment of their entry the Founders met with a sympathetic and understanding reception from the Hindus, and in this kindly atmosphere of traditional appreciation it was natural that the first declaration should be made of the deeper import of the Theosophical Movement. In *The Theosophist* for March, 1880, the article relating to the "Turkish Effendi" was reprinted from *Blackwood's*. In the succeeding number appeared "The Theosophical Society or Universal Brotherhood." This directly identified the Society with its great First Object, and made the first public proclamation of the Superior Sections. The article is an official and authoritative announcement, is signed by Kharsedji N. Seervai, Joint Recording Secretary, and has for its subtitle, "Principles, Rules and By-Laws, as revised in General Council, at the meeting held at the Palace of

H. H. the Maharajah of Vizianagram, Benares, 17th December, 1879."

Thereafter references in the pages of *The Theosophist* become more and more frequent; the mysterious Brothers, or Mahatmas, are often spoken of; chelas and chelaship are discussed, Occultism and its rules are alluded to and, on rare occasions, the names and designations of various chelas in their differing degrees are guardedly and indirectly introduced.

Subba Row and Damodar became more and more known in this way both to Hindus and Europeans. Others mentioned from time to time in peculiar and particular ways in *The Theosophist* have remained unknown to the world and the references to them seem never to have aroused question or comment among Theosophical students. Amongst Europeans, Mr. A. P. Sinnett and Mr. A. O. Hume, both then resident in India, came into indirect contact with the Mahatmas through H.P.B.'s agency. These two were witnesses of many phenomenal occurrences, and wrote numerous letters to the hidden "Brothers." Although they never met the Adepts personally and were never themselves able to communicate with them directly, both Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Hume received lengthy communications from them, "Occult letters" amongst those sent and received in more prosaic fashion. In the summer of 1881 Mr. Sinnett's book, "The Occult World," was published in London. This contains long extracts from some of the letters of the Mahatma "K. H.,"² written in a script and with a name chosen for the purpose of communicating with lay and probationary chelas. In these extracts will be found much of permanent value concerning the real nature of the Theosophical Movement, the purpose of the exoteric Theosophical Society or Third Section, the rules and discipline of chelaship of the Second Section, the methods of the Adepts in dealing with humanity, and other Occult

²The complete unexpurgated text of these communications has recently been published under the title, "The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett," London, T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.; New York City, Frederick A. Stokes Company.

matters. In 1882, "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy" was published and contains much matter bearing directly and indirectly on the existence and activity of the Second Section. The subject of the Superior Sections, their teachings, work, and the limitations imposed on and by them in dealing with the complex nature of Man, are largely discussed in the series of articles, "Fragments of Occult Truth," publication of which was begun in *The Theosophist* for October, 1881. In the number of March, 1882, was commenced "The Elixir of Life," with the parenthetical notation that it was "From a Chela's Diary," giving the physical discipline and scientific resultants of successful probationary chelaship, and setting out the conditions precedent to "Occult preferment." In January, 1883, "Chelas and Knowers" was printed, followed in the "Supplement" to the issue for July, 1883, by "Chelas and Lay Chelas." This, perhaps the most important article on Occultism ever published, sets forth the difference between accepted chelas and the pledged probationers and neophytes of every degree. It repeats in detail the risks and dangers of rushing prematurely into "practical Occultism," gives illustrative examples of failure, and specifies some of the iron conditions of self-discipline necessary. The same subject was first discussed in a general and guarded fashion toward the close of the last chapter in "Isis Unveiled." Finally, the leading article for July, 1884, entitled, "Mahatmas and Chelas," gave in clearest words the nature of Adeptship and the folly and futility of prevailing ideas among Theosophists in regard to Mahatmas and the means of approaching Them.

We have selected only a few of the numerous writings which gradually appeared bearing on the esoteric side of the Theosophical Movement during the first ten years of the Society's life. Only when these articles and the collateral circumstances of their appearance are understood can their relation to and bearing upon the incidents connected with the career of the exoteric Society be properly grasped and the behavior of various leading persons connected with it be comprehended. *To the*

"rush for chelaship" and to the failures of probationers in Occultism must the student look for the metaphysical and spiritual explanations of the internal storms which then and thereafter rent the original Theosophical Society and its Branches.

The extensive circulation of "The Occult World" and "Esoteric Buddhism," the intense activity of the London Lodge in the pursuit of the Third Object after the return of Mr. Sinnett to London and his leading position in that Lodge, most of whose members were Spiritualists and avid for "phenomena," caused many to believe that the Masters could be reached *via* mediums, séances, and "psychic practices" of one kind and another, to the entire neglect of the First Object or the study of philosophy. The powerful currents that surrounded H.P.B. wherever she went; the impetus given to curiosity and ambition for "Occult" knowledge by the great amount of published tales and speculations concerning her and her mission; the preliminary investigations of the Society for Psychical Research into the Theosophical phenomena—all these produced a great danger for the selfish, the unwary, the venturesome Fellows of the Society who had profited spiritually not at all from "Isis Unveiled," from the Master's letters in "The Occult World," from the repeated instructions and warnings in *The Theosophist*, nor from the private communications from H.P.B. and the Mahatmas to numerous individuals most bent on forcing their way into the sphere of action of the Superior Sections without regard to the unknown laws and perils to be encountered. Not until late in 1884, when the independent and misguided energies of the London Lodge threatened the gravest danger both to its Fellows, to the Society, and to the Movement, was permission granted, at their petition, to Miss Francesca Arundale and others to form an Inner Group of the London Lodge as probationers of the Second Section. The signers pledged themselves to follow strictly the rules and instructions given them. All this remained secret for many years, but in the volume, "Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom," published in 1919, will be found some graphic statements

and indications of the conditions prevailing—statements which shed a flood of light not only on the state of affairs at the time we are discussing, but which are equally illuminating in their application to the course of affairs since and now among the thirsty aspirants for Occult powers and knowledge.

During this period the fourth edition of "The Occult World" was published with its Appendix containing a long letter from the Master "K. H." on the "precipitation" of "Occult letters" by chelas of the Second Section. All these events accompanied the "Kiddle incident"; the attack on H.P.B. by Mr. Arthur Lillie in his pamphlet, "Koot Hoomi Unveiled"; the Coulomb charges and the investigation by the S.P.R.; the lukewarmness or desertions of the Fellows, and the violation of their pledges by lay and accepted probationers of the Second Section.

The first decade passed and its results ascertained and weighed as regarded the Society as a whole, re-organization of the work can be seen in the commencement of *The Path* by Mr. Judge, in April, 1886, and of *Lucifer* in London by H.P.B. in September 1887. Something of the immensity of the change inaugurated in the public work of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge can be seen by merely comparing the character and range of contents of these two magazines with those of the first seven volumes of *The Theosophist* (1879-86); the published books in the period 1885-95 with those of the first decade; the growth in character of work undertaken by the Society in America and England in 1885-95, whether compared with the history of the Society as a whole in its first ten years, or with its work and character in India during the same ten years, or with any of the fruits of the numerous Theosophical Societies now in existence that have sprung up since 1895.

The philosophical and moral lessons and considerations, the *sine qua non* conditions of the Superior Sections, the explanation of the numerous failures, exoteric and esoteric, which beset the work of the first ten years, and which must beset every similar attempt in all times,

are nowhere more clearly and authoritatively set forth than in the article entitled "The Theosophical Mahatmas." The general circumstances have already been outlined; the particular occasion was as follows:

Amongst the earliest of the European pledged probationers of the Second Section was Mr. W. T. Brown. He was a young man who had been reared a strict orthodox Christian, was a graduate of the University of Glasgow, and had traveled extensively. In 1883, while in London, he made the acquaintance of Mr. Sinnett and others of the London Lodge, as well as of some leading Spiritualists, some Continental followers of Eliphas Lévi, and students of medieval Rosicrucianism. He was a member of the Central Association of British Spiritualists, joined the London Lodge, and became so deeply interested in what he read and heard of Theosophical teachings that he determined to go to India and devote his life to the "esoteric doctrine." He was witness of some of the phenomena constantly occurring at headquarters, received "Occult" messages from one of the Masters, and besought Col. Olcott, then absent from Adyar on a tour, for permission to share in his work. He received a long, friendly, but very straightforward reply warning him of the immense difficulties to be confronted. Undeterred, he set out to accompany Col. Olcott, and on this trip received further communications from the Master "K. H.," was visited by the Master in "astral body," and finally met the Adept in his physical body, recognizing the Master both from the portrait which he had previously seen, from his "astral" appearance, and from the subject matters discussed. All this occurred during the latter half of 1883. Mr. Brown was so aroused by his experiences and studies that he determined to become a probationary chela, and was accepted on probation in January, 1884. "On that occasion," he says, "I was warned as to the difficulties of the road which I desired to tread, but was assured that by a close adherence to truth, and trust in 'My Master,' all must turn out well."

Mr. Brown was at headquarters during the time of

the Coulomb accusations, returning to England *via* the United States. Next he went to Germany and identified himself with the "Rosicrucians" there. He had written a pamphlet reciting his experiences in India, which was published "under the authority of the London Lodge." Next he published a brief autobiography devoted to his experiences in Rosicrucianism, and finally, early in 1886, came once more to the United States to associate himself with Mrs. Josephine W. Cables.

Mrs. Cables was a Christian Spiritualist and herself afflicted with psychic tendencies. Learning of the Theosophical teachings, she had been largely instrumental in forming the Rochester T.S. in 1882, with Mr. W. B. Shelley as President and herself as Secretary. This was the first Theosophical Society established in America after the formation of the parent T.S. In April, 1884, she established *The Occult Word*, a monthly "journal devoted to the interests of the Theosophical Society, and for the dissemination of Oriental Knowledge." The issues appeared irregularly and the contents show a curious mixture of Christianity, Spiritualism, Mysticism, personal vagaries on diet, "Asceticism," and "Occultism." Mrs. Cables gave frequent talks before the Rochester T.S., held séances, and endeavored by every means in her power to "open up communication" with the Mahatmas. Finally she procured the assistance of Mr. Brown. In the summer of 1886 Prof. Elliott Coues, President of the then American Board of Control of the T.S. endeavored to make of *The Occult Word* the official organ of the T.S. in the United States. Meantime Mr. Judge had started *The Path*, and the character of its contents showed a sure knowledge and the signs of direct contact with the very Powers Mrs. Cables had been seeking to reach in many ways. Very evidently it appeared to Mrs. Cables and Mr. Brown that the unknown Masters had not accorded them that recognition which they felt that they had earned. In *The Occult Word* for October-November, 1886, they published a leading editorial article over their joint signatures. The article is entitled "The Theosophical Mahatmas," and in it the authors say:

There is a great desire among many of our brothers to be put into communication with the Theosophical Mahatmas, and as we have given much thought to the subject, and evinced great desire to receive even slight tokens from the Masters, it will be useful to our brothers to have some of our reflections. *We have come to the conclusion that it is useless to strain the psychical eyes toward the Himalayas. . . . The Masters have given out nothing new in the literature of our Theosophical Society.* There have been students of mysticism in all ages . . . and all of these have found a world of literature opening to their gaze as they directed their attention to the spheres of the occult. . . . *We need not think, therefore, that we are having a special revelation by means of our Society. . . . Therefore, we need not run after Oriental mystics who deny their ability to help us. . . .*

A great many of us have come to think that we have been running vainly after Eastern mystics and ecstasies, when, within the New Testament itself, we find the Way, the Truth, and the Life. . . . *We are now prepared to stand by our Es-senian Master and to "test the spirits" in his name. We have been hunting after strange gods, and have "denied Him thrice," but with bleeding feet and prostrate spirit we pray that He may take us once more under His wing. . . . We have wandered far and suffered for our wanderings. We have been living on husks, while the gospel of love and soul invigoration has been always at our hands. . . . The "dwellers on the threshold are within."*

To this manifesto H.P.B. herself replied in an article with the same title, which was published in *The Path* for December, 1886. After stating that the feeling expressed by Mrs. Cables and Mr. Brown, "is undeniably shared by many Theosophists" H.P.B. goes on:

Whether the complaints are justified, and also whether it is the "Mahatmas" or Theosophists themselves who are to blame for it is a question that remains to be settled.

We can here give only the briefest extracts from H.P. B.'s article, which constitutes the view of the Superior Sections on the essentials of the path of probation and the causes of the wrecks that line the road. The article itself should be read and pondered by every aspirant to esoteric knowledge until it is ineradicably engraved in his inner nature, for it relates, not to an isolated instance, but to the inviolable law of the higher life. She says:

To the plain statement of our brothers and sisters that they have been "living on husks," "hunting after strange gods" without receiving admittance, I would ask in my turn, as plainly: "Are you sure of having knocked at the right door? Do you feel certain that you have not lost your way by *stopping so often on your journey at strange doors, behind which lie in wait the fiercest enemies of those you were searching for?*" . . . Our MASTERS are not a "jealous god"; they are simply holy mortals, nevertheless, however, higher than any in this world, morally, intellectually and spiritually, . . . members of a Brotherhood, who are the first in it to show themselves subservient to its time-honored laws and rules. And one of its first rules demands that those who start . . . as candidates . . . should proceed by the straight road, without stopping on every sideway and path, seeking to join other "Masters" and professors often of the Left-Hand Science, that they should have confidence and show trust and patience, besides several other conditions to fulfill. Failing in all of this from first to last, what right has any man or woman to com-

plain of the inability of the Masters to help them? . . .

Once that a Theosophist would become a candidate for either chelaship or favours, he must be aware of the *mutual* pledge, tacitly, if not formally offered and accepted between the two parties, and, *that such a pledge is sacred*. It is a bond of *seven* years of probation. If during that time, notwithstanding the many human shortcomings and mistakes of the candidate (save two which it is needless to specify in print), he remains throughout every temptation *true to the chosen Master*, or Masters (in the case of *lay* candidates), and as faithful to the Society founded at their wish and under their orders, then the theosophist will be initiated . . . thenceforward allowed to communicate with his *guru* unreservedly, all his failings save this one, as specified, may be overlooked; they belong to his future *Karma*. . . .

Thus the chief and only indispensable condition required in the candidate or chela on probation is simply unswerving fidelity to the chosen Master and his purposes. This is a condition *sine qua non*, not . . . on account of any jealous feeling, but simply because *the magnetic rapport between the two once broken, it becomes at each time doubly difficult to re-establish it again*. . . .

Both the writers may have and very likely they did—"hunt after *strange gods*"; but these *were not our MASTERS*. . . .

Yet, to those theosophists, who are displeased with the Society in general, no one has ever made you any rash promises; least of all, has either the Society or its founders ever offered their "Masters" as a *chromo-premium* to the best behaved. For years every new member has been told that *he was promised nothing*, but had everything to expect only from his own personal

merit. The theosophist is left free and untrammelled in his actions . . . unless, indeed, one has offered himself and is decided to win the Master's favors. To such especially, I now address myself and ask: Have you fulfilled *your* obligations and pledges? Have you . . . *led the life* requisite? . . . Let him who feels in his heart and conscience that he has— . . . let him rise and *protest*. . . I am afraid my invitation will remain unanswered. During the eleven years of the existence of the Theosophical Society I have known, out of the seventy-two regularly accepted chelas on probation and the hundreds of *lay* candidates—only *three* who have not hitherto failed, and *one only* who had a full success. No one forces anyone into chelaship; no promises are uttered, none except the mutual pledge between Master and the would-be-chela. Verily, verily, many are the called but few are chosen—or rather few who have the patience of going to the bitter end, if bitter we call simple perseverance and singleness of purpose. And what about the Society, in general? . . . Who among the thousands of members does *lead the life*? Shall anyone say because he is a strict vegetarian—*elephants and cows are that*—or happens to lead a celibate life, after a stormy youth in the opposite direction; or because he studies the *Bhagavad-Gita* or the “Yoga philosophy” *upside down*, that he is a theosophist *according to the Masters' hearts*? As it is not the cowl that makes the monk, so, no long hair with a poetical vacancy on the brow are sufficient to make of one a faithful follower of *divine* Wisdom. Look around you and behold our UNIVERSAL Brotherhood so-called! The Society founded to remedy the glaring evils of Christianity, to shun bigotry and intolerance, *cant* and superstition and to cultivate real uni-

versal love extending even to the dumb brute, what has it become in Europe and America in these eleven years of trial? . . .

I have never ceased repeating to others as soon as one steps on the Path leading to . . . the blessed Masters . . . his Karma, instead of having to be distributed throughout his long life, falls upon him in a block and crushes him with its whole weight. He who believes in what he professes and in his Master, will stand it and come out of the trial victorious; he *who doubts*, the coward who fears to receive his just dues and tries to avoid justice being done—**FAILS**. He will not escape Karma just the same, but he will only lose that for which he has risked its untimely visits. . . .

And now repeating after the *Paraguru*—my Master's MASTER—the words He had sent as a message to those who wanted to make of the Society a “miracle club” instead of a Brotherhood of Peace, Love and mutual assistance—“Perish rather, the Theosophical Society and its hapless Founders,” I say perish their twelve years' labour and their very lives rather than that I should see what I do to-day: theosophists, outvying political “rings” in their search for personal power and authority; theosophists slandering and criticizing each other as two rival Christian sects might do; finally theosophists refusing to *lead the life* and then criticizing and throwing slurs on the grandest and noblest of men, because . . . those Masters refuse to interfere with Karma and to play second fiddle to every theosophist who calls upon Them and whether he deserves it or not.”

The history of the Theosophical Society is the history of the failure of Theosophists in high and low position to *lead the life* inculcated in their own Objects and their

own professions; is the record of the failure of the lay and pledged probationers of the Second Section to *keep their pledges* in "simple perseverance and singleness of purpose."

The case of Mrs. Cables and Mr. Brown has been selected because it is public and typical of the hundreds of cases before and since of those who started with fair prospects, in all the glory of a fresh enthusiasm, with all the general and particular advantages, help, and guidance that past Karma and personal contact with the Teachings and the Teachers could give them, and who nevertheless failed miserably because they *would* not, and not because they *could* not, *adhere to the lines laid down* by those very Masters whom they longed to come in contact with as accepted chelas.

Mr. Brown returned to England, later went to India and there married an Eurasian lady; he returned to the fold of orthodox Christianity, and has never since been heard of in connection with chelaship. Mrs. Cables speedily turned the Rochester T. S. into the Rochester Brotherhood, and her magazine into the exponent of the various phases of "Mysticism" and "Occultism" that attracted her fancy from time to time. Neither Mrs. Cables nor Mr. Brown appears ever to have questioned their own instability of purpose, their own inconsistency of action, their own utter failure to abide by the conditions they had themselves invoked. Was this course of conduct unique on their part or was it but a manifestation of those very defects and weaknesses of human nature which must be fought and conquered by the candidate for chelaship?

CHAPTER IX

H.P.B., OLCOTT, AND JUDGE

HISTORY is more than the narration of events; even the most personal and short-sighted recognize that actions do not perform themselves. There is no action without a being to make it and to feel its effects. No one's minutest action stands alone and without relation.

History is the story of the persons and personages who performed the actions, as well as of the events themselves; but even more, if its chronicle is to be of any value to the student, he must be concerned in the meaning of the incidents which crowd the stage; in the parts played by the various actors in the drama; in the lessons to be learned in relation to the larger drama of life itself in which he and all other sentient beings are concerned.

Behind the arras of the visible lies the real and enduring world of *causation*, the world of immortal Souls engaged in the battle of Life—the pilgrimage of spiritual and mental evolution, in which all are involved. Thus the history of the Theosophical Movement becomes a *study of the operation of the Law of Karma*, in which every living Soul is equally concerned.

The moment anyone takes this position he is on the plane of consciousness of the Superior Sections of the Theosophical Society; he is studying particular persons and their actions in the light of *Universal Principles*—in the light of the teachings of Theosophy, exoteric and esoteric.

From the beginning it was the Theosophical Society which attracted the attention of friends and foes alike. As it was the visible body, the heredity and pre-conceptions of the race made the thing visible, the reality. Its declared platform of Objects was universally attractive,

so long as those Objects remained in the region of ideals; an abstraction which one could profess without disturbance, external or internal.

But when it was ascertained that the Society was in fact but a vehicle for the dissemination and serious study of Theosophy; when it was seen that the careful study and comparison of the various religions and theories, philosophical and scientific, led straight to the unavoidable inference that the only value in any or all of them lay in what they had in *common*, not in their mutual exclusions; that the various *differences* were mutually contradictory and destructive; that in Theosophy alone was an inclusive Wisdom, self-convincing and self-explanatory of all and everything—then the Theosophical Society became and continued to be the target for every species of assault and attack that the adherents of sectarianism, whether in religion or science, could devise. And when it was perceived by the Fellows that the Objects of the Society were not merely formal and academic; that the serious study of Theosophy produced wholly unlooked-for results in themselves, compelling them to choose between their predilections and their professed principles, by far the greater part either left the Society altogether, or lapsed into the hypocrisy which pretends one course of action while following another. The active and *earnest* Theosophists have always been but a scant fragment of even that handful of humanity which from time to time has called itself Theosophical.

The actual active and visible Head of the Theosophical Society was at all times Col. H. S. Olcott. To his zeal was due its foundation, to his ardent devotion its spread, to his abilities and sacrifices its successes. The Society itself more and more became to him the one Object of his existence; to it and for it he gave his all.

The case was quite otherwise both with H.P.B. and William Q. Judge. To neither of them was the Society ever anything but a body, an instrument, an imperfect and faulty machine for conserving energy and putting it to use. Both of them were Co-Founders with Col. Olcott of the Society, both of them gave without

stint to its support and defense, but only and always as a mere means to an end.

As President-Founder of the visible Society, Col. Olcott was prominent before the members and before the public. H.P.B. had as little to do as possible with the conduct of the Society; Mr. Judge was scarcely known at all in connection with it during its first decade. At all times until and unless the exigencies of the *Movement* compelled such appearances and interferences both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge supported and worked through Col. Olcott in the affairs of the Society, making themselves in every public way subordinate to him. His work was the exoteric phase of the Movement; theirs the esoteric.

H.P.B. was the *Teacher*; for purposes of the Movement she was the *direct Agent* of the Lodge of Masters of the Wisdom-Religion. These Masters were and remain, securely veiled from the prying and selfish approach of humanity, Their existence a matter of inference only to all but Their chelas and "those with whom They voluntarily communicate." They are known in the world only through the evidences amassed by H.P.B. in her writings, through the few communications from Them to others who were, in every case, brought into relation with Them by and through H.P.B., and through those longings and aspirations of the human heart which still preserve the faith in Divine Beings, Elder Brothers to suffering and sinful man. So far as the whole West is concerned all that anyone knows or infers of the Masters or Their Wisdom-Religion, or Their chelas, comes, directly or indirectly, from the mission of H. P. Blavatsky. She therefore stood, and stands, in a position of supreme importance to the whole world; for *she stands in the place of the Masters* as Their Messenger until 1975, when she stated that Their next Messenger would come. All others, their statements and their actions, must be viewed in the light of her mission, her teachings, her statements, and her example; for she and none other represented the First Section.

Next to her in importance in the Theosophical Move-

ment was, and is, William Q. Judge, as we shall see in due season. The placing of any persons, however talented or supposedly proficient in Occultism, on the same plane of knowledge and action in the world as these two; the acceptance of any teachings or "messages" as *Theosophy* in contravention of the recorded statements of these two, is to deny in fact the very Source of the Message of Theosophy, is to attribute to the Masters Themselves the fallibility of human nature. To take such a position is to imagine that They chose an untrustworthy direct Agent to deliver Their Message to humanity; that they permitted Their Message to be faultily and imperfectly recorded; that They left the world and the sincere student alike at the mercy of claimants of every kind, and without any sure guide or landmark of philosophy and example.

H.P.B. represented the First Section of the Theosophical Movement; W. Q. Judge represented the Second Section, and Col. H. S. Olcott the Third Section—or Theosophical Society proper. The evidences are abundant and overwhelming, as we shall see. Colonel Olcott was never, from the standpoint of the Superior Sections, other than a probationary chela. It is thus important to consider his dual position: on the one hand, the President-Founder of the Society, its guiding genius and chief figure before the world; on the other hand, a struggling probationer, fighting and failing over and over again in his efforts at self-discipline and self-mastery. In the esoteric study of the Theosophical Movement, the actions of Col. Olcott the President, in all their contradictions and confusions, have to be studied in the light of Col. Olcott, the aspirant for accepted chelaship of the Second Section. Pathetic and disillusioning as is the task, it should be tempered in writer and reader alike by the reflection that the story of Col. Olcott is the story in advance of what confronts every aspirant to the same up-hill Path; the extent to which we learn the lesson of his failures is the measure of our debt to him.

In the article "Chelas and Lay Chelas" before referred to, H.P.B., in discussing the requisites and diffi-

culties of probationary chelaship of the Second Section, illustrates some of her points by incidental reference to Col. Olcott. She says:

All were refused at first, Col. Olcott, the President himself, to begin with; and as to the latter gentleman there is now [July, 1883] no harm in saying that he was not formally accepted as a Chela until he had proved by more than a year's devoted labors and by a determination which brooked no denial, that he might safely be tested.

On this subject Col. Olcott himself says in a letter written in 1881 and published in "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy, Number I," that he was "provoked and exasperated" by the "selfish and cruel indifference of H.P.B." to his "yearnings after the truth," as well as by "the failure of the Brothers to come and instruct" him. He himself gives the reasons both for the delay and his own misunderstandings:

I got that proof in due time [of the existence of Masters]: but for months I was being gradually led out of my spiritualistic Fool's Paradise, and forced to abandon my delusions one by one. My mind was not prepared to give up ideas that had been the growth of 22 years' experiences, with mediums and circles. . . . But now it was all made clear. I had got just as much as I deserved. . . . So . . . I adopted those habits and encouraged those thoughts that were conducive to the attainment of my ends.

After that I had all the proofs I needed, alike of the existence of the Brothers, their wisdom, their psychical powers, and their unselfish devotion to humanity. For six years I have been blessed with this experience . . . and yet after all these years not only not made an adept, but hardly having achieved one step towards adeptship.

Colonel Olcott was in his forty-fourth year at the time; an age, when, owing to the physical and psychical limitations of the human instrument, the constitutional changes necessary to successful chelaship present the extreme of difficulty, even granting that all other conditions are of the most favorable. What his actual condition was is further indicated in the same letter:

If you will only reflect what it is to transform a worldly man, such as I was in 1874—a man of clubs, drinking parties, mistresses, a man absorbed in all sorts of worldly public and private undertakings and speculations—into that purest, wisest, noblest and most spiritual of human beings—a BROTHER, you will cease to wonder or rather you will wonder, how I could ever have struggled out of the swamp at all, and how I could have ever succeeded in gaining the firm straight road.

No one knows until he really tries it, how awful a task it is to subdue *all* his evil passions and animal instincts, and develop his higher nature. . . .

From time to time one or another Brother who had been on friendly terms with me . . . has become disgusted with me and left me to others, who kindly took their places. Most of all, I regret a certain Magyar philosopher, who had begun to give me a course of instruction in occult dynamics, but was repelled by an outbreak of my old earthly nature.

But I shall win him back and others also, for I have so determined; and *whatever a man really WILLS, that he has*. . . .

If my experience is worth anything, I should say . . . that however great a man may be at this side of the Himalayas, he begins his relations with the Brothers on exactly the same terms as the humblest Chela who ever tried to scale their Parnassus; he must "win his way."

Every probationer of the Second Section will be prepared to agree with Col. Olcott's statement of the difficulties of the effort to conquer "these vices of the ordinary personal man"; to sympathize with him in his struggles, failures, and renewed determination to continue on the path of probation. Few as yet have had the experience of the fiery furnace requisite to have a just appreciation of the far more difficult and onerous task of facing and conquering the universal vices inherent in human nature—the very crucible that his position as President-Founder and his "determination which brooked no denial" as an aspirant for chelaship, compelled Col. Olcott to enter. And it is this prolonged ordeal that we must now study in its effects. We have already touched on the failure of the probationers, Col. Olcott among them, "to defend the honour of a brother Theosophist even at the risk of their own lives," when H.P.B. was assailed by the Coulobms, the missionaries, and the Psychical Research Society. We have entered more largely into the primary obligations of chelaship in discussing the failures of Mrs. Cables and Mr. Brown. We must now trace Col. Olcott more particularly in his relation to H.P.B. as chela to Guru, in the incidents precluding the formation of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.

The pledge taken by Col. Olcott was not different in spirit from that taken by every neophyte of the Second Section. Its essential features, so far as it relates to the matters under review, are contained in the following clauses:

I pledge myself to support, before the world, the Theosophical Movement, its leaders and its members; and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders of the Head of the Section in all that concerns my relation with the Theosophical Movement.

The student will do well to note, (1) that the taking of the pledge is voluntary on the part of the applicant;

(2) that it pledges entire obedience to the Head of the Section, who was and is H.P.B., in all that relates to the Theosophical Movement; (3) that her public teachings, the Objects of the Society formed at her instigation, no less than her private teachings and individual instructions, constitute and comprise her orders, which every neophyte of the Second Section pledges himself to obey. Not until the candidate was making strenuous and measurably successful efforts to embody in his own life all Three Objects of the Society was he even eligible for consideration as an applicant for the probationary degree of the Second Section. Not until he fulfilled all the conditions of the pledges of the probationer was he in any way eligible to the higher degrees of the Second Section. Meantime he had constantly to bear in mind that no one would enforce or compel his keeping of his pledge; from start to finish his course must be self-induced and self-devised. In the words of Col. Olcott's letter before quoted from, each applicant would get just as much as he deserved; he need look for no extraneous help "to achieve that which no man ever did achieve except by his own self-development." Or, as expressed in "Chelas and Lay Chelas":

THE MAHATMAS ARE THE SERVANTS, NOT THE ARBITERS OF THE LAW OF KARMA. LAY-CHELASHIP CONFERS NO PRIVILEGE UPON ANYONE EXCEPT THAT OF WORKING FOR MERIT UNDER THE OBSERVATION OF A MASTER. And whether that Master be or be not seen by the Chela makes no difference whatever as to the result; his good thoughts, words, and deeds will bear their fruits, his evil ones theirs.

Col. Olcott's course may first be discerned by an examination of the contents of *The Theosophist*, which he directed after the departure from India of H.P.B. early in 1885. His prompt efforts to disclaim any reliance upon H.P.B., and his indirect assertion of his own paramount

importance have been noted in an earlier chapter.¹ When the American Board of Control was suggested by Mr. Judge to Col. Olcott for the preliminary direction of the rising tide foreseen by Mr. Judge in America, Col. Olcott appointed Prof. Elliott Coues of Washington, D. C., whom he met in London and Germany in the summer of 1884, to be its Chairman and leading figure. From the first moment of his connection with the Theosophical Society Prof. Coues began to cause difficulties. This requires separate treatment; it is sufficient here to mention the fact. Finally, Mr. Judge had recourse to Madame Blavatsky, and through her insistence Col. Olcott dissolved the American Board of Control and assented to the formation of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. The actual facts, so far as they could be stated without exposing the internal discords, were placed on record in the first printed Report of the American Section—that of the second Convention. The "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for November, 1886, remarks:

The movement in the United States is gaining strength, but not without friction always to be expected from the contact of strong personalities. . . . The reconstructive plan sent over by the Adyar Council, which supersedes the Board of Control by the organization of an American Section of the General Council, is to be acted upon in December, and it is hoped that all may be pleasantly settled.

There is here no apparent perception that anything was involved beyond the "friction of strong personalities"; no recognition of the fact that the plan came from Mr. Judge and was accepted only because of the insistence of H.P.B.; no comment upon the fact that the new Section was to be purely democratic, entirely independent, and in nominal affiliation only with the Indian autocracy set

¹ See Chapter VII.

up by Col. Olcott under the thin mask of the "Adyar Council."

The Path was noted in a friendly way at its foundation in April, 1886, and occasional brief mention made of its contents. But no notice was taken of the affair of Mrs. Cables and Mr. Brown, nor of "The Theosophical Mahatmas," in which, as we have seen,² H.P.B., from her sick bed at Ostend, wrote with the vigor and clarity that the importance of the issues required.

Another matter at the same time received her attention, and this was even more important, from the esoteric standpoint. Ever since Mr. C. C. Massey had raised the question that "Isis Unveiled" denied re-incarnation³ and had claimed that her later teachings were at variance in other points from her earliest expositions, H.P.B. had merely denied the allegation and declared that there were and could be no contradictions in any of her teachings, since all alike came from the Masters. Beyond that she had held her peace. But after the S.P.R. Report and especially after the divergent activities and teachings promulgated in the London Lodge under Mr. Sinnett's auspices, these old charges began once more to circulate. There was a persistent, private, word-of-mouth effort going on in various quarters to belittle the Occult knowledge and status of H.P.B., and make her out a medium and a student, as fallible as any of the others. The time being ripe, Mr. Judge published a long and leading article by H.P.B., in *The Path* for November, 1886, entitled "Theories About Re-incarnation and Spirits," in which she gave the actual facts once and for all.

No notice was taken of this article by *The Theosophist* for the very good reason that Col. Olcott shared Mr. Massey's opinions and those of Mr. Sinnett and others with regard to H.P.B., and her teachings and status, as long afterwards, he himself admitted.⁴

The publication of *Lucifer* was begun in London in

² See Chapter VIII.

³ See Chapter IV.

⁴ Postscript, *The Theosophist*, "Supplement," April, 1895.

September, 1887, with H.P.B., as its guiding genius. For more than a year the only notice taken by Col. Olcott of the magazine, its contents, or its editor, is confined to the following official "Editorial Notice," appearing in *The Theosophist* for November, 1887:

At the particular request of Madame Blavatsky, the undersigned assumes temporarily legal responsibility for the editorship of the *Theosophist*; she having undertaken special editorial duty, in connection with the members of our London Lodge T. S., involving the public use of her name. Adyar, October, 1887.

H. S. OLCOTT.

At the Indian Convention, held at the close of December, 1886, the famous T. Subba Row delivered a series of extemporaneous discourses on the "Bhagavad-Gita" to the assembled delegates and visitors. These lectures were published in *The Theosophist* during the year 1887. In the course of his dissertations Subba Row spoke somewhat slightly of the "Theosophical sevenfold classification of Principles" in Nature and in Man. No defensive notice was taken of the rather invidious tendency of his statements, then or thereafter, by Col. Olcott or those most closely associated with him. In the April, 1887, number, therefore, H.P.B. replied in friendly fashion to Subba Row's criticisms, assuming that they were incidental and oral and their bearing, as affording a basis for cleavage among Theosophists, overlooked. To this Subba Row replied at length, repeating, extending, and fortifying his previous statements, and indulging in some sharp remarks concerning H.P.B. herself. H.P.B. made answer in the August number, clearing up the matter of the "original expounder" of the "sevenfold classification," as Subba Row charged her with being. She simply stated that the classification attacked by Subba Row was not her own, but that originally given out by Mr. Sinnett in his "Esoteric Buddhism." On this she says—what most Theosophical students have overlooked—that "Esoteric Buddhism" was written

“absolutely without my knowledge, and as the author understood those teachings from letters he had received.”

As Subba Row was a chela, and the issues raised by him largely concerned the Second Section and its work, H.P.B. confined herself strictly to what could be publicly discussed. The controversy caused a considerable breach, as H.P.B. had foreseen, and thereafter Subba Row maintained a coolness towards H.P.B. till the time of his death. Her subsequent correction, in the “Secret Doctrine,” of Mr. Sinnett’s erroneous teachings, made complete the distrust which had been growing in him since 1883. In the one case and in the other Col. Olcott’s sympathies were with his fellow students and not with his Teacher and Guru, H.P.B. In the Subba Row controversy Col. Olcott kept silent. So did Mr. Sinnett, whose erroneous interpretations were the real basis of Subba Row’s criticisms directed against H.P.B. But Mr. Judge from far-away America was a diligent watcher of all that took place and in the August, 1887, number of *The Theosophist* with exquisite tact, skill, and perception he reconciled and cleared up the situation, giving the facts, but giving them with all gentleness and discretion. But he paid the price of his loyalty and devotion, no less than of his knowledge and intuition. For this article necessarily had to lay bare the inconsistencies and “authority” of “Esoteric Buddhism.” And, no more than Subba Row or Col. Olcott, could Mr. Sinnett endure correction, even at the hands of H.P.B., let alone a young man as obscure as Mr. Judge. Of all this in due sequence. Meantime, to follow the thread of Col. Olcott’s ordeal of chelaship.

Immediately after the formation of the American Section in April, 1887, Mr. Judge wrote H.P.B. under date of May 18:

. . . So many people are beginning to ask me to be Chelas that I must do something. . . . I know a good many good ones who will do well and who will form a rock on which the enemy will founder.

H.P.B. replied, telling Mr. Judge to go ahead in America and she would soon do something herself. In the autumn following she began *Lucifer*, which from its first number contained articles by her or written under her inspiration, all relating to the Second Section, although not so named, and all in preparation for the forthcoming change in the direction of the Movement. The first volume contained the “Comments on Light on the Path,” detailing the difficulties and requirements of the disciple striving for chelaship. The number for April, 1888, contained the article “Practical Occultism,” by H.P.B., giving publicly for the first time the “private rules” of the Eastern School, notating what would-be chelas had to do for their own safety as well as their progress, and for the first time clearly stating the enormous responsibilities assumed by the Guru or Teacher. This was immediately followed in the May number by “Occultism Versus the Occult Arts,” stressing the dangers of impure chelaship and the appalling consequences of falling into the “Left-Hand Path.” Coincidentally *The Path* was publishing articles of similar import.

To the April, 1888, Convention of the American Section H.P.B. sent a long and formal Letter, which she instructed Mr. Judge to read to the assembled delegates. In this she placed on record publicly and authoritatively her recognition of the status of Mr. Judge in the Movement, saying that it was to him chiefly, if not entirely, that the Society owed its life. The remainder of the Letter was devoted to a recital of the purpose and meaning of the Society and the obstacles that must be overcome by its members. This was the first of a series of annual Letters, four in all, which she addressed to the American Conventions, the last one being written but a few weeks before her death.

If the student will carefully compare the issues of *Lucifer*, *The Path*, and *The Theosophist* during the years 1887-9 he will be amazed to observe, first, the entire unity and accord in the two first named in all that concerned Theosophy and the Movement; secondly, the marked cleavage shown in the contents of *The Theosophist* dur-

ing the same period; the utter ignoring in the latter of the cyclic changes under way in the Movement as manifested in the writings of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge.

Mr. Judge went to London and there, at the request of H.P.B., drew up the plans and wrote the rules for the guidance of the forthcoming Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. Nothing in relation to the Esoteric Section by name appeared in public print until October, 1888. All that we have been discussing on that subject came to light only after many years. The same is true of the active correspondence which went on during the interval, between H.P.B. and Col. Olcott, and, to a lesser extent, between Mr. Judge and Col. Olcott. True as steel, alike to the purposes which inspired them and to Col. Olcott in his place and share in the Movement, nothing was omitted from their efforts to inform him of the great issues at stake, to strengthen his weak spots, to keep him in line with the real Objects of the Society as well as the Movement.

What Col. Olcott's real sentiments were, what his mingled feelings, what his alternations and violent oscillations during all this period, constitute one of the most vivid examples and illustrations of what may be called the "pledge fever" of probationary chelas. Of all this, also, nothing appeared in public print, save as it was noticeable by such acts of omission and commission as we have been referring to. Long afterwards, in his "Old Diary Leaves," Col. Olcott writes of the events narrated, and it is to that source that we may turn for the private and missing links of evidence which show that the ruffling of the surface of events was but the symptomatic sign of the inner struggle of probation. In spite of the manifold and manifest disloyalty, ingratitude, and other violations of their pledges by students and chelas of one degree of probation or another, of more or less prominence in the Society, neither H.P.B. nor Mr. Judge ever washed any of the Theosophical "dirty linen" in public; ever uttered any reproaches, ever in any way exposed the weaknesses and failings of their students or associates. Only when the Society, the School or the Move-

ment was imperiled by the follies of those whom they were trying in every way to shield and help, did they take the necessary steps to clear the situation. They never either defended themselves or attacked others. Their work was to lay down the lines of teaching and direction, to keep those lines energized, and only when the Cause which they represented was endangered by external pressures or internal ruptures did they intervene.

"Old Diary Leaves" is the personal story of Col. Olcott and has at least the merit of faithfully picturing, albeit unconsciously to himself, "the true history"—not of the Theosophical Society, but of Henry S. Olcott, aspirant for chelaship on "the hard and thorny path." Studied as the diary of a chela on probation, no more important lessons are anywhere recorded for the study and instruction of the student of the esoteric side of the Theosophical Movement, and the causes of the failure of the Theosophical Society, than in "Old Diary Leaves."

The four published volumes of "Old Diary Leaves" bear upon their covers the legend: **THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.**

No doubt this is what Col. Olcott intended and believed them to be. Equally it is beyond question that in the eyes of the world and of Theosophical students generally he has been assumed to be that one who had the greatest knowledge of the facts, the best opportunity for accurate judgments, and the strongest incentive for recording both. These views have been supported by the transparent sincerity that shines from every page of his reminiscences, by the wealth of details given by him, by the fact that he was throughout its life the official Head of the Theosophical Society, that he survived for many years both his colleagues in the pioneer work of the Movement.

Neither of his colleagues ever wrote for publication anything that savored of the autobiographical or were at pains to attract attention to themselves; on the contrary, they "sedulously kept closed," to the utmost ex-

tent that the nature of their mission and the indiscretions of their associates permitted, "every possible door of approach by which the inquisitive could spy upon them. The prime condition of their success was that they should never be supervised or obstructed. . . . All that those outside their circle could perceive was results, the causes of which were masked from view." It is passing strange that these statements of the Mahatma "K. H." in his letter to Mr. Hume, and the other statements of the same Adept in his letters reproduced in "The Occult World," have never been applied by Theosophical students to the events and actors in the drama of the Theosophical Movement. What more necessary and important than that the *direct Agent of the Masters in the world* should be shielded and guarded in her Occult nature and functions from all but those who have "earned the right to know Them?"

At the outset, then, it should be understood that widely as H.P.B. has been discussed and extensive as have been the controversies which have raged about her mission and her personality the fact remains that only the scantiest and most fragmentary details exist relating to her, after the elimination of all the mass of hearsay and opinion, of claims and counter-claims made by friends and foes as to her Occult status, powers, and relations. She is to be known, if known at all, only through her writings and by those who faithfully "follow the Path she showed, the Masters who are behind."

Her writings are devoted entirely: (1) to placing on record her message of Theosophy and the citation of the evidences and arguments establishing its unbroken existence down the ages; (2) to articles in explanation and application of the Principles of that Message; (3) to instruction, advice, and suggestion to the students, individually and collectively, who to any extent become interested in Theosophy; (4) to the direct and pointed statements made by her in her letters to and in relation to those persons who voluntarily associated themselves in her work and who as voluntarily pledged themselves

to her guidance and tuition; (5) to the defense of her mission, its instruments and her associates.

She was interested in and devoted to a CAUSE: nothing else mattered to her, nothing else was of moment to her, save and except as it might hasten or retard that Cause. Her writings, as her works, are wholly impersonal; consequently she never touched upon persons or events save as the exigencies of the Movement, of the Society, or of her pupils made such attention compulsory on her part. And the same state of fact applies in its integrity to William Q. Judge, his writings and his works.

On the other hand, "Old Diary Leaves," including the miscellaneous articles and letters written by Col. Olcott in connection with his Theosophical work, are wholly autobiographical and personal—in their point of view, in their treatment of men and events, in their judgment and conclusions. From the basis of the Superior Sections he was a struggling probationer, wrestling with the foes entrenched in his own inner nature. In his own eyes, and those of so many others, he was the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society, wrestling valiantly with its enemies, without and within. The period from 1881-8 is that of the second septennate of the probationary chelaship both of Henry S. Olcott and of the Theosophical Society as a body, and the struggles of the one are the mirror and the reflex of the struggles of the other. The "wandering from the discipline" of the one is depicted in the stresses which beset the other; their joint departures from their professed Pledges and Objects the compelling reason for the public formation of the Esoteric Section of the T.S.

“Occult world” better than you do, I am perhaps able to see better also where the real mischief was and lies.

What the truth and the real state of things was in connection with the facts and factors underlying the course of events we are considering is discussed at length:

CHAPTER X

THE FORMATION OF THE ESOTERIC SECTION

THE critical period preceding the formation of the Esoteric Section has been discussed, and its various factors and actors commented on from their several points of view, by the only ones competent to do so at first hand: by H.P.B., by Col. Olcott, by Mr. Judge, and by the Master “K. H.” We may examine at this point some of the statements of all of them, in the order named, omitting Mr. Judge for the time being, for the sake of logical, no less than of chronological, continuity.

In April, 1886, H.P.B. wrote a long and important letter to Dr. Franz Hartmann in reply to questions and problems raised by him. Dr. Hartmann, it will be remembered, was at Adyar before, during, and subsequent to the Coulomb charges, the Indian Convention’s practical desertion of H.P.B., Mr. Hodgson’s investigations for the S.P.R., the resignation and departure of H.P.B. He was familiar with much of the unwritten history of that eventful period. He learned enough, and his intuitions were sufficiently awake, to make him the faithful and loyal friend of both H.P.B., and W.Q.J., through all the troubled voyage of the Theosophical ship. H.P.B.’s letter to him was forced into publicity by the necessities of a decade later. It will be found in full in *The Path*, for March, 1896.

After acknowledging his letter she says:

What you say in it seems to me like an echo of my own thoughts in many a way; only knowing the truth and the real state of things in the

As to . . . that portion of your letter where you speak of the “army” of the deluded—and the “imaginary” Mahatmas of Olcott—you are absolutely and sadly right. Have I not seen the thing for nearly eight years? Have I not struggled and fought against Olcott’s ardent and gushing imagination, and tried to stop him every day of my life? Was he not told by me . . . that if he did not see the Masters in their true light, and did not cease speaking and enflaming people’s imaginations, that he would be held responsible for all the evil the Society might come to? . . .

Ah, if by some psychological process you could be made to see the whole truth! . . . I was sent to America on purpose and sent to the Eddys. There I found Olcott in love with spirits, as he became in love with the Masters later on. I was ordered to let him know that spiritual phenomena without the philosophy of Occultism were dangerous and misleading. I proved to him that all that mediums could do through spirits others could do at will without any spirits at all. . . . Well, I told him the whole truth. I said to him that I had known Adepts, . . . That . . . Adepts were everywhere Adepts—silent, secret, retiring, and who would never divulge themselves entirely to anyone, unless one did as I did—passed seven and ten years’ probation and given proofs of absolute devotion, and that he, or she, would keep silent even before a prospect and a threat of death. I fulfilled

the requirements and am what I am; and this no Hodgson, no Coulombs, no Sellin,¹ can take away from me. . . .

When we arrived [in India] and Master coming to Bombay bodily, paid a visit to us . . . Olcott became crazy. He was like Balaam's she-ass when she saw the angel! Then came . . . other fanatics who began calling them "Mahatmas"; and, little by little, the Adepts were transformed into Gods on earth. They began to be appealed to, and made *puja* to, and were becoming with every day more legendary and miraculous. . . . Well between this idea of Mahatmas and Olcott's rhapsodies, what could I do? I saw with terror and anger the false track they were all pursuing. The "Masters," as all thought, must be omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. . . . The Masters knew all; why did they not help the devotee? If a mistake or a flapdoodle was committed in the Society—"How could the Masters allow you or Olcott to do so?" we were asked in amazement. The idea that the Masters were mortal men, limited even in their great powers, never crossed anyone's mind. . . .

Is it Olcott's fault? perhaps, to a degree. Is it mine? I absolutely deny it, and protest against the accusation. It is no one's fault. Human nature alone, and the failure of modern society and religions to furnish people with something higher and nobler than craving after money and honors—is at the bottom of it. Place this failure on one side, and the mischief and havoc produced in people's brains by modern spiritualism, and you have the enigma solved. Olcott to this day is sincere, true and devoted to the cause. He does and acts the best he knows how, and the mistakes and absurdities he has

¹A German professor and Spiritualist to whom Dr. Hubbe-Schleiden turned for "messages," after his breach with H.P.B., and who, like Mr. Sinnett's "psychics," charged her with bogus communications.

committed and commits to this day are due to something he lacks in the psychological portion of his brain, and he is not responsible for it. Loaded and heavy is his Karma, poor man, but much must be forgiven to him, for he has always erred through lack of right judgment, not from any vicious propensity.

This letter, it will be noted, was written a year after H.P.B.'s departure from India, a little over a year before the foundation of *Lucifer*, and forms part of the chain of time and action leading to the formation of the Esoteric Section. Both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge from then on made the most strenuous efforts, publicly and privately, in preparations for the restoration of the Society, in Europe and America at least, to a semblance of its original lines, through the Esoteric Section. The obstacles, internally, lay in misconceptions of the philosophy, in the erroneous ideas in regard to the nature of the Masters, in the deeply rooted preconceived opinions of Col. Olcott and many others as to the purposes of the Society. From their point of view the Society had achieved a magnificent success and, under their guidance and direction, was on the highroad to still greater conquests; its drawbacks and limitations chiefly due to the "mistakes" and the "interferences" of H.P.B. How intensely these opinions affected Mr. Sinnett we shall find in due course.² How entirely they governed the outlook and controlled the attitude of Col. Olcott we have now to witness. Turning to "Old Diary Leaves," we may join him in India in the summer of 1887, shortly after H.P.B. had removed to London. Beginning with the last chapter of his Third Series he says:

At Chupra, among my foreign letters I received one from H.P.B. which distressed me much. She had consented to start a new magazine with capital subscribed by London friends

²See also in this connection Mr. Sinnett's posthumous book, "The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe."

of hers, while she was still editor and half proprietor of the *Theosophist*—a most unusual and unbusinesslike proceeding. Besides other causes, among them the persuasion of English friends, a reason which strongly moved her to this was that Mr. Cooper-Oakley, her own appointee as Managing Editor, had more or less sided with T. Subba Row in a dispute which had sprung up between him and H.P.B. on the question whether the “principles” which go to the make-up of a human being were seven or five in number. Subba Row had replied in our pages to an article of hers on the subject, and her letters to me about it were most bitter and denunciatory of Cooper-Oakley, whom she, without reasonable cause, charged with treachery. It was one of those resistless impulses which carried her away sometimes into extreme measures. She wanted me to take away his editorial authority, and even sent me a foolish document, like a power-of-attorney, empowering me to send him to Coventry, so to say, and not allow any galley-proof to pass to the printer until initialed by myself. Of course, I remonstrated strongly against her thus, without precedent, setting up a rival competing magazine to hurt as much as possible the circulation and influence of our old-established organ, on the title-page of which her name still appeared. But it was useless to protest; she said she was determined to have a magazine in which she could say what she pleased, and in due time *Lucifer* appeared as her personal organ, and I got on as well as I could without her. Meanwhile, a lively interchange of letters went on between us. She was at strife then, more or less, with Mr. Sinnett, and before this was settled, a number of seceders from his London Lodge organized as the Blavatsky Lodge, and met at her house in Lansdowne Road, where her sparkling personality

and vast knowledge of Occult things always ensured full meetings.

In the second chapter of the Fourth Series, which Col. Olcott heads, “The Fears of H.P.B.,” he says, by way of preface:

When I look back through my papers of those days of stress and storm, and read the letters written me from exile by Mme. Blavatsky, the solemn feeling comes over me that the binding mortar of its blocks was stiffened by the blood of her heart, and in her anguish were they laid. She was the Teacher, I the pupil; she the misunderstood and insulted messenger of the Great Ones, I the practical brain to plan, the right hand to work out the practical details.

After a desultory sentence or two the “pupil” continues in regard to his Teacher, the “misunderstood messenger of the Great Ones”:

It is painful beyond words to read her correspondence from Europe, and see how she suffered from various causes, fretting and worrying too often over mares’ nests. Out of the sorest grievances I select the defection of T. Subba Rao [Row]; the admission into the *Theosophist* by the Sub-Editor (whom she had herself appointed) of articles which she considered antagonistic to the Trans-Himalayan teachings; the refusal of Subba Rao to edit the *Secret Doctrine* MSS., contrary to his original promise, . . . his wholesale condemnation of it; the personal quarrels of various European colleagues; the war between Mr. Judge and Dr. Coues in America; the threatened renewal of persecution against her if she returned to India, as we begged her to do; . . .

On p. 41 he continues:

Things were growing more and more unpleasant at Adyar on account of the friction between H.P.B. and T. Subba Rao and certain of his Anglo-Indian backers. They even went so far as to threaten withdrawal from the Society and the publication of a rival magazine if H.P.B. did not treat them better.

On p. 47 he says:

Portents of a coming storm in our European groups, stirred up or intensified by H.P.B., begin to show themselves, and Judge complains of our neglecting him. Just then Dr. Coues was working hard for the notoriety he craved, and Judge was opposing him.

Finally, on p. 51, referring to the same year (1888) Col. Olcott relates:

The last week in June brought me a vexatious letter from H.P.B., indicative of a storm of trouble that was raging in and about her.

Chapter IV of the Fourth Series is entitled "Formation of the Esoteric Section," and continues Col. Olcott's reminiscences of this momentous epoch. He first pays tribute to H.P.B. and then proceeds to soliloquize—always to the issue that he was the saviour of the Society against the weaknesses and mistakes of H.P.B. Thus:

It was remarked at the end of the last chapter that we were now about to review some disagreeable incidents of the year in which H.P.B. was a conspicuous factor. If she had been just an ordinary person hidden behind the screen of domesticity, this history of the development of

the Theosophical movement might have been written without bringing her on the stage; or if the truth had been told about her by friend and foe I might have left her to be dealt with by her karma, showing, of course, what great part she had played in it, and to how great a credit she was entitled. But she has shared the fate of all public characters of mark in human affairs, having been absurdly flattered and worshipped by one party, and mercilessly wronged by the other. Unless, then, her most intimate friend and colleague, the surviving builder-up of the movement, had cast aside the reserve he had all along maintained, and would have preferred to preserve, the real personage would never have been understood by her contemporaries, nor justice done to her really grand character. That she was great in the sense of the thorough altruism of her public work is unquestionable: in her times of exaltation self was drowned in the yearning to spread knowledge and do her Master's bidding. She never sold her rich store of occult knowledge for money, nor bartered instruction for personal advantage. She valued her life as nothing as balanced against service, and would have given it as joyfully as any religious martyr if the occasion had seemed to demand the sacrifice. These tendencies and characteristic traits she had brought over with her from a long line of incarnations in which she (and in some, we) had been engaged in like service; they were the aspects of her individuality, high, noble, ideally loyal, worthy, not of being worshipped—for no human being ought to be made the cause of slavish adoration—but of aspiration to be like it.

Then the wise pupil, sure of his own discrimination and judgment, proceeds to point out the weaknesses and failings with which his Teacher is afflicted:

Her personality is quite another affair, and afforded a strong background to throw out her interior brightness into stronger relief. In the matter under present discussion, for instance, the front she presents to me in her letters is unlovely to a degree: language violent, passion raging, scorn and satire poorly covered by a skin of soft talk; a disposition to break through the "red tape" of the Society's mild constitution, and to rule or ruin as I might decide to ratify or disavow her arbitrary and utterly unconstitutional acts; a sniffing at the Council and Councillors, whom she did not choose to have stand in her way, a sharp and slashing criticism of certain of her European co-workers, especially of the one most prominent in that part of the movement, whose initials she parenthesized after the word "Satan," and an appeal that I should not let our many years of associated work be lost in the breaking up of the T.S. into two unrelated bodies, the Eastern and Western Theosophical Societies. In short, she writes like a mad person and in the tone of a hyper-excited hysterical woman, . . . Yet, ill in body and upset in mind as she may have been, she was still a mighty factor for me to deal with, and forced me to choose which line of policy I should pursue. The first count in her indictment against me (for, of course, *more suo*, it was all my fault) was that I had decided against her favourite in an arbitration I had held at Paris, that year, between two opposing parties among the French Theosophists; it was, she writes me, "no mistake, but a crime perpetrated by you against Theosophy (doubly underscored), in full knowledge of what X is and fear of Y. Olcott, my friend you are—, but I do not want to hurt your feelings, and will not say to you what you are. If you do not *feel* and *realize it yourself*, then all I can say will be useless. As for P.

[a Frenchman, subsequently expelled from the Society], you have put yourself entirely in his hands, and you have sacrificed Theosophy, and even the honour of the T.S. in France, out of fear of that wretched little—.

Although on page 23 he specifically declares that "she refused point-blank to lead any Society that did not recognize Adyar as its central head,"—a sheer assertion of his own stated in a manner to indicate it as an indirect citation from one of her letters—on p. 55 he contradicts himself *de but en blanc* by quoting directly from her correspondence:

She had hatched out a new section, with herself elected as "President," taken a commodious house, and had a sign-board ready to have painted on it either "European Headquarters of the T.S." or "Western Theosophical Society." Seeming to suspect that I might not like it *very* much to have the whole machinery of the Society upset to gratify her whim, and remembering of old that the more she threatened the more stubborn it made me, she writes:

Now look here, Olcott. It is very painful, most painful, for me to have to put you what the French call *marche en main*, and to have you choose. You will say again that you "hate threats," and these will only make you more stubborn. But this is no threat at all, but a *fait accompli*. It remains with you to either ratify it or to go against it, and declare war on me and my Esotericists. If, recognizing the utmost necessity of the step, you submit to the inexorable evolution of things, nothing will be changed. Adyar and Europe will remain allies, and *to all appearance*, the latter will seem to be subject to the former. If you do not ratify it—well, then there will be two

Theosophical Societies, the old Indian and the new European, *entirely independent of each other.*

Colonel Olcott says that "This stand-and-deliver ultimatum naturally frightened the 'mild Hindu' members of our Executive Council to fits," and that—"The Paris arbitration above referred to occurred during my European visit of 1888, which kept me there from 26th August to 22nd October, and was made at the entreaty of the Executive Council, as the tone of H.P.B.'s letters had alarmed them for the stability of the movement in the West. The tour should, by rights, have been mentioned before the incidents of the threatened split above alluded to, but H.P.B.'s letters lying nearest to hand, and the trouble being continuous through the two successive years [1888-9], I took it up first."

He then gives the "true history" of the "Paris imbroglio," raging in the "Isis" branch of the T.S. over its conduct by M. F. K. Gaboriau, the editor of *Le Lotus*.

Colonel Olcott says:

In doing this he had become involved in disputes, in which H.P.B. had taken his side, and made a bad mess for me by giving him, in her real character of Co-Founder and her assumed one of my representative, with *full discretionary powers*, a charter of a sweeping and unprecedented character, which practically let him do as he pleased. This was, of course, protested against by some of his soberer colleagues, re-cremations arose, and an appeal was made to me.

Colonel Olcott characterizes M. Gaboriau as a "hyper-sensitive young man . . . who showed an excessive enthusiasm for Theosophy, but small executive faculty."

Colonel Olcott proceeded to Paris and on the 17th September read his formal "decision" to the assembled members. The account in "Old Diary Leaves" recites:

My action in this affair was taken according to my best judgment, after hearing all that was to be said and seeing everybody concerned; I believe it to have been the best under existing circumstances, though it threw M. Gaboriau out of the active running; caused him and some of his few followers to denounce me unqualifiedly, and led to a pitched battle, as one might say, between H.P.B. and myself on my return to London. The sequel is above shown in her revolutionary action with respect to the reorganization at London. . . . Nearly all the persons engaged in the Paris quarrel were to blame, they having given way to personal jealousies, obliterated the landmarks of the Society, fallen into a strife for supremacy, with mutual abuse, oral and printed. . . .

Judging from the account in "Old Diary Leaves" Olcott was the savior of the T.S. and the Movement, against the "language violent," the "passion raging," the "arbitrary and utterly unconstitutional acts," the "disposition to rule or ruin," the "breaking-up of the T.S. into two unrelated bodies," the "stand-and-deliver ultimatum," the "bad mess" created by H.P.B.—the "mad person," the "conspicuous factor" in the "disagreeable incidents," the "hyperexcited hysterical woman."

In the case in point, the student may turn to the actual "official decision" of Col. Olcott, in contrast to his story as given in "Old Diary Leaves," and there learn whether H.P.B. exceeded her "constitutional powers" in the "Isis Branch" imbroglio. In his own words, as recorded in that "decision":

It has been objected that Mme. Blavatsky had not the right to act in this matter; that her interference was illegal according to the Rules of the Theosophical Society. . . . But, in point of fact, Mme. Blavatsky is . . . with me Co-

Founder of the Society, Corresponding Secretary and, *ex officio*, member of the General Council, of the Executive Council and of the Annual Convention, a sort of Parliament held at Adyar by delegates from all countries. . . .

She was, then, perfectly authorized (*compétente*) to issue the order in question as a temporary measure, an order which must be finally submitted for approbation to the President in Council. The Executive Council, in its session of 14th July, formally ratified the measure taken by Mme. Blavatsky, a measure which was urgent, and which I declare to have been legal. . . .

The absolute contradiction between the facts and the story given in "Old Diary Leaves" with its inferences and derogatory statements in regard to H.P.B., shows the utter unreliability of Col. Olcott when his feelings were involved, or when the full facts place him in an unenviable light. Only in the light of a "probationary chela" in the fiery furnace of "pledge fever" can his contradictions be understood and so reconciled with the real honesty of his nature and the genuine devotion which he manifested for the Theosophical Society, of which he was President-Founder and which was the be-all and end-all of existence to him. So identified was it with himself in his consciousness, that more and more he came to view and treat any differences with himself, any correction by his Teacher, as an assault and a menace on the Society.

Colonel Olcott's comments, strictures, and judgments on H.P.B., of which those herein given are but samples of many, stand in melancholy contrast to the Master's own statements in a letter to Col. Olcott at this very time. It is a characteristic anachronism that leads Col. Olcott, in "Old Diary Leaves," Third Series, Chapter VIII, to relate this letter to the joint visit of H.P.B. and himself to Europe in 1884 and the troubles *then* prevalent in the London Lodge; instead of, as was the

fact, to the very matters we are considering, in 1888. This letter, which, says Col. Olcott at p. 91, "I received phenomenally in my cabin on board the *Shannon*, the day before we reached Brindisi," is but barely referred to by the Colonel. No one could by any possibility infer the transcendent importance of its contents from the brief quotation given by him. Its textual omission from "Old Diary Leaves" is amply accounted for, (1) by the contents of the letter itself; (2) by the failing faculties of Col. Olcott when "Old Diary Leaves" was written. The brief quotation he gives, however, is sufficient to identify the letter itself, as is also the fact stated that it was received on board the *Shannon*, which was the vessel in which he voyaged in 1888, not in 1884; and, no less, the citations in *Lucifer* for October 15, 1888, where it is stated by H.P.B. that the letter was received by Col. Olcott "only a few weeks ago." The same number of *Lucifer* gives extracts from the letter, the extracts being certified by Col. Olcott himself. Fuller extracts were contained in a pamphlet sent out at the time, entitled "To All Theosophists." The complete text of the letter came to the light of general publicity only after many years. It will be found in the volume, "Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom."

Several momentous facts should be borne in mind in connection with this letter: It was "phenomenally" delivered to Col. Olcott who was voyaging alone, and was at sea, a day from Brindisi, when it was received. Its contents show that it was "precipitated," but a very short time before it was received by the Colonel—a matter of hours or minutes; it refers prophetically as well as historically to other subjects, to which we shall refer later on.³ At this point it is enough to introduce those extracts which directly relate to Col. Olcott and H.P.B. and shed a clear and authoritative light on their respective natures, status, and functions, no less than on the hidden aspects of the events under consideration. The Master addresses Col. Olcott without preamble or circumlocution:

³ See Chapters XV and XXIII.

Again, as you approach London, I have a word or two to say to you. Your impressibility is so changeful that I must not wholly depend upon it at this critical time. Of course you know that things were so brought to a focus as to necessitate the present journey. . . . Put all needed restraint upon your feelings, so that you may do the right thing in this Western imbroglio. Watch your first impressions. The mistakes you make spring from failure to do this. Let neither your personal predilections, affections, suspicions nor antipathies affect your action. . . .

Your revolt, good friend, against her "infallibility"—as you once thought it—has gone too far, and you have been unjust to her, for which I am sorry to say, you will have to suffer hereafter, along with others. Just now—on deck, your thoughts about her were dark and sinful, and so I find the moment a fitting one to put you on your guard. . . .

Make *all* these men feel that we have no favourites, nor affections for persons, but only for their good acts and humanity as a whole. But we employ agents—the best available. Of these for the past thirty years, the chief has been the personality known as H.P.B. to the world (but otherwise to us). Imperfect and very "troublesome," no doubt, she proves to some; nevertheless, there is no likelihood of our finding a better one for years to come, and your theosophists should be made to understand it. . . . Her fidelity to our work being constant, and her sufferings having come upon her through it, neither I nor either of my brother associates will desert or supplant her. As I once before remarked, *ingratitude* is not among our vices. With yourself our relations are direct, and have been, with the rare exceptions you know of, like the present, on the psychical plane, and so will continue through force of circumstances. That

they are so rare—is your own fault as I told you in my last. To help you in your present perplexity; H.P.B. has next to no concern with administrative details, and should be kept clear of them, so far as her strong nature can be controlled, but this *you must tell to all*:—*with Occult matters she has everything to do*. We have not "abandoned" her. She is not "given over to chelas." She is *our direct agent*. I warn you against permitting your suspicions and resentment against "her many follies" to bias your intuitive loyalty to her. In the adjustment of this European business, you will have two things to consider—the external and administrative, and the internal and psychical. Keep the former under your control and that of your most prudent associates jointly; *leave the latter to her*. You are left to devise the practical details with your usual ingenuity. Only be careful, I say, to discriminate when some emergent interference of hers in practical affairs is referred to you on appeal, between that which is merely exoteric in origin and effects, and that which beginning on the practical tends to beget consequences on the spiritual plane. As to the former you are the best judge, as to the latter, she. . . .

There have been sore trials in the past, others await you in the future. May the faith and courage which have supported you hitherto endure to the end. . . .

This letter . . . is merely given you as a warning and a guide. . . .

This letter from the Master, and the influence of H.P.B., prevailed for the time to restore the poise of Col. Olcott, to put him in his proper place, and to prevent any open breach in the Theosophical ranks. As in the spring of 1885, H.P.B. made every effort to shield Olcott himself, no less than the Society at large, from the bad consequences of his ill-advised actions. A "Joint

Note" was published in *Lucifer* along with the extracts from the Master's letter, from the official "decision" of Col. Olcott, and the notice of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. The form, both of the "Joint Note" and of the "Notice" was made, as with the notices in *The Theosophist* in the spring of 1885, to shield Col. Olcott in his position of President-Founder of the T. S., and to uphold as far as possible his standing before the membership. The "Joint Note" is as follows:

To dispel a misconception that has been engendered by mischief-makers, we, the undersigned, Founders of the Theosophical Society, declare that there is no enmity, rivalry, strife, or even coldness, between us, nor ever was; nor any weakening of our joint devotion to the Masters, or to our work, with the execution of which they have honoured us. Widely dissimilar in temperament and mental characteristics, and differing sometimes in views as to methods of propagandism, we are yet absolutely of one mind as to that work. As we have been from the first, so are we now united in purpose and zeal, and ready to sacrifice all, even life, for the promotion of theosophical knowledge, to the saving of mankind from the miseries which spring from ignorance.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.
H. S. OLCOTT.

The public Notice of the Esoteric Section reads:

THE ESOTERIC SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY

Owing to the fact that a large number of Fellows of the Society have felt the necessity for the formation of a body of Esoteric Students, to be organized on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the real founders of the T.S., the

following order has been issued by the President-Founder:

I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy, there is hereby organized a body, to be known as the "Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society."

II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame H. P. Blavatsky, as its Head; she is solely responsible to the Members for results; and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.

III. Persons wishing to join the Section and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with MME. H. P. BLAVATSKY, 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London, W.

(Signed) H. S. OLCOTT,
President in Council.

Attest: H. P. BLAVATSKY.

The astonishing admixture of complacency and *naïveté* exhibited in "Old Diary Leaves" is well illustrated by the following extracts, summing up, from Col. Olcott's point of view, the "title role" played by himself:

I called two Conventions at London of the British Branches, organized and chartered a British Section of the T.S., and issued an order in Council forming an Esoteric Section, with Madame Blavatsky as its responsible head. . . . This was the beginning of the E.S.T. movement. . . . The reason for my throwing the whole responsibility for results upon H.P.B. was that she had already made one failure in this direction at Adyar in 1884 . . . and I did not care to be responsible for the fulfilment of any special engagements she might make with the new set of students she was now gathering about her, in

her disturbed state of mind. I helped her write some of her instructions, and did all I could to make the way easy for her, but that was all. . . .

My tour realized the objects in view, H.P.B. being pacified, our affairs in Great Britain put in order, and the E. S. started; but . . . the calm was not destined to last and a second visit to Europe had to be made in 1889, after my return from Japan.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORK OF THE ESOTERIC SECTION

AFTER the events narrated in the last chapter, Col. Olcott returned to India, and, at the end of December, held the usual "convention" or "parliament" at Adyar. The full report of the sessions is contained in the "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for January, 1889.

After the admission that "the Annual Convention of the General Council has ceased to be, save in name, the true parliament or congress of the Branches," the report nevertheless goes on to affirm that the "fair thing" was "evidently to extend the sectional scheme to all countries," while yet "keeping the Headquarters as the hub and the President-Founder as the axle of this wheel of many spokes under the car of Progress . . . with the central point where the President-Founder represents and wields the executive authority of the entire undivided body known as the Theosophical Society."

"The President-Founder's Address" to the Convention opens with an argument to show that he "should be left with the widest discretion" in the management of the Society. Col. Olcott sums up:

The time has come when I should say, most distinctly and unequivocally, that since I am to stay and be responsible for the progress of the work, I shall not consent to any plan or scheme which hinders me in the performance of my official duty.

. . . I have never interfered with the esoteric or metaphysical part, nor set myself up as a competent teacher. That is Madame Blavatsky's specialty; and the better to enunciate that

idea I have just issued an Order in Council in London creating an Esoteric Section under her sole direction, as a body, or group, entirely separate and distinct from the Society proper and involving the latter in no responsibilities toward those who might choose to enrol themselves in her list of adherents.

. . . This is my determination: To be . . . loyal and staunch to the colleague you and I, and all of us know and a few of us appreciate at her true worth. This is my last word on that subject; but in saying it I do not mean to imply that I shall not freely use my own judgment, independently of Madame Blavatsky's, in every case calling for my personal action, nor that I shall not ever be most willing and anxious to receive and profit by the counsel of every true person who has at heart the interests of the Society. I cannot please all: it is folly to try; the wise man does his duty as he can see it before him.

The Address gives in brief the story of the troubles in Paris and London. Though these events were then all fresh in his mind; though the Master's words were still ringing in his ears; though the generous protection of H.P.B. still enveloped him and enabled him to "save his face" before the rank and file of the membership—the attitude taken and view expressed testify the same invincible self-complacency that at last wholly absorbed the probationary chela in the President-Founder. Thus:

It was by the Executive Council found expedient that I should proceed to Europe and attempt to bring our affairs into order. We saw the Continental Branches languishing for lack of superintendence and reciprocal work, although there was reason to hope that the movement might be greatly strengthened and ex-

panded under the proper organization. . . . I formed new Branches . . .; dischartered the old "Isis" Branch at Paris and chartered a new one . . .; called two Conventions in London . . .; organized and chartered a British Section of the Theosophical Society; and issued an order in Council forming an Esoteric Section of the Society, with Madame Blavatsky as its responsible head. The trouble in the Paris Branch was solely due—as we have almost invariably found to be the case—to personal jealousies and disagreements. The landmarks of the Society had been obliterated and forgotten; there had arisen a strife for supremacy, and, instead of setting the public an example of zealous fraternal union for the propagation of our ideas, the members had fallen to mutual abuse, oral and printed. Both parties were to blame, as I found after patient examination of the documents . . .

In no part of Col. Olcott's published statements is there a hint that might be construed that he at any time found himself in any way at fault; on the contrary, there is everywhere the continuous holding out of himself as the all-important factor in bringing order out of chaos, in holding the Society true to its purposes. Nowhere appears the faintest glimmer of perception that he himself might be the weakest joint in the Society's armor; that it was his failures as a probationer which were constantly upsetting his work as Executive.

It is intensely interesting and instructive to turn from the Adyar parliament to the proceedings of the Convention of the American Section in the April following. Delegates and proxies, democratically elected, were in attendance from all of the twenty-five active Lodges in the United States. The only one not represented was the Gnostic of Washington, D. C., controlled by Dr. Elliott Coues, whose case we shall shortly consider.

The spirit and energizing direction of the American Section, the devotion to a Cause rather than to its in-

strument, the Society, as contrasted with the work in India under Col. Olcott's autocratic control, are well typified in Madame Blavatsky's Letter to the Convention, presented by Mr. Judge in these words: "I have received from our revered founder, Madame H. P. Blavatsky, a letter for this Convention . . . and beg to lay it before you."

The four Letters of H.P.B. to the Conventions of the American Section are unique. They are the only addresses of H.P.B. to any Theosophical bodies, for she never thus honored either the Indian, the British, or the European Sections. These Letters are the public authoritative statements by the Agent of the Masters in enunciation of the real basis of the Theosophical Society and of all Theosophical endeavor, esoteric and exoteric. This second Letter was written soon after the issuance of the *Preliminary Memorandum* and *First Instruction* to the members of the Esoteric Section. The Letter shows the real spirit of the Movement in the West, the ever-existent dangers to be confronted, her insistent endeavor to keep the line energized in the true direction, and illustrates her exoteric handling of the situation. Thus:

But you in America. Your Karma as a nation has brought Theosophy home to you. The life of the Soul, the psychic side of nature, is open to many of you. The life of altruism is not so much a high ideal as a matter of practice. Naturally, then, Theosophy finds a home in many hearts and minds, and strikes a resounding harmony as soon as it reaches the ears of those who are ready to listen. There, then, is part of your work: to lift high the torch of the liberty of the Soul of Truth that all may see it and benefit by its light.

Therefore it is that the Ethics of Theosophy are even more necessary to mankind than the scientific aspects of the psychic facts of nature and man . . .

. . . Once before was growth checked in connection with the psychic phenomena, and there may yet come a time when the moral and ethical foundations of the Society may be wrecked in a similar way. What can be done to prevent such a thing is for each Fellow of the Society to make Theosophy a vital factor in their lives—to make it real, to weld its principles firmly into their lives—in short, to make it their own and treat the Theosophical Society as if it were themselves. Following closely on this is the necessity for Solidarity among the Fellows of the Society; the acquisition of such a feeling of identity with each and all of our Brothers that an attack upon one is an attack upon all. . . .

These statements were at once the recital of history, a warning, an admonition, and, as events have all too plainly proved, a prophecy. Where the danger ever lies, and how to meet it, are considered:

We have external enemies to fight in the shape of materialism, prejudice, and obstinacy; the enemies in the shape of custom and religious forms; enemies too numerous to mention, but nearly as thick as the sand-clouds which are raised by the blasting Sirocco of the desert. Do we not need our strength against these foes? Yet, again, there are more insidious foes, who "take our name in vain," and who make Theosophy a by-word in the mouths of men and the Theosophical Society a mark at which to throw mud. They slander Theosophists and Theosophy, and convert the moral Ethics into a cloak to conceal their own selfish objects. And as if this were not sufficient, there are the worst foes of all—those of a man's own household—Theosophists who are unfaithful both to the Society and to themselves. . . .

Let us, for a moment, glance backwards at

the ground we have passed over. We have had . . . to hold our own against the Spiritists, in the name of Truth and Spiritual Science. Not against the students of the true psychic knowledge, nor against the enlightened Spiritualists; but against the lower order of phenomenalists—the blind worshippers of the illusionary phantoms of the Dead. These we have fought for the sake of Truth, and also for that of the world which they were misleading. . . . Unless prepared carefully by a long and special course of study, the experimentalist risks not only the medium's soul but his own. The experiments made in Hypnotism and Mesmerism at the present time are experiments of unconscious, when not of conscious, Black Magic. The road is wide and broad which leads to such destruction; and it is but too easy to find; and only too many go ignorantly along it to their own destruction. But the practical cure of it lies in one thing. That is the course of study which I mentioned before. It sounds very simple, but it is eminently difficult; for that cure is "ALTRUISM." And this is the key-note of Theosophy and the cure for all ills; this it is which the real founders of the Theosophical Society promote as its first object—UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

Thus even if only in name a body of Altruists, the Theosophical Society has to fight all who under its cover seek to obtain magical powers to use for their own selfish ends and to the hurt of others. Many are those who joined our Society for no other purpose than curiosity. Psychological phenomena were what they sought, and they were unwilling to yield one iota of their own pleasure and habits to obtain them. These very quickly went away empty-handed. The Theosophical Society has never been and never will be a school of promiscuous Theurgic rites. But there are dozens of small occult Societies

which talk very glibly of Magic, Occultism, Rosicrucians, Adepts, etc. These profess much, even to giving the key to the Universe, but end by leading men to a blank wall instead of the "Door of the Mysteries." These are some of our most insidious foes. Under cover of the philosophy of the Wisdom-Religion they manage to get up a mystical jargon which for the time is effective and enables them, by the aid of a very small amount of clairvoyance, to fleece the mystically inclined but ignorant aspirants to the occult, and lead them like sheep in almost any direction. . . . But woe to those who try to convert a noble philosophy into a den of disgusting immorality, greediness for selfish power, and money-making under the cloak of Theosophy. Karma reaches them when least expected. But is it possible for our Society to stand by and remain respected, unless its members are prepared, at least in future, to stand like one man, and deal with such slanders upon themselves as true Theosophists, and such vile caricatures of their highest ideals . . . ?

But in order that we may be able to effect this working on behalf of our common cause, we have to sink all private differences. Many are the energetic members . . . who wish to work and to work hard. But the price of their assistance is that all the work must be done in their way and not in anyone else's way. And if this is not carried out they sink back into apathy or leave the Society entirely, loudly declaring that they are the only true Theosophists. Or, if they remain, they endeavor to exalt their own method of working at the expense of all other earnest workers. This is fact, but it is not Theosophy. There can be no other end to it than that the growth of the Society will soon be split up into various sects, as many as there are leaders. . . . Is this prospect one to look forward to . . . ? Is

this "Separateness" consonant with the united Altruism of Universal Brotherhood? Is this the teaching of our noble MASTERS?

The Letter contained a public reference to the Esoteric Section in these words:

As many of you are aware, we have formed the "Esoteric Section." Its members are pledged, among other things, to work for Theosophy under my direction. By it, for one thing, we have endeavored to secure some solidarity in our common work; to form a strong body of resistance against attempts to injure us on the part of the outside world, against prejudice against the Theosophical Society and against me personally. By its means much may be done to nullify the damage to the work of the Society in the past and to vastly further its work in the future.

The Letter closes:

And now a last and parting word. My words may and will pass and be forgotten, but certain sentences from letters written by the Masters will never pass, because they are the embodiment of the highest practical Theosophy. I must translate them for you:—

“. . . Let not the fruit of good Karma be your motive; for your Karma, good or bad, being one and the common property of all mankind, nothing good or bad can happen to you that is not shared by many others. Hence your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man's profit. . . . There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of Self and forgetting all other Selves.

“The Universe groans under the weight of such action (Karma), and none other than self-sacrificial Karma relieves it. . . . How many of you have helped humanity to carry its smallest burden, that you should all regard yourselves as Theosophists? Oh, men of the West, who would play at being the Saviors of mankind before they even spare the life of a mosquito whose sting threatens them! would you be partakers of Divine Wisdom or true Theosophists? Then do as the gods when incarnated do. Feel yourselves the vehicles of the whole humanity, mankind as part of yourselves, and act accordingly. . . .”

These are golden words; may you assimilate them! This is the hope of one who signs herself most sincerely the devoted sister *and servant* of every true follower of the Masters of Theosophy.

To any sincere student of today the thirty years of history intervening since the date of this Letter furnish their own confirmation and commentary on the prevision, the spiritual insight, the practical common sense and the never-dying courage of H.P.B. They show, as nothing else does or can do, the overwhelming need for a *return to the Source* of all true Theosophical inspiration and endeavor. This from the exoteric standpoint alone. Permissible extracts from the *Preliminary Memorandum* to the E.S. applicants show her esoteric treatment of the same problems:

Immediately following upon the publication in *Lucifer* of the Notice of the formation of the Esoteric Section, H.P.B. sent out to all applicants a formal communication, marked as were all subsequent papers of the Section, *strictly private and confidential*. It contained an introductory statement, a summary entitled "Rules of the Esoteric Section (Probationary) of the Theosophical Society," the "Pledge of Probationers in the Eso-

teric Section," and some preliminary questions and requirements to be responded to by the applicant. The introductory paragraphs read as follows:

I forward you herewith a copy of the Rules and Pledge for Probationers of the Esoteric Section of the T.S.

Should you be unable to accept them, I request that you will return this to me without delay.

The Rules referred to recite, amongst others, that no one will be admitted who is not a Fellow of the T.S.; that applications for membership in the Esoteric Section must be accompanied by a copy of the Pledge "*written out* and signed by the Candidate, who thereupon enters upon a special period of probation, which commences from the date of his signature"; that "all members shall be approved by the Head of the Section"—H.P.B.

Some hundreds of the most active and earnest Fellows of the T.S. complied with all the formal requirements above outlined, sent in their Pledges, and entered upon their special period of probation. H.P.B. forwarded to all these the *First Preliminary Memorandum* of the Section. This remarkable document has either been suppressed, altered or ignored, like the Pledge and Rules of the original School, by its unworthy "successors"; while its plain statements of facts, its prescient presentments of principles and their applications to the then present and future, now the past, the present, and the future, have been deliberately disregarded and corrupted.

The *Preliminary Memorandum* tells the probationers the impelling occasion for the step taken:

. . . At this stage it is perhaps better that the applicants should learn the reason for the formation of this Section, and what it is expected to achieve.

The Theosophical Society had just entered upon the fourteenth year of its existence; and if it had accomplished great, one may almost say stupendous, results on the exoteric and utilitarian plane, it had proved a dead failure on all those points which rank foremost among the objects of its original establishment. Thus, as a "Universal Brotherhood," or even as a fraternity, one among many, it had descended to the level of all those societies whose pretensions are great, but whose names are simply masks—nay, even SHAMS. Nor can the excuse be pleaded that it was led into such an undignified course owing to its having been impeded in its natural development, and almost extinguished, by reason of the conspiracies of its enemies *openly* begun in 1884. Because even before that date there never was that solidarity in the ranks of our Society which would not only enable it to resist all external attacks, but also make it possible for greater, wider and more tangible help to be given to all its members by Those who are always ready to give help when we are fit to receive it. When trouble arose, too many were quick to doubt and despair, and few indeed were they who had worked for the Cause and not for themselves. The attacks of the enemy have given the Society some discretion in the conduct of its external progress but its real internal condition has not improved, and the members, in their efforts toward spiritual culture still require that help which solidarity in the ranks can alone give them the right to ask. The Masters can give but little assistance to a Body not thoroughly united in purpose and feeling, and which breaks its first fundamental rule—universal brotherly love, without distinction of race, creed, colour or caste, *i. e.*, the social distinctions made in the world; nor to a Society, many members of which pass their lives in judg-

ing, condemning, and often reviling other members in a most untheosophical, not to say disgraceful, manner.

For this reason it was decided to gather the "elect" of the T.S., and to call them to action. It is only by a select group of brave souls, a handful of determined men and women hungry for genuine spiritual development and the acquirement of soul-wisdom, that the Theosophical Society at large can be brought back to its original lines. It is through an Esoteric Section alone—*i.e.*, a group in which all the members, even if unacquainted with one another, work for each other, and by working for all work for themselves—that the great Exoteric Society may be redeemed and made to realize that in union and harmony alone lie its strength and power. The object of this Section, then, is to help the future growth of the Theosophical Society as a whole in the true direction, by promoting brotherly union at least among a choice minority.

All know that this end was in view when the Society was established, and even in its mere unpledged ranks there was a possibility of development and knowledge, until it began to show want of real union; and now it must be saved from future dangers by the united aim, brotherly feeling, and constant exertions of the members of this Esoteric Section. Once offered the grand example of practical altruism, of the noble lives of those who learn to master the great knowledge but to help others, and who strive to acquire powers but to place them at the service of their fellow-men, and the whole Theosophical community may yet be steered into action, and led to follow the example set before them.

The Esoteric Section is thus "set apart" for the salvation of the whole Society, and its course from its first step is an arduous and

uphill work for its members, though a great reward lies behind the many obstacles once they are overcome.

To allay any misapprehensions due to widespread erroneous ideas regarding chelaship and asceticism while at the same time placing before the Candidates the seriousness of the steps contemplated and the absolutely essential prerequisites to any real solidarity or individual evolution, several paragraphs are devoted to direct plain speaking on these subjects. Thus the Candidates are told that one object of the *Memorandum*—

. . . is to give timely warning to any applicant, should he feel unable or unwilling to accept fully and without reserve, the instructions which may be given, or the consequences that may result, and to do the duties whose performance shall be asked. It is but fair to state at once that such duties will never interfere with, nor encroach upon, the probationer's family duties; on the other hand, it is certain that every member of the Esoteric Section will have to give up more than one personal habit, such as practised in social life, and adopt some few ascetic rules.

Those who may be seeking "powers" and "Occult preferment" are advised:

This degree of the Esoteric Section is probationary, and its general purpose is to prepare and fit the student for the study of practical Occultism or Raja Yoga. Therefore, in this degree the student—save in exceptional cases—will not be taught how to produce physical phenomena, nor will any magical powers be allowed to develop in him; nor, if possessing such powers naturally, will he be permitted to exercise them before he has mastered the knowledge of SELF, of the psycho-physiological processes . . .

in the human body generally, and until he has in abeyance all his lower passions and his PERSONAL SELF. . . .

Each person will receive in the way of enlightenment and assistance, just as much as he or she deserves, and no more; and it is to be distinctly understood that in this Section and these relations no such thing is known as favour—all depends upon the person's merits—and no member has the power or knowledge to decide what either he or she is entitled to. This must be left to those who know—alone. The apparent favour shown to some, and their consequent apparent advancement, will be due to the work they do, to the best of their power, in the cause of Universal Brotherhood and the elevation of the Race.

No man or woman is asked or expected to do any more than is his or her best; but each is expected to work to the extent of his ability and powers.

The value of the work of this Section to the individual member will depend upon:

1st. The person's power to assimilate the teachings and make them a part of his being; and

2nd. Upon the unselfishness of the motives with which he seeks for his knowledge; that is to say, upon whether he has entered this Section determined to work for humanity, or with only the desire to benefit or gain something for himself.

The *Book of Rules* supplied to each Candidate with the *Preliminary Memorandum* provided specifically amongst other things, that the various Groups into which those accepted were to be formed were *not* for *practical Occultism*, but for mutual study of the Instructions and help in the Theosophic life; gossip, derogatory statements, and the repetition of slanderous and

hearsay statements were strictly forbidden; the dangers and evils of cant, hypocrisy, and injustice to others were enforced; claims of Occult powers, boasting or speaking of Occult experiences, whether falsely or truly, discountenanced under penalty; the widest charity, tolerance, and mutual consideration and helpfulness laid down as the *sine qua non* of all true progress. "The first test of true apprenticeship," said the *Rule* on that subject, "is devotion to the interest of another," and continued:

For these doctrines to practically re-act on the life through the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of Theosophy. It is not the individual or determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana, which is, after all, only an exalted and glorious *selfishness*, but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead our neighbour on the right path, and cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true Theosophist.

CHAPTER XII

MABEL COLLINS AND PROFESSOR COUES

By 1889, despite all obstacles and all limitations, despite all the guerilla warfare of antagonistic elements and all the heavy artillery of the numerous "exposures" of H.P.B., the Theosophical Movement had gained such headway that the word "Theosophy" was part of the vocabulary of every intelligent person. The Theosophical Society was established in every civilized country and in every large city; the public announcement of the Esoteric Section had drawn the attention of the mystically inclined to the fact of the existence of a definite school of Occult instruction. The student will have poorly gauged the force of the powerful metaphysical current at work if he is not prepared for a more striking example of the real Theosophical phenomena than any so far produced. The great storm of 1889-90 does not vary in essentials from those which preceded it. The drama is the same.

Originally a newspaper writer and novelist, Miss Mabel Collins, then a young woman, had joined the London Lodge in 1884. Imaginative and sensitive in temperament she became intensely interested, not in Theosophy, but in the "psychical activities" pursued by many of the members of that Lodge. During that year she produced "The Idyll of the White Lotus." This was followed, early in 1885, by "Light on the Path, a Treatise written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within its influence. Written down by M. C., Fellow of the Theosophical Society." As this was the first and up to that time the only, apparently simple and direct statement of the Rules of practical Occultism, and as it was plainly hinted

that the book was "inspired" it attracted immediate attention. Moreover, its inherent merit, the sustained beauty of its diction, the noble simplicity of its expression of the loftiest ethics, the moral grandeur of the ideals submitted as within the reach of human attainment, at once gave it rank as a Theosophical classic. "Through the Gates of Gold," from the same pen, appeared in 1887. In the autumn of the same year, when Madame Blavatsky began the publication of *Lucifer*, the name of Mabel Collins appeared with her own as Editor. In view of the circumstances it was but natural that Theosophists everywhere should hold Miss Collins in the highest respect and regard.

When, therefore, with the issue of February 15, 1889, the name of Mabel Collins disappeared from *Lucifer*, it was inevitable that a furor of curiosity and interest should set in. This was accentuated by the fact that Miss Collins retired to privacy and gave no hint as to the cause of the breach; *Lucifer* gave no explanations and made no comments; Mr. Judge's *Path* and Col. Olcott's *Theosophist* remained equally silent. There the matter rested, so far as concerned public knowledge of events "behind the scenes," until the month of May.

On May 11, 1889, there appeared in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* a letter from Dr. Elliott Coes, embodying a letter to him from Miss Mabel Collins. The *Religio-Philosophical Journal* was an old established and leading Spiritualist publication printed at Chicago and edited by Col. Bundy, a life-long Spiritualist and a friend of Prof. Coes. Colonel Bundy had been admitted to membership in the Theosophical Society in 1885, on the recommendation of Prof. Coes and was a member of the Gnostic Branch of the T.S., at Washington, D. C., a Branch founded by Prof. Coes who was and had been its President from the beginning. The *Religio-Philosophical Journal* had previously given publicity to attacks upon H.P.B., by W. Emmette Coleman, whose life was for many years chiefly devoted to that purpose.

The Coes-Collins letters, and other communications from the same source in later issues of the *Religio-Phil-*

osophical Journal, made grave charges against H.P.B.,—grave in themselves, and doubly so from the reputation of those who made them.

Of Catholic family and education, Prof. Coues was a university graduate and originally by profession an American Army surgeon attached to various posts and expeditions. Highly educated, exceedingly versatile, of independent means, he became interested in various branches of science and pursued his studies and investigations to such good purpose that he soon ranked as an authority on many subjects. He published various books and was invited to edit that portion of the "Century Dictionary" dealing with his specialties. Early in the 80's of the last century, while still in the prime of life, he awakened to an interest in psychical research, and conducted many experiments of his own with chosen "subjects." He early became a member of the London Society for Psychical Research and was in London in the summer of 1884, at the time the S.P.R. Committee was making its preliminary investigation and report on the Theosophical phenomena. He sought out Col. Olcott who was naturally rejoiced to make his acquaintance, and finding his interest, to induct him into membership in the Theosophical Society. In company with Col. Olcott, Prof. Coues and his wife journeyed to Elberfeld, Germany to meet H.P.B., who was at the time with the trusted and trusting Gebhards. A great and spontaneous affection sprang up between Mrs. Coues and H.P.B.—an affection which never lapsed, on the one side or on the other.

Professor Coues met Col. Olcott again at London and was appointed a member of the newly constituted American Board of Control of the Theosophical Society. On his return to the United States he established the Gnostic Branch of the T. S. In 1885 he was active in the formation of the American Society for Psychical Research along the same lines of inquiry as pursued by its British predecessor. He was elected Chairman of the American Board of Control of the T.S., and in the midst of his multifarious activities in other directions busied himself in correspondence with members of the Society. Of

engaging manners and distinguished appearance, as excellent a speaker as he was brilliant a writer, he was a very popular lecturer and gave many addresses before scientific bodies, clubs, and other associations. Although he never made any distinctly Theosophical addresses there runs through all his lectures of the period a definite note of inquiry and suggestion of broader fields of investigation than those passing current under the name of "science." Although he was not a contributor to the Theosophical literature of the times, as editor of the "Biogen Series" he brought out an American edition of Col. Olcott's "Buddhist Catechism," republished the monograph, "Can Matter Think?" and published with an introduction and notes by himself Robert Dodsley's "True and Complete Economy of Human Life," originally issued at London in 1750. To this reprint he added the subtitle, "Based on the System of Theosophical Ethics." This phrase, his use of the name "Kuthumi"—a variant spelling of *Koot Hoomi*, the *Mahatma* to whom Mr. Sinnett's "Occult World" is dedicated—some questionable expressions in his introduction and notes, and his personal prominence and known affiliation with the Theosophical Society, gave Mr. Judge occasion to insert in *The Path* for July, 1886, two references, one a review complimentary to the "Biogen Series" and to Prof. Coues personally, and the other a correction of possible misconceptions in the following words:

The association of the name Kuthumi with the book, so perplexing to understand, is not a biographical fact, as Prof. Coues explains in his "foreword" (p. 10). It only remains to state clearly what is implied in the foreword that the Theosophical Society has no special code of morals, ready made and rigorously defined, for the acceptance of its members on admission.

By the summer of 1886, it became evident that the Board of Control, originally promulgated by Col. Olcott at Mr. Judge's request in order to avoid delay in

the conduct of the official routine of the American Branches, was, in the hands of Prof. Coues, a mere exchange of the paternal autocracy of Col. Olcott for the arbitrary autocracy of Prof. Coues. Mr. Judge had recourse to H.P.B. and Col. Olcott, and at a meeting of the Board of Control, held at Rochester, N. Y., at the house of Mrs. Cables on July 4, 1886, additional "orders" from Col. Olcott and his Indian General Council were presented by Mr. Judge, calling for a revised plan whereby an American Section of the General Council was to be formed. In this American Council was to be merged the Board of Control, the members of which, as also the Presidents of Branches, were to become *ex officio* members of the American Council. Provision was also to be made for the election of additional members of the American Council by the votes of the members of the Society.

Notwithstanding this promulgation, Prof. Coues, immediately after his return to his home, issued of his own motion the following:

AMERICAN BOARD OF CONTROL—OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 12, 1886.

It is desired that *The Occult Word* become the official organ of the American Board of Control of the Theosophical Society.

Correspondents having notes and news respecting the Society in America are requested to send them to *The Occult Word*. Members and others having the interests of the Society at heart will do well to extend the circulation of *The Occult Word*.

Contributors of articles upon speculative, doctrinal, or operative Theosophy will be individually responsible therefor, as heretofore.

ELLIOTT COUES, President.

It was already an open secret that Mrs. Cables, Editor of *The Occult Word*, another member of the Board of Control, and her associate, Mr. Brown, were disaf-

affected with the "Theosophical Mahatmas," a disaffection which burst into flame a few months later, as has been narrated in an earlier chapter.¹

In *The Path*, for August, 1886, Mr. Judge, knowing well the tangential activities of Prof. Coues, Mrs. Cables, and others, published in the section, "Reviews and Notes," an article, "Theosophy in the Press," in which, after noting the sudden appearance within a few months of many articles in the daily papers "full of misstatements mixed with ignorance of . . . Theosophy," he goes on to say:

But some Theosophists have been guilty of ventilating in the papers the statement that Theosophy is astralism, that is to say, that the object of the Society is to induce people to go into the study and practice of spirit raising, cultivating the abnormal faculties, of clairvoyance and the like, ignoring entirely the prime object, real end, aim and *raison d'être* of the movement—universal brotherhood and ethical teaching. In fact, we make bold to assert, from our own knowledge and from written documents, that the Mahatmas, who started the Society, and who stand behind it now, are distinctly opposed to making prominent these phenomenal leanings, this hunting after clairvoyance and astral bodies, and they have so declared most unmistakably, stating their wish and advice to be, that "*the Society should prosper on its ethical, philosophical and moral worth alone.*"

Theosophists should haste to see that this false impression created at large, that it is a dangerous study, or that it is any way dangerous, or that we conceal our reasons for doing what we are doing, is done away with. . . . If one or two persons in the Society imagine that the pursuit of psychical phenomena is its real end and aim and so declare, that weighs nothing

¹ See Chapter VIII.

against the immense body of the membership or against its widespread literature; it is merely their individual bias.

But at the same time, this imagination and misstatement are dangerous, and insidiously so. It is just the impression which the Jesuit college desires to be spread abroad concerning us, so that in one place ridicule may follow, and in another superstitious dread of the thing; which ever of these may happen to obtain, they would be equally well pleased.

Let Theosophists attend to this, and let them not forget, that the only authoritative statements of what are the ends and objects of the Society are contained in those printed in its by-laws. No amount of assertion to the contrary by any officer or member can change that declaration.

In the September, 1886, number of *The Path* was printed the notice of the receipt of the "formal orders" to form the American Council. On this Mr. Judge comments:

This action is eminently wise, as the term *Board of Control* was misleading, inasmuch as the very foundation of the Society is democratic in its nature, and *control* savored too much of form, ceremonies, discipline, officers, secret reports and all the paraphernalia of an established church.

The expression "Board of Control" was Col. Olcott's coinage. The various stages recounted were accepted by Mr. Judge as necessary intermediate steps in the effort to arrive at real democracy among the American Theosophists. Colonel Olcott was at all times loath to surrender his "paternal government" of the Society as a whole, and he acceded to the gradual democratization of the Society in America only under the steady pressure

of Mr. Judge, reinforced by the insistence of H.P.B. He at last consented to issue his "official order" for the formation of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, and at a meeting of the Board of Control, held at Cincinnati in October, 1886, and attended also by delegates and members from numerous Branches, the arrangements were perfected for the first Convention at New York City in April, 1887, at which elected delegates from all the Branches were present, adopted a constitution, and elected officers and a Council. The first formal Convention was held the next year, April, 1888, at Chicago.

Meantime a "lively interchange of letters," as "Old Diary Leaves" phrases it, had been going on, not only between H.P.B. and Col. Olcott over the threatening breach between them on matters of policy and the forthcoming Esoteric Section, but as well among Prof. Coues, Mr. Judge, Col. Olcott, and H.P.B. over affairs in America—as may readily be inferred from what has been stated.²

There can be no doubt that Col. Olcott, impressed by the prominence and ability of Prof. Coues, sympathized with that gentleman, whose views were entirely congenial to him. Nor can it, we think, be doubted that Prof. Coues, fully informed as to Col. Olcott's feelings, those of Mr. Sinnett and others, may well have concluded that he had but to lead in the coming battle, and all the disaffected would openly as well as secretly support him. Able, audacious, and subtle, he was writing in one strain to Col. Olcott, in another to H.P.B., and in a third to Mr. Judge. Like so many others he was entirely unaware that H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, working as one in the Cause dear to them, made no moves, the one without the other, nor ever wrote letters or other communications on moot Theosophical matters without supplying each other with copies. Nor was it conceivable to him or to many others prominent in the Society that the Occultism of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge was genuine and not spurious or mediumistic.

² See Chapters IX and X.

Colonel Olcott, honest to the core, loyal in his better moments to both his colleagues, was yet, by reason of his personal weaknesses and past life, almost wholly susceptible to the arts of those who knew how to play and prey upon his vanity, his fears and doubts concerning the welfare of his beloved Society, of which he had long since constituted himself the tutelary deity. Much may be read and inferred of the unwritten history of this period from the following extract from one of the President-Founder's letters to Prof. Coues:

Another warning: Beware how you encourage H.P.B. to act outside her special province of mystical research and esoteric teaching. The Council will stand no nonsense, nor shall I ratify a single order or promise of hers made independently of me and my full antecedent possession of the facts. She telegraphed to abolish the Board of Control and had just issued a revolutionary commission to Arthur Gebhard with an idiotic disregard of the proprieties and her own position. She seems a Bourbon as to memory and receptivity and fancies the old halcyon days are not gone. I shall neither ratify what she has done, nor anything of the sort she may in future do. Within her domain she is queen; outside that—well, fill in the blank yourself. Several attempts have been made to get her to set up a rival society. . . . She has not yet been fool enough to fall into the trap, nor do I think her brain will soften to the point of doing it. She would thereby take a life-contract for a fight; . . . and find herself with enfeebled health, advanced years and a tainted reputation recommencing our work of 1875, without, pardon me, an Olcott to stick to her, as I have, through thick and thin and bear shame and disgrace with mute endurance.³

³ *The Sun*, New York, July 20, 1890. The authenticity of this letter, published by Prof. Coues, was never disputed by Col. Olcott.

At the Chicago Convention at the end of April, 1888, Prof. Coues was present as a delegate and President of the Gnostic Branch of the T.S. He was elected Chairman of the Convention and presided over its sessions. The newspapers of the city gave a good deal of space to the proceedings and reporters were present at all of the open meetings. Following the Convention the *Chicago Tribune* published, without disclosing the source from which it had received them, a letter and *facsimile* of an alleged "message from a Mahatma" to Dr. Coues. Naturally this aroused considerable passing curiosity among the general public, and a very decided interest among American Theosophists. No public notice was taken of the matter either by H.P.B. or Mr. Judge, but the latter wrote privately to Dr. Coues, who responded as follows, under date of May 21, 1888:

My dear Judge:—I think that on reflection you will find yourself a little hasty in pitching into me about that *Tribune* matter.

. . . Now I saw that letter of which you complain fall down from the air over a person's head, precisely in the same manner as you have seen a like letter fall—one, of which we have since heard a good deal. The writing on one side was in that peculiar hand which I have learned to recognize in several expressions of the will of the Blessed Masters which you have been good enough to send me. . . . The writing on the other side must have been subsequently precipitated and the seal affixed. . . . If K. H. had not wished about 75,000 persons to be advised of the mode in which he brought about the Convention in Chicago he could easily have dematerialized that document. . . . It was clearly the will of the Brotherhood that the T.S. should be thus broadly advertised—and no doubt it would also be by the will of the same august personages, if the "Religio"⁴ for example

⁴ "Religio" means the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

should contain some day a column or two explaining the delicate and mysterious manner in which rice-paper communications are "precipitated" out of the Akasa.

This is clearly a tacit admission on Coues' part that he furnished the "message" to the *Tribune*, that he "saw" it precipitated, and an insinuation that he had received from Mr. Judge similar "messages." To Dr. Coues' letter Mr. Judge replied intimating that the whole tale, "messages" and all, originated in Dr. Coues' own brain. Under date of June 11, 1888, Prof. Coues replied to Mr. Judge's warnings:

Dear Judge:—But now comes another trouble. It appears, and not from "Coues' brain," but from a much more material and very likely much stupider source, that you have been opposing my long standing candidacy for the esoteric presidency, in order to keep the ostensible control of T.S. in your own hand and make yourself the real or actual head of the concern in America, leaving me only as a figure-head; and I am referred to all and any newspaper reports which emanate from the Aryan⁵ or yourself, as carefully suppressing or at least not putting forward my name, etc.

It had become very well known amongst members of the T.S. in the United States that Dr. Coues, in the course of his personal propaganda had broadly hinted at his own Occult relations with the Mahatmas, and as neither Mr. Judge nor H.P.B. in any way confirmed his claims, more or less questioning and suspicion arose in regard to him and his ulterior purposes. Thus "hoist with his own petard," Dr. Coues endeavored to turn his tactics to better advantage in the attempt to gain for

⁵"Aryan" means the Aryan Theosophical Society of New York City, the re-organization of the parent T.S. Mr. Judge was President of the Aryan Society.

himself the powerful support of H.P.B. in his ambition to be the public head of the Society in America, and as part of his campaign to enfold Mr. Judge in the soiled robes of his own pretended "messages." H.P.B. replied guardedly to his communications; agreeing where she could with Coues' strictures and criticisms on Col. Olcott, Mr. Judge, and the "management" of the Society; encouraging him to live up to his own protestations of loyalty, influence, and devotion to the Society; ignoring his egotism and blandishments; correcting him only where the issue raised was point-blank. On Christmas Day, 1888, he wrote her a bombastic and fulsome letter. Mr. Judge was at the time in England with H.P.B.; Col. Olcott, furious with her action in the Paris T.S. and her plain speaking with him, had just departed after his "pitched battle" with her, and his reconciliation due chiefly to the Master's Letter, as has already been told.⁶ Col. Olcott had been in communication with Prof. Coues and had poured out his feelings as we have seen. Prof. Coues' Christmas letter to H.P.B. was intended to avail himself of the supposed strained relations all around. We quote his closing phrases:

Is your "first-born," the meek Hibernian Judge,⁷ still with your majesty? Give my love to him and say, I don't get up very early, but I stay up very late. I am glad you made it all right with your psychologized baby Olcott when he was with you. . . .

And after all, dear H.P.B., I am really very fond and very proud of you, and admire your genius as only a man of genius can. So here's my blessing, and all good wishes, for the greatest woman of this age, *who is born to redeem her times*, and go down to everlasting historical fame.

Ever yours, still in the psychic maelstrom,
DARIUS HYSTASPES II.

⁶See Chapter X.

⁷Mr. Judge was of Irish parentage and birth.

In one of her letters to Dr. Coues, H.P.B. had called Mr. Judge her first-born; Col. Olcott she had spoken of as a psychologized baby when referring to the effects upon him of his twenty years' dabbling with mediums and his never-ending thirst for phenomena. Darius Hystaspes II was a favorite signature of Dr. Coues in writing to H.P.B., as Dr. Faustus was in his letters to Mr. Judge.

On April 16, 1889, just prior to the Convention of the American Section for that year, Dr. Coues wrote H.P.B. a long letter detailing his own greatness and influence, the strength of his Gnostic Branch (it had some thirty members all told, at the time, none of them active Theosophically), and with half-veiled threats tried to induce her to ask the American Theosophists to place him at their head. Thus:

You appear to have been misinformed or uninformed respecting the Gnostic and its Branches, as well as my own work in your behalf. Both in numbers and in quality of its membership, the Gnostic is unquestionably the leading Branch of the T.S. in the country. Its members are for the most part of a high, refined, educated, and influential class in society, in science and before the world, and most of them are indefatigable in working for the cause to which your own great and noble life is devoted. I am satisfied that if you would do *your* part to give my Gnostics their just dues and recognition, they and I can lift Theosophy clear of the mud which has been thrown upon it and set your own self in a proper light before the world. We all feel keenly the abuse and persecution to which you have been subjected, and anxious to do you full justice and honor. But they are unanimously dissatisfied with the way the society is run at present, and they wonder

where your INTUITION can be, that you fail to see where your obvious advantage lies, in not strengthening and holding up the hands of their representative man [Prof. Coues] . . . Be wise now and be warned in time; you are a very great woman, who should be quick to see that this is no ordinary occasion. I tell you frankly, it is possible that all this prestige, social and personal and professional influence, scientific attainment and public interest, can be thrown on the side of the T.S., as at present constituted, or can be switched off on a new track aside from the old lines. If you cannot SEE this, and understand it, and act accordingly, there is nothing more for me to say, and I must presume that you do not care for my people. Judge and I came to a fair understanding once, and I was carrying out our agreement in good faith, and all was smooth, when something or other, affecting the question of the *Presidency*, interfered, and since then there has been nothing but friction and misunderstanding in the "Esoteric" T.S.—which you know consisted of yourself, myself, and Judge: and your issue of a new and different "esoteric" manifesto did not mend matters. Now be *wise* and *POLITIC*. . . . The T.S. in America is at present a *HEADLESS* monstrosity: it must have a visible, official head to represent its real, invisible source. You know whom the majority of the F.T.S. have desired to put forward as their representative theosophist in America. It is only necessary for you to cable the Chicago Convention, to elect him president. Weigh these words well; pause, consider, reflect, and ACT. "If 'twere well done, 'twere well done quickly."

The next day, April 17, 1889, he wrote her further on the same subject and, with incomparable effrontery, in-

cluded the following choice gems of his egotism and mendacity:

. . . do you know you are getting great discredit in this country and for what do you suppose? for being *jealous of me!* Can you imagine such flapdoodle? You are not moved by abuse, but you want to know how people think and what they say, and a great many are talking loudly and wildly, that your silence respecting my books in the "Secret Doctrine," and the absence of my name from *Lucifer* (as well as from *The Path*) means that you are afraid of my growing power, and will brook no rival so dangerously near the papal throne of theosophy. . . . There is another queer thing. You have somehow got it stuck in your mind, that I put in the *Chicago Tribune* last year a caricature of the Master K. H. I had nothing whatever to do with the article, which was merely a newspaper skit, and the lithographed effusion was no more a Mahatmic document than this letter. It was simply a piece of newspaper wit.

Judge is a good fellow and means well, and I like him for many things, especially his devotion to you and the masters and their Cause; but dabbling in occultism, especially on a Mahatmic altitude is dangerous except to an Adept!! I am the humble servant of *my* Mahatma.

The American Convention met at the end of the same month. Professor Coues was not present. He was not elected President or any other officer of the American Section. H.P.B. did not cable the Convention as requested. On the contrary, her formal Letter to that Convention had distinct reference to the class of "Theosophists" of which Prof. Coues was such a shining example, as may be observed from the extracts given in the last chapter. And under date of April 30, 1889, she wrote Prof. Coues from London, saying:

Dear Doctor Coues: I have received your two letters and read them as they stand and also between the lines and therefore I mean to be as frank with you as you are frank with me. I will take your two letters point by point.

Point by point she goes over the various matters in Prof. Coues' letters, in friendly, considerate, but severely plain language, and on the subject of the "message from the Mahatma" she says:

3. If you had nothing to do with the *Chicago Tribune* article (tho' you must have influence with your own nephew) then why did you not contradict it, then and there?

4. I know nothing about the number of messages you may have received from Masters through Judge, whom I would never believe capable of it, or any one else. . . . You speak of my seals on those letters. . . . Where did they get this? From Judge, from me or from you? It could hardly have been any except one of us three. . . . Your wise advice that such Mahatma messages should be confined to one channel, "the only genuine and original H.P.B. your friend," was anticipated by Mahatma K. H. in so many words. Then why do you kick against that? You speak of *your* Mahatma, then why don't you send letters in his name instead of those of my Master and Mahatma K. H. That would settle all the difficulties and there would be no quarrel. . . . What you have learned through me, I know, and do not want to know beyond. You may obey or disobey your Master as much as you like, if you know him to exist outside of your psychic visions. As to mine, every man devoid of all psychic powers can see him, since he is a living man. I wish he could be yours, for then, my dearest Dr., you would be spiritually a better man and a less sceptical one than you are.

You speak of your eagerness "to defend and help a woman who has been sadly persecuted, because misunderstood." Permit me to say to you for the last time that no bitterest enemy of mine has ever misunderstood me as you do. . . .

CHAPTER XIII

THE COUES-COLLINS CHARGES AND THEIR AFTERMATH

HAVING failed, alike in his attempts to ingratiate himself with the American Theosophists, to deceive H.P.B. in regard to his own treacherous course, or to disturb her complete confidence and trust in Mr. Judge, and his material being all prepared and ready for the execution of his thinly veiled threats, Prof. Coues made the first assault in his campaign to ruin if he could not rule.

On May 11, 1889, appeared the first Coues-Collins letters in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*; followed up in the issue of the same journal for June 1, with two more letters from the same source. Succeeding issues followed with additional guns from the Editor, Col. Bundy, from Mr. W. Emmette Coleman, and others, in addition to Prof. Coues. Other Spiritualist and sectarian publications and the secular press followed suit. A manifestly inspired attack on everything Theosophical, including of course H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, raged in many quarters. In England the ground had been equally well prepared, and in *Light* of the issues for May, June, and succeeding months the charges first published in America were repeated, with additions and variations. There, as in the United States, many other publications entered the fray, and there was a revival of the familiar tactics employed five years previously during the Coulomb and S.P.R. attack. The *Religio-Philosophical Journal* did not open its columns to counter evidence, but *Light*, with a display of fairness as commendable as it was unique, gave space as freely to defenders as to assailants. During the summer and autumn another strategem was employed in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the followers of Ignatius Loyola. This jesuitical device was

ably carried out through Michael Angelo Lane. Mr. Lane was a newspaper reporter of St. Louis. Becoming interested in Theosophy as early as 1885, he joined the Society and corresponded with the headquarters at Adyar. Later on he became acquainted with Mr. Judge and volunteered his services in New York. After the formation of the Esoteric Section, Mr. Lane made his application for admission thereto as a probationer. He professed the utmost devotion to the Cause and wrote H.P.B. his desire to go to London to be near her and to aid in the work there. He took the pledge of the Esoteric Section, went to London, and was at the London headquarters for several weeks. He mysteriously disappeared on several occasions and very shortly returned to the United States. Thereafter he went from Lodge to Lodge, ostensibly as a Theosophist and member of the Esoteric Section and spread stories among the members to the discredit of H.P.B., of the Section and of the Society. Mr. Lane was promptly exposed as soon as circumstantial statements of his activities were forwarded to London, whereupon he ranged himself openly with Prof. Coues and other enemies of H.P.B., and her work. Professor Coues also had early applied to H.P.B. for the pledge and preliminary papers of the Esoteric Section, and these had been transmitted to him in confidence, the same as to all other applicants. He violated the confidence reposed in him, for these papers and the pledge were printed in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* during the course of the warfare, and their contents discussed with, and a portion of them given by Prof. Coues directly to the *New York Sun* in an interview.

In his first letter to the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* Prof. Coues stated specifically that "about four years ago," (*i.e.*, in 1885) being interested in "Light on the Path," he "wrote Mrs. Collins a letter, praising it and asking her about its real source." This was because "Light on the Path," said Prof. Coues, "was supposed to have been dictated to Mrs. Collins by 'Koot Hoomi,' or some other Hindu adept who held the Theosophical Society in the hollow of his masterly hand." To this

letter of his Miss Collins "promptly replied, in her own handwriting, to the effect that 'Light on the Path' was inspired or dictated from the source above indicated." Dr. Coues goes on to say that *since that time* "nothing passed between Mrs. Collins and myself until yesterday [May 2, 1889], when I *unexpectedly* received the following letter." Miss Collins' letter is dated April 18, 1889, and runs:

Dear Sir: I feel I have a duty to write you on a difficult and (to me) painful subject, and that I must not delay it any longer.

You will remember writing to ask me who was the inspirer of "Light on the Path." If you had not yourself been acquainted with Madame Blavatsky I should despair of making you ever understand my conduct. Of course I ought to have answered the letter without showing it to any one else; but at that time I was both studying Madame Blavatsky and studying under her. I knew nothing then of the mysteries of the Theosophical Society, and I was puzzled why you should write me in such a way. I took the letter to her; the result was that I wrote the answer at her dictation. I did not do this by her orders; I have never been under her orders. But I have done one or two things because she begged and implored me to; and this I did for that reason. So far as I can remember I wrote you that I had received "Light on the Path" from one of the Masters who guide Madame Blavatsky. I wish to ease my conscience now by saying that I wrote this letter from no knowledge of my own and merely to please her; and that I now see that I was very wrong in doing so. I ought further to state that "Light on the Path" was not to my knowledge inspired by any one; but that I saw it written on the walls of a place I visit spiritually, (which is described in the "Blossom and the Fruit")—there I read

it and I wrote it down. I have myself never received proof of the existence of any Master; though I believe (as always) that the mahatmic force must exist.

Yours faithfully,
MABEL COLLINS.

Professor Coues says of Mabel Collins' letter to him as above:

I was not surprised at the new light it threw on the pathway of the Theosophical Society, for late developments respecting that singular result of Madame Blavatsky's now famous hoax left me nothing to wonder at.

Next, in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of June 1, 1889, Prof. Coues appears with another letter in which he says that in his first communication he did not give the original letter from Miss Collins because—"I could not conveniently lay my hands on it." He says he now gives it "word for word. It is in Mrs. Cooke's handwriting, undated and unsigned." This *undated* and *unsigned* note is as follows:

The writer of "The Gates of Gold" is Mabel Collins, who had it as well as "Light on the Path" and the "Idyll of the White Lotus" dictated to her by one of the adepts of the group which through Madame Blavatsky first communicated with the Western world. The name of this inspirer cannot be given, as the personal names of the Masters have already been sufficiently desecrated.

Professor Coues adds:

This is exactly, word for word, what Mrs. Cooke now says she wrongly wrote to me because Madame Blavatsky "begged and im-

plored" her to do so, and which she also wrote at her dictation. It certainly has the genuine Blavatskian ring about it.

In a subsequent communication to the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* Dr. Coues has the hardihood to subscribe himself "F. T. S." (Fellow of the Theosophical Society), but the contents of the letter identify him as its author. Addressing himself to the Editor, Dr. Coues says:

If your mail resembles mine in quantity and quality of theosophical correspondence since "Mabel Collins'" disavowal of inspiration from Madame Blavatsky's Hindu "controls" it must be curious reading. . . . At this revelation through the *Journal* some people are pleased; other sorry, others angry; some applaud; some condemn; many are curious, and most of them want to argue about it. My mail has a sort of shivery, gooseflesh quality, as if a panic in mahatmic stock were imminent and there is a tendency of the hair of the faithful to stand on end. . . .

First, a good many persons are surprised that I seem to have only now found out that "Light on the Path" was not dictated by our friend Koot Hoomi or any other Eastern adept. Such have always known all about its source and my discovery is discounted as a theosophical chestnut. Let me say to all such that I do not always tell all I know, and that I might have continued silent on the authorship of "Light on the Path," had I not had reasons for publishing Mrs. Cooke's letter just then and there—reasons I reserve for the present.

Examining Prof. Coues' "evidence" as supplied by himself the reader will note that he says he first wrote Miss Collins in 1885 (the year in which "Light on the Path" was first published), asking her about its "real

source," and that he was moved to do this both because of the inscription that it was "written down" by her, and because "it was supposed to have been dictated to Mrs. Collins by 'Koot Hoomi' or some other adept who held the Theosophical Society in the hollow of his masterly hand." He says her reply confirmed the supposition.

At the time he wrote Miss Collins he was already himself a member of the Society and of the American Board of Control, was well acquainted with H.P.B., and Mr. Judge, and in communion with them then and thereafter, up to and including April, 1889, professing the warmest admiration and friendship for both, and the utmost devotion to the Cause they served. It does not appear that at any time during those four years he ever wrote either H.P.B. or Mr. Judge for confirmation of Miss Mabel Collins' affirmation that "Light on the Path" was inspired or dictated by one of the Theosophical Adepts. Yet, either on the assumption that he wanted to verify the source as claimed by Miss Collins or that he all along believed H.P.B. to be the inventor of a "hoax," as his first communication affirms and his last intimates, it is clear that he made no effort to verify Miss Collins' statement. This is the more peculiar, as it is plainly evident he neither knew Miss Collins personally, kept up his intercourse with her, nor had at the time he received her letter of April 18, 1889, any but the scantiest knowledge about her. For he says that in the intervening four years "nothing passed between Mrs. Collins and myself until yesterday" (May 2, 1889); and in his first letter he four times calls her "Mrs. Collins," whereas her married name was Cook; while in his later communications he repeatedly speaks of her as Mrs. Cooke.

Notable as was his omission in the circumstances, to verify in any way Miss Collins' first statement as to the authorship of "Light on the Path," his course of procedure, when her second letter came, is still more significant. For in that letter she plainly said to him that her own first statement was false, that in fact "Light on the

Path" was not to her knowledge inspired by anyone; that she had never received proof of the existence of any Master; that she knew nothing at the time of the "mysteries of the Theosophical Society."

Quite apart from anything else, these two contradictory statements must have shown Prof. Coues that Miss Mabel Collins' testimony was untrustworthy and valueless without corroboration. Here, from every angle, was something that required and demanded clearing up in mere justice to himself as an honest inquirer interested in getting at the facts. But much more than his own interests were concerned in doing his utmost to ascertain the truth: his fellow Theosophists by thousands were as much concerned as himself, if Mabel Collins' second "explanation" should be true, as much concerned as himself should it be false; finally, remained H. P. Blavatsky, his friend, revered by many, hated by many, accused of an abominable offense by a woman who had already once given him false testimony, and who, he must have known, had recently been dismissed from *Lucifer* and from all association with H.P.B. Certainly every motive of fairness, of common decency, even, would require him to take steps to ascertain the truth or the falsity of Mabel Collins' "explanation" and accusation before making any charges. Yet what did he do? Immediately on receipt of Miss Collins' letter of April 18, he says, "I cabled Mrs. Collins for permission to use her letter at my discretion." "Mrs." Collins obediently replied, "Use my letter as you please." And the same day Prof. Coues enclosed her letter and one of his own to the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*—an ardent Spiritualist publication, vehicle of Mr. W. Emmette Coleman's prolonged and malicious attacks on H.P.B. Thus, in view of the facts, what credence can be attached to the character or veracity of Dr. Elliott Coues' testimony where his motives are so absolutely impeached?

But there is more. In his second communication to the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* Prof. Coues gives, he says, "word for word" the *first* letter sent him by Mabel Collins. "It is in Mrs. Cooke's handwriting" and in it

she says, in reply to his original inquiry, "The writer of 'The Gates of Gold' is Mabel Collins who had *it* as well as 'Light on the Path' and 'Idyll of the White Lotus' dictated to her by one of the adepts." In his first communication (dated May 3, 1889) Prof. Coues had already stated that his original inquiry and her reply had occurred "about four years ago"—that is, sometime in 1885—"since which time nothing passed between Mrs. Collins and myself." Now the actual and indisputable fact is that "The Gates of Gold" was not published until 1887—two years after the alleged correspondence had taken place! Thus the "evidence" produced by Prof. Coues against the honor of H. P. Blavatsky not only falls of its own weight so far as she is concerned, but convicts Prof. Coues out of his own mouth of shameless duplicity and an equally shameless mendacity.

Turning now to Mabel Collins' share in the attempted stroke, the reader will note upon examining her two letters that she confesses her own falsehood. In her first letter she says her books were dictated by one of the Adepts; in her second letter she says her falsehood was dictated by H.P.B. If her *first* statement is accepted it was the Adept who dictated her books. But in her second letter she declares (1) "I have myself never received proof of the existence of any Master"; (2) "I knew nothing then of the mysteries of the Theosophical Society."

In her second letter Mabel Collins admits the falsehood in her first but says she told it because Madame Blavatsky "begged and implored me to."

Let us contrast these statements with known and *undisputed* facts.

H.P.B. was in London from the end of July, 1884, till November 11 of the same year, when she sailed for India, less the interval when she was in Germany with the Gebhards. She was in India till April of 1885, during which time she was in the midst of the storm of the Coulomb case and most of the time lying between life and death. From April, 1885, on, she was in Naples, in Germany, in Belgium, returning to England *only* in

May, 1887. During the entire period from November, 1884, until after May, 1887, she neither saw nor had any communications with Mabel Collins. Even while H.P.B. was in England during the fall of 1884 she never even saw Mabel Collins more than two or three times and *at no time did she see her except in the presence of others.* The "Idyll of the White Lotus" was written by Mabel Collins before she ever met H.P.B. That work was shown by her in manuscript to Mr. Ewen and Mr. Finch, both well-known and reputable men, to both of whom she stated that the work had been "inspired" by "some one" whose appearance she described. Mr. Ewen showed the manuscript to Col. Olcott, with whom Mabel Collins talked and made the same claim of "inspiration." She told Col. Olcott that the work had been written by her either in trance or under dictation, and described to him the appearance of the "inspirer." All this was *before* H.P.B. ever set eyes on Mabel Collins. Furthermore the first edition of the "Idyll," published when H.P.B. was thousands of miles away, and without any intervening communication with Mabel Collins, bore this inscription: "to the *True Author, the Inspirer* of this work; It Is Dedicated."

Next, with regard to "Light on the Path": The undisputed facts are that Mabel Collins did not begin that work until November, 1884, just prior to the departure of H.P.B. for India. On November 8 of that year Miss Collins showed H.P.B. a page or two of manuscript of what afterwards became "Light on the Path." H.P.B. was in India when that work was completed and published, yet the inscription and Mabel Collins' various statements at the time and on down to the present date, claim that work, not as her own composition, but "written down" by her. Her last claim in that respect was as recently made as the year 1919.¹ H.P.B. never even saw the text of "Light on the Path" until the summer of 1886, when a copy of it was given to her in Germany by Arthur Gebhard.

¹In an autograph letter, now in the possession of the Editors of the magazine *Theosophy* (Los Angeles, California).

Further, Mrs. C. A. Passingham, a reputable and well-known English woman, wrote to *Light* while the Coues-Collins charges were pending, to the effect that early in 1885 Mabel Collins spent an afternoon and part of the evening at her house. This, Mrs. Passingham thinks, was in February. She continues:

She expressed a wish to leave early, as she had an "appointment" with "Hilarion" . . . I may add that Mrs. Collins told me herself that the influence under which she wrote the book in question was that of a person whom she had long known, but had only lately identified as being that of an "adept."

On the 12th of June, 1889, Mabel Collins' sister, Ellen Hopkins, wrote a letter to *Light* which is published in that journal for June 15, 1889. The letter follows:

. . . Will you allow me to state that my sister, Mabel Collins, is too ill at the moment to be able to speak for herself, but I trust that she will be well enough in a few days to furnish you with a reply which will put a very different aspect on the whole affair?

The "few days" spoken of by Ellen Hopkins went by and rolled into months with no statement from Mabel Collins. Meantime pamphlets had been gotten out by "F.T.S.," by Mr. Judge, and by H.P.B. Statements had been made by Archibald and Bertram Keightley, both of whom had known H.P.B. since the summer of 1884, both of whom had been intimate indeed with Mabel Collins, and both of whom had resided almost continuously in the headquarters house with H.P.B., after her return to England in 1887. The several statements, the documentary and other proofs, the establishment of dates, the production of letters of Prof. Coues to H.P.B., all showed conclusively the utter falsity of the charges made by the Coues-Collins alliance.

Professor Coues had overreached himself. He had been thoroughly exposed. The charter of the Gnostic Branch was revoked and Coues himself expelled from the Society. Months later, while preparing a further attack, he endeavored to retrieve his earlier blunder by writing a letter to *Light* which is referred to in the leading editorial of that publication for November 2, 1889. From this it appears that he concocted an *ex post facto* correction by saying that he had been mistaken in fixing the date of his first letter to Miss Mabel Collins as 1885, when it should have been 1887. As proof he told the editor of *Light* that on June 1st, 1889, Miss Collins had cabled him of his mistake and as further proof he sent a card of Mabel Collins, *undated*, and *without* the envelope—a card, whether the original or otherwise does not matter, but claimed to be the original,—which *Light* accepted as an "explanation" because "The Gates of Gold" was not published until 1887! The animus of this laggard explanation of Prof. Coues' *impasse* is, we think, entirely clear, and worthy of the same degree of credibility as his other facile statements. It is to be noted that although Mabel Collins was "too ill" to make a concrete statement to *Light* at the time—and before the publication of the pamphlets which proved by dates alone the impossibility of her statements or Coues' being true—she was not too ill to send a cablegram to her co-conspirator warning him of the discrepancy into which his too great facility and too zealous haste had led him. But to return to Miss Mabel Collins' books.

The third of the trio was "The Gates of Gold" which her unsigned note to Prof. Coues attributed to "one of the adepts" and which—her retraction, whether four years later or two does not matter—by implication at least is included in the falsehood which Madame Blavatsky "begged and implored" her to circulate. Let us see as to that.

"The Gates of Gold" was written in 1886. Madame Blavatsky was living at the time in Germany. The book was published in England and in America very early in

1887, while H.P.B. lay on a sick-bed in Belgium. The first edition of the work contained this inscription:

Once, as I sat alone writing, a mysterious Visitor entered my study unannounced, and stood beside me. I forgot to ask who he was, or why he entered so unceremoniously, for he began to tell me of the Gates of Gold. He spoke from knowledge, and from the fire of his speech I caught faith. I have written down his words; but alas, I cannot hope that the fire shall burn as brightly in my writing as in his speech.

All these are *undisputed* facts. As in the case of the "Idyll" and "Light on the Path," this book was written and published when H.P.B. was not in England, when she was not in any communication with Mabel Collins, when she was physically in the gravest condition. Yet all three books bear inscriptions written by Mabel Collins which can be interpreted only as a disclaimer of her own authorship of them and a claim that they were inspired—no matter how or by whom.

Finally, as in the Coulomb case, H.P.B. had everything to risk and nothing to gain by such chicanery as was attributed to her. No one of her enemies ever imagined it plausible for a moment to call her a fool, but a fool as well as a "fraud" she must have been to put herself at the mercy of Madame Coulomb, Mabel Collins, or any one else, for such paltry ends as such rascality, even if successful, would have achieved. For quite without risk or occasion for either the Coulombs' or the Collins' help, she had the recorded testimony of Col. Olcott, of Mr. Judge, of Damodar, of Maj.-Gen. Morgan, of Mr. Sinnett, of Mr. A. O. Hume, of Countess Wachtmeister, of Mr. Hubbe-Schleiden, Dr. Hartmann, Miss Arundale, a hundred others of reputation and character, both as to Adept inspiration, and her own phenomenal powers. What had she to gain, what motive could inspire her, whether in 1885, while a storm was already raging about the Coulomb charges, or in 1887, when her

own position as regards Theosophists needed no bolstering—what had *she* to gain, one may ask, by fraudulently procuring what, if believed, would add neither to her own repute nor to that of her Masters, but would only enhance the importance and prestige of *Mabel Collins*?

It thus becomes clear with regard to all three books, first that Miss Collins on her own account both before and since, claimed them to be inspired; secondly, that with regard to any and all of them H.P.B. was physically absent, physically not in communication, physically not in a position to beg and implore Mabel Collins to do or say anything in regard to them. If, then, she "influenced" Miss Collins in any way, it was from a distance and by the use of phenomenal powers indeed. But if she actually possessed such *Occult* powers—and desired to misuse them—why in the name of the commonest of common sense should she betray herself by using cheap physical frauds, when by employing her Occult powers she could procure the wished for result without risk?

Miss Mabel Collins also wrote: "At the time—whether 1885 or 1887 does not matter—I was both studying Madame Blavatsky and studying under her." As Miss Collins was not in communication with H.P.B. nor in her presence from their first meeting in the fall of 1884 till just prior to the commencement of the publication of *Lucifer* in September, 1887, it is certain that during that interval this statement is as inaccurate as her others. Mabel Collins *was* closely associated with H.P.B. in the publication of *Lucifer* from September, 1887, until January, 1889. The contents of the magazine show that whatever Miss Collins wrote was published over her own signature, the same as with H.P.B. and other contributors—and on her own responsibility. Part of her contribution was "The Blossom and the Fruit," a novel for which she made the same claim of an inspirer as with the three works already discussed. At no time and in no place has anyone produced a line written or signed by H.P.B. supporting Miss Mabel Collins' claims to studying under her. On the contrary, H.P.B. *refused to accept Mabel Collins* even as a probationer of the

Esoteric Section until the latter "begged and implored" indeed. She was then placed on probation after warning, and within four days, in the words of H.P.B., "broke her vows, becoming guilty of the blackest treachery and disloyalty to her HIGHER SELF. And when I could no longer keep in the E.S. either herself or her friend, the two convulsed the whole Society with their calumnies and falsehoods." Mabel Collins brought suit in England against H.P.B. for libel. When the case came for trial in July, 1890, a certain letter written by Miss Mabel Collins was shown by H.P.B.'s attorney to the counsel for Miss Collins, who thereupon asked the Court to take the case off the docket, which was done.

Viewing the enormous difference between the three books named and the prior and subsequent writings of Mabel Collins, and the many stories told by Miss Collins and others as to the real source of "Light on the Path" and its companion volumes, and how they were obtained, the student may be interested in the only comment made directly by H.P.B. in those respects. In her letter to *Light* of June 8, 1889, she says, *inter alia*, "When I met her [Mabel Collins] she had just completed the *Idyll of the White Lotus*, which as she stated to Colonel Olcott, had been dictated to her by some 'mysterious person.' Guided by her description, we both recognized an old friend of ours, a Greek, and no Mahatma, though an Adept; further developments proving we were right. This fact, acknowledged by Mrs. Cooke in her dedication of the *Idyll*, sets aside the idea that the work was either inspired or dictated by Koot Hoomi or any other Mahatma." In the pamphlet issued by H.P.B. at the same time, this statement is repeated, together with the following most interesting paragraph:

Was the dedication *invented*, and a Master and "inspirer" suggested by Mme. [Blavatsky] before the latter had ever seen his *amanuensis* [Mabel Collins]? For that only she proclaims herself in her dedication, by speaking of the "true author," who thus must be regarded as

some kind of Master, at all events. Moreover, heaps of letters may be produced all written between 1872 and 1884, and signed Δ^2 : the well-known seal of one who became an *adept* only in 1886. Did Mme. Blavatsky send to "Miss Mabel Collins" this signature, when neither knew of the other's existence?

The same pamphlet of H.P.B.'s contains also a letter, signed "A Student of *Light on the Path*," reprinted from *Light* of June 8, 1889, in which the following suggestive ideas are put forth:

Referring to Miss Collins' explanation, it is at once evident that another intelligence besides her own must also have visited the place, "spiritually" or otherwise, where she saw "Light on the Path" written upon its walls, for *someone* must have placed the words there; moreover, that intelligence had command over good modern English as well as being the possessor of high practical wisdom.

We judge, therefore, that Miss Collins was simply the favoured vehicle for the communication of those particular rules of the "Hall of Learning" to the many mortals now needing and hungering for them, and while it is impossible that they could have been written up where she was permitted to observe them, otherwise than by an intelligent Being who had also visited that place, it does not at all follow that he should, or ought to, have made himself or his nature known to her. That would have been creating a basis for personal intimacy which was not necessary and perhaps not advisable.

As regards the manner in which one mind may instruct or inform another, on what may be termed the occult plane, we know at present very

* This symbol was used as a signature in the original edition of "Light on the Path," following the numbered "rules."

little, but the phenomena of psychometry and thought-transference may some day, if scientifically studied, be the means of our understanding those things better.

To whatever conclusions the student may come on the mooted real authorship of "Light on the Path" and its related volumes, what has been adduced will, we believe, serve to make two points, general and particular, very clear. The general point is that expressed in the words of H.P.B. in the "Introductory" to the "Secret Doctrine":

It is above everything important to keep in mind that no theosophical book acquires the least additional value from pretended authority.

Had Theosophical students kept this admonition in mind, whether as regards H.P.B. herself, Miss Mabel Collins, or all the host of those before and since, who have claimed, truly or falsely, to "speak with authority," whether "in the name of the Lord" or "in the name of the Master"—had they been content to study the "message" on the basis of its own inherent merit instead of under the glamour of belief in some authority, real or imaginary, they would quickly have become able to "test the spirits" to some purpose.

The particular point is that it is evident alike from Miss Mabel Collins' own statements as to her inspirer and from the quality of the other writings emanating from her pen, that she had not then and has not now, the remotest knowledge of her own, either as to the actual source of her three gem products, as to the means by which their substance and form reached her, or as to their substance. She was, in no invidious sense, purely and simply the *medium* of their transmission.

CHAPTER XIV

"THE NEW YORK SUN" LIBEL CASE

WHEN the American Sectional Convention met at Chicago at the end of April, 1890, Mr. Judge's Report as General Secretary contained the following reference to Prof. Coues:

During the past year there has been no appeal to the Executive Committee from any Branch or individual, and but one case of discipline. On June 11th [1889] formal charges of untheosophic conduct were preferred by Mr. Arthur B. Griggs of Boston against Dr. Elliott Coues, of Washington. These charges were in part based on public imputations by Dr. Coues of fraud and falsehood to Madame Blavatsky, and in part upon unpublished letters in which the Theosophical Society, its teachings, aims, and officers, were treated as shams and deceits. I officially sent a copy of these charges to Dr. Coues in a registered letter, notifying him of the date when the Executive Committee would be prepared to hear his defense. During the intervening time no reply was received, and the Committee, having considered the charges, adjudged them sustained, by a unanimous vote, and on June 22d expelled Dr. Coues from the Theosophical Society. Later events have conclusively shown that it is better for its enemies to be placed without its pale than permitted to remain within it. From this decision there has been no appeal to Col. Olcott, and therefore it is final.

The Theosophical community having thus disembarassed itself of the traitor within the household, and placed on record its action, Dr. Coes prepared his final thunderbolt. In the *New York Sun* for Sunday, June 1, 1890, the leading editorial article was entitled, "The Humbug of Theosophy." It says:

The exposure of the imposture of Mme. BLAVATSKY does not seem to lessen at all the prosperity of her humbug religion. . . .

The number of new members admitted during the year was 373, and there was one expulsion, Dr. ELLIOTT COES of Washington. He is a man of scientific reputation, who showed up the lying and trickery of the BLAVATSKY woman after having been one of her dupes for several years. With her closer intimates she seems to make little attempt to conceal her real character as a charlatan, and her hearty contempt for their folly in taking her seriously. Her long success in keeping up the humbug is, therefore, all the more astonishing. Whether her principal disciple, Col. OLCOTT, is also playing a fraudulent part, it is hard to say. He seems to be very much in earnest, and as she seems to despise him thoroughly and undisguisedly, laughing at his antics, it is perhaps presumable that he is honest and sincere in his credulity. He treats the snuffy old woman as a veritable seeress, and reads her mystical writings with apparent and probably real veneration, though she has described him to her old confederate, Mme. COULOMB, as a muff of the first water. Dr. COES is of very different stuff, and he did not hesitate to banter her on the success of her trickery. He seems to have seen through her at an early day, and the wonder is that a man of his standing remained in her crowd so long. . . .

Mme. BLAVATSKY has the assurance to write to her American dupes that her charlatanism is

prospering more than ever, financially and otherwise. She addresses them from a sick chamber,* to which she is confined by a mortal disease, and yet she persists in her determination to keep the imposture going until the end. She is an old woman of wonderful will power and of unquestionable intellectual ability. What the motive of her course is, we cannot imagine, unless it be mere love of fun and mischief. It evidently pleases her to make fools of people, and she is likely to go down to history as one of the chief impostors of our day. Whether theosophy will die with her is very doubtful. It has a fascination for a certain class of minds fond of mysticism; and its Buddhistic element is getting to be fashionable at this period. . . .

The men in the business strike us as being made up of arrant humbugs and superficial fellows whom anything like abstract thought drives substantially crazy. But they have succeeded in inducing thousands to take them seriously as profound philosophers.

This ignoble consideration of Madame Blavatsky, her teachings, and her students, was followed, on Sunday, July 20, 1890, by a full-page special article from its Washington correspondent in the form of an interview with Prof. Coes. The editorial page of the *Sun* of the same date contained as its leading article a still more undignified and disreputable treatment of the subject under the caption, "The History of a Humbug." It is, in full, as follows:

We publish to-day a wonderfully interesting history of the invention of the humbug of Theosophy. It is related by Prof. ELLIOTT COES of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, an ornithologist of distinction, who at one time was deceived by Mme. BLAVATSKY's pretensions, but

since has discovered her to be the impostor she is.

This woman is by birth a Russian subject, and is now about 60 years of age, though she looks and pretends to be much older. She is fat, gross, of abominable habits, an intolerable temper, swearing like a pirate and smoking like a chimney, of restless energy and endless craft. Very little is known of her early days, when she was Mlle. HÄHN, except that she was married to the Russian whose name she still bears, though she soon left him and entered upon her career of adventure without preserving any prejudices so far as matrimony is concerned.

In other words, her morals may be theosophic, but they are bad. Since she lost her youth she has been living by her wits, sharpened by much experience of travel and the friction of many years of vagabondage. Her profession, so far as she has had any stated employment, has been as a Russian spy. As such, Prof. COUES tells us, she came to New York in 1873, and in that capacity she subsequently went to India with Col. OLCOTT as her faithful attendant. The device of theosophy was simply contrived by her as a cover for her real designs.

This confirms the theory of her imposture which was advanced after she had been exposed by an investigating committee of the London Society for Psychical Research. That exposure was complete. It was proved beyond a doubt that, with Mme. COULOMB, a French woman, as a confederate, and with the assistance of the mechanical ingenuity of M. COULOMB, she kept up a pretended correspondence with a supernatural Koot Hoomi, deceiving her dupes by the baldest jugglery. The old witch, according to Prof. COUES, was doing it all for no other purpose than to kick up a dust to hide her political intrigues. But she was not so sharp as she thought; the

Russian Government stopped her pay, and she was driven to using her theosophical imposture itself as a means of making a living. As to OLCOTT, who began his career in the secret service of our own War Department, Prof. COUES seems to think that he is not the wholly guileless and gullible fool he appears, at least not now. Poor fellow, he is in BLAVATSKY'S clutches and he can not escape, though he has found her out as a harridan and a humbug. Accordingly he is perforce a humbug himself.

It is a wonderful story how this crafty Tartar entrapped this shrewd Yankee, so that for fifteen years they have together played their game of humbugging people into believing that they are the prophets of a new religion founded on Asiatic wisdom, of which they are both together totally ignorant. Their trickery has been exposed with scientific completeness and exactitude, and yet their impudence is in no wise lessened. They keep straight faces and go on with their humbug, cheered and encouraged, of course, by the folly of men and women who take them seriously.

Prof. COUES' narrative in form and substance makes capital reading.

The Coues interview fills seven closely printed columns of small type. The charges made and the alleged evidence procured by Prof. Coues ostensibly exposed the facts of H.P.B.'s career from 1857 onwards. It is worth while for the student to observe these putative facts in the *Sun* articles, for they include the multitude of attacks before and since upon H.P.B. and Theosophy. The sequel shows their untruthfulness and the basic ignorance or dishonesty of those who make and repeat those charges.

On the statements of Mr. Daniel Dunglas Home, the medium, and Mr. W. Emmette Coleman, Dr. Coues charged H.P.B. with having been a member of the *demi-*

monde of Paris in 1857-8 and mistress of the Prince Emile de Wittgenstein, "by whom she had a deformed son, who died at Kieff in 1868."

On the strength of the report of Mr. Richard Hodgson of S.P.R. fame, she is charged with "having shared the fortunes" of one Metrovitch in Cairo in 1871. This is said to be provable by Madame Coulomb and to be "the key to the power Coulomb had over Blavatsky." This charge is further supported by a letter from Madame Coulomb to Col. Bundy of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, and is the charge hinted at by Madame Coulomb, at the close of the preface to her pamphlet against H.P.B. in 1884, but which she feared to make publicly in India.

The next charge definitely makes H.P.B. out a Russian spy from 1873 on. Then she is charged to have been "exploiting as a spiritualist medium" during her five years at New York, and before that at Cairo. Hudson Tuttle, a Spiritualist, is quoted as sponsor for an attack on Mr. Judge. In gambler's terms Prof. Coues characterizes Theosophy, H.P.B., Col. Olcott, and Mr. Judge as "three-card monte with king, queen, and knave. Blavatsky dealt, Olcott steered, Judge played capper."

Madame Blavatsky's authorship of "Isis Unveiled" is declared to be a fiction and on the authority of "a friend of mine" the real author is claimed to be the Baron de Palm, who was a member of the Society in its earliest days and the cremation of whose body was the first in the United States. The de Palm story is told at length in Col. Olcott's "Old Diary Leaves." Prof. Coues goes on to declare, "similar, yet different frauds are the root, stock and branch of other theosophical books."

The Report of the Society for Psychical Research is then taken up, and Dr. Coues affirms:

The London Society for Psychical Research determined to send one of their number to Madras. Dr. Hodgson went to India in November, 1884, and stayed until April, 1885. The re-

sult of his investigation was the total collapse of the theosophic fake, and there has not yet been found leather enough in the lungs of all the fakirs combined to reinflate the bubble. Dr. Hodgson's report is elaborate, circumstantial and conclusive. Its force has never been and never will be broken. It is a volume of several hundred pages, with diagrams of the trap-doors on the Blavatsky stage, and facsimiles of Blavatsky's handwriting proved to be identical with that of the mythical Koot Hoomi. It shows that the Couombs, whatever their own characters, and whatever their animus or purpose, had told the plain, simple truth as far as their disclosures went. Their evidence had already damned the woman; Hodgson's report sealed, certified and executed that sentence.

H.P.B., Col. Olcott, and Mr. Judge are repeatedly charged with being in the Society for money and that it is run for revenue only. Mr. Michael Angelo Lane's exploits are then referred to and he is made sponsor for stories of bogus Mahatmic messages "in very good imitation of the things Mr. Judge has been in the habit of distributing to favorite dupes—these themselves being in imitation of the rice paper missives of Blavatsky's original hoax."

"How about these 'Mahatmic letters' we heard so much about a while ago, such a one, for example, as the *Chicago Tribune* published in facsimile?" asked the reporter.

"Oh, you mean those Aids to Faith in Blavatsky which went the rounds? Here are a couple. They are at your service if you wish to print them. . . . The subject of the communication is simply bosh, as you perceive; the handwriting is almost unquestionably that of Mr. Judge, who is an expert penman."

Professor Coues then renews the "Kiddle incident" charges as to the source of the Mahatma letters in "The Occult World," and concludes:

Such is the unspeakably puerile nonsense upon which the Mahatmic myth is erected. Papers prepared for no more cause or consequence than these flimsy forgeries I have obtained from Mr. Judge, and by Blavatsky or some other blatherskite, have made much theosophic history. . . . I could say more but I trust you appreciate the blessing of having two such authentic and impressive missives from beyond the Himalayas in your vest pocket—from as far beyond those heights as Mr. Judge's office in New York—precisely.

Following the *Sun* articles, Mr. Judge in *The Path* for August, 1890, advised all whom it might concern that he had brought suit for libel. Manifestly he had done this only for the protection of the Society and the good name of H.P.B., and to head off similar attacks in other publications, for he himself had been mentioned only incidentally and as rather dupe and tool than arch deceiver, and the same as to Col. Olcott. In his notice Mr. Judge made the significant statement:

The animus of the writer is so plainly disclosed that it might well serve as an ample answer to the attack. Inasmuch, however, as certain moral charges cannot be permitted utterance with impunity, I have brought suit for libel . . . and am awaiting instructions from Madame Blavatsky as to her own course.

In *The Path* for September, 1890, is printed a letter from Madame Blavatsky whose tone and spirit is in shining contrast with the course and animus of her calumniators. The letter reads:

While I fully agree to the proposition that we should forgive our enemies, yet I do not thereby lose my "appeal unto Caesar," and in that appeal, which is now made to the Law and not to the Emperor, I may keep the command to forgive, while for the protection of the name of a dead friend and the security in the future of Theosophists, I hale into the Courts of the land those who, having no sense of what is right or just, see fit to publish broadcast wicked and unfounded slanders.

For some fifteen years I have calmly stood by and seen my good name assailed by newspaper gossips who delight to dwell upon the personal peculiarities of those who are well known, and have worked on for the spread of our Theosophical ideas, feeling confident that, though I might be assailed by small minds who try their best to bring me into reproach, the Society which I helped to found would withstand the attacks, and, indeed, grow under them. This latter has been the case. It may be asked by some members why I have never replied to those attacks which were directed against Occultism and phenomena. For two reasons: Occultism will remain forever, no matter how assailed, and Occult phenomena can never be proved in a Court of Law during this century. Besides, I have never given public currency to any of the latter, but have always objected to the giving out of things the profane cannot understand.

But now a great metropolitan daily in New York, with no knowledge of the facts in the case, throws broadcast before the public many charges against me, the most of which meet their refutation in my life over a decade. But as one of them reflects strongly upon my moral character and brings into disrepute the honorable name of a dead man, an old family friend, it is impossible for me to remain silent, and so I have di-

rected my lawyers in New York to bring an action against the *New York Sun* for libel.

This paper accuses me of being a member of the *demi-monde* in '58 and '68 and of having improper relations with Prince Emile Wittgenstein, by whom the paper says I had an illegitimate son.

The first part of the charge is so ridiculous as to arouse laughter, but the second and third hold others up to reprobation. Prince Wittgenstein, now dead, was an old friend of my family, whom I saw for the last time when I was eighteen years old, *i.e.*, in 1849, and he and his wife remained until his death in close correspondence with me. He was a cousin of the late Empress of Russia, and little thought that upon his grave would be thrown the filth of a modern New York newspaper. This insult to him and to me I am bound by all dictates of my duty to repel, and am also obliged to protect the honor of all Theosophists who guide their lives by the teachings of Theosophy; hence my appeal to the Law and to a jury of my fellow Americans. I gave up my allegiance to the Czar of Russia in the hope that America would protect her citizens; may that hope not prove vain.—H. P. B.

At the time, the *Sun* was perhaps the most widely circulated and influential of American newspapers. It had at its command every resource of ability, influence, and money, and it is not to be supposed that it was unfamiliar with the technicalities of the New York State laws relating to libel or the difficulties in the way of any one who might try to obtain a verdict against it in such a suit. It had but to establish in court its own good faith and prove or show reasonable cause for belief in and circulation of a single one of its major charges, and the whole history of American jurisprudence in similar cases showed that it would be acquitted. But one thing favored the suit of H.P.B.: the fact that this time, quite the

contrary of the Coulomb charges, the S.P.R. report, and the numerous prior attacks upon her and her mission—*this time the charges were direct, made as statements of fact, not of opinion, hearsay, conclusion, inference, or innuendo.* If H.P.B. was actually guilty of a single one of the offenses charged against her, she was ruined, ineradicably branded with the stigma of a convicted rogue—her enemies triumphant, her Society exploded, her followers buried in ignominy, her mission and her "Theosophy" a thing of contempt and of derision.

The issue was squarely joined, with no possibility of evasion by either party to the suit. This time it was not a friendless and slandered woman forced into the position where she must suffer in silence or essay the *hopeless task of proving herself innocent* of the fabrications of irresponsible evil- and malicious-minded assassins of her good name. It was a great and powerful newspaper faced with the simple task of *proving her guilty* of a single one of its numerous charges by the simple process of bringing into Court in its behalf the Coues, the Bundys, the Hodgsons, the Coulombs, the Colemans, the Sidgwicks, the Myers, the Masseys, the Lillies, the Collinses, and all the other still living "witnesses" who had fathered or circulated the "evidence" which for so many years had been industriously spread before the public to "prove" H.P.B. a fraud, her phenomena bogus, her teachings a theft or a plagiarism. Certainly, on the assumption that at some time in her life H.P.B. had been indiscreet in her relations with men, at some time participant in questionable transactions, at some time engaged in anything disreputable, at some time party to fraudulent phenomena, at some time profiting by her "hoax," the task before the *Sun* was an easy one.

The case was pressed with the utmost vigor by H.P.B.'s attorneys, but the usual "law's delays" were invoked and taken advantage of in the defense. In *The Path* for March, 1891, a statement of the then status of the suit was published under the caption, "The Libel

Suits Against *New York Sun* and Elliott Coues." The article reads:

Several letters inquiring about these suits having been received, and various rumors about them having arisen, facts are given.

It is not possible to bring any suit to trial in New York very quickly, as all the calendars are crowded and suitors have to await their turn.

It is not possible in New York to have newspapers notice the progress of suits for libel against other newspapers, as an agreement exists between the various editors that no such publication will be made. Hence the silence about the above-mentioned actions.

The actions were begun in earnest and are awaiting trial. They will be continued until a verdict is reached or a retraction given.

One victory has been gained in this way. The *New York Sun* put in a long answer to Mme. Blavatsky's complaint and her lawyers demurred to its sufficiency as a defence. That question of law was argued before Judge Beach in the Supreme Court, and on the argument *the lawyers for the Sun confessed in open court their inability to prove the charge of immorality on which the suit lies*, and asked to be allowed to retain the mass of irrelevant matter in the answer. These matters could only have been meant to prejudice a jury. But Judge Beach sustained Mme. Blavatsky's objection and ordered that the objectionable matter be stricken out. The case now looks merely like one in which the only question will be the amount of damages, and everything must now stand until the case is reached in the Trial Term. This decision on the demurrer was a substantial victory. The suit against Dr. Elliott Coues is in exactly the same condition.

Madame Blavatsky died in May of the same year—1891—and, under the Laws of New York, her death automatically terminated the suit brought by her against the *Sun*. Mr. Judge, however, continued to press his own suit, although the allegations originally made against himself were rather ridicule than slander. Finally, on September 26, 1892, the *Sun*, which by this time had become convinced of the great wrong perpetrated through it, voluntarily published, in partial amends, an editorial article repudiating the Coues interview, and a long article by Mr. Judge devoted to a tribute to the life-work and character of H. P. Blavatsky. The editorial retraction reads:

We print on another page an article in which WILLIAM Q. JUDGE deals with the romantic and extraordinary career of the late Madame HELENA P. BLAVATSKY. We take occasion to observe that on July 20, 1890, we were misled into admitting into the *Sun's* columns an article by Dr. E. F. COUES of Washington, in which allegations were made against Madame BLAVATSKY's character, and also against her followers, which appear to have been without solid foundation. Mr. JUDGE's article disposes of all questions relating to Madame BLAVATSKY as presented by Dr. COUES, and we desire to say that his allegations respecting the Theosophical Society and Mr. JUDGE personally are not sustained by evidence, and should not have been printed.

It is probable that few Theosophical students of the present day have ever seen the article written by Mr. Judge on H.P.B. at the invitation of the *Sun*, and included as part of its editorial retraction by the words "Mr. Judge's article disposes of all questions relating to Madame Blavatsky as presented by Dr. Coues." The article itself, and the accompanying editorial endorsement and retraction, should be contrasted with the two

editorials from the *Sun* first quoted in the present chapter and with the Cones charges, in order fully to realize the complete reversal of its position by the *Sun*. This can be accounted for only on two grounds: (1) that the *Sun* after vigorous and prolonged efforts to find evidence to support even one of the charges found that they were mere calumnies, and (2) that its publishers were men honorable enough voluntarily to make amends for the wrong done by publishing a retraction, even after the death of H.P.B. had freed them from all risk of damages.

Theosophists, out of loyalty and gratitude to H.P.B. who brought them—at what cost to herself we have partly seen—the message of Theosophy, would do well to inform themselves fully on the Cones-Collins and *Sun* case, for they cover every accusation ever hurled at H.P.B.'s good name and fame; they constitute the only case where the charges were made directly, and by a responsible channel. The outcome of the case constitutes an absolute vindication of H.P.B. and an equally emphatic exposure of the bad faith or the ignorance of those who have since repeated those slanders. Yet years later one and another of the Cones-Collins-*Sun* charges have been repeated and have gained very wide publicity because of the supposed high character of the parties making them, for example, by "Margot Tennant" (wife of Herbert Asquith, ex-Prime Minister of Great Britain, in her "Intimate Diary"), and by the late Count Witte, for many years one of the leading Ministers of the Russian Empire under the *régime* of the late Czar. Count Witte was a cousin of H.P.B., but as he was many years her junior, he knew her only as a boy and saw her but a few times. In his published "Memoirs" the old charges of immorality first directly made by Cones and the *Sun* are circumstantially repeated. He does not profess to speak from knowledge, but for the same inscrutable reasons that have prompted so many others, does not hesitate to repeat these abominable calumnies at second-hand. The outcome of the *Sun* case gives the lie to the Witte slanders upon the dead. Students may be

interested to know that Count Witte's own mother, a devoted member of the orthodox Greek Catholic Church, remained to her dying day the warm friend and champion of H.P.B. Vile as must be considered the characters of those who originate or circulate unverified base charges against the living, they are respectable in comparison with those who continue to revile the defenseless dead.

After the battle in the *Sun* and its sequence, Dr. Cones fled ingloriously from the field; his Gnostic society melted away like a shadow, his prestige waned, and he died in obscurity in 1899. His Esoteric Theosophical Society exists only as a forgotten echo of his own bombast and pretense. After the *Sun* retraction he never again ventured to thrust himself on public attention as an "Occultist."

CHAPTER XV

OLCOTT VERSUS H.P.B.

ATTENTION must now be turned from the external aspects of the struggle of contending forces accompanying the progress of the Theosophical Movement, as exemplified in the Coues-Collins' storm, and the arena regarded from another point of view altogether—the issues as personified in H.P.B., Mr. Judge, and Col. Olcott, who, as said, represented in their own persons the three Sections of that Movement, exoteric and esoteric.¹

In the first decade of the Movement, as manifested in the exoteric Theosophical Society, the work of the three Founders was concordant and coherent. The Society grew rapidly in numbers and influence and became firmly established in America, Europe, and India. Minor opposition attended its course from external antagonistic factors and numerous internal disturbances arose, but none of these was of serious moment, because no dissensions existed among the Founders. Enemies without and trouble makers within could find nothing "whereon to stand" as a fulcrum. The first breach in the solidarity of the Founders was effected in the year 1881. It did not become a matter of public knowledge until 1895, and consideration of it must be deferred until the events of that period, but the fact should be noted in seeking to understand the origins of the successive phases of the Movement.²

Public reference was made to the existence of the inner Sections of the Movement at the close of the first seven years. From then on more and more frequent allusions to the Second Section, its superior importance,

¹ See Chapter IX.

² See Chapters XXIV and XXXIV.

its rules and discipline, its guardianship of the exoteric work, its provisions for the more earnest and worthy members of the Third Section or Theosophical Society proper, may be found in public print. Finally, in 1888, a definite, formal, public announcement was made of the formation of the Esoteric Section of the T.S., as a probationary degree of the Second Section of the Theosophical Movement. And, under the protection of the "pledge" and the seal of confidence, information was given to all applicants of the real purpose of the Movement, the real status of the Society, the real Objects of the invisible *Founders*—the Masters of Wisdom.

The first ten years was marked, exoterically, by the Coulomb charges and the *Report* of the Society for Psychical Research. Esoterically, both these were made possible and enabled to achieve an immense damage to the Movement, through the hidden rupture between the three Sections of the Movement, the First and Second Sections on the one hand, the Third Section on the other; between the esoteric side of the Movement as personified in H. P.B., Mr. Judge and Damodar, and the exoteric, as personified by Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and the Indian Council. At the time, the only public signs of this breach were the failure to defend H.P.B. as strenuously as she was attacked; her resignation and departure from India and from active connection with the Society; the public and private disclaimers of Col. Olcott and others of any reliance of their own or of the Society on the assumed Occult status or powers of H.P.B.; their assertion of the ability of the Society to stand on its own merits apart from H. P. Blavatsky as the direct Agent of the Masters; apart from her paramount status as the connecting link between those Masters and the Society; apart from her teachings of Theosophy as the authoritative exposition of the Wisdom-Religion.

Although they had abundant warnings, both from the teachings of Theosophy and from messages received by them directly from the Masters, that their views of H.P.B. were erroneous in fact and illogical in principle, and although not one of them himself had, or professed

to have, any Occult powers of his own, nevertheless their fundamentally false view of the nature of H.P.B. compelled them, little by little, to take a divergent path. In the beginning, doubts; next, private dissent and dissimulation; then a middle ground, public temporizing, and secret plotting; finally, open repudiation of her Occult status and standing in the Society, in the Movement, in Theosophy.

The stage of dissent and dissimulation was reached and practiced in 1884 and the following years. Compelled by their involvement with her in the affairs of the Society and their joint sponsorship for the numerous miraculous events attributed to the course of its history, a lukewarm support was publicly given to H.P.B., while in private a determined effort was made to suppress and "control" her in the common interest. During these years W. Stainton Moses ("M.A. Oxon"), C. C. Massey, A. O. Hume, V. V. Solovyoff, W. T. Brown, Mrs. Josephine Cables, Mohini M. Chatterji, Mr. Cooper-Oakley, and numerous others, both members of the Society and probationers of the Second Section, succumbed to inner and outer influences and left the Society, but Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and many others continued with the Society and its work, because, however much they doubted H.P.B., they were none the less convinced of the existence of the Masters and the value of the Society in the work of the Movement, provided only that they could themselves direct and control its destinies. Followed Col. Olcott's private but violent opposition to the formation of the Esoteric Section, and to the lines of direction that H.P.B. and Mr. Judge were attempting to lay and energize within the Society by the establishment of the Esoteric Section and by their magazines, *The Path* and *Lucifer*.³

The cleavage at this time went almost to the verge of the establishment by H.P.B. and Mr. Judge of a new Society composed of those Western Theosophists who would remain true to the original impetus and its lines, and would have so resulted had not Col. Olcott and those

³ See Chapters IX and X.

associated with his views modified their conduct. Concerned not at all with or over Col. Olcott's or any one's opinions in regard to themselves, but intent only on the Cause itself, H.P.B. and W.Q.J. used every effort to encourage, to sustain, to uphold him and others in their devotion and their place in the Society, so long as work was done and a possibility remained to keep the three lines of the Movement intact, coherent, and in proper relation. Nothing was omitted that might assuage the several vanities, jealousies, ambitions, and fears of Col. Olcott and his co-workers; everything possible was done to convince them that place, power, authority and dominion were not sought by H.P.B.

Then came the Coues-Collins-*Sun* attack. There can be no doubt, we think, that Dr. Coues counted that if he led the assault he would be supported openly by Col. Olcott and others prominent within the Society, and for this he had what to him were sound reasons, as has been indicated.⁴ Backed by his own prestige with the general public and that of Olcott and others with the Society's membership, knowing the general discredit heaped upon H.P.B. by the S.P.R. *Report*, knowing well the private opinions of Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and others in regard to her—what more natural than that he should consider his forces more than ample to so utterly crush the reputation of H.P.B. that she would be permanently eliminated as a factor in the Society, which could then be re-organized and re-built on lines agreeable to himself and his own ambitions, with himself as its bright particular star in the West? Able and astute, his plans succeeded perfectly with Miss Mabel Collins, but his master-stroke failed with Col. Olcott. This he could not know in advance, but his knowledge of conditions and the progress of his correspondence with the President-Founder gave him every reason to believe that the disaffection so artfully fanned would burst to flame in open treason when the battle should be joined. He reckoned without his host in the final issue, but how nearly he succeeded is indicated by the letter to him from Col. Olcott

⁴ See Chapters XII and XIV.

which we have given, and by the course pursued by the President-Founder during all that stormy period—a course which we have now to trace.

That course was one which could but aid the battle being waged to destroy the moral reputation and Occult status of H.P.B. and her chief defender, Mr. Judge, so far as that could be achieved without imperiling the Society and his own importance in it to the point of irretrievable disaster. Colonel Olcott was willing to go thus far in order to upset the paramount unofficial influence of H.P.B. and her colleague; reduce them to what he considered their proper place and subordination in the ranks; and at the same time enhance and render secure his own position and power as the recognized Official Head of the Society. In all this Col. Olcott was honest and sincere. It was but the logical development of his own basic misconception and misunderstanding of Masters, Their Movement, and Their Society—all alike menaced by the “irresponsible” and “unconstitutional” procedure of H.P.B. However mistaken or misguided his views, he *was* absolutely honest and devoted to what he conceived to be the best interests of the Society. It was precisely this honesty and devotion to the Society, however inconsistent and illogical his mind might be, that H.P.B. recognized, and that Dr. Coues failed utterly to reckon with.

Negatively, Col. Olcott’s state of mind is attested by his total failure to align himself with his colleagues while they were being sorely beset by traitors within and by enemies without. As in 1884-5 and again in 1886-7, his sole thought was for the Society and himself—for the Society as personified in himself. Its troubles and his troubles were, in his opinion, not due to any falling away from its Objects, any mistakes or misunderstandings of his own, but to the wrong and perverse actions of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge. They had gotten the Society, themselves and himself into serious difficulties in spite of his best efforts to prevent. Very well; it was for them to extricate and clear themselves if they could, and in so doing learn a needed lesson. That was their affair, not his.

His duty was to protect the Society and himself as its responsible Head and Guardian, at all hazards and from all hazards; and the chief of these hazards was the “friction of strong personalities,” due to the “unauthorized” and “irregular” actions of H.P.B. and W.Q.J., as opposed to his own “official” procedure.

Affirmatively, Col. Olcott’s predominating attitude is evidenced (1) by the record made by himself and his intimates at the time; (2) by his own disclosures made many years afterward; (3) by the record made by H.P.B. and Mr. Judge. From all these the student can piece together the pattern which shows the workings of consciousness of the three Founders during the storm of 1889-90.

“Old Diary Leaves,” Fourth Series, to which we shall have to refer, was published in book form after the death of Col. Olcott. There are many omissions of the text as originally printed in *The Theosophist*, Volumes 21 and 22, ten years after the events discussed therein. Quotations here given, therefore, should be verified by reference to the original text in *The Theosophist*.

Volume 21, p. 199, Col. Olcott describes the situation just prior to his visit to Europe in 1888. He puts it thus:

Portents of a coming storm in our European groups, stirred up or intensified by H.P.B., begin to show themselves, and Judge complains of our neglecting him. Just then Dr. Coues was working hard for the notoriety he craved and Judge was opposing him.

Then “Old Diary Leaves” gives extracts from private letters written by Mr. Judge to Col. Olcott, as follows:

May 21, 1888: I am always striving to keep your name at the top, for until your death you must be at the head.

June 8, 1888: Certain matters are occurring here which need attention and action. . . . His

(Coates') policy is to place himself at the head of some wonderful unknown thing through which (save the mark!) communications are alleged to come from Masters. He also in a large sense wishes to pull the T.S. away from your jurisdiction and make himself the Grand Mogul of it in this country. . . . *I know that. . . . policy is to retain complete control in you, and my desire is to keep the American Section as a dependency of the General Council in India; hence you are the President. It was never my intention to dissever, but to bind, and the form of our Constitution clearly shows that. That's why no President is elected or permitted here. . . . So I would recommend that you call the Council and consider our Constitution, which ought long ago to have been done—and decide that we are in affiliation and subordination to India and that we are recognized as part of the General Council, with power to have a Secretary as an (official) channel, but not to have a yearly President but only a Chairman at each Convention. . . . I cannot work this thing here properly without your co-operation.*

June 15, 1888: Until you two die it is folly for others to whistle against the wind. Masters and Federation!

Colonel Olcott's comments on Mr. Judge's letters show that in January, 1900, when he was writing, he as totally misconceived them, as at the time of their reception in 1888; that he saw in them nothing but "the building up of a new structure of falsehood, fraud and treachery in which to house new idols."

Then followed Col. Olcott's visit to England and his "pitched battle with H.P.B." over the various matters at issue—the trouble in the Paris Branch, the Charter of the Blavatsky Lodge, the formation of the British Section of the T.S., on the model of the previously

formed American Section, and the formation of the Esoteric Section.⁵ In all these matters at stake, as well as Cooper-Oakley's severance from the editorial staff of *The Theosophist*, Col. Olcott yielded, partly under the influence of his renewed association with H.P.B., partly because he saw that he had come to the parting of the ways. Mr. Judge came over to England and the three Founders became once more, for the time being, apparently of one aim, purpose, and feeling. To strengthen and maintain this bond after their separation and return, each to his own field of labor, H.P.B. and Mr. Judge arranged that delegates from the American and British Section should go with Col. Olcott to Adyar and represent those Sections at the forthcoming "parliament" or Convention of the Society in India, at the end of December, 1888.

Richard Harte, a former New York newspaper man, an old-time personal friend of Col. Olcott, who had been a member of the Society since 1878, was then in London and had acquired considerable reputation among Theosophists as the alleged writer of the famous editorial in *Lucifer* for December, 1887, entitled "Lucifer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting!" Him, Col. Olcott selected for his editorial associate on *The Theosophist*. Thereupon Mr. Judge arranged with the Executive Committee of the American Council to have Mr. Harte act as delegate for the American Section and to give Mr. Harte instructions to represent to the Indian Convention that the American Section favored the restoration to Col. Olcott of the powers and authority vested in the Indian Council early in 1885,⁶ as noted in a former chapter. Mr. Charles Johnston, long a resident of India, was similarly chosen as delegate of the British Section.

Colonel Olcott returned to India later in the fall of 1888. Volume 21, pp. 322-3, gives his reminiscences of the month preceding the Convention. He says:

⁵ See Chapter X.

⁶ See Chapters VII and XI.

The Executive Council met as usual, on the following Sunday [after his return], and passed resolutions thoroughly approving of my doings in Europe. . . .

At a Council meeting [in December], a resolution was unanimously passed to convert itself into an Advisory body and restore to me the full executive powers which, in 1885, I had consented to have curtailed, to satisfy some who thought it would be better to have several bosses instead of one. The thing did not work well enough to continue it, and all my colleagues were but too glad to re-shift the responsibility to my shoulders rather than keep it themselves. It was all the same to me, for even during the intervals I virtually had to do all the work, and the Council meetings grew more and more perfunctory—as Council meetings usually do, when there is some leader who may be counted on to pull the stroke-oar and get the boat on the straight course when cross winds blow.

The same pages contain Col. Olcott's comments on two other matters which were to come before the Convention. Of the first of these he says:

Tranquil days of work and pleasant conversation followed, but before long I began to see signs of discontent spreading to some extent among certain few Branches, the result of underhand schemings by one or two malcontents, who were unfriendly to H.P.B. This passed off in time, although a desperate attempt was made at that year's Convention to make trouble for me. The Bombay Branch sent me, on November 30th, a resolution recommending that T. Subba Row, who had resigned, be asked to come back to us, but I have positively refused to lower the Society's dignity in any similar case, however influential might be the seceder.

The other matter mentioned, which also includes the preceding, is described as follows:

The Convention Delegates began arriving on the 24th of December. On Christmas Day I got a foolish cablegram from H.P.B., threatening the resignation of herself and the entire Blavatsky Lodge should Cooper-Oakley be re-admitted to membership; the act showing the state of nervous excitement into which the Subba Row imbroglio had thrown her. She used the name of the Blavatsky Lodge and of certain of its members so often in her letters, as condemning me utterly and backing her views unreservedly, that it became at last tiresome. Considering our personal relations, the identity of our ages, and our joint relationship to our Guru, it seemed to me ridiculous that the dicta of a group of junior colleagues, however warm partisans of hers, should influence me to act against my own judgment in questions of management. I wrote her at last that if she sent me any more round robins or protests from the same quarter I should neither read nor answer her letters; our affairs must be settled between ourselves without the interference of third parties. Answering me, she admitted the correctness of my argument and the exasperating documents ceased to arrive.

Theosophical students generally have never gone to the labor necessary in checking Col. Olcott's very numerous misstatements of fact and his very frequent contradictions, but have accepted his testimony and his conclusions alike as accurate and just. The matters just quoted are a case in point. The fact is very plain from his other statements earlier referred to⁷ that he himself was the chief "malcontent," for it was *The Theosophist* that precipitated the "Subba Row imbroglio" by publishing the criticisms on the "seven-fold classification

⁷See Chapter X.

of principles." It was himself who supported Mr. Cooper-Oakley, its Editor, to the very point of a rupture with H.P.B. It was himself, in absolute control both of the Council and the Indian Convention, who favored the invitation not to Subba Row only, but to Mr. Cooper-Oakley and others, "to come back to us." It was himself who had the affair all staged to become a *fait accompli* before H.P.B. should hear of it, and only her prompt and decisive cablegram to him two days before the Convention convened, upset the cut-and-dried program. The matter had already gone so far it could not be kept out of the proceedings of the Convention, but her cablegram once more convinced Olcott that he had over-shot his mark. The Convention Report, carefully prepared and edited by Richard Harte to conform to the exigencies of Col. Olcott's course in this and the other actions taken by the Convention, reads as follows:

Second Day, Friday, December 28, 1888.

The President called on the Secretary to read a resolution of the Bombay Branch, to the effect that the President should urge upon certain ex-Fellows to resume their connection with the Society, and which he, the President, had been particularly requested to lay before the Convention. A debate ensued, in which the unanimous opinion was expressed that such a step would be incompatible with the dignity of the Society. Thereupon Mr. Harte moved, . . . that the document and the whole subject should be laid upon the table, which was carried unanimously.

This was the "desperate attempt at that year's Convention to make trouble for me" over the Subba Row imbroglio that Col. Olcott's reminiscences so graphically and so inaccurately portray and comment upon.

Mr. Harte and Mr. Johnston duly expressed to the Convention the authorized wish of their respective Sections that the executive powers of the President should

be restored to him by formal action of the Convention. According to the Report, Mr. Johnston went further and stated on behalf of the British Section: "It was further their opinion that Fees and Dues should be abolished, and the Society be placed upon a basis of voluntary support. As the President had intimated that he intended to place him (Mr. Johnston) on the Committee for the amendment of the Rules, he would not make any further remarks at present." As the Report follows immediately with a copy of the Rules of the British Section and those Rules provided explicitly both for fees for the support of the Section and for contributions to the Society, it is evident (1) that Mr. Johnston either was not correctly reported in his remarks, or (2) that he exceeded his instructions and authority from the newly organized British Section. Page 42 of the Report contains the statement as the conclusion of the "Report of the Executive Council":

Resolutions were also adopted to submit for favorable consideration suggestions made by the American and British Sections for the abolition of Entrance Fees and Annual Dues, and for the reorganization of the whole Society upon a basis of Sectional Divisions with an autonomous character, but dependent and subject to the supervision and executive control of the President in Council, as representative of the collective autonomy of the whole Society. The Council is of opinion that radical changes in the Rules are needed, and recommend that the whole subject be referred to a Committee on Rules with instructions to report an amended Code to the present Convention, for its approval.

No one, after reading the extracts just given from "Old Diary Leaves" can doubt that the Executive Council was merely Col. Olcott under a convenient cloak. A long set of "Revised Rules" was immediately presented to the Convention and the Report says:

The Rules, as read out one by one by the Secretary, were debated by Sections, amended, and voted upon. The President was empowered, on motion of Mr. S. Ramaswamier . . . to edit the text, and make necessary corrections therein before sending it to the printer.

The nine pages of the Report immediately following the official proceedings are devoted to elaborate "Introductory Explanations" of the "Revised Rules," which, upon examination, will be found to be in fact an entirely new Constitution.

Turning now to the official Report of the democratic American Section held at Chicago in April, 1889, following, and to the report of Mr. Judge as General Secretary to that Convention on the matters just considered, Mr. Judge there says:

My Report for this year has to deal with the progress of the Society's work since our last Convention, and certain changes which have been made by the Convention in India in last December. I propose to consider the last first.

The Secretary in charge in India has already sent to most of the Branches a copy of the "Revised Rules." By reading those, together with the Report of the Convention held there, it will be seen that apparently the purpose to revise the rules and abolish fees and dues was proposed by the American and English Sections, acting through their Delegates, Mr. Richard Harte and Mr. Charles Johnston. Mr. Harte was delegated by the Executive Committee, at the time he left London for India, to represent the American Section at that Convention, but, at the same time, written instructions were given him, very definitely stating that all that the American Section required him to do was to endeavor to restore to Col. Olcott the powers which he had voluntarily given up at a previous date, and those

were stated to be the only changes which he should say we were in favor of. It was not then thought that any proposal to abolish fees and dues would be made, and, as Mr. Harte was himself present in New York when our Constitution governing the American Section was passed, and knew our policy in carrying on the work here, it never for a moment occurred to the Executive Committee that it was necessary to say any more than we had said, and as our Constitution declared our autonomy which had been granted prior to the passage of the Constitution, and which has since been affirmed in the Convention in India, even if we had been told in advance what was proposed to be done, we should have thought it to be impossible, as well as injudicious.

The "Revised Rules" also amend the "objects" of the Society by altering them and adding to them, and, in a paper published in the succeeding issue of the "Theosophist" signed "F. T. S." an attempt is made to show that the "objects have never been definitely formulated." This article is full of misconceptions, and, therefore, of wrong conclusions, because the gentleman who wrote it was not acquainted with the facts nor in possession of the records. He refers to the printed "Rules" of each year, and says that in 1882 for the first time they appeared as they were printed last year, but on looking over my records I find, not only that they have always been the same—except in minor elaborations not affecting the substance,—but that they were originally formulated in the shape they appeared before the last Convention in India, at the time that this Society was organized in 1875.

. . . These alterations seem to be injudicious. I therefore suggest to the Convention that a Resolution be passed dissenting from the ad-

visability of these alterations and requesting a restoration, if possible, to the old form.

In the second place, all dues and fees are attempted to be abolished, and the source of revenue for expenses made to depend on voluntary contributions.

You will note that these "Revised Rules" reaffirm the autonomy we claimed in 1886 which was subsequently ratified. There is no inconsistency in our declaring autonomy in respect to the internal affairs of the Section and, at the same time, our allegiance to the cause and to the Society as a whole.

I am authorized by Mme. Blavatsky to say that she is not in favor of the change, and the majority of the British Section also disagree with it, and have stated that their delegate was not authorized to consent to it.

Mr. Judge goes on to say that, aware of the sentiment of the American and British Sections, he had written to Adyar protesting against the proposed change in the matter of dues, and had received a reply from "Bro. Harte, the Secretary, enclosing a copy of a Resolution passed by the Commissioners in charge during Col. Olcott's absence." That Resolution "suspended until further order" that portion of the "Revised Rules" relating to fees and dues. This was subsequently "ratified" by the Indian "Council" and confirmed by a change in the "Rules" at the next succeeding Adyar Convention, which was not held until 1890, owing to the absence of Col. Olcott in Europe in December, 1889—of which in due course.⁸

By referring to "Old Diary Leaves," Volume 21 of *The Theosophist*, at pages 324-5, comparison of Col. Olcott's comments with those of Mr. Judge can be made. Thus:

⁸ See Chapter XVII.

Consistently with my policy to give every chance to my colleagues to try experiments which seemed to them to promise well for the Society's interest, I acceded to their wish that we should try what effect the complete abolition of entrance fees and annual dues, and the trusting for the Society's support to voluntary contributions, would have. Personally, I did not believe in the scheme, though I officially supported it. . . . But the Convention voted for the change, upon the motion of the representatives of the British and American Sections present; I concurred, and issued the necessary Executive Notices, to clear the way.

The first effect was that angry protests broke out in both the Western Sections; H.P.B. wrote me a violent letter, denouncing me as a vacillator and liberally reporting what so and so, her friends and colleagues, said about my inconsistency, after having just effected the organization of a British Section and giving it the right to levy the customary entrance fees and annual dues; while Judge and his party openly revolted and refused to comply with the new order of things. Secretly I was rather amused to see how much of a mess was being made by marplots eager to have a finger in the pie, and was disposed to give them rope to hang themselves with. It was not long before the experiment failed and we returned to the old method. . . .

The other important thing done by the Convention of 1888 was the adoption of the policy of re-organizing the Society's work on the line of autonomous Sections: this having been the motive prompting me originally to grant, in 1886, a Charter to the American Section and, later, one to the new Section in London. The plan had proved an entire success in America, and after two years of testing it in practice it seemed but fair to extend it to all our fields of activity. It

was an admirable plan in every respect . . . and the Society changed from a quasi-autocracy to a constitutional Federation, each part independent as to its internal affairs, but responsible to every other part for its loyal support of the movement and its ideals and of the Federal Centre, which bound the whole together, like the *fascies* of the lictor, into an unbreakable bundle.

The elaborate "Introductory Explanations" to the "Revised Rules" published in the "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for January, 1889, was followed in the February number by an article on "The Theosophical Society," and signed in both cases with the initials "F. T. S." Both articles were undoubtedly written by Mr. Harte. It was these articles which were referred to by Mr. Judge in his report to the American Section. Both articles should be examined with great care as they mark the public features of a sustained campaign on the part of Col. Olcott and his associates to subordinate the esoteric aspect of the Theosophical Movement to the exoteric Society, to center the attention of the membership on the Society, and to make of the Indian headquarters and Col. Olcott the prime object of allegiance and devotion, as the visible head and front of the Movement. This campaign was coincident with the Coues-Collins' developments and can be taken only as co-ordinate with them.

"The Theosophical Society" first attempts to show that in the beginning the Society had no determinate purpose, no definite lines of direction, but was an "evolution" from unintended, unforeseen, unexpected stages.

"The Theosophical Society" then takes up the Objects of the Society and speaks of them also as a "development."

Curiously enough, "F. T. S.," goes on to say, later in his article:

This variation in the declared objects of the Society [those just promulgated in the "Re-

vised Rules"] must not be taken as indicating any real change in the intentions of the Founders. *There is abundant evidence in their writings and speeches that from the first their purposes were to stimulate the spiritual development of the individual and, to awaken in the race the sentiment of Brotherhood.*

"The Theosophical Society" was followed in the June, 1889, *Theosophist* by two more articles.

CHAPTER XVI

OLCOTT'S ATTEMPT TO CENTRALIZE ALL AUTHORITY

WHEN the January, 1889, *Theosophist* with its Report of the Adyar Convention, and the February number with the articles noted, reached America, Mr. Judge considered them in his report as General Secretary of the Convention of the American Section. How the issues raised were met has been shown in the citations given both from Mr. Judge's report¹ and from the Letter of H.P.B. to the same Convention. *Lucifer* for March, 1889, contained an editorial "On Pseudo-Theosophy," in which, taking advantage of an article in the *London Daily News* which amused itself by some comments on Dr. Franz Hartmann's novel, "The Talking Image of Urur," then running in *Lucifer*, H.P.B. without naming any names discussed the counter-currents in the Society. In *Lucifer* for June she published the article, "It's the Cat," which was "Dedicated to those Members of the T.S. whom the Cap may fit." Again without naming persons, she pays attention to those who would make of her "the cat," i.e., the scapegoat for all the sins of omission and commission of the Society and its members.

It was the habit with the three leading Theosophical publications to send to each other advance proofs of all forthcoming important articles. All the above cited articles should therefore be read, both in connection with the then existing internal and external situation of the Society, and as a prelude to the June, 1889, *Theosophist*.

"Applied Theosophy," its leading editorial, is an article of nearly ten pages. The writer asks:

The first question that naturally arises is, whether the action of the Theosophical Society

¹ See preceding chapter.

in every respect should be limited to its declared Objects. . . . Of the three Objects two are distinctly separated from everything else. . . . The first Object is altogether different. To "form the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood," is so far from conducing to retirement and concentration, is a purpose so high, so deep, so broad, so universally sympathetic, so distant of realization, that it becomes vague and confused when the attention is directed to it, and to most Fellows this Object is about equivalent in practice to the formation of a nucleus for the recurrence of the Golden Age, or for the re-establishment of the garden of Eden . . .

Here and there a Fellow of the Society outside of India may be found who is willing to accept the Eastern Initiates, whether ancient or modern, as teachers; but the majority prefer to think and theorize for themselves, which is, after all, the best way for anyone to learn who can think and theorize logically.

We have, then, a Society without opinions but with certain "Objects," certain principles, and certain methods, and we have as a result a tendency to certain modes of thought and certain theories of the Universe, to which theories the name of Theosophy has been given. . . . The fact that "The Secret Doctrine" has been so generally understood and so highly appreciated by Theosophists, shows that their own thoughts were not so very much behind the ideas *given out* in that marvellous work.

All this, however, is only what may be called the intellectual or philosophical side of Theosophy; and it is the fruit of the Theosophical Society's influence in only one direction. . . .

The whole tendency of this argument appears clearly, first, to discredit the real and primary Object of the Society, and to make a division in its Three Objects;

secondly, to emphasize that the teachings of the "Secret Doctrine" are neither new to the membership nor in any way an impartation from a higher plane of perception, as the "thoughts" of the membership "were not so very much behind the ideas 'given out' in that work"; thirdly, that H.P.B.'s "theories of the Universe" are merely "the fruit of the Theosophical Society's influence." The Society is not an outcome of H.P.B.'s mission and teaching; on the contrary these are a development of and from the *Society!*

After discoursing on the implications derivable from these premises, Mr. Harte proceeds a step further:

. . . Since the Theosophical Society has professedly, as a body, no opinions on any subject, it is equally a transgression of its basic principles for it to sustain or promulgate any special system of philosophy, as in practice it decidedly does, under the name of "Theosophy" . . .

Then Mr. Harte, his ground ready, asks:

Can any means be devised whereby the Fellows of the Society can apply their knowledge and their energies to the practical affairs of life? *Practical Theosophy* is an affair of the future. *Applied Theosophy* is a more modest ambition, and is, or ought to be, a possibility.

Mr. Harte has his answer ready:

If the Fellows of the Theosophical Society are to apply their Theosophy to the affairs of life, it must be through the Society, and as individual units of the whole,—not as isolated individuals. . . . It is this mystic individuality, "the sum total," that gives strength to all societies and congregations of men, and becomes the real dominating power, to which all contribute some of their force, and which stands behind every unit

and lends its whole strength to it. Without it a Fellow of the Theosophical Society would be as powerless as any other isolated man or woman in the community. With it behind him an F. T. S. is a power in proportion to the unity and singleness of purpose of the Society to which he belongs.

It is from the *Society* that radiates the "dominating power"; from the *Society* that the members are to draw their sustenance and support, not from any Teacher or Teaching, not from any "self-induced and self-devised exertions" of the individual aspirants. The model to follow, the example to emulate, is pictured by Mr. Harte:

Who speaks when a priest of the Roman Catholic Church utters a command? *The united power of the Church of Rome*. Who speaks when a disrobed priest says something? A *non-entity*. Who speaks when the Judge, the General, the Statesman open their mouths? "The State,"—the tremendous and often tyrannical personality that comes into life and action when the units that compose it [are] bound together, through organization, by a common will and a common purpose.

This idea that it is only "through organization," through making the *Society* the prime object of devotion, its "authority" through the voice of its officials supreme over the individual conscience and action, that "Applied Theosophy," can be made a success is argued at length, leading up to the culmination of making the Adyar Headquarters a second Rome, and, by necessary inference, of the President-Founder a Theosophical Pope:

The Theosophical Society is an ideal power for good diffused over the whole world, but it

requires material conditions, and the most important of these is a material centre, from which and to which the efferent and afferent forces shall circulate. This is a condition of the life of all organizations, and of all organisms, and the Theosophical Society is both; it is an organization on the material plane, an organism on the spiritual. A common centre, therefore, is as necessary for spiritual as for physical reasons. "ADYAR" is not a place only, it is a principle. It is a name that ought to carry with it a power far greater than that conveyed by the name "Rome." ADYAR is the centre of the Theosophical Movement—not "7 Duke Street, Adelphi" [the publication office of *Lucifer*] or "Post Office Box 2659, New York" [the address of *The Path*].

ADYAR is a principle and a symbol, as well as a locality. ADYAR is the name which means on the material plane the Headquarters of an international, or, more properly speaking, world-wide Society. . . . It means on the supra-physical plane a centre of life and energy, the point to and from which the currents run between the ideal and the material. Every loyal Fellow has in his heart a little ADYAR, for he has in him a spark of the spiritual fire which the name typifies. ADYAR is the symbol of our unity as a Society, and so long as it exists in the hearts of its Fellows, the powers of the enemy can never prevail against the Theosophical Society. . . .

What then, to recapitulate, must be our answer to the questions with which we started:—Is such a thing as "Applied Theosophy" possible? If so, of what does it consist?

. . . the Fellows must perceive that the Theosophical Society is a living entity, "ideal" if one chooses to call it so, but an entity *one and indivisible* alike upon the material and on the super-physical plane. We have also seen that

the visible centre of the Society, ADYAR, is symbolical of the principle of unity, as well as of the material life of the Society, and that in every sense loyalty to ADYAR means loyalty to the objects of the Society and to the principles of Theosophy. . . .

The same—June—number of *The Theosophist* contained a related article by Mr. Harte, signed "F. T. S." and bearing the title, "The Situation." Some extracts follow:

We have not yet got our proper bearings after the radical change in the Society made by an Order of the President last autumn, and adopted into the Constitution and Rules of the Theosophical Society, by the General Council in the Annual Convention of 1888. This change was the formation of an Esoteric Division of the Society; and this separation of the esoteric element from the exoteric, is not only a disentangling of two things that have different methods and aims, and the mixing up of which in the life and work of the Society has given rise to considerable confusion, but it is, moreover, a weaning of the Society from sources that have previously nourished it. . . . It is pretty generally felt that if the Theosophical Society is to be a moral and spiritual power in the world, it must be in touch with the world and live in the world; using such methods in its dealings with that world as the latter can appreciate and understand, or which, at all events, will not excite its prejudices, and put it into a fury of opposition at the very first go off.

There is here put forward the misstatement that the formation of the Esoteric Section was *due to* and *dependent upon* "an Order of the President"; that the real object of its formation was to *separate* the "esoteric

element from the exoteric"; that the "mixing up" of the esoteric with the exoteric aspects of the Movement had given rise to "considerable confusion," and that it was necessary to "wean" the Society "from the sources that have hitherto nourished it." The view is presented that if the Society is to influence the world it must have a worldly incentive to offer, a *worldly* basis and authority in order to "be a moral and spiritual power in the world"; that because its actual Objects, its actual basis, its actual methods have hitherto been *unworldly*, *therefore* it has excited the prejudices of the world, *therefore* it has put the world "into a fury of opposition." What is needed, in this view, is not the basis and methods of H.P.B., which have been the disturbing factor, but the basis and methods of Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, *et al*, who have been using and will continue to use such methods in dealing with the world "as the latter can appreciate and understand." This suggestion implanted, the logical corollary is that H.P.B.'s methods have been a blunder which must be corrected. What her methods have been and how sadly she has misrepresented the Masters, are next implied:

If there is any reliance to be placed upon what has come to us as the wishes and instructions of those mysterious Personages behind the scenes, by whose orders the Society was founded, then the weaning of the Society from any further professed and ostensible connection with phenomena and invisible wire-pullers (using the term with the greatest respect) has been determined and decreed some time ago. If we are to have faith in anything we have been told as coming from the Masters, we are constrained to believe that it is their wish that the Theosophical Society shall now stand before all men for what it is worth in itself, and that Theosophy shall from henceforth be put before the world as a system of philosophical and ethical truth which stands on its own merits without any adventitious aids,

props or abutments. This implies at the outset that from henceforth Occultism and Theosophy, which are in reality two very different things, shall be separate in the minds of the Fellows, and in the life of the Society.

The Master's letter to Col. Olcott² is referred to to show that H.P.B. should "mind her own business!" Mr. Harte comments:

That letter refers to the settlement of a dispute among the Fellows in France, but the principle so definitely stated with regard to the division of functions . . . and the formation of an Esoteric Division of the Theosophical Society under the exclusive management and control of Madame Blavatsky was the result of its wider application—it being understood that the President was in no way to interfere with that division, Madame Blavatsky, in return, abstaining in future from any *direct* interference with the worldly or exoteric management of the Society. . . . It may be further stated here, for the benefit of those whom it may concern, that the formation of the Esoteric Section, was in accordance with the instructions received from the Masters.

On both sides this new departure was felt to be a relief. Occultism is above all "rule" or "bye-law" emanating from the will of the governed, which is the only possible basis of a popular government such as that of the Theosophical Society. The result of trying to make two such different things work harmoniously was like that which might be expected from harnessing together a "sacred bull" and a draft horse—the waggon was continually running into the fence, and always in danger of being upset; a danger in no way diminished by the fact that two coach-

² See Chapter X.

men sat on the box seat, each of whom held one of the reins, and pulled it vigorously every now and then without much reference to the ideas of the other, or to "things as a whole." Now, happily, there has been a division of labour, each driver has got his own animal to himself.

Having thus driven home the idea that H.P.B. and Col. Olcott were originally on a plane of entire equality both with regard to the Masters and to the T.S.; that the "interference" of H.P.B. was as displeasing to Masters as it was to Col. Olcott, so that Masters gave Col. Olcott "instructions" to "order" the formation of an Esoteric Section to limit the capacity for harmfulness of H.P.B.; that the "bargain" was that H.P.B. should be let alone in the esoteric "Division" and Col. Olcott no longer interfered with in the Society as a whole—having thus arrived at his explanation of facts and factors, Mr. Harte then pays attention to the "Esoteric Division," its members, and H.P.B. in these terms:

The head of the Esoteric Division is at liberty to impose pledges, institute degrees, and ordain exercises, and without let or hindrance to issue instructions and orders to those who place themselves under her guidance; . . .

With the affairs of the Esoteric Division this article has nothing to do. That division seems to be a kind of Annex to the Theosophical Society proper, having two doors of exit—one leading up to higher levels, the other leading down and out. Not only do advanced students seek entrance to it, but it appears to have especial attractions for many who are spiritually somewhat crippled. The halt, the maimed and the blind, blissfully unaware of their infirmities, and oblivious of their utter want of preparation, knock incontinently at the door, and the Head of the Division cannot always refuse them a

chance. At the first little "trial" these weak brothers lose their heads and their holds, fall flat on their noses, and go off howling.

The President and General Council are free to legislate for the Theosophical Society to the best of their knowledge and ability, in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the Fellows. . . .

It is a matter of fact . . . that the Rules of the Theosophical Society have been all along so weak, confused and contradictory, that no other society or persons who wished to receive credit for common sense would probably have put up with them for a day. So long as the esoteric and exoteric elements were mixed up in the Society this state of affairs did not matter. It was inevitable; . . .

The consequences of the former state of affairs is telling on the Society now. . . . No one suspected the want of loyalty to the Society on the part of a portion of the Branches and Sections, until the attempt was made by the late Convention to put a little seriousness and energy into the Society. It looks as if certain of the Sections and Branches have got somewhat too high an opinion of their own importance.

The only Sections which existed prior to the Convention were the American, the British, and the Esoteric, whose Branches, Groups, and Members were primarily interested in Theosophy, not the Society, and who therefore looked to Theosophy and to the example and guidance of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, not to Col. Olcott and the "Rules and Bye-laws" of the Indian Convention's facile adoption at Col. Olcott's behests. Plain notice is therefore served on these recalcitrants—as they seemed to the President and his associates—that they have no authority, rights, or existence, save by virtue of Col. Olcott's "orders" and that the Power that created

them can as easily dissolve them; and it is intimated that that Power will be exercised if former conduct is not superseded by better behavior:

They [the Sections and Branches] exist only by virtue of Charters issued by the President of the Theosophical Society. It is the fact of the possession of these Charters that makes them different from other little collections of students of Theosophy in the countries where they exist, and gives them what credit they enjoy. . . . Suppose it became necessary to withdraw the Charters of certain Sections, does any one believe for a moment that the Theosophical Society would eventually suffer? At present a large and increasing proportion of the Fellows are "Fellows at large"—that is, unattached to any branch; Fellows in Branches would perceive that their status remained unchanged; and thousands who now sympathize with the objects and work of the Society, but are deterred from joining it by the idea that they are expected to join a branch, would prick up their ears and become interested. These do not care to join the Society now for a variety of reasons:—because they look upon the branches as mutual admiration clubs; because they regard them as the private friends and followers of some one man; because they don't want to be bothered in attending their meetings and listening to things they either know already or do not understand; because they are disgusted with the jealousies and rivalries of Fellows who are prominent in branches; because they do not approve of the branch system at all, which brings the Fellows who belong to branches into unnecessary publicity. If every existing Charter of Section and branch of the Theosophical Society were withdrawn tomorrow, the Society would, in all probability, be a stronger body in a short time than it is now, and

certainly it would not be a weaker one. Every active Fellow would become a natural recruiting agent, not for a little local branch as at present, but for *the Theosophical Society*.

All this leads up to the summation which is laid before the members, as the cure for the "Situation":

The Theosophical Society would then exist as a homogeneous whole, composed of loyal Fellows animated by a common spirit, and Adyar would be what it ought to be—the centre of a system for the circulation of Theosophical ideas and literature, and for the organization of Theosophical activities all over the globe. And the Fellows would soon spontaneously form into groups with connections with each other and with Adyar, which would enable them to carry out the work.

These are very obvious considerations. Still, there are people who do not always remember them, and to whom the above remarks may not be without utility.

These articles in the June, 1889, *Theosophist* were immediately followed in the "Supplement" to the July issue by an article entitled "A Disclaimer," the insinuations in which were still more direct and pronounced. It is, in full, as follows:

The Editor of *The Theosophist* has much pleasure in publishing the following extracts from a letter from Mr. Bertram Keightley, Secretary of the "Esoteric Section" of the Theosophical Society, to one of the Commissioners, which have been handed to him for publication. [Mr. Keightley's letter was in fact a private one to Mr. Harte himself, in reply to a letter from Mr. Harte.] It should be explained that the denial therein contained refers to certain surmises

and reports afloat in the Society, and which were seemingly corroborated by apparently arbitrary and underhand proceedings by certain Fellows known to be members of the Esoteric Section.

Mr. Keightley tells this Commissioner that he must not believe "that the Esoteric Section has any, even the slightest, pretension to 'boss' the Theosophical Society or anything of the kind." Again he says: "We are all, H.P.B. first and foremost, just as loyal to the Theosophical Society and to Adyar as the Colonel can possibly be." And yet again he says: "I have nothing more to say, except to repeat in the most formal and positive manner my assurance that there is not a word of truth in the statement that the Esoteric Section has any desire or pretension to 'boss' any other part or Section of the T.S."

It is to be hoped that after this very distinct and authoritative disclaimer no further "private circulars" will be issued by any members of the Esoteric Section, calling upon the Fellows to oppose the action of the General Council, because "Madame Blavatsky does not approve of it"; and also that silly editorials, declaring that Theosophy is degenerating into obedience to the dictates of Madame Blavatsky, like that in a recent issue of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, will cease to appear.

The private circulars referred to are the *First Preliminary Memorandum*³ to applicants to the E.S., issued by H.P.B., and the Report of Mr. Judge as General Secretary to the American Convention, from both of which documents we have already given the germane extracts. The "silly editorial" was an article by Col.

³See Chapter XI. The *Preliminary Memorandum* of the Esoteric Section was issued by H.P.B. late in 1888. Its strictures on the failure of the T.S. were the undoubted occasion of Mr. Harte's series of articles in *The Theosophist*.

Bundy in his paper, the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, in support of the Coues-Collins attack.

To appreciate fully the force and bearing of the various citations given, the student should remember that *The Theosophist* was the official organ of the Society; *The Path* and *Lucifer* being Theosophical, not organizational, publications; further, that *The Theosophist* was the only one of the three with any circulation in India, and was, in addition, sent officially to every Branch throughout the world and had a wide circulation among the Fellows in England, France, and the United States. For a large portion of the membership it was the only means of information concerning the Society, and, in India, the only channel both for Theosophy and the Society. Indian members, therefore, were entirely dependent on it for the accuracy, completeness, and authenticity of its statements.

Immediately following the Convention of 1888, Col. Olcott had departed on a tour in Japan from which he did not return until the latter half of 1889. During his absence Mr. Harte was in entire charge of *The Theosophist*, and was one of the three "Commissioners" to whom he had delegated his powers as President; the other two being Hindu members of his "General Council." It cannot be doubted, both that Mr. Harte was following out a prearranged program in the matter quoted from, and that he was in constant communication with Col. Olcott during the latter's absence on his Japanese Buddhist mission. That his course was fully approved by Col. Olcott is shown by the immediate sequel, as follows:

As soon as the proofs of the two articles quoted from reached America Mr. Judge prepared a long communication taking issue with the facts, the implications, the spirit, and the tendencies thus expressed with every appearance of authority and Presidential sanction in the official organ of the Society. This—and the fact should be noted as an example of the method used by both Mr. Judge and H.P.B. in dealing with Col. Olcott's periodical outbreaks of "pledge fever"—was sent privately by

Mr. Judge direct to Col. Olcott with request for its insertion in *The Theosophist*, on the assumed ground that the articles complained of were written without Col. Olcott's knowledge and that he, no less than Mr. Judge, would hasten to correct the misstatements and false suggestions conveyed by the articles in question.

In the September, 1889, *Theosophist*, Col. Olcott published as the leading editorial and over his own signature an article entitled "Centres of The Theosophical Movement." He refused to print Mr. Judge's article in full, declaring that it—

Contains passages of a far too personal character for me to admit them. . . . I have taken no part, nor shall I, in the various unseemly quarrels, public and private, which the friction of "strong personalities" among us has and probably always will engender. They are mostly unimportant, involving no great principles or vital issue, and therefore beneath the interest of those who have the high purposes and aims of the Society at heart.

He calls Mr. Judge's criticisms "mayavic delusion." He then quotes Mr. Judge that the "Centre" is wherever H.P.B. may be; that it was originally in New York, then in Bombay, then "a short time at Adyar" (while she was there)—

. . . for where she is burns the flame that draws its force from the plane of ideas! The mere location of the President in Adyar, and the existence of a library there, do not make that spot our Rome." . . . What would become of this new Rome—Adyar—if an order were received for Col. Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky to betake themselves to America once more and there set up the Theosophical Society Headquarters? Such a thing might happen. It happened before, and the channel for the order was H. P. Blavatsky. Does any one suppose that either Col.

Olcott or H. P. Blavatsky would be obstructed in their actions by the "Revised Rules?"

This query rouses Col. Olcott over what he calls his "irascible colleague's questions and conundrums." He proceeds to argue at length from the record of the various minutes and changes of by-laws and rules that the President-Founder is the real fountain of authority in the Society and the real "Rome" is wherever the President-Founder may be domiciled. He does not claim "spiritual authority," he says, but he does claim he has been "granted absolute and unlimited discretion as to the practical management of our affairs." He has never interfered with H.P.B.:

. . . who taught and introduced me to my Initiators, but it was I who gave officially to her last year a charter to form her Esoteric Section. Between her and myself there was never any dispute upon these points, she sustaining my exoteric authority as loyally as I have ever recognized her superior connection with the "Founders." . . . Col. Olcott did *not* move the Headquarters to India by any one's order: his "orders" came from the depths of his own heart. . . . If in the course of the Society's development the transfer of Headquarters should ever be advisable—which neither I nor Mr. Judge can now forecast—doubtless I shall receive direct notice with ample time to make all the necessary arrangements in a businesslike and constitutional manner.

. . . But when it is a question of papal infallibilities and Romes, it is just as well to say it was I who proposed the formation of the Society, who had all the early burden of guiding its infant steps, and who, after the collapse of the original legislative scheme of Rules and Bye-Laws, had—as above remarked—all the executive responsibility. . . .

What the heart is to the body the Headquarters is to the Society, the working centre of its vital action. Its existence is what makes Theosophy a "going concern." . . . While the French and Germans mutually resent interference by each other in their official concerns and both would rebel against interference with them by the British or American Sections and *vice versa*, all unhesitatingly submit their unsettled disputes to the Executive for decision. And again, when there was trouble between personal factions in English Branches and between the American Theosophical leaders, it was to me and to no one else that the disputants looked for equitable composition of their troubles. These are facts beyond dispute, facts going to prove the indispensability of a general centre which shall be the official residence of the central arbitrator and judge, officially placed above the plane of partisanship and of local interests and influences.

These numerous and lengthy extracts will, we believe, serve fairly and fully to place before the reader the views entertained by Col. Olcott and actuating his conduct, his estimate of his own importance, and his attitude towards his colleagues and their status in the Society and in the Movement. Mr. Judge's views may be readily inferred from what has been given. It remains to compare and contrast all with the definite statement of H.P.B. in the *Preliminary Memorandum* already quoted from,⁴ and with her equally definite public expression of her own views and attitude as drawn forth and compelled by the several articles mentioned. In *Lucifer* for August, 1889, under the caption, "A Puzzle from Adyar," H.P.B., like Mr. Judge, assumes that *The Theosophist* articles have been written without the concurrence of Col. Olcott and without intention to aid and abet the enemy. "Now what," she asks,—

⁴See Chapter XI.

may be the meaning of this extraordinary and *most tactless "sortie"* of the esteemed *acting editor of our Theosophist*? Is he . . . like our (and his) editor-enemies across the Atlantic, also dreaming uncanny dreams and seeing lying visions—or what? And let me remind him at once that he must not feel offended by these remarks, as he has imperatively called them forth himself. *Lucifer*, the *Path* and the *Theosophist* are the only organs of communication with the Fellows of our Society, each in its respective country. Since the acting editor of the *Theosophist* has chosen to give a wide publicity in his organ to abnormal fancies, he has no right to expect a reply through any other channel than *Lucifer*. Moreover, if he fails to understand all the seriousness of his implied charges *against me* and several honorable men, he may realise them better, when he reads the present.

. . . what does he try to insinuate by the following . . .

She then reprints the "Disclaimer" from the "Supplement" to the July *Theosophist*, and analyzes the several insinuations in regard to members of the E.S., who, she says, "stand accused by Mr. Harte . . . of 'arbitrary and underhand proceedings.'" She asks, "Is not such a sentence a gross insult thrown into the face of honorable men—far better Theosophists than any of their accusers—and of myself?" Of the plain intimation that the American or British Sections or the Blavatsky Lodge or the E.S. wanted to "boss Adyar," she says:

That the E.S. had never any pretensions to "boss" the T.S., stands to reason: with the exception of Col. Olcott, the President, the Esoteric Section has nothing whatever to do with the Theosophical Society, its Council or officers. It is a Section entirely apart from the exoteric body and independent of it, H.P.

B. *alone being responsible for its members*, as shown in the official announcement over the signature of the President-Founder himself. It follows, therefore, that the E.S., as a body owes no allegiance whatever to the Theosophical Society, as a *Society*, least of all to Adyar.

Next she takes up another statement in the "Disclaimer."

It is pure nonsense to say that "H.P.B. . . . is loyal to the Theosophical Society and to Adyar" (?). H.P.B. *is loyal to death to the Theosophical CAUSE, and those great Teachers whose philosophy alone can bind the whole of Humanity into one Brotherhood.* Together with Col. Olcott, she is the chief Founder and Builder of the Society which *was and is* meant to represent that CAUSE; and if she is so loyal to H. S. Olcott, it is not at all because of his being its "President," but, firstly, because there is no man living who has worked harder for that Society, or been more devoted to it than the Colonel, and, secondly, because she regards him as a loyal friend and co-worker. Therefore the degree of her sympathies with the "Theosophical Society and Adyar" depends upon the degree of the loyalty of that Society to the CAUSE. Let it break away from the original lines and show disloyalty in its policy to the CAUSE and the original programme of the Society, and H.P.B. calling the T. S. *disloyal*, will shake it off like dust from her feet.

And what does "loyalty to Adyar" mean, in the name of all wonders? What *is* Adyar apart from that CAUSE and the *two* (not *one* Founder, if you please) who represent it? Adyar is the present Headquarters of the Society, because these "Headquarters are wherever the President is," as stated in the rules. To be logical the

Fellows of the T.S. had to be loyal to Japan while Col. Olcott was there, and to London during his presence here.

She then makes the memorable declaration of the actual existing status of affairs:

There is no longer a "Parent Society"; it is abolished and replaced by an aggregate body of Theosophical Societies, *all autonomous*, as are the States of America, and all under one head President, who, together with H. P. Blavatsky, will champion the CAUSE against the whole world. Such is the real state of things.

The theory of government of the Society held, practiced and preached by Col. Olcott and his pliant supporters is next covered by her declaration made in that regard also:

Whenever "Madame Blavatsky does not approve" of "an action of the General Council" (or "Commissioners," of whom Mr. R. Harte is one), she will say so openly and to their faces. Because (a) Madame Blavatsky does not owe the slightest allegiance to a Council which is liable at any moment to issue silly and *untheosophical ukases*; and (b) for the simple reason that she recognizes but one person in the T. S. beside herself, namely Colonel Olcott, as having the right of effecting fundamental re-organizations in a Society which owes its life to them, and for which they are both *karmically* responsible. If the acting editor makes slight account of a *sacred pledge*, neither Col. Olcott nor H. P. Blavatsky are likely to do so. H. P. Blavatsky will always bow before the decision of the majority of a Section or even a simple Branch; but she will ever protest against the decision of the General Council, were it composed of Archangels and Dhyan Chohans themselves, if their

decision seems to her unjust, or untheosophical, or fails to meet with the approval of the majority of the Fellows. No more than H. P. Blavatsky has the President-Founder the right of exercising autocracy or *papal* powers, and Col. Olcott would be the last man in the world to attempt to do so. It is the two Founders and especially the President, who have virtually sworn allegiance to the Fellows, whom they have to protect, and teach those who want to be taught, and not to tyrannize and rule over them.

Here, as always, where the weaknesses, the foibles, and the derelictions of her associates and students are involved, H.P.B. writes only under the gravest compulsion, with the extreme of reluctance, and in such terms as to hold wide the door of return to right action with the least possible humiliation to the pride and vanity of human nature. She sums up, and conveys at the same time her appeal to the best in her colleagues, in these terms:

And now I have said over my own signature what I had to say and that which ought to have been said in so many plain words long ago. The public is all agog with the silliest stories about our doings, and the supposed and real dissensions in the Society. Let every one know the truth at last, in which there is nothing to make any one ashamed and which alone can put an end to a most painful and strained feeling. This truth is as simple as can be.

The acting editor of the *Theosophist* has taken it into his head that the Esoteric Section together with the British and American Sections, were either conspiring or preparing to conspire against what he most curiously calls "Adyar" and its authority. Now being a most devoted Fellow of the T.S. and attached to the President, his zeal in hunting up this mare's

nest has led him to become more Catholic than the Pope. That is all, and I hope that such misunderstandings and hallucinations will come to an end with the return of the President to India. Had he been at home, he, at any rate, would have objected to all those dark hints and cloaked sayings that have of late incessantly appeared in the *Theosophist* to the great delight of our enemies. . . .

But it is time for me to close. If Mr. Harte persists still in acting in such a strange and untheosophical way, then the sooner the President settles these matters the better for all concerned.

Owing to such undignified quibbles, Adyar and especially the *Theosophist* are fast becoming the laughing stock of Theosophists themselves as well as of their enemies.

And, lest her unflinching clemency should again be misconstrued and abused to their own injury and that of the Cause to which they, no less than herself, are pledged, she concludes with this note of mingled appeal and warning to those at fault:

I end by assuring him [Mr. Harte] that there is no need for him to pose as Colonel Olcott's protecting angel. Neither he nor I need a third party to screen us from each other. We have worked and toiled and suffered together for fifteen long years, and if after all these years of mutual friendship the President-Founder were capable of lending ear to insane accusations and turning against me, well—the world is wide enough for us both. Let the new Exoteric Theosophical Society headed by Mr. Harte, play at red tape if the President lets them and let the General Council expel me for "disloyalty," if, again, Colonel Olcott should be so blind as to fail to see where the "true friend" and his duty

lie. Only unless they hasten to do so, at the first sign of *their* disloyalty to the CAUSE—it is I who will have resigned my office of Corresponding Secretary for life and left the Society. This will not prevent me from remaining at the head of those who will follow me.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

CHAPTER XVII

H.P.B. TAKES CHARGE OF THE T.S. IN EUROPE

It would serve no useful purpose to set out in detail the internecine troubles of the Theosophical Society during the three years which followed. Our aim has been to present only so much of the sequence of events during that melancholy period of stress and strain as might make clear the two horns of the dilemma unavoidably produced by the clash between human nature and the purposes of the Theosophical Movement. That is to say: (1) to indicate clearly the failure of the Society and its responsible officials and leaders to live up to its and their professed Objects; (2) the corresponding necessity under which H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge labored—either to stand by and permit the Society to become a worldly success but an Occult failure, or to restore the Movement by the formation of the Esoteric Section within the shell of the Society.

The Society tended continually to follow those lines which were attractive to the members and the inquiring public—that is, to run into channels of mere study of comparative religion and philosophy or to experiments and investigations in psychical research. The inflexible devotion to the assimilation of the philosophy of Theosophy, the rigid self-discipline required for the application of Theosophy to their own daily conduct in all the affairs of life—these essential conditions precedent to any realization of the great First Object, possessed no charms for any but the very few. *Theoretical* brotherhood was one thing; the practical application and exemplification of the principles professedly held was quite another thing, then as now.

On the other hand, one has but to read any one of the statements emanating from the Masters of Wisdom from

1877-96, to recognize the great gulf between *Their* view of life and action and that prevailing in the world and in the Society. Philosophy and ethics, *ethics and philosophy*—through the study and application of these alone could the Society and its members hope to benefit the world and themselves. Little by little the opposed fundamental ideas and applications produced those frictions and fractures which at last led to the opening up of broad lines of cleavage. And since actions do not perform themselves, it was inevitable that these fundamental differences should at last become personified in the leading persons and personages whose relations embody the history of the Theosophical Movement.

After the receipt of the advance proofs of *Lucifer* for August 15, 1889, containing "A Puzzle from Adyar," Col. Olcott recognized that the various issues evoked by the Convention proceedings of December preceding and the subsequent promulgations in *The Theosophist*, had been squarely met by H.P.B. and Mr. Judge. Either he would have to proceed in open defiance of them and of their policies, execute a complete "about face," and bring himself once more into line with the principles and procedure they had proclaimed, or take a compromise course. He chose, as usual, the middle course: he determined to go to England and "fight it out" once more with H.P.B., rather than raise the standard of rebellion and thus perforce align himself with Prof. Coues, whose assault threatened not only the ruin of the prestige of H.P.B., but the destruction of the Society as well. He therefore hastened to insert in the "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for August a formal notice addressed "To the Indian Section," in which he announced his departure for the United Kingdom in these words:

A promise made last year obliges me to proceed without delay to England for a Society lecturing tour through parts of the United Kingdom.

He arrived in England when the public press, no less than the Theosophical ranks, was agog over the charges

and counter-charges incident to the Coues-Collins explosion. He found H.P.B. undaunted, undismayed, undisturbed. Although she lay upon that rack of physical as well as moral pain that was all too soon to destroy her body, never had the lion's heart and the lion's courage that inspired her been more true. She received him with that loyalty and forgetfulness of all but the good in him that had so many times before restored his concert pitch of faith and feeling. Accord was soon reached. He was received by all the English Theosophists with that consideration so dear to his nature. His fears that his importance to the work of the Society and the Movement would be ignored or minimized, evaporated for the time being, and this was facilitated by his discovery that H.P.B. was surrounded by eager and ardent students whose worldly standing and repute far more than compensated for any possible losses due to the defection of Dr. Coues and Miss Collins. To mention only two of the recent recruits, he met Mr. Herbert Burrows, the well-known Socialist in England, man of education and character so great as to command the respect even of those whose class interests were endangered by him, now devoted to Theosophy and to H.P.B. He met Mrs. Annie Besant, champion of the oppressed, fearless follower of her convictions, lead her where they might, now aflame with the glory of a fresh enthusiasm, already the right hand of H.P.B. Under such auspices as these, Col. Olcott departed on his lecturing tour and everywhere found new evidences of a rising tide. On his return to London in December he readily acceded to the expressed wish of the Council of the British Section and issued an "Order" naming H.P.B., with an advisory Committee of three, to exercise his "Presidential powers" in the United Kingdom. Still further to strengthen him against reactionary tendencies on his return to India, H.P.B. put into his hands before his departure a document appointing him her sole representative for the Esoteric Section in Asiatic countries.

During Col. Olcott's absence no Convention had been held at Adyar, but a Bombay Conference was arranged

which met at the usual time, adopted stirring resolutions of confidence in H.P.B., and voiced its condemnation of attacks made upon her and its disapproval of the dissentient frictions with the Society. Thus for a time—a brief time, as always—there was concord and some semblance of fraternity throughout the whole vast area of the Society.

But early in the summer of 1890 the Paris Branch once again became the focal point of disturbance which threatened the disruption of the Society. While H.P.B. was doing her utmost to reconcile the warring factions Col. Olcott again intervened and almost an identical situation to that in the fall of 1888 again arose. The various European Lodges, the English Branches, and the numerous “unattached” Fellows in Britain and on the Continent rose in arms and bombarded H.P.B. with letters, resolutions and petitions to clear the situation once and for all from any further “Executive Orders” from Adyar.

Thus confronted, H.P.B. once more acted with characteristic decision, frankness, and loyalty. A brief delineation can but outline in relief the sagacity and the kindness with which she performed the seemingly impossible task thrust upon her.

On July 2, 1890, the Council of the British Section held an extraordinary session with Mrs. Besant in the chair. Letters and resolutions from the various Lodges and unattached Fellows were read, and after full discussion “it was proposed by Dr. [Archibald] Keightley that a requisition, embodying the following views, be drawn up and addressed to the President of the Society”:

The Continental Lodges and unattached members having made an appeal to H.P.B. that they may place themselves directly under her authority, the British Section joins in their demand that the constitutional powers at present exercised by Colonel H. S. Olcott in Europe, shall be transferred to H.P.B. and her Advisory

Council, already appointed to exercise part of such function in the United Kingdom.

H.P.B. cabled Col. Olcott of the action taken by the Council, of her own proposed steps in consequence, and, for his own sake no less than that of the Society, urged him to issue such formal notice as would accept the *status quo* and preserve the appearance of harmony. The “Supplement” of *The Theosophist* for August, 1890, contains two eminently characteristic documents, both signed “H. S. Olcott, P.T.S.” The first of these reads in part as follows:

To secure a better management of the Society’s affairs throughout Europe, than I can give from this distance, I do hereby depute to my co-Founder, H. P. Blavatsky, full authority to come to an agreement with the Branches of the United Kingdom, Greece, France, Austria, and Holland, and the non-official groups in Spain, Russia, and other Continental countries, for the consolidation of the whole into one Section, to be designated as the European Section of the Theosophical Society; and to take the general supervision over and have as full management of the same as I could myself.

This was dated “Adyar, 9th July, 1890,” seven days after the meeting of the Council of the British Section, and the heading, “Headquarters Official Orders,” has a delightfully Pickwickian tone in thus “ordering” what was already a *fait accompli*. This order was, of course, written when Col. Olcott had only brief telegraphic advices. So soon as the mails reached India with full details of the transactions of the Council of the British Section, including the resolution above given, the Colonel felt himself compelled to sustain the Presidential dignity by a second Pickwickian “Headquarters Official Order,” dated July 29th, and reprinted in the “Supplement” immediately following the first. It runs:

The . . . resolution of the Council of the British Section of July 2, 1890, is hereby cancelled, as contrary to the constitution and by-laws of the Theosophical Society, a usurpation of the Presidential prerogative, and beyond the competence of any Section or other fragment of the Society to enact.

Lucifer for August, 1890, contains the notice sent out by H.P.B.:

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN EUROPE

In consequence of the receipt of letters from all the active Lodges in Europe, and from a large majority of the Unattached Fellows of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky is reluctantly compelled to abandon the position which she originally took up at the foundation of the Society.

NOTICE

IN OBEDIENCE TO THE ALMOST UNANIMOUS VOICE OF THE FELLOWS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN EUROPE, I, H. P. BLAVATSKY, THE ORIGINATOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ACCEPT THE DUTY OF EXERCISING THE PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY FOR THE WHOLE OF EUROPE; AND IN VIRTUE OF THIS AUTHORITY I DECLARE THAT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN LONDON, WHERE I RESIDE, WILL IN FUTURE BE THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE TRANSACTION OF ALL OFFICIAL BUSINESS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN EUROPE.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

Let no one imagine that this reform in any sense suggests a separation from, or even the loosening in any way of the authority of, my colleague at Adyar. Colonel H. S. Olcott remains, as heretofore, the President-Founder of

the Theosophical Society *the world over*. But it has been found impossible for him at such a great distance to exercise accurate discrimination in current matters of guidance of the Theosophical Society. His functions including the official issue of Charters and Diplomas in Europe, errors in the selection of members to whom such Charters and Diplomas are issued (besides the minor evil of delay) have rendered it impossible that the system of government of the Theosophical Society in Europe should be continued as heretofore. In the issue of *Lucifer* for August, 1889, I made use of the following sentences:

H. P. Blavatsky will always bow before the decision of the majority of a Section or even a simple Branch. . . . No more . . . has the President-Founder the right of exercising autocracy or *papal* powers, and Colonel Olcott would be the last man in the world to attempt to do so. *It is the two Founders, and especially the President, who have virtually sworn allegiance to the Fellows, whom they have to protect . . . and not to tyrannize and rule over them.*

Therefore, owing to the issue of a Charter in ignorance of the actual facts, and the immediate protest made by all the active members of the Lodges, and their unanimous desire that I should exercise the Presidential authority over the Theosophical Society in Europe, bowing to the decision of the majority I have issued the above official "NOTICE." To avoid even the appearance of *autocracy* I select as an advisory Council to assist me in the exercise of these functions, in addition to my three colleagues appointed by the President, viz.: Annie Besant, and Messrs. W. Kingsland and Herbert Burrows, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, President of the London Lodge who has cordially joined in this reform, Dr. H. A. W.

Coryn, President of the Brixton Lodge, Theosophical Society, Mr. E. T. Sturdy, and Mr. G. R. S. Mead.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

Thereafter peace and peaceful activities attended the work of the Theosophical Society in the West till after the death of H.P.B. The reader who may have been misled as to the facts attendant upon the events just cited, because of the sorry account in the pages of "Old Diary Leaves," Fourth Series, should remember that the Col. Olcott there writing was a broken old man, that he was telling his tale ten years after the events discussed and after the fatal follies of 1894-6, and felt under the overwhelming compulsion to put himself in the best light possible before posterity. His case is not unlike that of de Lesseps, the glory of whose achievement at Suez was, to so many minds, put in total eclipse by the folly, the fraud and the failure at Panama. Only those who, like H.P.B., know human nature and the Karma of the individual through and through—only such have the wisdom neither to ignore the good services, nor to be disturbed by the mistakes or frailties of their associates and helpers—only such have the right to throw the first stone at "poor old Olcott"—and they have none to throw!

CHAPTER XVIII

DEATH OF H.P.B.—HER LAST MESSAGES

H. P. BLAVATSKY died May 8, 1891, in the sixtieth year of her age. The generation which knew her personally is no more, but the fierce controversies which raged around her living still survive, and not a year passes but her name and nature become the target for renewed discussion. It is not overstating the fact to say that of no character in history is both so much and so little known. We say "known," but the fact is that today, as when she moved among men, she is as much as ever a confronting mystery.

During sixteen years she lived on three continents amid the most alien surroundings, in the light of the most watchful as well as the most hostile publicity. For those who called themselves her friends and followers were not less critical and observant of her every mood, her every word and action, than those who saw in her a charlatan, an emissary of immorality and irreligion. Not one who sought to gain access to her was ever denied the opportunity to question and cross-examine her. Her doors were open to friends and foes alike. Yet today as while she lived she remains an enigma, not because of the mystery with which she cloaked herself, but because she presents to the mind of the race an unsolved problem—an insoluble problem from any but one approach: that of the Wisdom-Religion which she inculcated and exemplified. She was herself the very testimony and witness of that which she taught, but none thought to solve the riddle of the Sphinx of the nineteenth century by an application to her of the philosophy she brought.

In closing the Introductory to the "Secret Doctrine" Madame Blavatsky writes that she has constantly to bear in mind that "every reader will inevitably judge the

statements made from the standpoint of his own knowledge, experience, and consciousness, based on what he has already learnt" of life, its phenomena and significance. None that we know of have ever taken home the universal applications of this truism. Those who approached H.P.B. did so, each with his own pre-conceptions. Each was willing to admit the shortcomings of his own knowledge, experience, and consciousness; each was desirous of adding to his knowledge; each was "willing to learn" what he could from H.P.B., but when the opportunity and the test came, *who studied himself in the light of H.P.B.'s knowledge, experience, and consciousness?* Yet if she was, perchance, a Being of another order from mankind, some Buddha in disguise, how could she be truly availed of by any aspirant for Wisdom, unless by a reversal of our accustomed mode of inquiry? It is one thing to study the great doctrine, say, of Karma and Reincarnation, from the standpoint of our own present personal predilections and antipathies, and quite another thing to study our own present selves and natures in the light of these twin truths. Yet, if Karma and Reincarnation be, perchance, the very key to the riddle of existence with all its included contradictions, what other mode can possibly bring that enlightenment and illumination which all seek and which confessedly neither human religion nor human science, any more than our own knowledge, experience, and consciousness have been able to give us?

And again, in the Preface to the "Secret Doctrine" she says that "the publication of many of the facts herein stated has been rendered necessary by the wild and fanciful speculations in which many Theosophists and students of Mysticism have indulged, during the last few years, in their endeavour to, as they imagined, work out a complete system of thought from the few facts previously communicated to them." Although she specifically states that the "Secret Doctrine" is written for the *instruction of students* of Occultism, how many of those who call themselves "Occultists" have ever really studied her life or her writings, let alone derived any applications

from them? On the contrary, the multitude of books and other writings emanating from self-styled "initiates," "outer heads," and "teachers" who pose as "successors" and "revealers," do they not one and all merely betray themselves as those very "wild and fanciful speculations" of which H.P.B. wrote warningly? If her own students and professed followers and disciples have made such sorry use, and betray such sorry understanding, of the very genius, principles, and practices of the philosophy she taught, how could they or can they but grossly and grievously err in their understanding of H.P.B. herself—the living embodiment of what she taught?

And, finally, in closing the Preface, she used this ancient maxim of jurisprudence:

"*De minimis non curat lex*"—The Law takes no account of trifles. Her followers and disciples have taken account of little else! The *Society* engrossed them—not its *Objects*. Comparative religion and philosophy engrossed them—not the attempt to detect the vital principles which underlie them all. Phenomena engrossed them—not the effort to investigate the unexplained *laws* of their occurrence. "Progress" engrossed them—not *Brotherhood*. "Doctrines" engrossed them—not the universal applications of *Theosophy*. Speculations engrossed them—not the serious *study* of what was given them for their guidance and instruction. If this is true as regards the Society she founded and the message she delivered, how could it be other than true in the case of the attitude of the students toward herself? Scarce one but put on record his experiences and opinions in relation to H.P.B. Trifles—trifles—what she ate and what she wore. How she looked and how she "behaved." How she stood and how she sat. What this one thought and what that one had to say of her: Speculations, fancies, inferences, world without end. All trifles, trifles, illuminant only of the narrow radius of the "knowledge, experience, and consciousness" of the beholders of this greatest phenomenon of the centuries.

Every lawyer knows that the best evidence of anything

is the thing itself; the best evidence in regard to anyone the acts and words of that one himself. Too many concern themselves with reputation—too few with *character*. Those who are ardent to learn the *truth* in regard to anyone or anything must soon come to distinguish between reputation and character. The one depends upon hearsay and opinion, upon the thousand forces influencing the testimony and inferences of the witnesses; the other depends upon nothing and no one but the subject himself. And particularly is this watchfulness necessary in the study of anyone who has made or sought to make his mark upon the times. The opportunism of immediate self-interest colors us all far more than any of us realize. History is for the most part a record of reversals of judgment. Who of those that shine with ever-increasing luster through the night of time ever enjoyed in his lifetime, or for generations after, that *reputation* which his *character* justified?

And the same state of facts applies in its integrity to what one might at first glance conceive to be the impersonal world of ideas. For, with newer weapons and changed alignments the war of ideas is still the same today as in all the past. Men still wrestle and war over opposing ideas as to God, as to Nature, as to Man. The problems of Good and Evil, of Justice and Injustice, of Life and Death, are as far off from solution, as apparently insoluble, as ever. If men cannot yet come to a stable conclusion in regard to the very fundamentals of existence and action, how fatuous he who looks for uniformity or unanimity in their applications. Neither human science, human religion, nor human philosophy offers, or ever has offered, any but fallible and tentative, but mutable and partial, explanations or applications concerning those things which are the *universal* experience of mankind. Yet each presumes today, as always, to sit in the judgment seat, and pronounce anathema or approval in the light of its own "knowledge, experience, and consciousness" on those very subjects on which each will abstractly admit its own utter incompetency! Could logical absurdity go farther?

H.P.B. showed the unbroken prevalence in time and space of a knowledge that includes *all* life and action, and demonstrated to a Q. E. D. that such knowledge and its Adept-custodians exist today as always; that They are the Source from which has sprung everything that the world has that is permanent in every field of human inquiry. What makes men incompetent to weigh that testimony, to proceed to its verification by actual experience of their own? Nothing in the world but human prejudice and conceit, human superstition and materialism, masquerading as religion and science.

Whatever the testimony and opinion of her critics, friendly or hostile, one thing stands out like a flame in the night with regard to the character of H. P. Blavatsky—she was consistent throughout in all that she said and did. Few there be of her critics who can endure the same test of sincerity and good faith. Her profession of faith, her declaration of principles, may be found in the Preface of "Isis Unveiled" in 1877. All the rest that issued from her life and pen in the prolific years that followed flowed with as mathematical consistency as the theorems of geometry issue from its fundamental axioms and apothegms.

There is never anything but two things to consider—the credibility and the competency of the witness. Search as they did with might and main to find some faintest thread whereon to hitch the imputation of base motives, and thus to destroy her credibility—not one of all the assassins of her reputation ever was able to produce aught that might savor of self-interest in anything she ever said or did. Incredible follies are ascribed to her—follies so egregiously stupid as to fall of their own weight when attributed even to a child or a dolt; impossible immoralities are charged against her—impossible even physically, for her body was that of an androgyne, an hermaphrodite. Slanders and calumnies without number have been perpetrated against her, but every imputation against her motives—and we have assiduously examined the charges of her detractors by hundreds—rests upon no other basis than suspicion, accusa-

tion, repetition. In no solitary instance is one solitary *fact* adduced that would stand a moment's impartial examination. To the contrary, not one of the hundreds of original and repeated charges leveled against her but betrays the animus, the interested motives of the *accusers*—not of their victim.

If we turn to the question of her competency, two things become more convincingly sure the more her career is examined: (1) No single fact adduced by her has ever been upset by counter-evidence; (2) no postulation laid down by her has ever been rendered untenable philosophically, logically, or evidentially. Her testimony as to facts, her conclusions and theories in regard to the facts, remain as invincible as ever. No one of all her enemies and opponents ever evinced any appetite to assail her philosophy, none ever tried conclusions with her logic and boasted afterwards of his success; none ever showed in his own life the sincerity, the tolerance, the generosity of spirit, the ardor for Truth, lead where it might, that burned with a quenchless light throughout her whole career. One has but to compare the record of H. P. Blavatsky for sincerity and consistency with that of any of her detractors, any of her followers, or *with his own as known to himself*, to gain some glimmer of recognition that here in our own times in the personage known as H. P. Blavatsky is one who, in the luminous zone of the eternal great, shines with an undimmed light, needing no borrowed radiance; a Messenger from other Spheres indeed.

To the Theosophical student who has gained from her and from her mission some flying spark of grateful perception of the Immortal and the Immortals, nothing can call for deeper reflection or more profound consideration than what may best be called her dying declarations. The accretions of human experience, as concentrated in our jurisprudence, have led all men everywhere to attach a momentous significance to the last words, whether of saint or sinner. The equitable authority of a dying declaration is everywhere held to equal the sanction of the most solemn oath or other attestation.

April 15, 1891, three weeks before the cord broke, she signed her last Message to the American Theosophists in Convention assembled:

Suffering in body as I am continually, the only consolation that remains to me is to hear of the progress of the Holy Cause to which my health and strength have been given; but to which, now that these are going, I can only offer my passionate devotion and never-weakening good wishes for its success and welfare. . . . Fellow Theosophists, I am proud of your noble work in the New World; Sisters and Brothers of America, I thank and I bless you for your unremitting labours for the common cause so dear to us all.

Let me remind you all once more that such work is now more than ever needed. The period which we have now reached . . . is, and will continue to be, one of great conflict and continued strain. If the T.S. can hold through it, good; if not, while Theosophy will remain unscathed, the Society will perish—perchance most ingloriously—and the World will suffer. I fervently hope that I may not see such a disaster in my present body. The critical nature of the stage on which we have entered is as well known to the forces that fight against us as to those that fight on our side. No opportunity will be lost of sowing dissension, of taking advantage of mistaken and false moves, of instilling doubt, of augmenting difficulties, of breathing suspicions, so that by any and every means the unity of the Society may be broken and the ranks of our Fellows thinned and thrown into disarray. Never has it been more necessary for the members of the T.S. to lay to heart the old parable of the bundle of sticks than it is at the present time; divided, they will inevitably be broken, one by one; united, there is no force on earth able to destroy our Brotherhood. Now I have

marked with pain a tendency among you, as among the Theosophists in Europe and India, to quarrel over trifles, and to allow your very devotion to the cause of Theosophy to lead you into disunion. Believe me, that apart from such natural tendency, owing to the inherent imperfections of Human Nature, advantage is often taken by our ever-watchful enemies of your noblest qualities to betray and to mislead you. Sceptics will laugh at this statement, and even some of you may put small faith in the actual existence of the terrible forces of these mental, hence subjective and invisible, yet withal living and potent, influences around all of us. But there they are, and I know of more than one among you who have felt them, and have actually been forced to acknowledge these extraneous mental pressures. On those of you who are unselfishly and sincerely devoted to the Cause, they will produce little, if any, impression. On some others, those who place their personal pride higher than their duty to the T.S., higher even than their pledge to their divine SELF, the effect is generally disastrous. Self-watchfulness is never more necessary than when a personal wish to lead, and wounded vanity, dress themselves in the peacock's feathers of devotion and altruistic work; but at the present crisis of the Society a lack of self-control and watchfulness may become fatal in every case. But these diabolical attempts of our powerful enemies—the irreconcilable foes of the truths now being given out and practically asserted—may be frustrated. If every Fellow in the Society were content to be an impersonal force for good, careless of praise or blame so long as he subserved the purposes of the Brotherhood, the progress made would astonish the World and place the Ark of the T.S. out of danger. . . .

Your position as the fore-runners of the sixth sub-race of the fifth root-race has its own special perils as well as its special advantages. Psychic, with all its allurements and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the Psychic outruns the Manasic and Spiritual development. Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction. Watch therefore carefully this development, inevitable in your race and evolution-period, so that it may finally work for good and not for evil; and receive, in advance, the sincere and potent blessings of Those whose good-will will never fail you, if you do not fail yourselves. . . .

And now I have said all. I am not sufficiently strong to write a more lengthy message, and there is the less need for me to do so as my friend and trusted messenger, Annie Besant, she who is my right arm here, will be able to explain to you my wishes more fully and better than I can write them. After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never-dormant wish of my heart, "Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy!" Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its *practical* realization alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race; one nation from the other; and from that hatred of class and social considerations that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. Theosophy alone can keep it from sinking into that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as civilizations have done. In

your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility. My own span of life may not be long, and if any of you have learned aught from my teachings or have gained by my help a glimpse of the True Light, I ask you, in return, to strengthen the Cause by the triumph of which that True Light, made still brighter and more glorious through your individual and collective efforts, will lighten the World, and thus to let me see, before I part with this worn-out body, the stability of the Society secured.

May the blessings of the past and present great Teachers rest upon you. From myself accept collectively the assurance of my true, never-wavering fraternal feelings, and the sincere, heartfelt thanks for the work done by all the workers.

From their servant to the last,

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

This moving valedictory to the American Theosophists was read to the Convention by Mrs. Besant, whom H.P.B. had sent to America for the purpose and to meet Mr. Judge.

Again, but ten days before her departure, H.P.B. affixed her signature and the date, as to a Testament, to the article "My Books," which was published in *Lucifer* for May 15, 1891, immediately following her death. It is the last article written by H.P.B. She says:

Isis was full of misprints and misquotations; it contained useless repetitions, most irritating digressions, and to the casual reader unfamiliar with the various aspects of metaphysical ideas and symbols, as many apparent contradictions; much of the matter in it ought not to be there at all, and also it had some very gross mistakes due to the many alterations in proofreading in

general, and word corrections in particular. Finally, the work, for reasons that will now be explained, has no system in it. . . .

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 to the last page, 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 for 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 me more anxiety and trouble during a long lifetime which has ever been more full of thorns than of roses.

But in spite of these perhaps too great admissions, I maintain that *Isis Unveiled* contains a mass of original and never hitherto divulged information on occult subjects. . . . 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. . . .

The first enemies that my work brought to the front were Spiritualists, whose fundamental theories as to the spirits of the dead communicating in *propria persona* I upset. For the

last fifteen years—ever since this first publication—an incessant shower of ugly accusations have been poured upon me. Every libellous charge, from immorality and the “Russian spy” theory down to my acting on false pretences, of being a chronic fraud and a *living lie*, an habitual drunkard, an emissary of the Pope, paid to break down Spiritualism, and Satan incarnate, every slander that can be thought of, has been brought to bear upon my private and public life. The fact *that not a single one of these charges has ever been substantiated*; that from the first day of January to the last of December, year after year, I have lived surrounded by friends and foes as in a glass-house,—nothing could stop these wicked, venomous, and thoroughly unscrupulous tongues. It has been said at various times by my ever-active opponents that (1) *Isis Unveiled* was simply a rehash of Eliphas Lévi and a few old alchemists; (2) that it was written by me under the dictation of Evil Powers and the *departed spirits* of Jesuits (*sic*); and finally (3) that my two volumes had been compiled from MSS. (never before heard of), which Baron de Palm—he of the cremation and double-burial fame—had left behind him, and which I had found in his trunk! On the other hand, friends, as unwise as they were kind, spread abroad that which was really the truth, a little too enthusiastically, about the connection of my Eastern Teacher and other Occultists with the work, and this was seized upon by the enemy and exaggerated out of all limits of truth. It was said that the whole of *Isis* has been dictated to me *from cover to cover* and *verbatim* by these invisible Adepts. And, as the imperfections of my work were only too glaring, the consequence of all this idle and malicious talk was that my enemies and critics inferred—as well they might

—that either these invisible inspirers had no existence, and were part of my “fraud,” or that they lacked the cleverness of even an average good writer.

Now, no one has any right to hold me responsible for what any one may say, but only for that which I myself state orally, or in public print over my signature. And what I say and maintain is this: Save the direct quotations and the many afore specified and mentioned misprints, errors and misquotations, and the general make-up of *Isis Unveiled*, for which I am in no way responsible, (a) every word of information found in this work or in my later writings, comes from the teachings of our Eastern Masters; and (b) that many a passage in these works has been written by me *under their dictation*. In saying this no *supernatural* claim is urged, for no *miracle* is performed by such a dictation. Any moderately intelligent person, convinced by this time of the many possibilities of hypnotism . . . and of the phenomena of *thought-transference*, will easily concede that if even a hypnotized subject, a mere irresponsible medium, *hears the unexpressed thought* of his hypnotizer, who can thus transfer his thought to him—even to *repeating the words read by the hypnotizer mentally from a book*—then my claim has nothing impossible in it. Space and distance do not exist for thought; and if two persons are in perfect mutual psycho-magnetic *rapport*, and of these two, one is a great Adept in Occult Sciences, then thought-transference and dictation of whole pages, becomes as easy and as comprehensible at the distance of ten thousand miles as the transference of two words across a room.

Hitherto, I have abstained—except on very rare occasions—from answering any criticism on my works, and have even left direct lies and slanders unrefuted, because in the case of *Isis*

I found almost every kind of criticism justifiable, and in that of "slanders and lies," my contempt for the slanderers was too great to permit me to notice them. . . . But, as *Isis* is now attacked for at least the tenth time, the day has come when my perplexed friends and that portion of the public which may be in sympathy with Theosophy are entitled to the whole truth—and *nothing but the truth*. Not that I seek to excuse myself in anything even before them or to "explain things." It is nothing of the kind. 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 learned 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, 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 Colonel 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 Colonel Olcott. Of course he said that everything save the pages dictated—had to be rewritten. Then we started on our literary labours and worked together every 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*. It is he again who suggested that the work should be divided into chapters, and the first volume devoted to SCIENCE and the second to THEOLOGY. To do this, the matter had to be re-shifted, and many of the chapters also; repetitions had to be erased, and the literary connection of subjects attended to. 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 footnotes. I have never made a secret of it, and every one of my numerous acquaintances in New York knew it. When ready the work went to press.

From that moment the real difficulty began. I had no idea of correcting galley-proofs; Colonel 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 proofreading. Pressed by the publisher, Colonel 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 "Vaivaswata" (Manu) became transformed in the published volumes into "Viswamitra," that thirty-six pages of the Index were irretrievably lost, and quotation-marks 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 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.

And now—and perhaps in consequence of all

this—comes a new accusation: I am charged with wholesale plagiarism in the Introductory Chapter "Before the Veil."

Well, had I committed plagiarism, I should not feel the slightest hesitation in admitting the "borrowing." But all "parallel passages" to the contrary, as I have not done so, I do not see why I should confess it . . .

[*Isis*] . . . is an inexhaustible mine of misquotations, errors and blunders, to which it is impossible for me to plead "guilty" in the ordinary sense. . . . I have no author's vanity; and years of unjust persecution and abuse have made me entirely callous to what the public may think of me—personally.

But in view of the facts as given above; and considering that—

(a) The language in *Isis* is not mine; but (with the exception of that portion of the work which, as I claim, was *dictated*), may be called only a sort of translation of my facts and ideas into English;

(b) It was not written for the public,—the latter having always been only a secondary consideration with me—but for the use of Theosophists and members of the Theosophical Society to which *Isis* is dedicated;

(c) Though I have since learned sufficient English to have been enabled to edit two magazines. . . 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 ask now every impartial and honest man or woman whether it is just or even fair to criticize 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 every one of those who have helped me. Even for the *Secret Doctrine* there are about half-a-dozen Theosophists who have been busy in editing it, 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 only 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?

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CRISIS IN THE SOCIETY

At the time of H.P.B.'s death Mr. Judge was in New York, Mrs. Besant in mid-ocean on her homeward voyage from her visit as H.P.B.'s messenger to the Convention of the American Section, Col. Olcott in Australia, whither he had gone partly on business for the Society, and partly on account of his health, which was greatly impaired. On receipt of the news of H.P.B.'s death Mr. Judge cabled to London that he would come on the first boat and to keep her things intact till his arrival. Cables were also exchanged between Mr. Judge and Col. Olcott, and the latter, who was on the point of departing for New Zealand, advised both London and New York that he would go at once to England.

The death of H.P.B. necessarily aroused great uncertainties and speculations as to what might befall the Society, its Esoteric Section, and the solidarity of its unwieldy and poorly amalgamated elements. Her presence being removed, her pervading influence no longer being directly exercised, her commanding voice no longer possible to be heard, what was going to be done by her lieutenants and by the rank and file of her followers? Although she had never held any but a purely nominal official position during the entire life of the Society, H.P.B. had none the less been not only the inspiring genius of its foundation but its guiding star.

It will be remembered that the membership, the proceedings, the meetings, and the instructions of the Esoteric Section were all under the seal of secrecy,¹ every member making the most solemn pledge in that as in other respects. Neither Col. Olcott nor Mr. Sinnett were members of the Esoteric Section; Dr. Coues had

¹ See Chapter IX.

been declined admission; Miss Mabel Collins had been admitted and dismissed for flagrant violation of her pledges, as had Mr. Michael Angelo Lane. There were very few members of the E.S. in India and the Orient generally, few on the Continent of Europe, the larger membership being from the beginning in the United States and, next to that, in England. As no one was received who was not also a member in good standing of the T.S.; as the bulk of the financial and other support of the T.S. came from England and the United States, and nearly all the literature of Theosophy and most of the periodicals devoted to it were printed in the English language, the formation and rise of the Esoteric Section afforded ample occasion for speculations, doubts, and fears on the part of Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and others who were prominent in the Society and well pleased with its conduct and progress on lines satisfactory to themselves. They saw in the Esoteric Section a standing menace, because it was a secret body pledged, not to the Society but to the Theosophical *Movement*; looking, not to the Organization and its Officers for direction, but to H.P.B. and Mr. Judge; concerned not at all with the "neutrality" of the Society on all matters of philosophy, religion, and science, but pledged to study, promulgate, and practice *Theosophy*.

Mrs. Annie Besant had become a convert to Theosophy early in 1889, very shortly after the defection of Miss Mabel Collins and Dr. Coues. She had ceased her connection with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and with atheistic and socialistic activities, joined the "household" of H.P.B., been admitted to the Esoteric Section, had become President of the Blavatsky Lodge, was made by H.P.B. Co-Editor of *Lucifer*, and within a few months her reputation, her ardor, and her intellectual abilities made her the right hand of H.P.B. In the eyes of the world and of most members of the Society, she was the foremost light in the Theosophical firmament after H.P.B., and destined after H.P.B.'s death to become the central luminary in the Theosophical heavens. She had been the prime supporter of the movement among

European and English Theosophists to use Alexandrian methods to cut the Gordian knot of Col. Olcott's incessant intermeddling through his Presidential ukases in the active conduct of the work in the West, which resulted in the taking over by H.P.B., at the almost unanimous request of the membership, of the Presidential powers and authority for the whole of Europe—an action which Col. Olcott accepted with what grace he could. As will be remembered, a British Section modeled on the same democratic lines as the original American Section, had been formed near the close of 1888. After H.P.B. had assumed the Presidency of the European Societies and the European "unattached" Fellows, in the summer of 1890, she had planned to organize them, together with the Branches and Lodges in Great Britain, into a single autonomous Section, nominally and in aim an integral portion of the Theosophical Society, recognizing and supporting Col. Olcott as titular President-Founder of all the Societies the world over, but actually and practically entirely independent of any jurisdiction outside of or other than the democratic decisions of its own Branches and Fellows, in delegate Convention assembled.

The situation Mr. Judge had to meet was thus one of great and peculiar difficulty. On the one hand was the jealousy felt by Col. Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and others, over the influence of the Esoteric Section on the fortunes of the exoteric Society. On the other hand was the problem of Mrs. Besant, as placed before him by H.P.B. in her letter to him of March 27, 1891, shortly before her death. Although of great ability, strong will, and intense devotion, Mrs. Besant was, as stated in that letter, "not psychic or spiritual in the least—all intellect." From being a confirmed materialist for many years, she had been a Probationer of the Esoteric Section but two years, while *accepted chelaship in Masters' Lodge* requires a minimum of seven years' probation under the most favorable circumstances. Her ordeals of chelaship were yet to come; nevertheless she was the most prominent member, both of the Society and the

Esoteric Section, and it was certain the English and European members would follow her course, whatever it might be.

So soon as Mr. Judge reached London he called together as Vice-President a Consultative Emergency Council, consisting of the European Advisory Council, as named by H.P.B., and the members of the General Council of the British Section. A meeting was held on May 23 and it was resolved to summon a convention of the European and British Sections to meet at the London Headquarters on July 9, 1891. Also, as the representative of H.P.B. in the Esoteric Section, he called a conference of its Advisory Council which was held on May 27, 1891. There were present Mr. Judge, Mrs. Besant, Miss Alice Leighton Cleather, Miss Isabel Cooper-Oakley, Miss Laura M. Cooper, Messrs. H. A. W. Coryn, Archibald Keightley, William Kingsland, Miss Emily Kislingbury, Messrs. G. R. S. Mead, W. R. Old, E. T. Sturdy, Constance Wachtmeister, Messrs. W. Wynn Westcott and Claude F. Wright. Aside from Mr. Judge all those named were then residents of England, were actively connected with the Society and its work, were all members of the E.S. formally admitted by H.P.B. under pledge during the preceding two and a half years, and all were Councillors E. S. T.—an advisory body appointed by H.P.B. to assist her in the multitudinous details of the Esoteric Section, whose name had meantime—in 1889—been changed to that of the “Eastern School of Theosophy.” A general discussion took place, participated in by all those present. The important matters of the meeting (with one exception²), and the decisions reached were embodied in a circular letter dated the day of the meeting, and signed by all those in attendance, Mr. Judge signing “for the entire American Council E. S. T., and individually,” and each of the others signing as “Councillor E.S.T.” A copy of this circular, which was headed “Strictly private and confidential,” was sent to each member of the E.S.T. Although signed by all, the actual wording of the cir-

² See Chapter XXVI.

cular was the work of Mrs. Besant, with some changes and corrections suggested by Mr. Judge and concurred in by those present at the meeting. As a portion of the circular there was included an address to the members of the E.S.T., signed by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge.

That portion of the circular signed by all who attended the conference recites:

The American Councillors were represented by Bro. William Q. Judge, with full power, and Bro. Judge attended as the representative of H.P.B. under a general power as given below.

This “general power” is the document by H.P.B. dated December 14, 1888, which will be given in full later on.³

Additional decisions reached by the full Council at the meeting are set forth in these extracts:

In virtue of our appointment by H.P.B. we declare:

That in full accord with the known wishes of H.P.B. the visible Head of the School, *we primarily record and declare that the work of the School ought and shall be continued and carried on along the lines laid down by her, and with the matter left in writing or dictated by her before her departure . . .*

That her words to Bro. Judge in a recent letter were read stating that this Section (now School) is the “throbbing heart of the Theosophical Society.”

That it was resolved and recorded that the highest officials in the School *for the present* are Annie Besant and William Q. Judge. . . .

That having read the address drawn up by Annie Besant and William Q. Judge, we put on record our full accord with it.

That this Council records its decision that its appointment was solely for the purpose of as-

³ See Chapter XXXI.

sisting H.P.B. in a consultative way, and that as she had full power and authority to relieve us from duty at any time, our office and that of each of us ends with the above resolution passed in order as far as possible in our power to place the future conduct of the School on the basis directed and intended by her; therefore we collectively and individually declare that our office as Councillors ceases at this date, and that from henceforth with Annie Besant and William Q. Judge rest the full charge and management of this School.

The address to the members of the E.S.T., signed by Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant, and incorporated in the circular, was in fact partly written by each, though signed by both. Their joint and several remarks are characteristic in more ways than one. In that portion actually written by Mrs. Besant she says:

. . . it is our duty, as the two selected by H.P.B. as her agents and representatives after her departure, to specially speak to each one of you respecting the duty laid on the School by her retirement from the visible control of its affairs. The future of this body depends on the way in which this test of steadfastness and loyalty is endured by the members collectively and individually. . . it will ill become her pupils if they desert the great Cause to which her life was given, and invite the terrible Karma that must fall on those who break the solemn pledge that each of us has made. The School is the heart of the Society; if the heart ceases to throb, the Society must die, as a living power, and slowly decay while passing into a mere sect. . . . It is not that the Masters will not help the School if we are supine; it is that they cannot, for they are bound by law, not by law of man's creation but by the immutable Law of na-

ture which always works through agents appropriate to the end in view.

This is followed without a break by that portion of the address which was written by Mr. Judge:

Consider the position of the School: we are no longer a band of students taught by a visible Teacher; we are a band of students mutually interdependent, forced to rely on each other for our usefulness and our progress, until our very brotherliness in mutual help shall draw a visible Teacher back among us. H.P.B. remains one of our Heads though H. P. Blavatsky is "dead," and the Heads of the School have not withdrawn Their guidance in withdrawing the presence chosen to represent Them for a time on which we have rejoiced to lean.

Especially important is it that at the present juncture we should bear in mind the words of H.P.B., written at the conclusion of the *Key to Theosophy*. In laying stress on the knowledge and wisdom that will be required by those on whom it falls to carry on the work of the Society after her departure, she explains that those qualities only can save the Theosophical Society from ending in failure. All previous attempts have thus failed (in accomplishing their mission in full) because they have degenerated into sects, and we have her word for it that unless we be freed from bias, "or at least taught to recognize it instantly and so avoid being led away by it, the result can only be that the Society will drift off to some sandbank of thought or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and decay." . . .

There, then, is our next pressing work, our most mighty responsibility. For if we of this School, Brothers and Sisters, cannot accomplish this task, the Theosophical Society is doomed.

Not in vain will come to you these tones of her living voice, speaking across "the change that men call death," for we know that she lives and is watching with grave, strong interest how they acquit themselves whose pledge can in no wise be altered by her departure into the invisible. That pledge was not given to the personality, it was given to Masters' Lodge and given also to the Higher Self invoked to witness it. It can therefore never be recalled, however much it may be denied.

We who write to you claim over you no authority save such as she delegated to us. We are your fellow students, chosen by her—the Messenger of the Masters of Wisdom—as Their channels to the measure of our ability, during this period of darkness. . . .

We believe in H.P.B. and in the Masters, and it is enough to us that they say, "Go and carry on our work along the lines on which you have been instructed. . . ."

For the use of all of us, there are written teachings left by H.P.B. in our hands that will give food for study and thought for many a year to come, and though the main duty of the Esotericist is service to others, and not personal advancement in knowledge, it is characteristic of her thought for us that behind her she left intellectual and spiritual food for the earnest student, as well as the charge to complete her unfinished work.

The circular as signed by all the Councillors recorded that H.P.B.'s "last words in reference to the School and its work were: 'KEEP THE LINK UNBROKEN! DO NOT LET MY LAST INCARNATION BE A FAILURE.'" The reference by Mr. Judge in the joint address of Mrs. Besant and himself, to the "Key to Theosophy" was to the concluding section entitled "The Future of the The-

osophical Society," and to be found at p. 304 of the original edition of that work.

Thus was the crisis in the School occasioned by the death of H.P.B. met and resolved by the determination that its conduct should henceforth be "on the lines laid down by her, and with the matter left in writing or dictated by her before her departure," and by the decision to leave its future "charge and management" with Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge.

CHAPTER XX

ATTEMPTS TO SUPERSEDE H.P.B.'S INFLUENCE

COLONEL OLCOTT arrived in England at the end of June, Mr. Judge remaining in London to meet him and to participate in the Convention of the European Section called for July 9, 1891. Colonel Olcott was made acquainted in a general way with what action had been taken in connection with the affairs of the Esoteric Section. The common feeling of loss, the general sense of uncertainty as to the future, the pressing necessity for concord, the hopeful augury provided by the circular of May 27 to the E.S., and the awakened sense of individual responsibility for the success of the Movement, now that its great Messenger was no more among them, all combined to allay frictions, dispel rivalries, and arouse the spirit of real fraternity. There being then present in London the best known and most respected leaders of the Society from Asia, America, and England, the Convention of the European Section, in the circumstances recited, became the first real convocation and assembly of the whole Society since its foundation.

Colonel Olcott, as President-Founder of the whole Society, presided at the sessions, Mr. Judge attended as Vice-President of the Society, as General Secretary of the American Section, and as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Section. Mrs. Besant was present as President of the Blavatsky Lodge of London, at the time the largest of the Societies in Great Britain. The various British and Continental Lodges were represented by delegates or proxies. In addition there were numerous visiting Fellows from the United States, from India, and from Australia, all of whom bore the cordial, if unofficial, greetings from the scattered members and Branches.

The London Lodge was not represented in person by its President, Mr. Sinnett, nor by any delegate. From the beginning of his leadership of the London Lodge Mr. Sinnett's influence had held it aloof from the general activities of the Society at large, though nominally a Branch of the Society. When the Blavatsky Lodge was formed at London shortly after H.P.B. had taken up her permanent residence in England, its original membership was entirely composed of former members of the London Lodge. Mr. Sinnett had been equally opposed, both to its formation and to the policy of active public propaganda for membership regardless of class distinctions. The formation of the Blavatsky Lodge, the publication of the "Secret Doctrine," with its corrections of his presentation of the teachings of Theosophy in his book "Esoteric Buddhism," and other matters which he could not approve, had all served to alienate his sympathies. His London Lodge discontinued all but closed meetings for its members only and formed a quasi-exclusive body. The active efforts of Col. Olcott, with whom he had always remained on terms of friendship, the olive branch tendered by Mrs. Besant and others, and the consideration shown him by Mr. Judge, so far prevailed as to ameliorate the somewhat strained situation, and the London Lodge sent a letter to the Convention.

This letter, signed by the Secretary, Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, is distinctly formal, not to say reserved, in its tone. It recites the history of the London Lodge, gives a chronological account of its activities, and concludes with the following paragraph:

On the formation of the "British Section" in 1889, the London Lodge asserted the principle of complete autonomy as that on which it preferred to proceed; and with the concurrence of the President of the Parent Society, Col. Olcott, it remained an independent Branch of the Society outside that organization. Later on, when Madame Blavatsky formed the European Sec-

tion under her own Presidentship, on principles which provided merely for a consultative council to assist her in discharging the functions of that office, the London Lodge cordially consented to be included in that arrangement. Clinging with great tenacity, however, to the principle of autonomy, it will now revert to its former status, and while heartily in sympathy with all bodies recognized as parts of the world-wide Theosophical Society, which Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott founded, it will not take any share in the administration or control of any other branches, and will continue responsible alone to the original authority from which it sprang in reference to the conduct of its own affairs.

This letter was read to the Convention by Mr. G. R. S. Mead, General Secretary of the European Section, and was received without comment or objection. The full text of the letter of the London Lodge will be found in the Official Report of the Convention. The Convention itself is denominated on the cover and text page, not as a convention of the European Section, T.S., but as The Theosophical Society in Europe, the name adopted by H.P.B.

The proceedings of the Convention were opened by Mrs. Besant with a brief address of welcome to Col. Olcott.

Mr. Judge warmly seconded Mrs. Besant's remarks, and in taking the chair Col. Olcott spoke with great feeling.

Mr. Judge offered Resolutions for the creation of an H.P.B. Memorial Fund, to be devoted to such publications "as will tend to promote that intimate union between the life and thought of the Orient and the Occident to the bringing about of which her life was devoted." In seconding these resolutions Mrs. Besant said:

. . . will the Convention permit me to add that it certainly has the approval of all those who

were closely connected with her during the latter years of her life; that her leaving us is in no manner a change in her position in this Society, nor a change in the lines along which her work will be directed. . . . May I say for those who lived most closely with her that what she was with us in her visible presence she is to us still: friend and guide, teacher and master. We know no change because she has passed from the visible into the invisible, and in asking you to found this memorial we ask you to found it, not to a dead teacher, but to a living energy, an energy as real now as it was real when clothed in the body of H. P. Blavatsky; a memorial indeed of our love to her, but of a love of a living presence whom we recognise amongst us still.

A letter of greeting, signed by Mr. Judge as General Secretary, was read from the American Section:

It is with great pleasure that I convey to you the brotherly and affectionate greetings of the American Section of our beloved Society, knowing that had I the time to call that Section together it would, without a dissenting voice, thank you for the work you have done, and encourage you to go on to still better work for the future. It would also, I am sure, give you full assurance of the value of organizing yourselves into a single body, for experience has shown us that only thus can good and wide work be done, and in no other way can you carry to a successful issue the task left by our beloved friend and co-worker, H.P.B. Unity is strength; division leads to weakness, decay and final dissolution. Hence the American Section views with pleasure the prospect of all the European Branches being closely massed together with a common object, a single organization. May your deliberations lead not only to greater energy in your own field but also

to an added interest, sympathy and strength throughout the whole area of International Theosophical work.

When the Convention had concluded its work, the President-Founder made some parting remarks, from which we quote:

Our task is done. We have met together in this friendly Conference; we have discussed the method of laying the basis for the future work of the Society; we have come to a fraternal agreement to make all parts of the Society work together in harmony; we have linked hands across the Atlantic and across the Southern seas, and pledged ourselves to each other to carry on this mission which was undertaken by H.P.B., and which we have been sharers in. The outside world are looking with curiosity to see what effect the death of H.P.B. will have upon us. The answer is to be obtained in the proceedings of this Convention. . . . In her death H.P.B. speaks more potently to us even than she did in her life. The tattered veil of the personality has been drawn aside, and the individuality which we knew only as a light shining from afar, is now before us to guide us on our way. . . . Whatever strength we have to the outside world depends upon the purity of our principles, the unselfishness of our behaviour, and our loyalty to the eclectic platform of our constitution. . . . No greater shock could possibly have come to us than the death of Mme. Blavatsky, and if the movement has survived it, then take my assurance that nothing whatever can affect us so long as we keep in view the principles upon which our movement is based and go fearlessly on to what lies to our hand to do. . . . Let us determine that at all costs this Society shall be kept impartial, calm, fraternal, benevolent, tol-

erant, as regards all groups of the family of mankind. If we do this, if we place a guard upon any disposition on our part to be narrow, or prejudiced, or sectarian, we shall have earned the gratitude of our generation, and be remembered by posterity as those who sought to do good to their fellow men; but if, on the contrary, we allow ourselves to be influenced by these petty considerations of social position, or of race, or differences of creed, we will die out and be remembered only as an unworthy Association that lifted a banner which it was not fit to carry. . . .

Lucifer for June, July, and August, 1891, contains a great number of articles on H.P.B. by leading members of the Society. These articles were reprinted in a volume entitled "H.P.B., In Memoriam by Some of Her Pupils." Like the proceedings of the Council of the Esoteric Section and those of the European Convention, these articles breathe the best and purest spirit, for they betoken the renaissance for the time of the gratitude, the loyalty, the reverence felt for H.P.B. Jealousies, ambitions, vanities, misunderstandings of all kinds were for the moment dormant. It was as if, for the time being, her freed spirit enveloped them all, putting all lesser feelings aside and lending to each and all some measure of the inspiration which for so many years had burned in her with an unwavering flame.

The quoted matter will make clear and convincing the fact that in the period immediately following the death of H.P.B., all elements in the Society felt deeply the impulse of that Brotherhood which it was H.P.B.'s mission and the work of the Society to teach and practice. Certainly no one can read the Minutes of the E.S. Conference, the Report of the European Convention, and the memorial articles on H.P.B. without being struck by the unanimous recognition of the mission of H.P.B. and by the solemn declarations and pledges made to carry on the work of the Society on the lines laid down by her, with the material left by her, and with her

example ever before them as that of a still living and guiding Teacher.

After the Convention, then, the workers scattered, each to his own field of labor. Mrs. Besant took entire charge of the conduct of *Lucifer*, with Mr. G. R. S. Mead associated with her as Sub-Editor. She herself plunged into incessant activities, writing, lecturing, encouraging and inspiring all those who surrounded her to an energy and devotion second only to her own. This as to the public work of the exoteric Society. Within the ranks of the Esoteric Section she was not less earnest and untiring. As Co-Head of the Section with Mr. Judge, practically the entire interests of the School in Britain, on the Continent, and in the Orient were in her care. Her reputation, gained before her entrance into the Theosophical world, made of her a constant subject of newspaper comment, and her presence at any meeting was enough to attract a large audience. Theosophical activities and growth doubled and tripled in England under her influence and example, and its secondary benefit throughout the world was felt by every worker in every land. Wherever her name was mentioned, Theosophy was equally the subject of discussion. Wherever Theosophy was spoken of, Annie Besant was naturally looked upon as its unequalled exponent and she was hailed by members and outsiders alike as the great and worthy successor of H.P.B.

Mr. Judge returned to America and resumed the active conduct of his magazine, *The Path*. The work of the American Section, of which he was continuously from its organization the General Secretary, made heavy inroads upon his time and energies. The active American membership in the T.S. was at that time larger than in all the rest of the world, and growing rapidly. The American membership in the Esoteric Section comprised two-thirds of the entire body and called for unceasing and difficult attention. Next to H.P.B., Mr. Judge's personal correspondence with members throughout the world was by far the heaviest. His health had been undermined by the drain of recent years and by the re-

lentless and sustained attacks and antagonisms without and within the Society with himself as their object along with H.P.B. The good-will and good feeling reached during the London conferences, the apparent healing of all distempers within the Society, the fresh alliance of all the forces in the common object of carrying on the work on the lines established by H.P.B.—all these gave him new vigor and a strength sufficient for his increased burdens.

Colonel Olcott, now past sixty, patriarchal in appearance, cordial by nature, looked upon with the utmost respect and reverence by the rank and file of the membership as being the President-Founder of the Society, the earliest as the lifelong colleague of H.P.B., and the one chosen by the Masters as Head of the Society, might be said to have had his cup of glory full at this epoch. His journey had restored his physical health; the reception accorded him at London had reassured him as to the solid place he held in the affections of the membership in the Occident as in the Orient; the pledges of devotion by all the Western leaders in the Society to H.P.B., to the Cause, to his beloved Society, and to him personally, had brought out all that was generous, genial, and optimistic in his nature. He could see everywhere the work to which he had given his all through long years of hardship, often of ignominy, now sustained by able and devoted lieutenants, respected where it had once been despised, spoken of in flattering terms where once both it and himself had been received with contumely. Wherever he went he was the Chief. He determined to return to India by America, and his journey was broken from city to city by meetings at which he was the commanding figure. His entire journey during the months of his absence from Adyar was a kind of triumphal progress, strewn with testimonials of the love and gratitude of his colleagues and of the world-wide membership of the Society. Returned to India, his arrival was signaled by the Indian members in a manner not less warmly appreciative of his services.

In December, 1890, while H.P.B. lay between life and

death, Mrs. Besant had published on her own motion, and without the knowledge of H.P.B., a ringing article in *Lucifer* entitled "The Theosophical Society and H.P.B." The occasion for this article was the private propaganda that was diligently being promoted in derogation of H.P.B. by adherents of Col. Olcott and Mr. Sinnett for her action in taking over the Headship of the newly formed Theosophical Society in Europe. In this article Mrs. Besant wrote with great force and conviction in support of the following numbered propositions which she italicized in her article:

Now touching the position of H.P.B. to and in the Theosophical Society, the following is a brief exposition of it, as it appears to many of us:

(1) *Either she is a messenger from the Masters, or else she is a fraud.*

(2) *In either case the Theosophical Society would have had no existence without her.*

(3) *If she is a fraud, she is a woman of wonderful ability and learning, giving all the credit of these to some persons who do not exist.*

(4) *If H.P.B. is a true messenger, opposition to her is opposition to Masters, she being their only channel to the Western World.*

(5) *If there are no Masters, the Theosophical Society is an absurdity, and there is no use in keeping it up. But if there are Masters, and H.P.B. is their messenger, and the Theosophical Society their foundation, the Theosophical Society and H.P.B. cannot be separated before the world.*

Having thus advanced her theorems and worked them out to a satisfactory Q.E.D., Mrs. Besant's article closed with the inevitable corollary from her demonstration:

. . . If the members care at all for the future of the Society, if they wish to know that the Twentieth Century will see it standing high

above the strife of parties, a beacon-light in the darkness for the guiding of men, if they believe in the Teacher who founded it for human service, let them now arouse themselves from slothful indifference, sternly silence all dissensions over petty follies in their ranks, and march shoulder to shoulder for the achievement of the heavy task laid upon their strength and courage. If Theosophy is worth anything, it is worth living for and worth dying for. If it is worth nothing let it go at once and for all. It is not a thing to play with, it is not a thing to trifle with . . . let each Theosophist, and above all, let each Occultist, calmly review his position, carefully make his choice, and if that choice be for Theosophy, let him sternly determine that neither open foe nor treacherous friends shall shake his loyalty for all time to come to his great Cause and Leader, which twain are one.

Such a proclamation as this, coming from one who was, in the eyes of the world, even more than in the Society, the foremost power in the movement next to H.P.B. herself, could but align the ranks and silence, for the time being, all covert as well as open belittling of H.P.B.

After the death of H.P.B., as the no less clear proclamation in the E.S. circular became common knowledge throughout the Society, the determination of the Council, of Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant, to follow strictly the aims and lines and teachings of H.P.B., produced such a revival of activity, such an exhibition of common Brotherhood and loyalty to the First Object and, no less, to H.P.B. as the Teacher, as had never been witnessed during her lifetime. Followed the Convention of the British and European Sections with their renewed asseverations, and the many articles breathing the most profound respect and devotion to H.P.B. and her mission from the lips of every well-known Theosophist.

On August 30, 1891, Mrs. Besant bade farewell to the

Secularists with whom, in collaboration with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, she had labored for so many years. Her address was entitled "1875 to 1891: A Fragment of Autobiography." This memorable speech was circulated far and wide. After recounting her fifteen years of battle and achievement, her hard-won steps of progress to her conversion to Theosophy through her reviewing the "Secret Doctrine," her meeting with H.P.B., her examination of the famous S.P.R. *Report* with its charges of fraud against H.P.B., Mrs. Besant astounded the meeting, the world, and the members of the Theosophical Society with this bold and categorical statement:

You have known me in this hall for sixteen and a half years. You have never known me to lie to you. My worst public enemy, through the whole of my life, never cast a slur upon my integrity. Everything else they have sullied, but my truth never; and I tell you that since Madame Blavatsky left, I have had letters in the same writing and from the same person [as the writer of the disputed "Mahatma" letters alleged in the S.P.R. *Report* to have been written by H.P.B.]. Unless you think that dead persons write—and I do not think so—that is rather a curious fact against the whole challenge of fraud. I do not ask you to believe me, but I tell you this on the faith of a record that has never yet been sullied by a conscious lie. Those who knew her, knew that she could not very well commit fraud, if she tried. She was the frankest of human beings. It may be said, "What evidence have you beside hers?" My own knowledge. For some time, all the evidence I had of the existence of her Teachers and the existence of those so-called "abnormal powers" was second-hand, gained through her. It is not so now; and it has not been so for many months; unless every sense can be at the same time deceived, unless a person can be, at the same moment, sane

and insane, I have exactly the same certainty for the truth of those statements as I have for the fact that you are here. Of course you may be all delusions invented by myself and manufactured by my own brain. I refuse—merely because ignorant people shout fraud and trickery—to be false to all the knowledge of my intellect, the perceptions of my senses, and my reasoning faculties as well.

Lucifer for October, 1891, contained another unequivocal declaration by Mrs. Besant in its leading article, "Theosophy and Christianity." She says:

. . . THEOSOPHY is a body of knowledge, clearly and distinctly formulated in part and proclaimed to the world. Members of the Society may or may not be students of this knowledge, but none the less is it the sure foundation on which the MASTERS have built the Society, and on which its central teaching of the Brotherhood of Man is based. Without Theosophy Universal Brotherhood may be proclaimed as an Ideal, but it cannot be demonstrated as a Fact. . . .

Now by Theosophy I mean the "Wisdom Religion," or the "Secret Doctrine," and our only knowledge of the Wisdom Religion at the present time comes to us from the Messenger of its Custodians, H. P. BLAVATSKY. Knowing what she taught, we can recognise fragments of the same teachings in other writings, but her message remains for us the test of Theosophy everywhere. . . . Only, none of us has any right to put forward his own views as "Theosophy" in conflict with hers, for all that we know of Theosophy comes from her. When she says "The Secret Doctrine teaches," none can say her nay; we may disagree with the teaching, but it remains "the Secret Doctrine," or Theosophy;

she always encouraged independent thought and criticism, and never resented differences of opinion, but she never wavered in the distinct proclamation "The Secret Doctrine is" so-and-so. . . .

Theosophists have it in charge not to whittle away the Secret Doctrine. . . . Steadily, calmly, without anger but also without fear, they must stand by the Secret Doctrine as she gave it, who carried unflinchingly through the storms of well-nigh seventeen years the torch of the Eastern Wisdom. The condition of success is perfect loyalty. . . .

It must be evident to any student that these several proclamations referred alike to those within and without the Society, of high and low degree, who found it to their interest to belittle or calumniate H.P.B. In the months following the death of H.P.B. the natural impulse of gratitude on the part of the rank and file of the membership toward H.P.B. received an accession, a countenance, and a support from Mrs. Besant's affirmations of the status of H.P.B. and bold defiance of "treacherous friends" within the Society, that effectually put in prudent silence those who before had belittled publicly and privately the authoritative character of H.P.B. as the Messenger of the Masters.

But after Col. Olcott's tour and return to India it is clear that the testimonials he had received of the respect accorded to him and his position of President-Founder gave him a re-inforced feeling of security and strength. Likewise, from his past conduct, it is evident he had expected that with the death of H.P.B. she would no longer remain a living power in the Society. That part of his nature which so often had risen in rebellion against H.P.B. living, as the dominant factor in the Society of which he felt himself the true and competent Head, once more became restive, alarmed, and decisive of his action. What the inner councils of his thoughts and what the outcome are clearly discernible

in his Address to the "Seventeenth Convention and Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at the Headquarters, Adyar, Madras," India, at the end of December, 1891. The Address is contained in full in the Report of the Convention; also issued as a "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for January, 1892. We quote the germane remarks:

As the Co-Founder of the Society, as one who has had constant opportunities for knowing the chosen policy and wishes of the Masters, as one who has, under them and with their assent, borne our flag through sixteen years of battle, I protest against the first giving way to the temptation to elevate either them, their agents, or any other living or dead personage, to the divine status, or their teachings to that of infallible doctrine. . . .

If she had lived, she would have undoubtedly left her protest against her friends making a saint of her or a bible out of her magnificent, though not infallible writings. I helped to compile her "Isis Unveiled" while Mr. Keightley and several others did the same by "The Secret Doctrine." Surely we know how far from infallible are our portions of the books, to say nothing about hers. She did not discover, nor invent Theosophy, nor was she the first or the ablest agent, scribe or messenger of the Hidden Teachers of the Snowy Mountains. The various scriptures of the ancient nations contain every idea now put forth, and in some cases possess far greater beauties and merits than any of her or our books. We need not fall into idolatry to signify our lasting reverence and love for her, the contemporary teacher, nor offend the literary world by pretending that she wrote with the pen of inspiration. Nobody living was a more staunch and loyal friend of hers than I, nobody will cherish her memory more lovingly. I was

true to her to the end of her life, and now I shall continue to be true to her memory. But I never worshipped her, never blinded my eyes to her faults, never dreamt that she was as perfect a channel for the transmission of occult teaching as some others in history have been, or as the Masters would have been glad to have found. As her tried friend, then, as one who worked most intimately with her, and is most anxious that she may be taken by posterity at her true high value; as her co-worker; as one long ago accepted, though humble, agent of the Masters; and finally, as the official head of the Society and guardian of the personal rights of its Fellows, I place on record my protest against all attempts to create an H.P.B. school, sect or cult, or to take her utterances as in the least degree above criticism. The importance of the subject must be my excuse for thus dwelling upon it at some length. I single out no individuals, mean to hurt nobody's feelings. I am not sure of being alive very many years longer, and what duty demands I must say while I can.

To complete the picture as limned in the preceding extracts and comments, one may turn to the published statements of Mr. Judge during the same period. In *The Path*, for June, 1891, he sounded the following note of mingled confidence, caution, and advice:

The death of H. P. Blavatsky should have the effect on the Society of making the work go on with increased vigor free from all personalities. The movement was not started for the glory of any person, but for the elevation of Mankind. The organization is not affected as such by her death for her official positions were those of Corresponding Secretary and President of the European Section. The Constitution has long provided that after her death the office of Corre-

sponding Secretary should not be filled. The vacancy in the European Section will be filled by election in that Section, as that is matter with which only the European Branches have to deal. She held no position in the exoteric American Section, and had no jurisdiction over it in any way. Hence there is no vacancy to fill and no disturbance to be felt in the purely corporate part of the American work. The work here is going on as it always has done, under the efforts of its members who now will draw their inspiration from the books and works of H.P.B. and from the purity of their own motive.

All that the Society needs now to make it the great power it was intended to be is first, *solidarity*, and second, *Theosophical education*. These are wholly in the hands of its members. The first gives that resistless strength which is found only in Union, the second gives that judgment and wisdom needed to properly direct energy and zeal.

Read these words from H. P. Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*.

Then follow the quotations before referred to in the circular of the Esoteric Section from which we have quoted. In *The Path* for August, 1891, the leading article begins with this quotation:

“INGRATITUDE IS NOT ONE OF OUR FAULTS.”
WE ALWAYS HELP THOSE WHO HELP US. TACT,
DISCRETION, AND ZEAL ARE MORE THAN EVER
NEEDED. THE HUMBLEST WORKER IS SEEN AND
HELPED. . . .

The text immediately following runs thus:

To a student theosophist, serving whenever and however he could, there came very recently—since the departure from this plane of H. P. Blavatsky—these words of highest cheer from

that Master of whom H. P. B. was the reverent pupil. Attested by His real signature and seal, they are given here for the encouragement and support of all those who serve the Theosophical Society—and through it, humanity—as best they can; given in the belief that it was not intended that the recipient should sequester or absorb them silently, but rather that he should understand them to be his only in the sense that he might share them with his comrades, that his was permitted to be the happy hand to pass them on as the common right, the universal benediction of one and all.

The article is signed "Jasper Niemand." This pen name had by that time become known and loved throughout the Theosophical world as the recipient of the famous "Letters That Have Helped Me" from "Z. L. Z., the Greatest of the Exiles," originally published in *The Path* during the lifetime of H.P.B., and by many Theosophists then supposed to have been written by H.P.B. herself. Not till some years later was it made known that "Z. L. Z." was Mr. Judge, and "Jasper Niemand" Mrs. Archibald Keightley (Julia Campbell-Ver Planck). The article from which we have been quoting was written and published during the absence of Mr. Judge in England following H.P.B.'s death, and without his knowledge, as Mrs. Keightley was in editorial conduct of *The Path* during Mr. Judge's absence. The article, the message from the Masters with which it began, and the claim that the message had been received subsequent to the death of H.P.B., stirred Col. Olcott to the depths. He wrote to Mr. Judge about it in strong terms, as he saw in it nothing but an attempt to attract attention to H.P.B., Masters and Mr. Judge himself. Mr. Judge replied at length to Col. Olcott, and this letter was later published in *Lucifer*. As we shall have occasion later to refer to this correspondence,¹ no comment is necessary at this stage of our study.

¹ See Chapter XXVI.

Succeeding articles and notes in *The Path* gave attention to Col. Olcott's place in the T.S. with respect and loyalty; noted Mrs. Besant's claim to the receipt of messages subsequent to H.P.B.'s death; and in January, 1892, had for its leading article "Dogmatism in Theosophy." This article was written partly to make clear the real position to be assumed by all Theosophists, partly to moderate the intemperate zeal of some enthusiasts who were wont to quote H.P.B. to "put a quietus" on their opponents whose views of H.P.B. or her teachings were not the same as their own; partly as an open declaration of Mr. Judge's own attitude, in response to Col. Olcott's criticisms and public statements. We quote from "Dogmatism in Theosophy":

The Theosophical Society was founded to destroy dogmatism. This is one of the meanings of its first object—Universal Brotherhood. . . .

In the *Key to Theosophy*, in the "Conclusion," H.P.B. again refers to this subject and expresses the hope that the Society might not, after her death, become dogmatic or crystallize on some phase of thought or philosophy, but that it might remain free and open, with its members wise and unselfish. And in all her writings and remarks, privately or publicly, she constantly reiterated this idea. . . .

If our effort is to succeed, we must avoid dogmatism in theosophy as much as in anything else, for the moment we dogmatise and insist on our construction of theosophy, that moment we lose sight of Universal Brotherhood and sow the seeds of future trouble.

. . . Even though nine-tenths of the members believe in Reincarnation, Karma, the seven-fold constitution, and all the rest, and even though its prominent ones are engaged in promulgating these doctrines as well as others, the ranks of the Society must always be kept open, and no one should be told that he is not orthodox or not

a good Theosophist because he does not believe in these doctrines. . . .

But at the same time it is obvious that to enter the Society and then, under our plea of tolerance, assert that theosophy shall not be studied, . . . shall not be investigated, is un-theosophical, unpractical, and absurd, for it were to nullify the very object of our organization. . . .

And as the great body of philosophy, science, and ethics offered by H. P. Blavatsky and her teachers has upon it the seal of research, of reasonableness, of antiquity, and of wisdom, it demands our first and best consideration. . . .

So, then, a member of the Society, no matter how high or how low his or her position in its ranks, has the right to promulgate all the philosophical and ethical ideas found in our literature to the best ability possessed, and no one else has the right to object, provided such promulgation is accompanied by a clear statement that it is not authorized or made orthodox by any declaration from the body corporate of the T.S. . . .

CHAPTER XXI

GROWING DIVERGENCES—OLCOTT RESIGNS AS PRESIDENT

THUS the real issue—the Theosophical Movement *versus* the Theosophical Society—once more became the wager of battle within less than a year after the death of H. P. Blavatsky. Doubtless this view will come as a shock to very many Theosophical students who have been educated to the belief that some particular organization is *the* Theosophical Society and who have therefore taken Theosophy, the Theosophical Movement, and their particular Society to be essentially one and the same thing. They do not see that this is the very pitfall into which the different Christian sects have fallen, and has come about in the same way—through biased and partisan guidance on the part of those whom they have trusted as teachers and leaders, and through their own failure to make diligent, open-minded investigation and comparison of the opposing and contradictory teachings and testimony.

Altruism was the self-imposed standard of action for all Fellows of the Theosophical Society, altruism and spiritual knowledge the self-pledged criterion of every Probationer of the Esoteric Section. Every Fellow of the T.S. must therefore be studied in his conduct, not by the sins of omission or of commission of his fellows, but in the light of his own devotion to the great First Object of the Society. Every Probationer of the Esoteric Section must be weighed in the balance, not of his rank, standing, or reputation in the world or in the Society, but in the light of his solemn declaration: "I pledge myself to endeavour to make Theosophy a living power in my life." The formulation of the Objects of the Society was so definite and inclusive that no man can err as to what those Objects mean.

When *The Theosophist* for January, 1892, with its report of the Adyar Convention just held, reached America Mr. Judge published in his magazine *The Path* for March, 1892, three articles of momentous import. The importance which the world-wide membership must necessarily attach to Col. Olcott's proclamation, because of his position as President of the whole Society; because of his known long-continued and intimate relations with H.P.B., and because of the reverence and respect in which he was held as President-Founder, compelled consideration. The first article is entitled "The Future and the Theosophical Society," and begins abruptly:

In 1888 H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

Night before last I was shown a bird's-eye view of the theosophical societies. I saw a few earnest reliable theosophists in a death struggle with the world in general and with other—nominal and ambitious—theosophists. The former are greater in number than you may think, and *they prevailed*—as you in America *will prevail*, if you only remain staunch to the Master's programme and true to yourselves. And last night I saw. . . . The defending forces have to be judiciously—so scanty are they—distributed over the globe wherever theosophy is struggling with the powers of darkness.

The article follows this with another quotation from the "Key to Theosophy," the section entitled "The Future of the Theosophical Society," to which we have before referred, and continues:

Every member of the Society should be, and many are, deeply interested in the above words. The outlook, the difficulties, the dangers, the necessities are the same now as then, and as they were in the beginning in 1875. For, as she has often said, this is not the first nor will it be the last effort to spread the truth and to undertake

the same mission . . . to lead men to look for the one truth that underlies all religions and which alone can guide science in the direction of ideal progress. In every century such attempts are made, and many of them have been actually named "theosophical." Each time they have to be adapted to the era in which they appear. And this is the era . . . of freedom for thought and for investigation.

In the first quotation there is a prophecy that those few reliable theosophists who are engaged in a struggle with the opposition of the world and that coming from weak or ambitious members will prevail, *but it has annexed to it a condition that is of importance. There must be an adherence to the program of the Masters. That can only be ascertained by consulting her and the letters given out by her as from those to whom she refers. It excludes the idea that the Society was founded or is intended as "a School for Occultism!"*¹

Referring to a letter received (1884) from the same source we find: "*Let the Society flourish on its moral worth, and not by phenomena made so often degrading.*" The need of the west for such doctrines as Karma and Reincarnation and the actual Unity of the whole human family is dwelt upon at length in another . . .

This is the great tone running through all the words from these sources. It is a call to work for the race and not for self, a request to bring the west and the east the doctrines that have most effect on human conduct, on the relations of man to man, and hence the greatest possibility of forming at last a true universal brotherhood. *We must follow this program and supply the world with a system of philosophy which gives a sure and logical basis for ethics, and that can only be gotten from those to whom I have ad-*

¹ The italics in this quotation are our own.

verted; there is no basis for morals in phenomena, because a man might learn to do the most wonderful things by the aid of occult forces and yet at the same time be the very worst of men.

A subsidiary condition, but quite as important as the other, is laid down by H.P.B. in her words that we must "remain true to ourselves." This means true to our better selves and the dictates of conscience. *We cannot promulgate the doctrines and the rules of life found in theosophy and at the same time ourselves not live up to them as far as possible. We must practice what we preach, and make as far as we can a small brotherhood within the Theosophical Society.*

Mr. Judge goes on to say that these things must be done, not only as an example to the world, but because as an Occult and scientific fact unity of action gives a ten-fold power. He calls attention to what has already been achieved in modifying the thought of the day, by bringing Theosophy to the front of thought and notice, despite all oppositions without and within, but warns the members against the futility of hoping to enlist the co-operation of the churches in the attempt to destroy priestcraft and dogmatism. The article concludes:

Our destiny is to continue the wide work of the past in affecting literature and thought throughout the world, while our ranks see many changing quantities but always holding those who remain true to the program and refuse to become dogmatic or to give up commonsense in theosophy. Thus will we wait for the new messenger, striving to keep the organization alive that he may use it and have the great opportunity H.P.B. outlines when she says, "Think how much one to whom such an opportunity is given could accomplish."

The second of the articles referred to is a review of the Proceedings of the Adyar Convention. Kindly consideration is given to Col. Olcott and his labors, and occasion is taken to speak with generous warmth of Mrs. Besant and her potentialities for good in the Society. Attention is paid to the Colonel's remarks on H.P.B. in his Presidential Address. Mr. Judge's comments follow:

[Col. Olcott] indulges in some remarks as to the grave error he and H.P.B. made, as he thinks, in being intolerant towards Christianity. Those who have carefully read her writings and have known her as well as Col. Olcott know that there has been very little intolerance from our side, but that there has been, as there always will be, a constant irritation on the part of dogmatists who perceive that the pure light of theosophy makes dogmatism see its death-warrant very visibly before its eyes. Neither H.P.B. nor Col. Olcott, nor any one else in the Society who has understood its mission, can suppose there has been any intolerance of true Christianity, as that is confined in any city to a small number of persons.

Col. Olcott also said that he did not believe H.P.B. thought she was going to die, and that in his opinion her death was a surprise to her. With this we cannot agree in the least. He had not been with her for some time and did not know of the many warnings she had been lately giving to all her immediate friends, including the Editor of this magazine, of her approaching demise. In some cases the notice she gave was very detailed, in others it was by question, by symbolical language, and by hint, but for the year or more before her death she let those who were close to her know that she was soon to go, and in one case, when a certain event happened, she said, "That means my death." We have

great respect for Col. Olcott, but cannot agree with him in this matter. . . .

. . . Further, in speaking of a tendency he saw on the part of some to dogmatise on H.P.B., Col. Olcott paid her a tribute and at the same time said there ought to be no idolatry; but while he was right in that, yet at the same time the very Masters of whom he spoke, and from whom he heard through H.P.B., said in a letter that has long been published that H.P.B. had everything to do with the occult department of the work of the members of the Society. This must not be forgotten.

The third of the articles mentioned came with the shock of a complete surprise to all but a handful. Its consequences were so far-reaching, exoterically and esoterically, that we give it in full herewith, as it is probable that few, if any, Theosophists of the present day know even the bald facts as publicly disclosed. The article is entitled "Resignation of Presidency T.S. by Col. Olcott," and its text is as follows:

The following correspondence sufficiently explains itself. It is inserted here in order that American members generally may be in possession of the information. It will be remembered that Col. Olcott determined to resign some time ago, but was induced to alter his decision and to take a vacation in order to restore his health, but although the rest did him good we were all sorry to see, even so lately as when he visited America in 1891, that traces of old trouble remained, and at the 16th Annual Convention, [the one just held] he again said that he could not do the work he used to do. So, feeling that the Society is firmly established, he now resigns official position. He will continue to reside in India and do literary work for the Society's benefit, and no doubt will aid his successor very

much in placing the Adyar Oriental Library on a better footing than ever. At the April Convention [of the American Section] in Chicago resolutions will probably be passed upon the matter, and will include the expression of our high appreciation of his long services. By some it is proposed to suggest at that meeting that the American Section desires him to have at Adyar a free life-residence. This would be fitting.

This is followed by the text of the two letters mentioned—the first from Col. Olcott as President to Mr. Judge as Vice-President, and dated at Adyar, January 21, 1892. In his letter Col. Olcott gives as his reason for the present, as for the two former occasions when he had expressed the wish to retire, the state of his health, and adds that he has now "obtained permission to carry out the wish." The two former occasions were his expressions at the Adyar Convention at the close of 1885 (not 1886, as he gives it in his letter), and again in 1890. While the statements made of his impaired health were true in all three cases, in none of them was it the real underlying reason. The first time was because of the strong reaction in India against the treatment accorded H.P.B. during the Coulomb troubles and afterward. Although all had shared in the timid and disloyal course adopted, the resentment shown against Col. Olcott by those who had before been his advisers and supporters, was unjust in that it was an attempt to make him the scapegoat of atonement for the common sin. It was due to the privately exercised influence of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge and their loyal friends that the Convention refused to accept Col. Olcott's resignation and reiterated its gratitude and loyalty to him in his onerous position of President of the whole Society. And again, in 1890, his desire to resign was due in fact to the rebellion in England and Europe which culminated in a revolution—H.P.B. taking over, at the almost unanimous request and insistence of the various Lodges and unattached Fel-

lows, the Presidency of the Theosophical Society in Europe. Seeing Europe lost to his authority, and America emancipated from his "exercise of Presidential powers," with all the more important and devoted Western Fellows members of the Esoteric Section pledged to follow the instructions of H.P.B. in all Theosophical relations, Col. Olcott had experienced all that bitterness of heart which must come to those who, having exercised plenary powers, now find themselves reduced to the position of a figurehead. Justly feeling that he had given his all to the Society and that during his long years of "paternal authority" he had done his best for the children dear to his heart, Col. Olcott, like all zealous-hearted but proud and sensitive soldiers, was moved to resign rather than to resignation. On this second occasion, as on the first, H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, had shown the kind of loyalty which animated *them*. Loyalty to the *Cause* had compelled them to hold true to the lines laid down from the beginning, at whatever cost of misunderstanding or risk of rupture to external machinery or relations; loyalty to Col. Olcott, the struggling probationer who had earned help in his hour of need by his devoted efforts and sacrifices, whose *heart* was still true, whatever his mental and psychic errancies and personal flux of feelings in regard to themselves—this principle of true Occultism had caused them to make every effort to soothe the President-Founder's ruffled vanity, to sweeten the bitter pill of his acceptance of the changes enforced by the necessities of the occasion. And they had succeeded, for Col. Olcott accepted the new status of affairs with the best grace he could muster and went on with his part of the work—a part which they knew he had performed and could still perform, better than any man living.

But if Col. Olcott had suffered on the two former occasions, the iron which had now entered his heart and driven him once more to "resign" was a thousand times more poignant, it was a veritable crucifixion of his personal nature, coupled with a sense of injustice which was unendurable; hence his "resignation."

The hidden facts behind this resignation have never to this day been disclosed. The only direct public references to the real cause of Col. Olcott's resignation are to be found in a letter addressed by Mr. Herbert Burrows to the editor of *The English Theosophist*, and published in that magazine for November, 1895; in the editorial article in the same magazine for December, 1895, entitled "The Resignation Mystery, 1892," and in the extremely reticent and guarded statement by Mr. Judge in the pamphlet issued in April, 1895. None of these references does more than to indicate that other reasons than ill health lay at the bottom of the President-Founder's sudden determination to "resign."

While Col. Olcott was at London in the summer of 1891, following H.P.B.'s death, he was a guest in the house of Miss F. Henrietta Müller. This lady, well-to-do, well-educated, moving in the best classes of society, was an "eccentric" at a time when things now commonplace of everyday life were accounted marked if not reprehensible "eccentricities." She advocated the "equality of the sexes"; she was an ardent "suffragist"; she proclaimed her views on any and all subjects with entire freedom of expression; she lived according to her own ideas of propriety and decorum. In other words she was, according to her lights, an independent and honest woman. No breath or taint of scandal attached to her name. She had become a member of the Theosophical Society and was as active and ardent an exponent of her views in this relation as on all others.

Colonel Olcott, of a personal nature not dissimilar to her own, enjoyed her hospitality and her companionship. Moreover, his heart, heavy over the perception of all that was involved in the death of H.P.B., had been lightened by the reception accorded him by his associates, by the new harmony and unity arrived at during the period of the first Convention of the European Section. His physical health rebounded to the changed environment and his mental and moral health no less. He conducted himself toward all with that frankness, that *bonhomie* and *naïveté*, that mixture of child and man of the

world, which was his enduring personal charm. He traveled Britain, visited Sweden, and returned to India *via* America, Japan, and Ceylon, receiving everywhere a heartfelt reception and attention. Once in India, his long-time hold upon the affections of the members was manifested by a thousand spontaneous incidents. He must have felt himself, as he had never felt during the lifetime of H.P.B., the chief figure in the Society and in the confidence of its world-wide membership. Then came the Adyar Convention and the reassertion of his old self-confident, self-complacent nature in his condescending and corrective remarks on the "worship" of H.P.B. and his delineation of her nature and place in the work while living.

What, then, was the shock which followed, each student must imagine for himself, but its intensity can be briefly indicated by the recital of the dramatic elements supplied by the fact as follows. Colonel Olcott had visioned in Mrs. Besant a worthy "successor" to H.P.B., a successor with whom he could work in full harmony and mutuality of understanding, as he had never been able to do with H.P.B. herself. He had besought her to come to India, and Mr. Bertram Keightley, then in India and acting as General Secretary of the Indian Section and as Col. Olcott's chief aid, had formally seconded this desire on the part of the Indian Section and opened a subscription to pay the expenses of the hoped-for tour. Yielding to these solicitations Mrs. Besant had agreed to visit India and deliver a number of lectures. Just prior to the time of her expected departure announcement was made that Mrs. Besant was suffering from the exhaustion due to a prolonged period of overwork, was threatened with a collapse, and that her physician had ordered a sea voyage and a brief period of complete relaxation to restore her. This also was all true enough, but in fact Mrs. Besant took her "sea voyage" to New York and return, and delivered a number of lectures in the United States, in place of Adyar and India. No one seems to have questioned the sudden change of plans, or the incongruity between the prescribed relaxation and

the strenuous activities of her brief stay in America. What had happened was this: Charges of "grave immorality"—to quote Mr. Herbert Burrows' words—had been made to Mrs. Besant in England against Col. Olcott for his conduct while in London. Mrs. Besant had listened to these accusations, had investigated them according to her own ideas of what constitutes an investigation, until she also became convinced that the charges were true. She had cabled Mr. Judge demanding immediate action on his part as Vice-President of the whole Society for its purification and protection. Mr. Judge replied suggesting it would be well for Mrs. Besant to come to America with the evidence. Accordingly Mrs. Besant sailed for New York, reaching there November 27, 1891, and departing December 9, giving four public lectures, two in New York, one in Philadelphia, and one in Fort Wayne, Indiana, besides an address to the members of the Aryan Society and a talk to a private meeting of members of the E.S. She recounted to Mr. Judge circumstantially and in detail the charge and the evidence to which she and Miss Müller were parties and demanded of Mr. Judge as Vice-President of the Society and her Co-Head in the Esoteric Section that he forthwith require of Col. Olcott his resignation.

Mr. Judge cross-questioned her as to the facts and her knowledge of them. Then he called in Mr. E. August Neresheimer to whom he had Mrs. Besant repeat the charge and her statements of the evidence. He did the same with another friend and associate whose name it is not necessary to mention. To both of these Mrs. Besant repeated in detail and with particularity the facts of which she claimed to be possessed. To both of these Mrs. Besant repeated and reaffirmed her demand for instant action. Mr. Judge thereupon wrote a letter to Col. Olcott, not as Vice-President, but as an old friend, and in this letter advised Col. Olcott of the charge made and the evidence alleged to substantiate it, and suggested to him whether, *if the charge were true*, he had not better resign. This letter Mr. Judge gave to Mrs. Besant, who said that she had already arranged that a "London mem-

ber, a man of means, would go to India as special messenger so as to avoid all risks from spies at Adyar."

Miss Müller had already gone to India from London. The special messenger went to India, delivered Mr. Judge's letter; Col. Olcott denied the charge, but *put in his resignation of the Presidency*, as we have seen.

Why did Col. Olcott thus resign *if innocent*? Yet resign he did, without explanation and without protest, as without consideration of the effect upon the Society of his resignation, both in the loss of his services and in the infinitely greater loss that would accrue if his resignation "under fire" should in any way become public knowledge. But a rational explanation must exist for every action, however irrational. The ample explanation is to be found in the understanding of the personal characteristics of Col. Olcott and a knowledge of his earlier life. Capable and energetic, very honest and very vain, he had achieved what in the world is called an honorable career; he had been a successful student, soldier, writer, lawyer. Exceedingly credulous he was, and as is the case with all credulous people of ability and honesty, also exceedingly suspicious when his sensitiveness to ridicule was in any way pricked by the fear that he might have been duped. In his middle life he had been a "man of clubs, drinking parties, mistresses," as he had himself publicly stated in his letter to Mr. Hume printed in "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy," published in 1882. He knew that he had many enemies, both as a man and as President of the Theosophical Society, and he had never been able to overcome his jealousy of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, both of whom he fancied were envious of his superior position in the Society and desirous of supplanting him. He knew that if he refused to retire under fire and demanded an investigation of the charge made against him, the accusation would become public, and he, like many another even less open to calumny than himself, would be made the victim of ceaseless repetitions of the charge. Galling as it was to resign and retire, it was less galling than to endure the stings of the vermin of the press and to see or fancy that he saw, wherever

he might go, the whisper and the knowing nod of those whose feast is scandal.

Colonel Olcott's letter of resignation as published in *The Path* was immediately followed by the text of Mr. Judge's letter of acknowledgment, dated February 22, 1892. Mr. Judge's letter formally acknowledged, paragraph by paragraph, the several statements contained in the President-Founder's epistle, and, in closing, contained the following expression of recognition and appreciation:

. . . the Sections of the Society will, however rejoice when they read that you, in tendering your resignation of your official position, and in declaring continued loyalty to the movement—which indeed none could doubt,—assure us that the Society shall have as long as you live the benefit of your counsel when asked. Of this we shall as a body most surely avail ourselves, for otherwise we would be shown incapable of valuing history, as well as ungrateful to one who so long has carried the banner of Theosophy in the thickest of the fight.

With assurance of universal sympathy from the American Section, I am, my dear colleague, your friend and brother,

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

terpretations upon its members, or to establish a creedal interpretation of any of its philosophical propositions; therefore

Resolved, That the T.S. as such, has no creed, no formulated beliefs that could or should be enforced on any one inside or outside its ranks; that no doctrine can be declared as orthodox, and that no Theosophical Popery can exist without annulling the very basis of ethics and the foundations of truth upon which the whole Theosophical teachings rest; and in support of this resolution appeal is made to the entire literature of the Society, and the oft-repeated statements published wide-spread by H.P.B., Col. Olcott, Mr. Judge, and every other prominent writer and speaker upon the subject since the foundation of the Theosophical Society.

The full proceedings of the Convention were published in the Official Report. Copies of the various resolutions in relation to Col. Olcott's tendered resignation were sent to the General Secretaries of the European and Indian Sections, their substance printed in *The Path* and *Lucifer*, and a large publicity secured in the secular press. Mr. Judge wrote Col. Olcott both officially and privately, and in the latter capacity sent him a message received from one of the Masters. It is this message and a communication received direct by himself that Col. Olcott refers to in his final Official Letter on the subject of his resignation. Meantime, under date of April 27, immediately after receipt of Mr. Judge's cabled news of the action of the American Convention, Col. Olcott issued "Executive Orders" in relation to the difficulties in the way of his immediate retirement, and paves the way for the withdrawal of his resignation in these words:

Notice is therefore given that, without again vainly trying to fix an actual date for my vacating office, I shall do my utmost to hasten the completion of all legal business, so that I may

hand over everything to Mr. Judge, my old friend, colleague and chosen successor.

The latter part of this statement refers to the provision of the General Constitution adopted by the Indian Council and confirmed by the "Adyar Parliament" some years before, empowering Col. Olcott to *nominate* his successor in office; and, while the American Section had expressed its choice of Mr. Judge as that successor, the European and Indian Sections had not yet had the opportunity to express their wishes, whether on the question of accepting Col. Olcott's resignation or the choice of his successor.

This "Executive Notice" was followed on May 25 by another "rescript" from Col. Olcott, reading:

TO THEOSOPHISTS

I have just received a digest of the Resolutions passed by the American Convention relative to my retirement and Mr. Judge's re-election as General Secretary of the Section. As my resignation was not thoughtlessly offered nor without sufficient reasons, I shall not cancel it—save as I have been forced to do temporarily in the financial interest of the Society—until a long enough time has been given me to see what effect the invigorating air of these lovely mountains [Col. Olcott's Notice was issued from Ootacamund in the Nilgherry Hills, India] will have upon my health, and I become satisfied that a return to executive work is essential to the welfare of our movement. Besides the meeting of the European Convention in July I am expecting other important events to happen and I shall give no answer until then. Meanwhile, however, my heart is touched by the universal tokens of personal regard and official approval which have reached me from all parts of the world.

H. S. OLCOTT.

This Note was published in *Lucifer* for July 15, 1892, just prior to the meeting of the European Convention. It was not perceived by the English and Continental Theosophists to be an intimation from Col. Olcott that he was, in fact, waiting to receive from them a request and re-affirmation similar to the action taken by the American Convention under the influence of Mr. Judge's strong stand for the retention of the old "war-horse" of the Society.

Lucifer for May, 1892, refers to the action taken by the American Convention, as reported by Mr. Mead who had attended the Convention as a delegate from the English Theosophists. The substance of the various resolutions adopted is given and Mrs. Besant comments:

. . . these resolutions, of course, do not bind the Society and no definite arrangement can be come to until the European Section has added its voice to those of the other Sections. With a Society extending all over the world, it takes a long time to reach a decision, but it is pleasant to see the good feeling which is manifested on all sides, and the strong wish to recognize good service in the past as giving claim to the utmost consideration. It is clear that Bro. Judge will be the next President, whether now or at some future date, but whether he will take office at once or not will remain doubtful for some months. Meanwhile, as no practical difficulty is caused by the delay, we can all possess our souls in patience, and rejoice, at the brotherly feeling shown in the American Section, alike in the wish to delay parting with the President-Founder as long as possible, and in the unanimous choice of a successor.

The Convention of the European Section met at London on July 14, 1892. Mr. Judge, who was present, was, on Mrs. Besant's motion, unanimously elected Chairman. Mrs. Besant's report of the Convention in the August

Lucifer, recites that "the Chairman delivered an earnest opening address, recalling the memory of H.P.B., and speaking of the work done by Col. Olcott, the President-Founder, "work that no one else had done" and to be ever held in grateful remembrance in the Society. He also read a telegram from Col. Olcott, wishing success to the Convention, and a letter of greeting from the American Section. . . ."

In this letter of greeting, which was signed by Mr. Judge as General Secretary, for the Executive Committee of the American Section, he speaks on the subject of Col. Olcott's resignation as follows:

At our Convention in April last we asked you to unite with us in a request to Colonel Olcott to revoke his resignation. This we did in candour and friendship, leaving it to you to decide your course. We recollected what was so often and so truly said by H. P. Blavatsky, that this organization, unique in this century, partook of the life of its parents. One of them was Col. Olcott. It would be disloyal to our ideals to hurry in accepting his resignation, even though we knew that we might get on without his presence at the head. And if he should hold to his determination our loving request would fill his remaining years with pleasing remembrances of his brothers without a trace of bitterness. . . .

The Convention began its regular business—so runs the account in *Lucifer*—"by receiving the votes of the Section as to the election of President, the General Secretary [G. R. S. Mead] moving:

Whereas, the President-Founder T.S., Colonel H. S. Olcott, owing to ill-health, has placed his resignation in the hands of the Vice-President, William Q. Judge; and

Whereas, the votes of the European Section T.S., having been duly taken by the General

Secretary, and the result declared that the choice of the European Section of a President to succeed Col. Olcott is William Q. Judge:

Resolved: that this Convention unanimously and enthusiastically confirms this vote, and chooses William Q. Judge as the succeeding President of the T.S.

Brother Jose Xifre [Delegate from Spain] seconded the resolution—continues *Lucifer*—and it was endorsed by a delegate from each country and carried with much applause. And so was taken an important step in the history of the T.S., and there remains only the Indian Section to speak its choice in unison, we may hope, with the American and the European, so that the first choice of a President may be unanimous.

A second resolution offered by Mrs. Besant provided for the opening of a fund as a testimonial to Col. Olcott. The Convention ordered a telegram of greeting to be sent to Col. Olcott. Another resolution was proposed and carried unanimously, as follows:

Whereas, this Convention has taken into due consideration the resolutions of our American brethren at their last Convention touching the resignation of the President-Founder; and

Whereas, we have heard the answer of the President-Founder himself to these resolutions.

Resolved: that while agreeing most cordially with the fraternal spirit of good-will that has animated the resolutions of our Brethren, and desiring always to co-operate with them in this liberal and commendable spirit, we consider that the answer of the President-Founder renders any further action impossible.

Another resolution unanimously passed declared the neutrality of the T.S. in matters of religious and philo-

sophical opinion, and re-affirmed the freedom of the Society from any creed, dogma, or formulated belief other than its three proclaimed Objects.

The action taken by the European Section with reference to his tendered resignation filled Col. Olcott with disappointment and placed him in a most cruel dilemma. Encouraged by the American Convention in its resolutions, restored to confidence in a way out of the predicament in which he had placed himself, braced by private letters of Mr. Judge and the Message transmitted to him as from the Masters, Col. Olcott, to whom his position and title were as the breath of life and to whose fulfillment he had given that life, evidently had expected no other outcome to the European Convention than the passage by it of resolutions of the same tenor as the American Convention's, urging him to withdraw his proffered resignation. That he took stock of his paramount longing is apparent from the "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for September, 1892.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,
21st August, 1892.

THE PRESIDENT'S RETIREMENT

In January last, confined to my room by sickness, lame in both feet, unable to move about, save on crutches, and yearning for rest after many years of incessant work, I carried out a purpose long entertained and sent the Vice-President my resignation of the Presidentship. I should have exercised my constitutional right and named him as my successor if I had not been told that the American and European Sections would not consent to having the office filled during my lifetime, this being, they thought, the truest compliment that could be paid me. Immediately I began building the cottage at

Ootacamund on land bought in 1888, as a retreat for H.P.B. and myself in our old age.

On the 11th February, however, the familiar voice of my Guru chided me for attempting to retire before my time, asserted the unbroken relation between Himself, H.P.B. and myself, and bade me to receive further and more specific orders by messenger, but without naming the time or place.

The Indian Section had, as early as February last, unanimously agreed to recommend that, if I were really compelled to retire, the Presidential office should not be filled during my lifetime, but my duties performed by the Vice-President, acting as P.T.S. Nearly all the Indian branches and most influential members, as well as the Branches and chief members in Australasia and Ceylon, and many in Europe and America wrote to express their hope that I might yet see my way to retaining an office in which I had given satisfaction.

Under date of April 20th, Mr. Judge cabled from New York that he was not then able to relinquish the Secretaryship of the American Section and wrote me, enclosing a transcript of a message he had also received for me from a Master that "it is not time, nor right, nor just, nor wise, nor the real wish of the . . . that you should go out, either corporally or officially."

The Chicago Convention of the American Section, held in the same month, unanimously adopted Resolutions declaring their choice of Mr. Judge as my constitutional successor, but asking me not to retire.

The London Convention of the European Section, held in July, also unanimously declared its choice of Mr. Judge as my successor and adopted complimentary Resolutions about myself, but abstained from passing upon the question of my remaining in office under the misapprehension

—how caused I know not—that I had definitely and finally refused to revoke my January letter of resignation. The fact being that the terms of my May note upon the subject . . . left the question open and dependent upon the contingencies of my health and the proof that my return to office would be for the best interest of the Society.

A long rest in the mountains has restored my health and renewed my mental and physical vigor, and therefore, since further suspense would injure the Society, I hereby give notice that I revoke my letter of resignation and resume active duties and responsibilities of office: and I declare William Q. Judge, Vice-President, my constitutional successor, and eligible for duty as such upon his relinquishment of any other office in the Society which he may hold at the time of my death.

H. S. OLCOTT, P.T.S.

The Path for October, 1892, contains the following under the title "Col. Olcott's Revocation"—

To the Members and Branches of T.S. in U. S.:

On the 30th of August, 1892, I received the following telegram from Col. H. S. Olcott:

"To Judge, New York: Col. H. S. Olcott remains president" (of the Theosophical Society).

Notice of this revocation of his resignation of the office of President was immediately given by me through the newspaper press of the country. His official letter arrived September 24th and is given hereunder with the accompanying circular. They are now printed for general information, and will go to the Secretaries of Branches as soon as possible.

The election of successor to the presidency

having been held in all the Sections, and the choice having been unanimous, there will be no new election for the office, but the General Council, consisting of the President and General Secretaries, will make the needed Constitutional alterations. The well-working machinery of the Sections will go on with no change of officials, and the President-Founder will remain at the head of the organization till the very last, thus fulfilling the promise given in his resignation of never ceasing to devote himself to the Cause of the Society which he has so long worked for in season and out of season, in every land and in many climates.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,
Gen. Sec'y Am. Sec.

This was followed by the text of Col. Olcott's official notification and the text of the "Executive Circular" which we have given.

CHAPTER XXIII

H.P.B.'S "SUCCESSORS"—THE PUBLICATION OF "OLD DIARY LEAVES"

THE Adyar parliament following the withdrawal by Col. Olcott of his resignation was held at the close of 1892, and is notable for several matters. The Presidential Address of Col. Olcott illustrates the workings of his mind over recent events. On the subject of his late resignation he reiterates that it was prompted by ill health, and in discussing his resumption of duties as President he calls it a "sacrifice demanded by the best interests of the Society." On the action taken by the various Sections he says:

The Indian Section expressed its desire that I should hold office for life, even without performing the duties; the American Section begged me to reconsider and cancel my resignation; and the European Section, misled by ignorance of the exact phraseology of an Executive Order which I had published, into supposing that I had absolutely refused to resume the Presidency, simply elected Mr. Judge as my successor.

The student may compare these statements with the facts as set forth in the two preceding chapters. It is important that this should be done, as this matter of his resignation and the two bogies of "dogmatism in the T.S., and the "worship of H.P.B." continued to haunt the mind of Col. Olcott. The Presidential Address of 1892 also contains the admission by Col. Olcott that the so-called Adyar Conventions were neither official nor unofficially representative of the whole Society; it marks

also the recrudescence of the effort made in 1888-9 to focus the attention of the members upon the *Society*, upon *Adyar*, upon the *official* authority of the President-Founder, as detailed in Chapters XV and XVI. Col. Olcott said on these subjects:

The loose federal organization of the Society in autonomous Sections, provides a very efficient means of local management, but is apt to give rise to a powerful disintegrating tendency, leading individual Sections to lose sight of the unity of the Society, in an all-absorbing interest in their own special work.

Under the present Rules, no General Convention of the whole T.S. is now held; and the federal unity of the whole body finds expression only in my Annual Report, which is sent to every Branch of the Society throughout the world.

My Annual Report, therefore, assumes a special historic value and great importance, as it is the only means by which the members and Branches of the Society have brought before them a complete view of the Society's work as a whole. . . . For it must be remembered that the gathering I am now addressing is a purely personal one, and in no sense a Representative Convention of the whole T.S. . . . it is simply a gathering of Theosophists to whom I am reading my Annual Report before despatching it to all parts of the world. . . .

It is only by viewing our work from the standpoint of the Federal Centre, the real axis of our revolving wheel, that the net loss or gain of the year's activity can be estimated. Thus, for instance, intense action is the feature within the American Section, while a marked lassitude has of late been noted in the Indian work. Europe, manifesting a maximum of activity in London, a lesser yet most creditable degree at Paris, Barcelona, The Hague, in Sweden and

elsewhere, shows seven new Branches to India's eight and America's thirteen. Thus while the outlook is not exhilarating in one part of the world, it is highly encouraging, taking the field as a whole.

An instructive contrast is offered by considering the state of the Society and the Movement in India and the Orient generally. The "marked lassitude" of which Col. Olcott speaks is made very plain by turning to the Report of Bertram Keightley, General Secretary of the Indian Section, included in the Report of the Proceedings of the Adyar Convention at the end of 1892. His report shows 145 Branches on the roll of the Indian Section, and he speaks in detail of their condition. He summarizes as follows:

It is foolish for us to console ourselves for the many deficiencies of our Indian Section, by pointing to our long list of Branches and gazing with placid satisfaction at the numerous shields on these walls, when we know in our inmost hearts, that there are, as my report shows, *only five Branches that are really doing satisfactory work.*

When the student remembers that the Indian Section and the Orient generally, had been, since 1885, exclusively under the unquestioned control and inspiration of the President-Founder, supported at all times by the loyal co-operation of H.P.B. and W.Q.J., supported also in great part by dues and voluntary contributions from America and England, and by numerous volunteer workers who went in a steady succession from the West to the East, but two conclusions can be drawn: *First*, that Col. Olcott's ideas as to the proper basis for work were erroneous; *second*, that the spirit of the First Object and the teachings of Theosophy made no *practical* appeal either to the Hindus or to himself. They, like himself, were interested primarily in the Second and

Third Objects and in the Society as a forum for their discussion—not in Brotherhood and “the vital principles which underlie the philosophical systems of old.”

Turning now from the public phases of events and their discussion in the Sectional Conventions, in the various Reports, and in the three leading magazines, *The Theosophist*, *Lucifer*, and *The Path*, it is informative to review the trend of the Esoteric Section or School during the same period and in relation to the same issues. The re-organization of the School and the re-affirmation of principles and policies as contained in the Circular of May 27, 1891, have already been described.¹ Under the clear and logical lines thus established the work of the School proceeded apace, free from dissensions or disharmonies. The public writings of H.P.B. and of others recommended by her, the private Instructions issued by H.P.B., and the various papers with “Suggestions and Aids” supplied by Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant as joint Heads of the School, afforded abundant and consistent material for study and application in daily life. The Rules of the School itself, the incentive provided by its teachings and purposes and the example of Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant were ample to make the members active and energetic in the public promulgation of Theosophy and in the support of the T.S., while the very freedom from any taint of authority, external supervision or prescribed regulations but caused the members to be voluntarily more self-sacrificing in time, money, and work to make the exoteric Society a real and true success in the line of its proclaimed Objects. It should be clearly borne in mind that the Instructions of H.P.B. to the E.S.T. were in no sense orders, but simply more definite and specific statements of Teaching than are contained in her exoteric writings. The Rules of the School were, in the same way, not regulations to be enforced by any outside pressure of superior authorities, but those statements of discipline and conduct which each member voluntarily gave his “most solemn and sacred word of honor” to enforce

¹ See Chapter XIX.

upon himself in his own thoughts and actions. And it should be remembered that while thousands of members of the T.S. were not members of the E.S., no one could enter or remain in the E.S. who was not also a member of the T.S. In a word: the exoteric Theosophical Society had three defined Objects and was committed to no religion, no philosophy, no science, no system of thought; the Esoteric School had the same Three Objects, but in addition its members were voluntarily pledged to do their utmost to make those Objects effective in their own lives through the study and practice of *Theosophy*, exoteric and esoteric. As, outside of Col. Olcott and Mr. Sinnett, nearly all of those most active in the Society were pledged probationers of the Esoteric School, there was necessarily room for speculation, question, doubt, and suspicion among members of the exoteric Society not members of the E.S. as to that body. As has been noted,² these fears possessed Col. Olcott long before the formation of the E.S., and continued till long afterwards. H.P.B. had done her utmost to allay them during her lifetime. It was not long after her death before the stand taken in regard to her and her work by the re-organized E.S. became a matter of more or less common knowledge in the exoteric Society, and it was this which in fact stirred Col. Olcott to renewed apprehension lest there arise an “H.P.B. cult,” “worship” of H.P.B., “dogmatism in the T.S.” and a “breach of the neutrality of the T.S.” in matters of opinion and belief, and led to his public remarks in his Presidential Address at the Adyar Convention at the close of 1891. How these apprehensions and misapprehensions were met publicly by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge has already been shown.³ Within the School itself a circular, “strictly private and only for E.S. members” as usual, was sent out on March 29, 1892. It began with an “IMPORTANT NOTICE” in italics, reading as follows:

*The E.S.T. has no official connection with the
Theosophical Society.*

² See Chapters X and XI.

³ See Chapter XX.

When first organized it was known as a section of the T.S. but it being seen that the perfect freedom and public character of the Society might be interfered with, H.P.B., some time before her departure, gave notice that all official connection between the two should end, and then changed the name to the present one.

This leaves all T.S. officials who are in the E.S.T. perfectly free in their official capacity, and also permits members if asked to say with truth that the School has no official connection with the T.S. and is not a part of it.

Members will please bear this in mind.

ANNIE BESANT

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

The body of the circular contained an added reference to the subject under the caption, "THE T.S. AND THE SCHOOL":

Members must carefully remember that the School has no official connection with the Society [T.S.], although none are admitted who are not F.T.S. [Fellows of the T.S.] Hence the T.S. must not be compromised by members of the School. We must all recollect that the T.S. is a free open body. So if one of the Heads is also an official in the T.S., his or her words or requests as such T.S. official must not under any circumstances be colored or construed on the basis of the work of this School.

This caution is necessary because some members have said to the General Secretary of the U. S. Sect. T. S. [Mr. Judge] that they regarded his words as such official to be an order. This is improper and may lead to trouble if members cannot see their plain ethical duty under the pledge. They are, surely, to work for the T.S., but must also use their common-sense *and never let the T.S. become dogmatic.*

Although this circular was signed by both Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge, it was in fact written by Mr. Judge, and its occasion is an illustration of the difficulties under which he, like H.P.B. before him, labored in trying to secure continuity of policy in line with proclaimed principles on the part of associates. The occasion was as follows: Following the public news of the resignation of Col. Olcott, Mrs. Besant, then full of faith in Mr. Judge and of zeal to influence others to adopt her own particular ideas, had sent out on March 10, 1892, a circular letter to all members of the School urging the election of Mr. Judge to the office of President of the T.S. This circular of Mrs. Besant's was sent out without Mr. Judge's knowledge. So soon as he learned of it he prepared the circular of March 29, from which we have been quoting, to offset as far as possible the mischief it might lead to, and to restate the true position without chagrin for Mrs. Besant.

The aftermath of Mrs. Besant's circular is equally interesting and instructive. As Mr. Judge had anticipated, some members of the E.S. took Mrs. Besant's circular as an "order," and others resented it as an interference; still others saw in it an attempt of the E.S. to control the T.S. and make a breach in the neutrality of the exoteric Society. And when the July, 1892, Convention of the European Section ignored the request of the American Section to join with it in asking Col. Olcott to revoke his resignation, and instead accepted the resignation as a *fait accompli*, its action was ascribed by many to the E.S. influence exerted by Mrs. Besant's circular. And since Mr. Judge seemed in their eyes to have been the beneficiary, as he was chosen President in place of Col. Olcott, it was easy for the jealous and suspicious minded to conclude that the whole proceeding had been, if not actually engineered by him, at least carried through with his tacit approval. And this was actually one of the charges against him in the affairs of 1894-5. It is now time that the actual facts and real actors should be known and the circular to the E.S. of March 29, 1892, three months before the European Convention of that

year, shows Mr. Judge's entire innocence and good faith. More, when the suspicions spoken of were voiced, as they were, immediately following the European Section Convention in July, 1892, by partisans and friends of Col. Olcott and by others envious of the sudden rise to prominence and power of Mrs. Besant, Mr. Judge joined with Mrs. Besant in signing the circular sent out by her from London, dated August 1, 1892, explaining and defending her action. This circular, written by Mrs. Besant, and sent to all E.S. members, is really a key to the workings of her consciousness when her actions, good or bad, were questioned by anyone. She says:

You will see that Annie Besant, as one of the two to whom MASTERS committed the charge of the E.S.T., was discharging an obvious duty when she called on members of the School to show strength, quietness, and absence of prejudice, and to try and infuse similar qualities into the branches of the Society at such an important time as the first Presidential Election. The direction to act as pacificators and to make harmony their object, is in exact accord with the word of our Teacher, H.P.B. . . .

There remains the statement, not made as one of the Outer Heads, that Annie Besant hoped that the choice of the Society would fall upon William Q. Judge, as President, and it was suggested . . . that this would be taken as a direction to Esotericists to vote for him, although they were told, in so many words, that as no direction had come each must use his own best judgment. But had a far stronger form of advice been used, would the liberty of members have been unfairly infringed? Once more a glance at the past may help us. The first form of pledge in the School bound the disciple "to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders of the Head of the E.S. in all that concerns my relation with the Theosophical Movement." On be-

coming an Esotericist he voluntarily abdicated his liberty as regarded the Exoteric Society, and bound himself to carry out in the Exoteric Society the orders he received from the head of the E.S.

It is true that this simple frank pledge was altered by H.P.B. in consequence of the criticism of some, who feared lest obedience against conscience should be claimed by her; but, as she herself said, the remodeled clause was a farce. She changed it, not because the new form was good, but because Western students were, many of them, not ready to pass under Occult training. They do not understand the privilege of obedience, when rendered to such as are the MASTERS. . . .

Obedience is forced on none: . . . Meanwhile let all feel assured that neither of us two will make any attempt to give orders to the School, except in its societies and ordinary work, and that you are free to accept or reject our advice as you will.

Certain exceptions must be taken to the foregoing as to matters of fact: (1) the original "pledge" was not, in fact, in the wording given in quotation by Mrs. Besant; (2) no member was ever asked, attempted to be influenced, or permitted to "abdicate his liberty" in the exoteric Society, or "bind himself to carry out in the exoteric Society the orders he received from the Head of the E.S.," either by H.P.B. or Mr. Judge or in any messages received through them from the Masters; these are Mrs. Besant's own interpretations and conclusions; (3) "obedience to the Masters," is one thing, obedience to the "Outer Head of the E.S.," quite another thing, whether that "Outer Head" were H.P.B., Mr. Judge, Mrs. Besant, or anyone else; (4) the pledge, Rules, and Instructions of the E.S.T. were for the help and guidance of the members in their relation of *pupils* to a *teacher* in a *School*, not for the regulation and govern-

ment of an organization by its *authorities*, and were uniformly so stated to be and so construed by both H.P.B. and W.Q.J.

It may be asked, Why did not Mr. Judge himself take exceptions to this circular of Mrs. Besant's which he signed with her? The answer is obvious to any mind which can grasp the spirit of the Movement and the related facts. Mr. Judge *did* take exceptions *in advance*, by stating the true position in the circular of March 29, 1892,—the same position that both H.P.B. and himself had repeatedly taken previously, both in the School and in the public Society.⁴ When Mrs. Besant asked him to sign with her this defensive circular of August 1, 1892, he was placed in the same position as H.P.B. so often was in relation with Col. Olcott: Having stated the true position on his own account, he went to the utmost limits to shelter and support a colleague who had erred, and left to the discrimination of the students themselves to make their own application. To have done other than as he did would have been himself to violate the spirit of the School, to infringe on the freedom of the members, to expose the mistakes of a co-worker and to invite a rupture. All the members of the School had the pledge, the various E.S. communications of H.P.B., and her *Preliminary Memoranda and Instructions*; it was for the members to *apply* them to the case in hand, uncoached and uninterfered with. To have interfered, except in a drastic emergency where the course was not clear upon reflection, was to retard or subvert the very purposes of the School as set forth in one of the most important of the Rules:

It is required of a member that when a question arises it shall be deeply thought over from all its aspects, to the end that he may find the answer himself; and in no case shall questions be asked . . . until the person has exhausted every ordinary means of solving the doubt or of acquiring himself the information sought. *Otherwise*

⁴See Chapter XVI.

his intuition will never be developed; he will not learn self-reliance; and two of the main objects of the School will be defeated.

In other words, the very object of the mission and message of H.P.B., esoteric and exoteric, was to destroy that *authority* which human nature alternately seeks to impose or to lean upon. Another episode, equally illustrative of this human tendency to substitute some authority for self-knowledge, as of its other pole, the ambition to pose "as one having authority" before the ignorant, the credulous, and the self-seeking, is to be found in the question of "successorship" which was raised immediately after the death of H.P.B.

In human jurisprudence succession relates to the transmission of property, rights, privileges, power, authority, obligations, and responsibility. Ecclesiastically, the doctrine generally denominated apostolic succession is as old as popular religion and is integral with the idea of a priesthood. "The King never dies," and "the King can do no wrong," are two ancient phrases which convey the conception of the "divine right of kings" and the transmission of the kingly office from predecessor to successor. In religious history both myth and tradition, as well as accredited records, show that in all times, among all peoples, in all religions, there has been a deeply imbedded corresponding notion that spiritual knowledge and its concomitants can be conveyed by some sort of gift or endowment. This proceeds from the assumption that the Founder can convey His nature to His Disciples, they to their disciples, and so on in an unbroken line of transmission, the same as a physical object can be passed on from hand to hand. Inseparably bound up with this popular dogma are the ideas that some particular tribe, or caste or association, made up of the individuals thus endowed and their followers and believers, are the *chosen* vehicle of this apostolic succession, which is conveyed by birth, by baptism, by laying on of hands, by election, by ordination, by other rites and ceremonies; and that a peculiar and sacred authority attaches by virtue thereof

to the particular individuals and associations, who are thus able to bind or loose, to save or damn the common herd of mankind. The whole claim of the Brahmin caste in India, of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, of the Greek Catholic Church, of the Anglican Communion, to consideration rests upon this popular superstition and upon the vast edifice of theological subtleties erected by endless generations of false prophets and priests. It is the basis of Judaism and Mohammedanism, and the various Protestant Christian sects equally depend on this dogma.

The prime mission of H. P. Blavatsky, as of every other religious Founder and Reformer, was to destroy this monstrous parasite on human faith in the Divine in Nature and in Man, in the only way it can ever be destroyed: By pointing out its fundamental inequity and injustice on the one hand, and, on the other, by spreading far and wide true basic concepts of Deity, of Law, and of Man,—ideas so unassailably just, so logically sequential, so scientifically buttressed, so philosophically sound, so self-evidently manifest in every department of nature, that none but the fool and the false could fail to grasp them. “Isis Unveiled,” from beginning to end, was written with this very object in view, as were all her other writings; the Theosophical Society and its Esoteric Section had the same great objective: The *Theosophical Movement* exists for no other purpose than to supplant this monstrous heresy on true religion, pure and undefiled, by giving mankind *Knowledge* in place of belief; Teachers in place of priestly authority. To quote all that H.P.B. has written upon this subject and its cognates is to quote all that she ever wrote. But two citations from “Isis Unveiled” will serve to give her views; for her reasons, arguments, and evidences, the student must study the work itself. Thus, near the close of Volume 2 (p. 544), she says:

The present volumes have been written to small purpose if they have not shown . . . that . . . apostolic succession is a gross and palpable fraud.

And again, page 635 of the same volume:

The world needs no sectarian church, whether of Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, Swedenborg, Calvin, or any other. There being but ONE Truth, man requires but one church—the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter but penetrable by any one who can find the way; *the pure in heart see God.*

When H.P.B. died the first question in the minds of many of the members, as in public curiosity, was, Who will be her successor? At once the newspapers responded to this gullibility and desire for sensation. Within a week from the death of H.P.B. the Paris press announced that Madame Marie Caithness, Duchess of Pomar, had been “chosen” by H.P.B. as her successor. The Duchess had been a long-time friend of H.P.B., who had been her guest during the stay in Paris in 1884; she was “psychic”; she was greatly interested in the “Occult”; she was socially prominent. It was enough! She was promptly accepted by many French “spiritists” with Theosophical leanings as the new wearer of the mantle of the prophet. The fire promptly spread to England; Mrs. Besant was “written up” as the successor. She was brilliant; she was famous; she had been the right hand of H.P.B. for two years; she was an Occultist; she was head and shoulders above any Theosophist before the public; *ergo*, she was the successor. In America the same curiosity and interest existed and Mr. Judge was considered the foreordained successor. But when the versatile reporters sought to interview him, he received them in a body and made to them the succinct statement: “Madame Blavatsky was *sui generis*. She has, and can have, no ‘successor.’”

Nevertheless, the appetite existed and public curiosity did not lack for nourishment. A score of mediums and psychics in as many different cities announced for themselves, on the strength of real or pretended messages from their several guides and controls that they were,

each of them, the successor of Madame Blavatsky. Not a month passed but a new successor was heralded by some trustful believer in his claims, or claimed for himself by some less modest aspirant. In nearly every large center of the Society there was to be found some Occultist who was not averse to letting it be known that he was "in communication with the Masters," and each of these had his believers and his imitators. Late in 1891, Mr. Henry B. Foulke of Philadelphia, Pa., claimed to be Madame Blavatsky's successor. Mr. Foulke had been a member of the Esoteric Section, and had corresponded with H.P.B. His claim was that H.P.B. had "appointed" him during her life and that since her death he had received communications from her confirming the appointment, bidding him demand recognition and take over the direction of the Society and the guidance of the School. He therefore wrote to Col. Olcott, Mrs. Besant, and Mr. Judge, offering to submit his "proofs," and, upon their refusal to pay any attention to him or his claims of successorship, made his claims public through the newspapers. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge promptly suspended him from his membership in the Esoteric Section; whereupon he resigned from the E.S. and from the Society. Mr. Foulke and his claims were taken up by a number of papers, notably the *Wilkes-Barre (Pa.) Times*. Mr. Judge wrote two letters on the subject to the *Times*, and these were reprinted by Mrs. Besant in *Lucifer* for March, 1892. For their present as well as their historical value, we give here the text of the germane portions of these two letters by Mr. Judge, as published in *Lucifer*, accompanied by Mrs. Besant's comment: "As non-theosophists . . . were to some extent misled by the preposterous fiction, W. Q. Judge sent the following letters to the paper in which the statement first appeared":

Editor *Times*:

Will you permit me to correct the statement . . . that Madame Blavatsky appointed as her "successor" Mr. Henry B. Foulke, and "guar-

anteed" to him the "allegiance" of the "higher spiritual intelligences and forces." As one of Madame Blavatsky's oldest and most intimate friends, connected with her most closely in the foundation and work of the Theosophical Society, and familiar with her teachings, purposes, ideas, forecasts, I am in a position to assure . . . the public that there is not an atom of foundation for the statement quoted.

Madame Blavatsky has no "successor," could have none, never contemplated, selected, or notified one. Her work and status were unique. Whether or not her genuineness as a spiritual teacher be admitted matters not: she *believed* it to be so, and all who enjoyed her confidence will unite with me in the assertion that she never even hinted at "succession," "allegiance," or "guarantee." Even if a successor was possible, Mr. Foulke could not be he. He is not a member of the Theosophical Society, does not accept its and her teachings, had a very slight and brief acquaintance with her, and pretends to no interest in her views, life or mission. Of her actual estimate of him I have ample knowledge.

But anyhow, no "guaranteeing of allegiance of spiritual forces" is practicable by anyone. Knowledge of and control over the higher potencies in Nature comes only by individual attainment through long discipline and conquest. It can no more be transferred than can a knowledge of Greek, of chemistry, psychology, or of medicine. If a person moves on a lofty level, it is because he worked his way there. This is true in spiritual things as in mental. When Mr. Foulke produces a work like *Isis Unveiled* or *The Secret Doctrine*, he may be cited as H.P.B.'s intellectual peer; when he imparts such impulsion as does *The Voice of the Silence*, he may be recognized as her spiritual equal; when he adds to these an utter consecra-

tion to the work of the T.S. as his lifelong mission, he may participate in such "succession" as the case admits. But it will not be through alleged precipitated pictures and imagined astral shapes. The effect of these on Theosophy . . . may be stated in one word—nothing.

Yours truly,

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,
Gen. Sec'y American Sec.

Editor *Times*:

Will you allow me a word—my last—respecting the Foulke claim to succeed Mme. Blavatsky.

First. If Mr. Foulke . . . has precipitated pictures of Mme. Blavatsky produced since her demise . . . Precipitations are not uncommon, but are no evidence of anything whatever save the power to precipitate and the fact of precipitation. Spiritualists have always asserted that their mediums could procure these things. Chemists also can precipitate substances out of the air. So this point is wide of the Society and its work.

Second. As I said in my previous letter, when Mr. Foulke, or any one, indeed, proves by his work and attainments that he is as great as Mme. Blavatsky, every one will at once recognize that fact. But irresponsible mediumship, or what we call astral intoxication, will not prove these attainments nor constitute that work.

Third. Mme. Blavatsky was Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society, and its Constitution years ago provided that office, out of compliment to her, should become extinct upon her death. . . . The Society will hardly hurry to revive it for the sake of one who is not a member of the body and who has never thrown any particular glory upon it. Scarcely either because he is a medium—and not even a good one—who prates of receiving messages from be-

yond the grave assumed to be from Mme. Blavatsky. He may assert that he has baskets full of letters from Mme. Blavatsky written before her death, and we are not interested either to deny the assertion or to desire to see the documents.

Fourth. The Theosophical Society is a body governed by Rules embodied in its Constitution. Its officers are elected by votes, and not by the production of precipitated letters or pictures of any sort. It generally elects those who do its work, and not outsiders who masquerade as recipients of directions from the abode of departed souls. It is not likely to request proposed officers to produce documents . . . brought forth at mediumistic séances before the wondering eyes of untrained witnesses. . . .

Fifth. Mr. Foulke's possession of any number of letters written by Mme. Blavatsky prior to her demise, offering him "leadership" or "succession," might please and interest himself, but can have no other effect on the corporate body of the Society. Let him preserve them or otherwise as he may see fit; they are utterly without bearing or even authority, and if in existence would only serve to show that she in her lifetime may have given him a chance to do earnest sincere work for a Society she had at heart and that he neglected the opportunity, passing his time in idle, fantastic day-dreams.

Yours truly,

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,
Gen. Sec'y American Sec.

In the "Supplement" to *The Theosophist* for April, 1892, Col. Olcott paid his compliments to the "successorship" idea in the following paragraph, printed under the title, "H.P.B.'s Ghost":

A rubbishing report is circulating to the effect that H.P.B. chose Mr. Foulke of Philadel-

phia, as her "Successor," and ratified her act by appearing in a spiritualistic circle and painting for him her portrait. As to the picture having been painted I say nothing save that it is no more improbable than other portrait paintings in mediumistic circles: but this does not imply that she painted it. And to offset that theory one has but to refer back to an old volume of *The Theosophist* to find that she and I, anticipating some such nonsense, published our joint declaration that under no circumstances should we visit after death a medium or a circle, and authorizing our friends to declare false any story to the contrary. As for her naming a "Successor," Beethoven or Edison, Magliabecchi or Milton might just as well declare A, B or C the heirs of their genius. *Blavatsky nascitur, non fit.*

H. S. O.

Mrs. Besant in the "Watch-Tower" of *Lucifer*, for May, 1892, follows up this and her reprint a couple of months before of the two letters by Mr. Judge, with the following:

There is a wonderful amount of masquerading under the name of H. P. Blavatsky in the post-mortem realms, but the various mummers do not agree in their presentations. . . . Each new mumming spook claims to be the real and only one, and the latest of them claims to be the first real appearance, all the others being humbugs. With this spook I heartily agree on all points save one—that I include itself with the rest.

In *The Path* for July, 1892, Mr. Judge has an opening editorial article on the subject for the edification of his readers. The article is entitled, "How She Must Laugh." We quote:

Since the demise of H. P. Blavatsky's body, a little over a year ago, mediums in various parts

of the world have reported her "spirit" as giving communications . . .

Those who communicate these extraordinary reports from H.P.B. are not accused by us of malice or any improper motive. The first "message" came privately from one who had known her in life but whose views were always quite in line with the message. The others represent the different private opinions of the medium or clairvoyant reporting them. Such is nearly always the case with these "spirit messages." They do, indeed, come from psychic planes, and are not strictly the product of the medium's normal brain. But they are the result of obscure thoughts of the medium which color the astral atmosphere, and thus do no more than copy the living. In one case, and this was the hugest joke of all, the medium made a claim to at once step into H.P.B.'s shoes and be acknowledged the leader of the Society.

How she must laugh! Unless mere death may change a sage into an idiot, she is enjoying these jokes, for she had a keen sense of humor, and as it is perfectly certain that Theosophists are not at all disturbed by these "communications," her enjoyment of the fun is not embittered by the idea that staunch old-time Theosophists are being troubled. But what a fantastical world it is with its Materialists, Spiritualists, Christians, Jews, and other barbarians as well as the obscure Theosophists.

Although H.P.B.'s position in regard to "succession" was made known in the very beginning of her mission, and although Mrs. Besant and Col. Olcott, following Mr. Judge, put their views on record in full accord, as shown by the foregoing quotations, we shall find that the ghost of "apostolic succession" was raised again within less than three years. It, together with the other events we have been recounting, and Col. Olcott's "Old

Diary Leaves," supplied the necessary groundwork and material on and out of which was fabricated the "Judge case." Until all these connected and connecting events are co-ordinated in the mind of the student like the features of a map he will be unable to trace intelligently the divergent courses soon to be taken by the various "pilgrims"; unable to understand the *débâcle* which befell the Society; unable to solve the mystery of the confusions and contradictions in the Theosophical world of today; unable to find and follow the "straight and narrow path" of the true Theosophical Movement; unable to do his part in restoring the work of the Movement to its pristine unity and purity.

"Old Diary Leaves" was begun by Col. Olcott in *The Theosophist* for March, 1892. Its commencement was, therefore, coincident in time and occasion with the issue of the "worship" of H.P.B., with the issue of "dogmatism in the T.S." and "the neutrality of the T.S.," with the issue of the relation of the Esoteric School to the T.S., and with Col. Olcott's resignation as President of the Society. This prolonged series of personal reminiscences was continued from month to month in *The Theosophist*, with occasional brief interruptions, until the death of Col. Olcott in 1907. Thus during fifteen years a steady stream of autobiographical articles flowed through the pages of the oldest and most widely circulated of the Theosophical magazines and the only official organ of the Society; articles written by the man who had from the beginning been the President of the Society and who, after the death of Mr. Judge in 1896, was the sole survivor of the original three Founders. "Old Diary Leaves" is written in an easy, lucid, and interesting style; it abounds in personal recollections of H.P.B.; it overflows with stories of marvelous and mysterious phenomena; it deals graphically with the human and anecdotal side of the various actors in the Society's life—a side purposely ignored in all the writings of H.P.B. and W. Q. Judge. No one who has studied the life and writings of Col. Olcott can doubt his honesty, his frankness, his sincerity—the admirable

qualities, in short, which make up the charm of human nature. And certainly no genuine chela, or even Probationer of the Second Section, can ever fail to sympathize with him in his struggles with those elements of human nature which are the real foes of every aspirant in *Occultism*. That he failed in the supreme trials of the neophyte does not dishonor nor militate against his real virtues, nor render less the debt which every Theosophist must gladly acknowledge to him for his great sacrifices and services. The final test of character, however, is not in the strength, but in the weaknesses of the candidate, and history is filled with the record of those whose defects became the axis for the overthrow of all that they labored mightily to achieve.

For nearly twenty-five years "Old Diary Leaves" has been read by Theosophists and others of the present generation. Its statements have been accepted without question by most students, and their views in respect to Madame H. P. Blavatsky, Mr. W. Q. Judge, and many others have been colored and formed by the opinions of Col. Olcott and those whose interest it was to support them. Few indeed have taken thought or trouble to submit the different actors and exponents in Theosophical history to any critical examination. Yet the criteria of correct judgment are not difficult to ascertain or to apply. Most judgments are formed upon hearsay, and that testimony is almost always accepted with least question which is most conformable to the interest or the nature of the would-be judge. Seldom is any witness subjected to the test of the comparison of his different statements on the same subjects, let alone their comparison with the statements of others; still more rarely are the motive and animus of a witness subjected to scrutiny. Yet the whole course of human jurisprudence has shown that unless these and other precautions are rigidly observed the judgment is certain to be misled and a false verdict reached. Just as a biased attitude may, and but too often does, exist in the would-be judge unconsciously to himself, so it may and often does exist in a witness otherwise candid and sincere, and this is

pre-eminently the case with Col. Olcott; so pre-eminently that it requires but casual comparison of his various statements to see that Col. Olcott is anything but a dependable witness; the more untrustworthy because his very honesty and frankness tend to lead the reader astray as the Colonel was himself led.

When he began the writing of "Old Diary Leaves," he was more than sixty years of age, broken in health, deeply wounded in his feelings over the charges which caused him to offer his resignation; over the apparent ingratitude with which his lifelong services had been rewarded; over the loss of an official pre-eminence and prerogative dear to his heart; over the seeming unconcern with which his resignation was received by Theosophists at large; and dejected in spirit by the prospect of being speedily forgotten and replaced in the esteem of the members by younger colleagues who had hardly received a wound while he was rejected for the very scars he had suffered in their service. He could but too easily vision H.P.B. placed on a pedestal and himself neglected in his old age, destined to an equally neglected memory. He could but too easily see Mr. Judge elected his successor—Judge who was but a boy while he was bearing the brunt of battle—and receiving the acclaim and honors made possible by his own sacrifices. His memory, never dependable, as he himself often declared, became a quicksand as the years progressed and the storms broke upon his beloved Society. He was in his seventy-fifth year when the last instalment of "Old Diary Leaves" was written—and the last ten years of his life were doubly embittered; embittered by the private contumely and neglect of those who had used him as their tool; embittered by the perception too late of his colossal blunders, which yet he had not the strength and stamina publicly to acknowledge, though he did so in private to the one of the early years most loved by him, and most loyal to him through all his divagations.⁵ These

⁵ See *The Word* for October, 1915, article "Colonel Olcott: a Reminiscence." The anonymous writer was in fact Mrs. Laura Langford (Mrs. L. C. Holloway) one of the two authors of "Man: Fragment of Forgotten History."

things being recognized, justice can be done to his colleagues and to the "true history of the Theosophical Society" without doing injustice to Henry S. Olcott. Until even justice is done to all, how can the work of the Theosophical Movement be restored? And how can that justice be done except in the spirit of the Preface of "Isis Unveiled"? The investigator must proceed "in all sincerity; he must do even justice, and speak the truth alike without malice or prejudice; he must show neither mercy for enthroned error, nor reverence for usurped authority. He must demand for a spoliated past, that credit for its achievements which has been too long withheld. He must call for a restitution of borrowed robes, and the vindication of glorious but calumniated reputations."

"Old Diary Leaves," after serial publication in *The Theosophist* during three years, were issued in book form in 1895. This first volume contains a "Foreword" especially written by Col. Olcott. His real motives in writing his reminiscences are there for the first time publicly acknowledged—motives entirely unknown and unsuspected by Theosophical students during their magazine publication. He says:

The controlling impulse to prepare these papers was a desire to combat a growing tendency within the Society to deify Mme. Blavatsky, and to give her commonest literary productions a quasi-inspirational character. Her transparent faults were being blindly ignored, and the pinchbeck screen of pretended authority drawn between her actions and legitimate criticism. Those who had least of her actual confidence, and hence knew least of her private character, were the greatest offenders in this direction. It was but too evident that unless I spoke out what I alone knew, the true history of our movement could never be written, nor the actual merit of my wonderful colleague become known. In these pages I have, therefore, told the truth about her

and about the beginnings of the Society—truth which nobody can gainsay. . . . I have pursued my present task to its completion, despite the fact that some of my most influential colleagues have, from what I consider mistaken loyalty to “H.P.B.,” secretly tried to destroy my influence, ruin my reputation, reduce the circulation of my magazine, and prevent the publication of my book. . . .

. . . Karma forbid that I should do her a featherweight of injustice, but if there ever existed a person in history who was a greater conglomeration of good and bad, light and shadow, wisdom and indiscretion, spiritual insight and lack of common sense, I cannot recall the name, the circumstances or the epoch.

For contrast one has but to turn to the Henry S. Olcott of the summer of 1891, immediately after the death of H.P.B. *Lucifer* for August 15 of that year contains a long memorial article by Col. Olcott, entitled “H.P.B.’s Departure.” We quote:

. . . There is no one to replace Helena Petrovna, nor can she ever be forgotten. Others have certain of her gifts, none has them all. . . . Her life, as I have known it these past seventeen years, as friend, colleague and collaborator, has been a tragedy, the tragedy of a martyr-philanthropist. Burning with zeal for the spiritual welfare and intellectual enfranchisement of humanity, moved by no selfish inspiration, giving herself freely and without price to her altruistic work, she has been hounded to her death-day, by the slanderer, the bigot and the Pharisee. . . . In temperament and abilities as dissimilar as any two persons could well be, and often disagreeing radically in details, we have yet been of one mind and heart as regards the work in hand and in our reverent allegiance

to our Teachers and Masters, its planners and overlookers. We both knew them personally, she a hundred times more intimately than I. . . . She was pre-eminently a double-selfed personality, one of them very antipathetic to me and some others. . . . One seeing us together would have said I had her fullest confidence, yet the fact is that, despite seventeen years of intimacy in daily work, she was an enigma to me to the end. Often I would think I knew her perfectly, and presently discover that there were deeper depths in her selfhood I had not sounded. I could never find out *who she was*, not as Helena Petrovna, . . . but as “H.P.B.,” the mysterious individuality which wrote, and worked wonders. . . .

We had each our department of work—hers the mystical, mine the practical. In her line, she infinitely excelled me and every other of her colleagues. I have no claim at all to the title of metaphysician, nor to anything save a block of very humble knowledge. . . .

. . . She knew the bitterness and gloom of physical life well enough, often saying to me that her true existence only began when nightly she had put her body to sleep and went out of it to the Masters. I can believe that, from often sitting and watching her from across the table, when she was away from the body, and then when she returned from her soul-flight and resumed occupancy, as one might call it. When she was away the body was like a darkened house, when she was there it was as though the windows were brilliant with lights within. One who had not seen this change, cannot understand why the mystic calls his physical body, a “shadow.”

Here are two violently contradictory opinions of H.P.B.—both of them from the pen of Col. Olcott. It

is certain that H.P.B. had not changed from 1891 to 1895; what caused the change in Col. Olcott, and which of his opposed utterances is the more nearly accurate, the more expressive of the highest and best in him? The one view is the view expressed by the Master Himself in the letter written Col. Olcott in the early fall of 1888, the view consistently held by Mr. Judge, and consistently supported by the best evidence of all—the evidence furnished by the life and teachings of H. P. Blavatsky. The other view is the view of the S.P.R., of Mrs. Cables, of Mr. Hume, of Prof. Coues, of Miss Mabel Collins, of Mr. A. P. Sinnett. Colonel Olcott, like many another, had every *opportunity* to know the “real H.P.B.,” and the world and the students took it for granted that he *did* know.

It is curious, and at this point of related value, to turn to two quotations from “Old Diary Leaves.” They may afford the intuitional student a hint on some of the mysteries and methods of true Occultism, and serve at the same time to show how little able Col. Olcott was to avail himself of the rare opportunities his services brought him. Chapter XVI of the first volume of “Old Diary Leaves” discusses the mystery of H.P.B. and, amidst a mass of Col. Olcott’s speculations interspersed with the alleged facts recited, makes certain highly significant statements. But first it should be noted that Chapter XIV propounds *seven distinct hypotheses* to try to “explain” H.P.B., and it and the following chapter are devoted to trying to make the facts fit one or another of these theories of the Colonel’s. The mere fact that he submits seven theories should show anyone that however fertile Col. Olcott’s imagination in trying to resolve the mystery, it *was* a mystery, and one he was unable to solve. Finally, in Chapter XVI he gives the two incidents spoken of. He says that one summer evening just after dinner in New York days and while it was still early twilight, he was standing by the mantel while H.P.B. sat by one of the front windows. Then:

I heard her say “Look and learn”; and glancing that way, saw a mist rising from her head and shoulders. Presently it defined itself into the likeness of one of the Mahatmas. . . . Absorbed in watching the phenomenon, I stood silent and motionless. The shadowy shape only formed for itself the upper half of the torso, and then faded away and was gone; whether re-absorbed into H.P.B.’s body or not, I do not know. . . . When I asked her to explain the phenomenon she refused, saying that it was for me to develop my intuition so as to understand the phenomena of the world I lived in. All she could do was to help in showing me things and let me make of them what I could.

This incident is recited by Col. Olcott to suggest “that H.P.B.’s body became, at times, occupied by other entities.” It seems not to have occurred to him at all that perhaps he was being afforded a glimpse of the “real H.P.B.,” nor was he, who asked her for an explanation, able to relate the experience with which he was favored to the true rationale of its exhibition, given in the twelfth chapter of the second volume of “Isis Unveiled” in one of the numbered paragraphs. All he saw was a very wonderful phenomenon, and all he was able to make of it was a new speculation. So absolutely engrossed was he at all times in gratifying his thirst for phenomena and in speculations on their nature that he never had time or inclination to try to see if *her* explanations of their nature and rationale might not afford the very solution he was so desirous of gaining.

In Chapter XVII, he follows with an incident of a year or two later and sees no connection! He is telling of some of the communications he received from the Masters. He says:

One quite long letter that I received in 1879
[from one of the Masters], *most strangely alters*

her sex, speaks of her in the male gender, and confounds her with the Mahatma "M" . . . It says—about a first draft of the letter itself which had been written but not sent me: "Owing to certain expressions therein, the letter was stopped on its way by order of our Brother H.P.B. As you are not under my direct guidance but *his* (hers), we have naught to say, either of us"; etc. And again: "*Our Brother H.P.B. rightly remarked . . .*" etc.

One may compare the foregoing with the remark of the Master "K. H." in his letter of 1888 to Col. Olcott: "The personality known as H.P.B. to the world (*but otherwise to us*)."

Still another most interesting sidelight on the "mystery of H.P.B." and of Occultism in general, may be found in *Lucifer* for October 15, 1888 (the month of the public announcement of the Esoteric Section). There a correspondent makes some "Pertinent Queries" in regard to statements in Mr. Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism." In the "Editor's Answer" to these pertinent queries H.P.B. takes occasion to make some remarks regarding the Masters. She says (*italics ours*):

. . . among the group of Initiates to which his [Mr. Sinnett's] own mystical correspondent ["K. H."] is allied, *are two of European race, and that one who is that Teacher's superior [the Master "M"] is also of that origin, being half a Slavonian in his "present incarnation," as he himself wrote to Colonel Olcott in New York.*

Just why H.P.B. should put the phrase "present incarnation" in quotes is worth some intuitional effort, as is also the fact that "H. P. B." was herself precisely and exactly "*half a Slavonian*" in *her* then "present incarnation."

One word more: Col. Olcott's "faith" in H.P.B., in Masters, in Theosophy, rested upon exactly the same

basis as his "faith" in Spiritualism during the preceding twenty years. That basis was *phenomena*—not philosophy, logic, ethics, altruism. "Old Diary Leaves" shows this on nearly every page. His memorial article above quoted from so states specifically. When this is recognized his vagaries can be understood, his failures overlooked, his misjudgments forgiven, his misconceptions allowed for, and the solid value of his services to the Society and to Buddhism given generous tribute.