

# DEFENCE OF MADAME BLAVATSKY

Volume II.

(Each volume is complete in itself)

## THE "COULOMB PAMPHLET"

BY

BEATRICE HASTINGS

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Mrs. Beatrice Hastings is a writer well-known in literary circles, but, having written mostly anonymously, is unknown to the general public. The quotations below may, therefore, be convenient.

April 14th, 1932: "Beatrice Hastings, the cleverest woman writer of her day."—*Everyman*.

1934. (Mr. Victor Neuburg): "Mrs. Hastings, the famous critic, star turn of the 'New Age' when that paper was by far the best-written in London."—*Sunday Referee*.

June 1st, 1933. (Londoner's Diary): "I can recall only one other Englishwoman who publishes in both French and English, and that is Mrs. Beatrice Hastings."  
—*Evening Standard*.

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## PREFACE.

This Volume 2 is intended to deal mainly with letters allegedly written by Madame Blavatsky to Madame Coulomb. Examination in detail of the whole of Mme. C.'s pamphlet would be a lengthy affair, requiring a book three times as large as her own. As in the case of the Report of the Society for Psychical Research and of Solovyoff's "Modern Priestess of Isis", we have to stem an inexhaustible flow of garrulity, apparently coming from a source of fact, but really being "inexactitudes" following each other with almost mysterious ingenuity, cunning that nothing but tireless research will finally expose. Here is an instance: On page 84, Mme. C. says with reference to a Mahatmic communication advising Damodar and the rest to be more patient with her, she being a medium and irresponsible:

"He [Damodar] went upstairs, I followed him tip-toe, saw him prepare the letter, and when he was coming down I ran before him and was in time to hear him say that the Mahatma had settled the business [the Board of Control was sitting to expel her] by the letter".

It would take many pages to show with references and quotations that 1. Dr. Hartmann, President of the Board, when testifying to his colleagues and fellow members on the spot, all of whom were in a position to verify what he said—stated that the letter was received in the Board room; and that what Hodgson says Hartmann told him, namely, that Damodar left the room, returning almost immediately, cannot be relied on, even as hearsay evidence, seeing that Hartmann and the *chelas* had decided by then to refuse Hodgson any "occult" testimony, and deliberately assisted him with every new mare's nest he built up on Mme. C.'s "revelations";

2. that Damodar had ceased to use the room upstairs; 3. that to follow Damodar "upstairs", she needed to cross the house and pass the office, risking detection by Babaji, Brown, Ananda and anyone else who happened to be about, visitors or one or other of the numerous servants; 4. that the letter was in the Mahatma's most authentic style and in his handwriting and was sixteen lines, small print, long (see Appendix 1.); 5. that the tenour of the letter was absolutely against Damodar's inclinations to see the last of Mme. C., who made his life a burden; 6. that this is the *one and only* instance where Mme. C. accuses D. of being anything but a *dupe*. And then, we should have to consider the glib rubbish of "tip-toe" up and "running" down and although "before" him, being "in time" to hear him say, etc.

On page 93, in a note, Mr. Coulomb states: "In order to save Madame's reputation, I did my best to the last, and it was only on the morning of the 16th May that I confessed to Mr. Damodar the existence of the trap-doors (as it can be seen by his affidavit) and this confidentially with the object of sparing Madame's honour."

Below, on the very same page, Mr. C. writes, with reference to a letter he only heard of after he had been expelled—a Mahatmic letter saying that trap-doors would be found and advising Dr. Hartmann to act without delay against the Coulombs, *date, April 26th*: "It would have been much better for Mme. Blavatsky if Mr. Damodar, *knowing the danger of the situation* [italics mine], would have warned her of the consequences attending it . . .".

The lying flow of garrulity is really inexhaustible, wherefore I confine my examination mainly to the direct question of the letters giving these in full with narrative of the circumstances.

B. H.

August, 1937.

## NOTE.

In the spring of 1872, in Cairo, Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky started a society called "La Société Spirite", her objects being, firstly, to convince the public of the reality of the so-called "spiritualistic" phenomena, and, secondly, to demonstrate the scientific basis of the manifestations and the possibility of repeating certain phenomena at will. She began this work against the advice of her friend, the famous Coptic occultist, Paul Metanon, who said that it was premature. The Society had been in existence for about two weeks when, in the absence of Madame Blavatsky, some mediums whom she had engaged organised a fraudulent séance, and were caught; the Society then came to an end. Among the sitters was a Miss E. Cutting, later, Madame Coulomb. She was of Levantine extraction, spoke Italian, but knew some English and French, and she had been employed as nursery governess in an Egyptian family. Being dismissed, she had taken service in a small hotel. After the exposure of the mediums, which she witnessed (testifying, incidentally, to the absence of Madame Blavatsky), she called on H.P.B., showed sympathy and lent her some money.

H.P.B. left Egypt, went to Russia and Paris, and thence, in 1873, to New York, where the Theosophical Society was founded, in 1875. She left America for India in 1879 and set up the headquarters of the T.S. in Bombay.

Meanwhile, Miss Cutting had become Madame Coulomb and, with her husband, a Frenchman born in Egypt, had left that country, bankrupt, and, after wanderings here and there, had fallen on evil days in Ceylon. She read in a newspaper of Madame Blavatsky's arrival in India, wrote to her, and received a genial reply. More correspondence followed and then, without announcing their coming, the Coulombs appeared at Bombay headquarters on March 28th, 1880, their

fares having been paid by the French Consul at Galle. The penniless couple were welcomed and taken in, and soon they became, respectively, housekeeper and handy-man of the establishment; and they made themselves invaluable as domestics.

But Madame Coulomb was jealous, conceited and incredibly ambitious; and she soon showed her character. As early as July, 1881, she furtively slandered Madame Blavatsky and offered, unsuccessfully, to sell "secrets" to the "Bombay Guardian". The Theosophical Society made much progress and in Dec. 1882, moved to Adyar, Madras. Here, the couple did pretty much as they pleased so far as the household was concerned. But, as Mme. C. remarks on page 50 of her pamphlet; "There is no peace for the wicked, says Isaiah, no more was there any for the Coulombs". She blames Madame Blavatsky for the lack of peace, but the case seems to have been that Mme. C. was obsessed by an envious hatred of H.P.B. that amounted to a disease and that time only increased. The climax arrived when Madame Blavatsky, on the eve of sailing from Bombay for Europe, Feb. 20. 84, prevented Mme. C. from borrowing 2,000 Rupees from a rich Theosophist. When leaving the ship, after saying good-bye, Mme. C. told H.P.B.'s servant, Babula, that she would be revenged on his mistress. She returned to Adyar from Bombay and, a week or two later, the Board of Control that had been set up to take charge of the household during the absence of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, began to hear about "trap-doors" for fraudulent phenomena. Mme. C.'s evil tongue being well-known, no-one believed what she said, especially as she denied having said it, when tackled on the subject. However, the Board had discovered pilfering by the Coulombs, and set about collecting information from well-known Theosophists. Affidavits were made that testified to Mme. C.'s habits of secretly slandering Madame Blavatsky and the Society in general, and of attempting to get money from members. It was decided to expel the couple; they resisted, refused to leave. On May 18th, H.P.B. cabled to the Board authority to demand the keys of her private rooms from the Coulombs.

Then it was found that a hole in the wall and trap-doors actually did exist in Madame Blavatsky's rooms. The discovery did not shake the faith of the members on the spot

who, one and all, Indians and Europeans, agreed that no fraud could have been carried out already by these contrivances, obviously only in process of construction by the man Coulomb. The couple were got rid of at last on May 23rd.

Mme. C. had mentioned no compromising letters, although she had tried to blackmail the Board of Control into paying her 3,000 Rupees as the price of her peaceful departure. But, in August, three months later, she sold to the Rev. Patterson, Editor of the "Christian College Magazine" at Madras, a bundle of seventy letters, all allegedly written by H.P.B., and nineteen of which contained instructions to the Coulombs to produce fraudulent "phenomena". Mr. Patterson published the letters (or, rather, notes and selected extracts from letters). One result of this was the despatch to India by the Society for Psychical Research of Mr. Hodgson to investigate the affair. The world is only too well aware that the S.P.R. branded Madame Blavatsky as an impostor.

A year before Hodgson's Report was issued (Dec. 1885), the Madras Scottish Free Church missionaries (Rev. Patterson and colleagues) had published a pamphlet written by Mme. Coulomb, entitled, "Some Account of my association with Madame Blavatsky, 1872 to 1884".

This present Volume 2 of "Defence of Madame Blavatsky" deals with the main part of the pamphlet, in which Mme. C. publishes the alleged "fraud" letters. To avoid overlapping, I reserve seven of the letters to be examined in Volume 3, in two sections on "The Shrine" and "The Adyar Saucer Phenomenon". Subscribers have already been notified that these sections, advertised to appear in Vol. 2, have had to be held over to Vol. 3, in order to give full space to verbatim reproduction of all the "fraud" letters here examined, French and English, and to a fuller treatment of the pamphlet than was at first intended.

B.H.

## INTRODUCTORY I.

"Some Account of my association with Madame Blavatsky from 1872 to 1884." By Madame Coulomb.

This pamphlet was signed by Madame Coulomb on November 29th, 1884, and first printed at Madras, Dec. 84. I have a copy of the London edition, long since out of print, "published for the Proprietors of the *Christian College Magazine* by Elliot Stock, London, 1885". The inside of the title page bears the legend: "This pamphlet is reprinted verbatim from the edition issued in Madras, including the occasional inaccuracies and incorrect expressions consequent on the Author's imperfect knowledge of the English language."

Mme. Coulomb's English is tolerable from a half-educated semi-foreigner, although not so good as possibly to be confounded with that used in certain passages where the pen of some accommodating Madras padri is to be discerned turning a point and indulging in unctuous irony.

What Mme. Coulomb lacked was the skill to make a judicially complete story of a mixture of already published and well-known facts, of half-truths, lies and slander with a series of letters partly genuine and partly invented. But then, nobody could do that; the facts and the genuine parts would defeat the most hardy cunning. Mme. C. had to fit in a false side to well-known circumstances; and the result is a muddle. The book may seem simply disgusting, or somewhat amusing, according to the reader's temper. Perhaps most modern readers would feel at first a remarkably unpleasant sensation as of some stinging creature lurking, but would occasionally give way to amusement, finally wondering how anyone ever came to accept this document as evidence.

The "Author" who had just sold to the Madras Scottish Free Church missionaries for publication a confession of prolonged swindling, begins her Preface: "This pamphlet has originated in the unscrupulous attacks on my character."

One of these "attacks" was made by a witness who told how Mme. C. extracted a loan of a hundred rupees from him, declaring that she had seen clairvoyantly a treasure buried in the house of a miserably poor person; but, even after getting

a further loan of twenty-five rupees from the poor person himself, she failed to find the treasure and never returned the rupees. ("Result of Observations made during a nine-months' stay at the Theosophical Headquarters, Madras." By F. Hartmann, M.D. Madras, September, 1884. P. 26.)

But the attacks against this lady's character had been put in due form long before she sold for publication in the "Christian College Magazine", Sep.-Oct., 1884, what she calls the "Blavatsky correspondence"; this correspondence being entirely one-sided, and consisting mainly of mere notes and of extracts from nineteen out of about seventy letters allegedly written by Madame Blavatsky to the Coulomb and her husband—the nineteen having been selected by the Rev. Patterson, Editor of the "C.C.M." as incriminating Madame Blavatsky and proving her to have carried on fraud over some years with the assistance of the Coulombs.

The truth was that in the previous May, 84, the Coulombs had been expelled from the Society on account of charges made in affidavits by several European and Indian members of the T.S. The couple had resisted to the last. Mr. Coulomb had even shown holes in walls and sliding-panels, the which he declared he had made by Madame Blavatsky's orders. Madame Coulomb demanded 3,000 Rupees as the price of her departure. It was all in vain. The Board of Control turned them out.

What neither of the couple did was to threaten to produce any letters. Olcott's remark in "Old Diary Leaves", Vol. 3, p.179, that Mme. C. offered to sell letters before she was expelled, is contradicted by Mme. Coulomb herself. Olcott was in Europe at the time. Mr. Lane-Fox, who was on the spot, made no mention of any letters. Dr. Hartmann, President of the Board, writes ironically in his pamphlet (P.56): "It is reasonable to suppose that if the letters had already existed when the Coulombs left headquarters, my friend, Mrs. Coulomb would have informed me about it". This is certainly reasonable, seeing that the Coulombs were desperately trying to extract blackmail. A long letter from H.P.B. to Mme. C., dated from Paris, April 2nd, reproaches Mme. C. with her "trapdoor" yarns, but ignores any threat to produce letters. Finally, Judge J. B. Gribble, the missionaries' handwriting expert, states ("Report of an examination into the

Blavatsky correspondence," P. 22.) that Mme. C. told them that she first wrote threatening Madame Blavatsky "about the end of April", and that she made no threat to the Board until after she had been expelled. As we shall see, *about the end of April*, Mme. C. was writing an imploring and abject letter to H.P.B. It is probable that she wrote previously a blackmailing letter on quite another subject, namely, H.P.B.'s connection with the revolutionary Metrovitch.

\* \* \*

Certainly, no letters were produced. But, on Aug. 9th, about three months after the expulsion of the Coulobms, who were provided with a lodging by the missionaries through a member of their congregation, a Mrs. Dyer, Mme. Coulobm asked for an interview with the Rev. Patterson and offered to sell him a whole bundle. The letters proved to be "in the main a collection of letters purely private or dealing with Theosophical affairs" (Mr. Patterson in "The British Weekly", May 21st, 1891). But there were nineteen of an incriminating nature, written in a hand so like the rest that the missionary, after asking the opinion "of some gentlemen with banking experience", decided that their verdict of guilty against Madame Blavatsky warranted him in publishing the letters; the which he did, together with an attack on the Theosophical Society under the lurid title, "Collapse of Koot Hoomi".

Kcot Hoomi was a name that signified one of the Mahatmas connected with the Society.

## 2.

Some of the pamphlets published and signed by reverends in 1884-5, and even much later, against Madame Blavatsky would really be almost impossible today as coming from clerical pens. In fact, the upshot of one's delvings into these productions is the conclusion that, then, anyone might safely say what he pleased against her. The Madras Bench was known to be hostile to the Theosophical Society. The Government was considerably wiser, valuing the good effect the T.S. had worked on Indian loyalty; and later, the outrage on Indian sentiment committed by the Society for Psychical Research when this body denounced every native connected

with the Theosophical Society as either a dupe or a confederate, thus causing the most insulting pain to hundreds of good Indian families, was duly corrected by Lord Connemara, who, in 1888, invited Colonel Olcott, the President-Founder of the T.S., to Government House. One may imagine the faces of magistrates and reverends who were obliged, there, at least, to keep their incivility in their pockets.

Among the reverends who distinguished themselves was a certain Mr. R. Ethol Welsh, M.A. This gentleman wrote a treatise, "The Truth about Theosophy". He reproduced a plan of the famous "Occult Room" with the "Shrine", the cabinet that was used at Adyar Headquarters for correspondence with the Mahatmas. There were only two plans of the Shrine and surroundings ever known; one is in Dr. Hartmann's pamphlet, and the other, drawn by W. Q. Judge, was pirated by Hodgson of the S.P.R. and reproduced as his own in his Report ("H.P.B. and the Masters." By Annie Besant. P. 43.). Hodgson improved on this plan, and Mr. Welsh took the tip.

Hartmann's authentic plan places the Shrine too far beyond the hole in the wall, made by Mr. Coulobm, to be of any use for the fraud of passing letters through that hole; in this further agreeing with the evidence given by witnesses before the Adyar Defence Committee to the effect that Coulobm had miscalculated. ("Report of an Investigation into the charges against Madame Blavatsky." Jan. 1885, P. 14.). But this nonsense won't do for the Rev. Welsh. He sees, as so many saw, that things did not fit; so, he shoves up the Shrine to the hole! I have a copy of his pamphlet with the drawing before my eyes. Still, this ingenuity is only of a piece with the whole campaign, than which, perhaps, nothing more unscrupulous was ever left on stark record.

## 3.

Dr. Hartmann's pamphlet was written originally as a private report to the General Council of the T.S. It was in the press before the Rev. Patterson's "Collapse of Koot Hoomi!" appeared, and was marked, "Private and Confidential". When the alleged letters appeared, Hartmann immediately issued his Report to the public. It is almost as

amusing as instructive. He had an easy pen, and he draws around Mme. Coulomb a circle wherein she stands before us like an enchanted little ogress (P.24.):

"Soon after my arrival at Adyar [Dec. 83.], I was introduced to a female who was addressed as 'Madame Coulomb', and who, as I soon had occasion to find out, was not only the independent master of all the household, but was suffered to 'boss' Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, and woe to him who would accidentally step on her toes!

"Imagine a weird, witch-like creature, with wrinkled features and a stinging look, and an uncouth form. Her duty was to patronise the servants to nurse like a mother a decrepid old horse and several mangy dogs, which were unable to walk. She seemed to consider it her especial purpose in life to pry into everybody's private affairs, pick up stray letters here and there, probably for the purpose of studying the handwriting; she attempted to wriggle herself into the confidence of newcomers, and had a way of finding out their secrets by pretending to tell their fortunes by means of a pack of cards; while at the same time she would try to awaken the sympathy of strangers by her tales, how from a life of luxury she had sunk down to a position of servitude, and if she found a willing ear, she would never hesitate to insinuate that the whole Society was a humbug, the phenomena produced by fraud, and that 'she could tell many things if only she wanted to do so'.

"She would tell the aspirant for Theosophical honours, kindly and confidentially, that Colonel Olcott was a fool, who was led by the nose by Madame Blavatsky. If asked to explain herself, she would say: 'My mouth is shut up, I cannot talk against the people whose bread I eat', and when she was told that occult phenomena occurred even when Madame Blavatsky was thousands of miles away, she would say that 'she knew what she knew'."

Mme. C. was a bit of a medium, pretended to clairvoyance, and had picked up a few hints in Egypt. Hartmann depicts her as composing "magic mirrors" and trying to conjure Elementals amid burning incense.

"For all these valuable services, Madame Coulomb claimed no wages. She had arrived at headquarters penniless and been taken into the house of Madame Blavatsky out of

charity, and been given full control over everything, including the purse; and when she left headquarters, she sported a large roll of bank-notes. (The household expenses since the Coulombs left, have been each month 230 to 270 Rupees less than the monthly expenses during their presence.) It seems, therefore, that her unremunerated stay at headquarters was a financial success after all; but Madame Coulomb did 'a little trading' on her own account . . .

"Having paid my respects to Madame Coulomb, it behoves us to look at the appendix. Imagine a ghostly Frenchman with the complexion of an ash-barrel, to which is attached a black beard. While he speaks with you, his one glass eye stares you out of countenance, while his other eye, with characteristic politeness, wanders out of your way. Mr. Coulomb enjoyed the reputation of being a man of great valour, and if you could hear him swear and curse and yell in French at the coolies, you would have thought that he was without fear. In fact, his frequent violent outbursts of passion had produced the universal belief in the neighbourhood that it would be dangerous to contradict him . . .

"Mr. Coulomb held nominally the office of a librarian and man of all work. He was a mechanic and carpenter, expert in making trap-doors and sliding-panels; but his accomplishments were then neither fully known nor appreciated, and while Madame Coulomb's talk was listened to by us as the innocent twaddle of a cranky old woman, her appendix was treated with great civility to avoid having him go into a fit of hysterics or epilepsies."

Here we have the worthy couple drawn from life. But I think that Dr. Hartmann should have said that Madame Coulomb gained only gradually control of the purse and became suffered to 'boss' everyone. The couple, in the course of four years from their advent at Bombay on March 28th, 1880, had managed to make themselves apparently indispensable, for they ran the household; Olcott and H.P.B. could go away for weeks and months and return with no domestic worry. Mr. C. was willing to do anything wanted, make a new door, mend the roof, build a new room, anything—so long as he was left free and never crossed in his suggestions. He made walls and cupboards and panels just as he pleased, for nobody else understood anything about build-



ing and carpentering. Nobody ever asked him what he was doing. Nobody suspected him at all. To the very end, until there was no doubt possible, both Olcott and H.P.B. confided in his "honneur"; the letters that both wrote from Paris, even after the Board of Control had begun its investigations, indicate that they believed Mr. Coulomb to be himself the victim of his wife's archi-known evil tongue.

With a kind of automatic necessity that she often exhibits, Mme. C. publishes these letters in her pamphlet (P.83 and onwards. See Appendix to present volume.). She also publishes a letter to Col. Olcott, written by her husband, that must be almost unexampled for unctuous cunning. Outside Balzac and Dickens, such a couple was rarely put together. If Mr. Coulomb had been equipped to compose in English, instead of being reduced to copy his wife's concoctions in an imitation of Madame Blavatsky's handwriting, the "Coulomb pamphlet" might have been a much stiffer business to deal with. He could read English, was an expert draughtsman and could copy anything . . . good reasons for H.P.B.'s enemies to keep him in the background. And they did so.

It has been asked—how Madame Blavatsky could tolerate the Coulombs? Tolerate? I think that she was absolutely terrified of losing these domestic jewels. Who would not be so? And H.P.B. utterly incompetent at house-keeping! We discern from one of the genuine letters so strangely inserted by Mme. C., what was H.P.B.'s innate attitude of impatient or humorous indulgence towards the useful dependent who finally got such a hold . . . but who realised, with incurable resentment, that she could never walk around this wonderful personage, could never be superior outside the kitchen. This letter was written from Ootacamund, August, 1883; *at the very same moment* as Mme. C. pretends to have received several of the most imbecile, illiterate and vulgar of the letters she sold to the Rev. Patterson. Madame Blavatsky's letter is in French, and, as it is not one of the "fraud" letters, I correct slightly Madame C.'s translation:

"Ma chère amie, I am sending you a large box of flowers—forget-me-nots, reseda, violets, etc. The plants will be well watered at the roots, but I am afraid that they may arrive faded, although with their roots. They must be planted and kept always in the shade; that sun of Madras would kill

them in no time. I shall bring two more boxes with me.

"Yes, you may take the carriage and go wherever you please, even to the Archbishop's. Neither carriage nor horse can catch bad magnetism, and I am no bigot to prevent you or anyone else from going to church; it is you only who risk catching a moral, if not physical, scabies there. A lady here became possessed after going to church. Nice place! And you call yourself a Christian? But read the injunction of your Christ: he forbids going to church and doing like the Pharisees. However, it is your look-out, ma belle amie, your affair.

"Sincerely yours, church and flapdoodle notwithstanding,

"H. P. Blavatsky."

\* \* \*

Maybe, Mme. Coulomb printed this merely to impress her piety upon her Christian readers; but also, perhaps, she felt a longing to perpetuate this record of other days, days of toleration and indulgence, days of a sure home, days forever gone. When she copied it out for print, people whom she had known, and perhaps 'bossed', at Adyar, were drawing their robes aside as they passed her in the street. The diseased dogs which she kept to alarm the high-caste Brahmin visitors to Adyar, were not more untouchable to these than she now to the veriest pariah recipient of Theosophical charity.

4.

But there was a charming reason for H.P.B.'s toleration of Mme. C. Years back, in Cairo, 1872, Mme. C. had done her a service. H.P.B.'s mistaken "Société Spirite" had only been running a fortnight. One day, she went out to visit a Copt friend in the Desert, and, during her absence, the mediums whom she had engaged organised a fraudulent séance, and were caught by the sitters. Mme. C. says (P.3.) that she arrived to find the room in an uproar: "I went away, leaving the crowd red as fire, ready to knock her down when she came back". Meeting Madame Blavatsky a few days later, she heard the story and, calling next day, found that H.P.B. was temporarily short of money; and Mme. Coulomb lent some small sums. She writes: "She granted

me receipts, which I left in my boxes in Egypt when I came away." Unfortunate! But, a letter from Mme. C. to Madame Blavatsky, produced by the Adyar Defence Committee, shows that H.P.B. had given her a valuable cloth, presumably to cover the debt. In the same letter, Mme. C. begs for a loan of Rs. 200, offers security, and makes not the least claim as an old and unpaid creditor. Letter dates from Ceylon, June 10th, 1879, when Mme. Coulomb first read in the papers that Madame Blavatsky had arrived in India. (Report of an Investigation into the charges against Madame Blavatsky." Appendix VIII. 6.)

Nevertheless, in 1872, Mme. Coulomb made life a little less dismal for H.P.B. during those days of distress of all kinds; and, when the Coulobms arrived penniless at Bombay, their fares having been advanced, with alacrity, by the French Consul at Galle, Ceylon, they were given a welcome and a shelter, although they had come unannounced.

H.P.B.'s distress at Cairo was not only due to cheating mediums, or even to pecuniary straits. There was something that troubled her much more.

Her aunt, Madame N. Fadeev, had heard that she was in Egypt and had begged a friend, or a family acquaintance, a man named Metrovitch, to find her and beg her to come home. H.P.B. had not been home for over six years. Metrovitch was the most famous operatic basso of his day. He was also a revolutionary, one of the ever-hunted Carbonaros; a secret unlikely to have been confided to the orthodox Mme. Fadeev, but known to H.P.B. He arrived in Alexandria, and, somehow, H.P.B. received information that the hunters were on his track. She persuaded him to hide for ten days in her apartment at Cairo. Metrovitch could not endure the seclusion; he left, intending to return to Alexandria, but, on the way, at Ramleh, he was struck down by a mysterious illness. The famous Russian traveller, Madame Lydia Paschkoff, wired the news to Madame Blavatsky, who immediately set off for Ramleh. Metrovitch died; and, as the Christian Church refused to bury a Mazzinist, H.P.B. buried the body herself on the seashore.

The story of Metrovitch's death as told by Count Witte in his "Memoirs" (or, alleged Memoirs) namely, that Metrovitch was killed in the ship, "Eumonia" that blew up at

sea in June, 1871, would seem doubtful, even if we had nothing but inference to go on. Such an end of the celebrated singer would have been wired from end to end of Europe. But, our friend, Mme. Coulomb, knew of him in Cairo in 1872; so that's that. Metrovitch vanished; and H.P.B. tells us how ("Letters from H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett", p.190.). Mme. C. probably actually saw Metrovitch when he was in hiding at H.P.B.'s, for we read on page 189 (ibid): "All this mystery and precaution made Mme. C. open her eyes and ears and she began gossiping and bothering me to tell her whether it was true—what people said—that I was secretly married to him, she not daring I suppose to say that people believed him most charitably *worse* than a husband. I sent her to grass, and told her that people might say and believe what they liked as I didn't care. This is the *germ* of all the later gossip".

Mme. C. showed Hodgson of the S.P.R. a letter (never produced for profane gaze) wherein Madame Blavatsky is alleged to say that she "had been filling a page" in Cairo, 1872, which she wished might be "torn out of the book of her life" (S.P.R. Report, Dec. 1885, p.315.). The Rev. Patterson also referred to this "page", in the *Christian College Magazine*, April, 1885. And, of course, the charitable once more imagined the worst; and H.P.B. must have gone up one in their secret opinion; car c'est comme cela avec cette bête-là. Whether or no any such letter ever existed, unless forged by Mr. Coulomb, is of no moment here. What concerns us is that Madame Blavatsky herself says that the Coulomb knew about Metrovitch. That Hodgson had made enquiries and discovered Metrovitch's political reputation is indicated by the circumstance that he placed his dark reference to the "page" to support his famous *canard* that H.P.B. was a Russian spy. None the less, he expressed himself in a manner to awaken suspicions of other kinds of mystery than political: "This part of her history does not concern us at present [!], except that it proves the story of her Tibetan experiences to be fabulous". Comprehend who may. The inference many people drew was that he had discovered things in Cairo . . . where he discovered nothing but the excellent opinion in which Madame Blavatsky was held by the Russian officials and the colony there; his venomous remarks about all Russians sug-

gesting that he had been received for what he was, a sleuth, and "sent to grass". However, he got the tongues wagging in London and for a while H.P.B. figured as *une grande amoureuse!*

As well as being nobody's business, the story is scarcely supported. Count Witte's memoirs that repeat the old gossip, bear marks of adulteration; even facts that Witte must have known are wildly misstated, and things he could not have known, *because they never existed*, are stated as if eye-witnessed. Besides the improbability that a Russian nobleman would set so *clumsily* about family déboutonnage, a liaison, as here described, lasting over twenty years between the famous opera-singer and a woman of good family—and that woman the ever-discussed Helena Petrovna—would have been European gossip, the sport of every Society rag of the period. Fifty years' scavenging by the enemy has drawn a blank!

"Ephesian", the Mysterious Monsieur, whose sense of virtue and what not and so on seems so sensitive on this point, tells *us* that somebody told *him* that somebody told *her* that somebody told *him* that Madame Blavatsky had had a child. The evidence—a photo of H.P.B. with a child—was unfortunately destroyed by the Bolcheviks! "Ephesian's" book contains some few hundred mis-statements, many of them apparently quite deliberate, and to any student of the subject, he makes himself appear a dull, perky, sanctimonious person devoid of conscience; next time he writes on H.P.B., he might do worse than call in our old mutual colleague, the brilliant "Charles Brookfarmer", to do the documentation for him; for the "friend" he mentions as assistant has let him down badly.

But, let us accept "Ephesian's" chin-wag with the slanderous old Baroness as leading us to the bosom of Truth; admit the impossible—that H.P.B. had had a child. Did she smother it, desert it? No. She took it to her own family and got it petted and loved, and had her photo taken with it. She flew with it to the best physicians, and never left it until it died.

\* \* \*

All this she did—and for a *child that was not hers!*

There is cast-iron medical evidence that she was never a

mother. If the certificate to this effect is not evidence, then nothing any surgeon signs can be considered evidence. Olcott published this certificate in 1904, while the surgeon was alive, for Dr. Leon Oppenheim of Würzburg only died in 1912. His certificate was witnessed by Dr. Med. Roeder, Royal Medical Officer of the District, and it says: "As proven by a minute examination, she has never borne a child". A letter from Countess Wachtmeister to Olcott, only recently exhumed from the Adyar catacombs, enclosed a second certificate given on Feb. 10th, 1886, a few days after the examination of H.P.B.\* It adds that H.P.B. was never even pregnant, and is only less valuable because it is given in English, and is unwitnessed. Perhaps Adyar will see the necessity of reproducing the original, for the enemies of Madame Blavatsky are no more likely to accept mere statements from Adyar than a Christian apologist to accept statements from the Vatican, and, as in the case of the latter, every year that passes lessens the value of documents that frequently change hands. Fortunately, we have had a good deal from Adyar in recent years in photographic form, and there is now accessible, from this and other Theosophical groups, so much cross-correspondence that practically every question may be confidently tackled by students.

\* \* \*

I cannot here give more space to this subject that has only a hoot of importance as showing that H.P.B. was no fraud in this matter *either*. I merely exclaim, "Grande amoureuse? Bon voyage! Not a line of all her enormous production breathes the breath of Aphrodite, but much breathes the startled maiden aunt. When she writes to Sinnett about the ladies who fell in love with Mohini, she cannot find natural expression, she becomes *literary*, flies to the Bible and ancient Greece and Rome for parallels, and one ends in fits of laughter over her handling of this dreadful "Potiphar" scandal.

Her "Confession", that, as others have remarked, is no confession at all, betrays the same ignorance. The magnificent introduction is a piece of herself, her genius, but much of the rest is reminiscences of Balzac. She may have picked

\* "Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky." By Mary K. Neff. (Rider)

up a lot *about* "immorality" from the numerous persons who sought her as a clairvoyant, but the truth concerning herself is certainly that it suited her when young to be supposed *une galante* while really she was delving into the occult sciences and travelling here and there with both men and women similarly occupied with the mysteries. Incidentally, my opinion of the various itineraries given out is that they are one and all "blinds". The Theosophists who opine that she was not in Tibet with the Master before 1857 and, also, that in that year, she was sent on an *occult foreign service* errand, do not consider the degree of training required.

\* \* \*

Fascinating. But I must return to Hodgson, his "page" and his obvious knowledge of the real position with regard to Metrovitch. And what a painful position for H.P.B. in India, in 1880, eight years later! If the Indian Government had known that she had sheltered a revolutionary in Egypt at a time when that country was running for revolt, things might have gone disastrously for the infant Theosophical Society. Small wonder if H.P.B. did wish that that page had never been written and if she felt some gratitude to Mme. Coulomb for keeping the secret! It seems likely that H.P.B. may have asked her to be silent and that Mme. Coulomb afterwards worked up the request into a letter of confession. And I think that this secret was the only secret there ever was between Madame Blavatsky and the Coulomb.

5.

The couple arrived at Bombay headquarters on March 28th, 1880. As H.P.B. and Olcott were just off for their first Theosophical tour of Ceylon, and as a certain Miss Bates, a journalist who had come with them from America, was a poor house-keeper, this lady was given charge of the Society's journal, "The Theosophist"—and Mme. C. took over the household. Olcott found a job as mechanic for Mr. Coulomb, but the latter was "difficult about employers", and soon left. Meanwhile, he had begun to make his merit felt at headquarters; he chipped and sawed and made and mended and became gradually so indispensable as handy-man

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that presently he was given a regular status in the house. He was politely alluded to as the Librarian—of the library that had still to be collected. There is no doubt that the couple worked hard and meant to keep their situation.

But Mme. Coulomb was a jealous, resentful and morbidly ambitious small person. She was supposed by the Indians to be a bigot, but there are no signs of real religious bigotry; she exploited piety. However, she positively did not believe in the Mahatmas or that Madame Blavatsky knew any secrets of occult science. Any phenomenon she could not explain by fraud she set down to "spirits" or—Old Nick. Having read a good many books on spiritualism, fortune-telling and conjuring, having a certain mild education that included, besides Italian, some knowledge of English and French and her mind being a mere embryo behind the stuff in her memory, the happenings at the headquarters irritated her. For, although she and her husband had joined the Society, she found herself excluded from the Theosophical mysteries. The fact of this exclusion peeps out from many of her pages. She knew, as others knew, what happened *when* it happened, but she never knew what was *going on*. There is not a shred of evidence that the most amateur *chela*, or aspirant to occult knowledge, ever gave her a single confidence.

Her pages are made up of stories that were known and archi-known, many of them long since published in the "Theosophist" and in "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy" and "The Occult World". To these stories, she tried to fit an explanation giving herself and spouse a conspiratorial importance in these occult phenomena about which they had never been told more than any other outside witness. Several astounding phenomena, to which she fitted an "explanation" after Hodgson arrived in India to investigate for the S.P.R., are not so much as mentioned in her pamphlet. She left out the yarn she told him about her one and only appearance disguised as a Mahatma. She forgot that! She forgot, also, to narrate how she undid Professor Smith's letter, that had been sewn through and through with silk, and sewed it up again by means of a hair. She never remembered this performance until Hodgson began to put his questions. The probability is that she had never heard of either of the phenomena concerned before Hodgson met her in Madras.

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There were only two chelas as witnesses to the first phenomenon, Mahatma K.H.'s appearance to Mohini at Adyar, just before the latter sailed for Europe, Feb. 1884; and there seems to have been no public reference either to this or to the "sewn letter", that Professor Smith received back with the silk intact but with a Mahatmic note inside, before Mohini and Olcott gave their evidence in London to the Committee of the S.P.R.

She remained an outsider. Her book shows that as late as September 1882, after nearly three years of alleged intimate confederacy in fraud—she was reduced to guessing on the subject of H.P.B.'s visit to Darjeeling, the circumstances of which were known to several chelas at headquarters.

All these *insults* to such a clever person! In one of the strangest passages in her book, one that must have made the padris realise that their brand would be hard to pluck from the burning, she writes: "Having witnessed some very painful instances of people who have ruined their brains in looking for this philosopher's stone (the Mahatmas), I tried to arrange Theosophy without Mahatmas . . . but instead of finding reasonable people who might have helped me to carry it out, I found only bigotry and obstinacy". Her ambition, as we see, was no small thing; nothing less than to run a Theosophical Society on a plan of her own.

Where she ventures to invent a story around some phenomenon, her tale falls to pieces against the records. Many pages of her pamphlet might almost be discarded; anyone who had read the many accounts of phenomena given in the "Theosophist" and elsewhere, could say what she says, if they had a mind. She *says*, that Madame Blavatsky asked her to tell Olcott falsely that she had seen a figure in the garden. But what necessity was there for H.P.B. to bother with lies about "figures"? Olcott had not only seen his Master in speaking astral form in New York, but had met him in the flesh at Bombay, before the Coulombs came, and had a ten minutes' talk with him about the business of the Society ("Hints" etc., No. I, p. 110. 1909 ed.) Mme. C. comes a bad fall over this. On P. 9, she explains to "my readers" why she behaved so badly to the Colonel, he "so gentlemanly and kind": "Madame Blavatsky told me that she did all these things to divert the Colonel's mind from

certain painful occurrences that he had experienced while in America, and that if she had not got over him by these means, he certainly would have destroyed himself".

The Coulombs only arrived in March, 1880. On June 11th, 1879, Olcott had been in a fit of depression, ready to give up and return to America, when he received a stinging letter from Mahatma M., reproaching him with lack of courage, ("Letters from the Masters." Vol. 2, p. 68.). On July 4th, Olcott laid the basis of the "Theosophist", and never looked back any more. By the time the Coulombs arrived, the journal had begun to pay its way, many new Branches had been formed in India, and the Colonel was just off to tour Ceylon. In fact, he was already in his glory. Possibly H.P.B. had dropped an incautious word to Mme. C. about the past, or the lady had had her ear at a keyhole sometime when H.P.B. and Olcott were laughing at their old troubles. Her tale, anyway, is all holes.

She *says*, that H.P.B. asked her to embroider names on handkerchiefs that were to be used for fraud. But, in Feb. 1879, long before the C.'s appeared, H.P.B. had done a phenomenon for Ross Scott, who snatched her handkerchief embroidered with her name, Heliona, and challenged her to cause this to disappear and another name, that he chose, to appear; and this was done ("Old Diary Leaves", Vol. 2, p. 17.). Also, on the ship going to Ceylon, while she was said by the Coulomb to be carrying with her three ready embroidered handkerchiefs for fraud, Madame Blavatsky did a similar phenomenon for the chief engineer, Elliot, whom she had never heard of before, he holding the handkerchief embroidered with H.P.B.'s name. (Ibid, p. 153.).

She *says*, that she cut a slit in the ceiling-cloth in Olcott's room, a slit large enough to pass through an envelope containing a portrait the size of a flat half-sheet of the Colonel's New York club note-paper, on which the portrait had been "precipitated". (This is the portrait that Hodgson describes as "possibly worked in over a photograph"! S.P.R. Report, p. 373.). If neither the Colonel nor anyone else could ever see the slit, although it must have been there for months—well, we must give up all we think we know about human eyesight. There must have been several slits, however, for the records show that things fell in various spots in this room. Yet,

Mme. C. says that in order to reach the slit, she had to make a hole in the boarded ceiling above, to pass the "whole length of her arm to reach the cloth". The hole, besides being moveable, must have been big enough to pass the flat paper mounted on cardboard, too. Those cloths hang very loosely; cats get in them. Just imagine the Coulomb lying on the floor with her arm through the hole and jiggling to find the slit—and, once or twice, with several people present to observe the tempest in the cloth! The common phenomenon of an *apport*, of which there must be now about a hundred thousand instances on record, was altogether too much for the S.P.R., preaching the gospel of its patronne, Madame Coulomb; but her miracles were believed merely on her assertion that she did them. "Madame Coulomb asserts . . ."! For instance, one evening, the Dewan of Cochin asked Madame Blavatsky for her visiting card. She gave him one, but he said he wanted one phenomenally produced. In a moment, a second card fluttered down. Well, Mme. C. slipped that card through the slit. She says so. She must have foreseen the Dewan's challenge, or else annihilated Time. She lets slip the evidence that she had read about the phenomenon "on page 107 of *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy*".

6.

As might be expected, Mme. Coulomb's pamphlet is "all over the shop"; no worse, however, in this respect than Hodgson's Report, the which I was obliged to take to pieces and re-arrange, to save myself exasperation and the pages from being turned and re-turned to rags—no wonder that so few readers fathomed its vice!

Mme. C. prints as "Letter I." a screed containing a desperate insult to a rather important friend of the Society, the Maharajah of Benares; but although a good flashy send-off, it is not first in order, even such order as one can establish. I shall reduce these undated productions to as near chronological order as the references in them allow, although the task is rather like dealing with letters from Bedlam. I have no doubt left that Hodgson and the missionaries soon realised that there were enormous "howlers" in these letters, and

that this was one of the reasons why they were never published in full, never given to Theosophists for examination of the paper and ink—*post-marked envelopes, with one exception, being lacking!*—and why no attempt was made to date them. The "incriminating" passages were nineteen, mostly short, sometimes only a few words written on scraps of paper; and these were all there were to seize among seventy letters written over a period of four years!

Of the nineteen, seven consist of six lines, or less, several being of only two and a half or three lines; three, of eleven to eighteen lines of ordinary epistolary matter, with from two to four lines of sudden leap into fraud *at the very end*, and, for all we know, on a separate sheet of paper; one has eighteen epistolary lines, with a startling one and a half of fraud splashed in the middle, at the *end* of a paragraph; three, of eleven, thirteen and twenty-nine lines, respectively, are mingled epistolary and fraud, looking sometimes as if genuine domestic orders and references to real every-day events had been twisted to seem suspicious—and these letters, precisely, were exposed as inventions by Adyar witnesses whom they concerned; five, of nine to eighteen lines, apply to fraud, and they read mainly like communications from a lunatic asylum; the last, the famous "Sassoon telegram" letter, opens with *sixty-one* ordinary epistolary lines, and then comes a bolt from the blue in the shape of fourteen lines relating to a proposed fraud. These lines form the *end* paragraph of a letter of the paper of which we *have* some description.

Mr. Gribble, the amateur calligraphist called in by the Rev. Patterson after the "Collapse" articles in the "C.C.M." had excited some indignation, was a retired petty judge and an occasional contributor to the Rev. Patterson's journal. His opinion of the possible existence of Mahatmas may only be guessed, for he takes care not to express it but only insists on his impartiality. We may safely enough guess that he could not believe H.P.B. to be anything but a humbug. But, his training as a judge told in more than one instance and he did not deny the evidence of his eyes. He said, with reference to a sliding-panel shown him that it was "evidently of recent construction" and that "it would be difficult to produce any phenomena by its means". His pamphlet on the handwriting frequently verges on the serio-comic, but,

with regard to this letter of the sixty-one lines with the last-paragraph sudden bolt from the blue, he seems to have felt it incumbent on him to state that it was written on—two sheets of grey paper and one of pink.

If the Theosophists had ever been allowed to examine the paper of these letters . . . but then, they were not allowed.

Major-General Morgan, a Theosophist, who had many letters from H.P.B., demanded to see a "fraud" letter that actually named him. This was the only time any letter was ever shown to the Theosophists. He says in his "Reply to a Report of an examination by J. D. B. Gribble", given on p. 119 of the Adyar Report: "What struck me at once was the general character of the forged letter, that showed the letters to be more sloping than in the true ones, and this is exactly what the forger overlooked". Again: "The letter in question, which I examined in company with three other persons, quite as competent as Mr. Gribble to pronounce on the matter, is certainly a forgery."

## II.

THE FIRST SIX LETTERS: allegedly from Simla, Sep-Oct. 1880.

### I.

By May 17th, 1880, Madame Blavatsky and Olcott had returned from the Ceylon tour to find Miss Bates and Madame Coulomb engaged in a fierce domestic war for supremacy. Miss Bates declared that Mme. C. had tried to poison her. This accusation struck the Colonel as sheer nonsense, but it was with some difficulty that he persuaded a certain Wimbridge, who, with Miss Bates, had accompanied the Founders from New York to Bombay—to join him in "forcing the belligerents to consent to an 'armed neutrality'". Day by day, however, things grew worse. In the middle of all this, came an invitation to H.P.B. and Olcott from A. P. Sinnett, then Editor of the "Pioneer", a Government organ. Sinnett had long been interested in psychical research, had joined the Theosophical Society and had already, in Dec. 1879, entertained the Founders at his house at Allahabad. He was now at his summer residence in Simla, and he invited them there. They arrived in Simla on Sep. 7th, having left the house-party in separate bungalows in the compound and at daggers drawn.

\* \* \*

Mme. Coulomb writes (P. 13.): "When Madame Blavatsky had decided to go to Simla, she asked me whether I would have time to embroider three handkerchiefs with blue silk letters. I complied with her desire, and worked the name A. P. Sinnett on each of them. Two were laid one on the top of the other, and after carefully fastening the four sides firmly, making the letters of the two handkerchiefs meet exactly one on top of the other, the two were cut crossways, thus dividing the name 'sin' [sic] on one side and 'nett' on the other. The third handkerchief was left uncut. One of these handkerchiefs cut in two was left with me, the other she took with her along with the uncut one. The phenomenon was to be performed in the following way: Madame Blavatsky was to bring round the conversation with regard to the

phenomenon she meant to perform, then, taking the uncut handkerchief, she was to cut it across with a pair of scissors, and then, by a *léger de main* substitute the other half fellow to mine; she would give it in the hand of Mr. Sinnett, pretending that she had sent the other half to Bombay [by occult means]. This *léger de main* that Madame performs is facilitated by the large sleeves she wears. The two handkerchiefs were cut, as I said, exactly one on the other, in order that the part chosen by Mr. Sinnett would exactly fit one of the two halves she had left with me; she was to send me a telegram with conventional initials, and according to what initials they were, I would know which part of the handkerchief I was to choose, and in what place I was to put it."

\* \* \*

On page 30, Mme. C. gives a bit of advice to "the public": "If the public desire to have an idea as to how the phenomena are performed, I would advise it to try and get a book called 'Memoirs of Robert Houdin', translated from the French."

It would scarcely be surprising if therein were to be found a handkerchief trick rather like the above, or if the copy in the Coulomb's library were pretty well thumbed!

\* \* \*

As a matter of fact, no phenomenon resembling the above is on record as done at Simla or anywhere else. Olcott writes that, soon after their arrival, "H.P.B. drew out of a handkerchief marked with her name a second one marked, by request, with Mr. Sinnett's name in the same style of embroidery". This phenomenon was talked about, and doubtless, Mme. C. heard of it some time. But there was another that she appears never to have heard of. On Oct. 16th, H.P.B. produced at a picnic, from a handkerchief *steeped in a saucer of water*, a duplicate with *Mrs. Sinnett's* name in the corner ("O.D.L." Vol. 2, p. 243.).

Having consulted her "Houdin", perhaps, H.P.B., according to the Coulomb (P. 15), arranged a set of those "conventional initials" to suit her personages. The scheme seems to condemn the "H.P.B." of the fraud letters as an illiterate noodle. However, "she" took precautions to hide her identity from a possibly unsympathetic world.

Letter I. (P. 15.)

Si je vous télégraphie je signerai *J. Morgan*. Mes lettres sont elles arrivées enfin? Mes lettres adressées A. ou Z. ou B. ou n'importe quelle initiale? Ne les perdez pas de grâce. Mes saluts at amitiés à Mr. Coulomb. A vous,

H.P.B.

If I telegraph to you I shall sign *J. Morgan*. Have my letters arrived at last? My letters addressed A. or Z. or B. or any other initial? Do not lose them please. My salutations etc., to Mr. Coulomb, Yours, H.P.B.

"On a square bit of paper" says Mme. Coulomb, "are drawn lines which are meant to represent a handkerchief, and where the instructions written by Madame Blavatsky read as follows:—"

Any letters  
addressed S.?  
veut dire\* sin  
(or) any letters addressed  
(S. or D.) B. (Bridge)  
M. or G.  
according to the  
number of the  
alphabet  
Il Signor

Any letters addressed  
D.? (v.d. net

Any letters addressed  
S. or D.) Rex (Regina)  
Z.

Dio

\* \* \*

I feel obliged to put some stars between me and this mystery.

What I think must have happened is that Mme. C. and consort had vainly tried to puzzle out in English some foreign conjuror's instructions, and to work out a scheme of initials to fit their plot and personages; and that this bit of paper on which Mr. Coulomb was imitating H.P.B.'s hand under his spouse's directing eye, had been thrown aside and the attempt abandoned; but that the paper having slipped among the bundle sold to the Rev. Patterson, they had to stick to it as being Madame Blavatsky's "instructions". The Dio at the end sounds like an exasperated swear at the unexpected difficulties.

\* Means.



At this period, the Theosophical Society was heavily under Government suspicion. A detective was always on H.P.B.'s tracks, and her letters were certainly scrutinised. Olcott was trying to get the detective taken off and was in correspondence with the Indian Government. The notion of Madame Blavatsky sending telegrams from Simla Post-Office to Mme. C. at Bombay Theosophical Headquarters, signed J. Morgan . . . !

Almost needless to say, the Coulombs *never produced any telegrams*. Letters could be forged, but telegrams from Simla could not be forged; and so, the Rev. Patterson got none . . . and accommodatingly overlooked this lacuna in the bundle of "proofs".

2.

Letter II. is on page 18. In the last paragraph and the post-script occur two references that afford us an interesting date and some equally interesting speculations. I think that the screed is made up of several genuine bits of news from different letters, with a little bit of fraud-plot introduced. The style is not very like the style of H.P.B., but we cannot expect too much; it would take a very clever writer to reproduce H.P.B.'s turn of the pen. She did occasionally write about Society with a big S, but with her own ironical salt, when not abusive salt. Mme. C. says "Another proof of the truth of my statement with regard to the non-genuineness of the phenomena and the impossibility of their taking place without the help of someone else at the other end of the line will be found in a paragraph of the following letter:."

She refers to the little bit of fraud-plot, "Ni Z. ni B."; but the paragraph really worth noting is not this one, but the one referring to the Rajah.

Letter II. (P. 18.)

Ma chère Madame Coulomb, Je vous supplie.....  
Ici la société est folle de moi. Les gens les plus hauts placés dans le gouvernement sont à mes pieds. Nous allons établir une branche anglaise, appelée, The Anglo-Indian Theosophical Society, et laisser la Branche de Bombay aller au diable si les membres ne savent pas mieux protéger leur Société.....

Nous avons sept théosophes anglais de plus, et nous en aurons une quarantaine avant de nous aller à Lahore et Benares, où nous allons en visite chez le Raja avec des lettres de recommandation des plus hauts *officials*.

Ni Z ni B? hein! Ah vous êtes courageuse et hardie—en paroles. Ainsi soit-il! Nous avons un de *nos frères* ici, et les phénomènes qu'il m'aide à produire laissent tous les autres bien loin. Je m'en fiche.....

[three lines of dots]

Les phénomènes—je m'en moque. J'ai dans ma tête assez de savoir et de science pour repousser tous les phénomènes dans le back ground. C'est ce que disent Lyall, Hogg, Grant, Fitzpatrick et même Major Henderson, devenu mon plus grand ami et qui me supplie de l'accepter comme théosophe. Et savez vous qui est Major Henderson? Le chef suprême de toutes les polices et du political Foreign Dept. des Indes. Le personnage le plus redouté et le plus influent ici, qui peut *tout*.....

[more dots]

Adieu—à revoir, A vous encore, H. P. Blavatsky.

Ce soir il y a un grand dîner en mon honneur chez Mr. Hume, où trente personnes du haut monde viennent pour faire ma connaissance.

\* \* \*

I give below, Mme. Coulomb's heavy literal English, although, of course, the French is fifty per cent lighter. "Mad after me" does not quite render *folle de moi*, but as the letter is a "fraud" one, it is better to allow Mme. C.'s translation to stand.

"My dear Madame Coulomb,

I beg you .....

"Here the society is mad after me. The people in the highest position in Government are at my feet. We are going to establish an English branch called the Anglo-Indian Theosophical Society, and let the Bombay Branch go to the devil if its members do not know how to protect their Society better. [dots] We have seven English Theosophists more, and we shall have about forty before we go to Lahore and Benares, where we are going on a visit to the Rajah with letters of recommendation from the highest officials.

"Neither Z nor B? Fine thing! Ah, you are courageous and daring—with words. So be it! We have here one of our brothers, and the phenomena that he helps me to perform leave all the others far away. I don't care a straw about it .....

[three lines of dots]

"As to the phenomena I don't care. I have enough knowledge and science in my head to push all the phenomena in the background. And this is what is said by Lyall, Hogg, Grant, Fitzpatrick and even Major Henderson, who has become my greatest friend and who entreats me to accept him as a theosophist. And do you know who Major Henderson is? The supreme chief of all the police and of the political foreign department of India. The most dreaded and the most influential personage here, who can do *everything*.

"Adieu—goodbye, Still yours, H. P. Blavatsky.

"This evening there is going to be a great dinner-party in my honour at Mr. Hume's, where thirty persons of the high society come to make my acquaintance."

\* \* \*

We have now an accurate enough idea of the several kinds of injury the Coulombs intended to inflict.

The first paragraph seems genuine in content, but rendered in Coulombese. The second, "Rajah", paragraph must be reserved for the light it throws on the examination of a later letter, No. V. Then comes the paragraph that Mme. C. points to:

"Neither Z nor B? Fine thing!"

We are to conclude that Mr. "Morgan" had telegraphed these "conventional initials" so that Mme. C. could "choose a part" of the cut handkerchief and "put it somewhere". Under the very nose of Major Henderson, the most dreaded personage, and of Mr. Hogg, who was Post-Master General! And while Olcott, so far, had vainly tried to get the spies taken off! All this desperate, fatal intrigue—for a miserable handkerchief trick! And while Madame Blavatsky was producing handkerchiefs—with no-one "at the other end of the line"! One may be excused a few shriek-marks.

Nevertheless, just precisely, the "instructions" do not say what "Z." means. "S. veut dire sin" and "D.v.d. net", but "Z" is left to conjecture. "B" means "Bridge", and would seem to wish to refer to Wimbridge; but what "Neither Z nor B? hein!" signifies, unless a little bit of fraud-plot to sell to the Rev. Patterson, must be left to M. Houdin or some other expert to elucidate. Fortunately, Mr. "Morgan" didn't "care a straw about it"!

The string of personal names, none of which could then mean anything to the Coulomb, was easy enough to collect later, as those of influential personages likely to become furicus against the alleged writer, Madame Blavatsky, for dragging them in.

\* \* \*

The last paragraph and the post-script afford us a date.

"Major Henderson, who has become my greatest friend . . .", and, "This evening there is going to be a dinner-party at Mr. Hume's . . .".

It was on Oct. 3rd, that the Sinnetts gave a famous picnic breakfast at which occurred some astonishing phenomena; a cup and saucer were produced from between the buried roots of a tree; a diploma of membership of the T.S. was produced for Major Henderson, who had said he would join the

Society if his diploma of membership were produced on the spot, and who himself found one, duly signed, under a bush; a water-bottle, one of four previously empty, was suddenly filled ("Occult World", p.66. and "O.D.L.", Vol. 2, p.232, with valuable additional detail). But before that early picnic was over, the Major and H.P.B. had a violent quarrel regarding the genuineness of the phenomenon. Olcott says: "She seemed about to take leave of her senses and poured out the thunder of her wrath". Next day, Henderson sent her an almost insulting letter. So, any letter speaking of his friendship must date before the start for the picnic of Oct. 3rd.

The Hume dinner-party took place that same evening; a phenomenon that occurred at the table was described in the "Pioneer" of Oct. 7th. As the letter says, "This evening", we have to conclude that Madame Blavatsky, who had already been a month in Simla society and had undoubtedly written frequently to her housekeeper, and who was at this time in the thick of the most startling phenomena, and who had had to depart with the others for a picnic *breakfast* some miles out of Simla—had devoted the break of day to writing to the housekeeper a lengthy epistle of chit-chat. And thus she improves the shining hour on the very morning of the day when, according to the S.P.R., she had planned to carry out *four most complicated fraudulent phenomena*.

Well, let us on! The letter is clearly a combination of bits from genuine notes sent by H.P.B. during the month, with the Z-B mystery added.

3.

For the third letter, we must turn back to page 16. Mme. C. and the Rev. Patterson seem to have differed in their opinion as to the "splash" value of the screeds. She plumped for one mentioning the Maharajah of Benares, but Patterson places first this one that is really No. 3, and that must have caused great annoyance to a certain Bombay Police-Commissioner who had shown some friendliness to the Theosophists.

The first part of the letter is certainly genuine. It refers to a phenomenon suggested by a Captain Maitland. One Sunday evening, amid a numerous Simla company, he had asked Madame Blavatsky to try and send a cigarette to Bombay by occult means. She agreed. To make it as difficult as possible, and beyond suspicion of collusion, he selected a spot on the statue of the Prince of Wales, opposite Watson's Hotel. A telegram was immediately sent to the Police-Commissioner, brother-in-law of Maitland, asking him to go and look for the cigarette. He good-naturedly went, although there was a monsoon rain on, but found nothing. It is likely enough that H.P.B., with a certain definite intention, wrote as follows about the affair to Mme. Coulomb.

Letter III. (P. 16.)

Monday.

"My dear Madame Coulomb,

"Last night, Sunday, I wanted to show my friends a phenomenon, and sent a cigarette tied up with my hair to be placed opposite Watson's hotel in the coat-of-arms (under the Prince of Wales's statue), under the horn of the Unicorn. Captain Maitland had himself chosen the town and named the place. He spent 13 Rs. for a telegram to Police-Commissioner Grant, his brother-in-law. The latter went the moment he received it and—found NOTHING. It is a dead failure, but I do not believe it, for I saw it there clearly [clairvoyantly] at three in the morning. I am sorry for it, for Captain Maitland is a Theosophist, and spent money over it."

Thus the first part of the letter. The content is clearly genuine. H.P.B. describes in detail exactly where the cigarette was to have been dropped. Why should she have given all this detail *next day* to Mme. Coulomb, saying that she does not believe the phenomenon to have been a failure?

The letter proceeds as though the writer had suddenly gone wrong in the head:

“They want to tear the cigarette in two and keep half. And I will choose the same places with the exception of the Prince’s statue, for our enemies might watch and see the cigarette fall and destroy it. I enclose an envelope with a cigarette paper in it. I will drop another *half* of a cigarette behind the Queen’s head, where I dropped my hair, the same day or Saturday. Is the hair still there? and the cigarette still under the *cover*? Oh, Dio, Dio! What a pity,

Yours faithfully, H.P.B.

(*Note on the fly-leaf.*) “Make a half cigarette of this. Take care of the edges.”

“On a slip of paper,” says Mme. Coulomb, “which accompanied the cigarette-paper referred to the following is written: Roll a cigarette of this half and tie it with H.P.B.’s hair. Put it on the top of the cupboard made by Wimbridge to the furthest corner near the wall on your right. Do it quick.”

\* \* \*

Passing over the little miracle of two persons rolling two halves of a cigarette *to fit*—these orders are quite clear and undoubtedly suggest a plot. Yet, for some unstated reason, Judge Gribble decided to exclude the “note on the fly-leaf” as “unsafe”, and he did not even notice by a word the “slip of paper”. He decides that Mme. Blavatsky wrote the first part of the letter, and I should make no bones about agreeing. It seems to me obvious that H.P.B., believing that she had *not* failed, wrote to Mme. C. begging her to go and ascertain whether the cigarette had not fallen down somewhere. This is the explanation that H.P.B. gave to Olcott, and it is the only one that could fit the first part of the letter where she describes to Mme. C. exactly where to look.

Mme. C.’s pamphlet was in press before Hodgson arrived in Madras, or we might never have heard from her of this “Maitland” phenomenon. On page 16, she explains that Mr. Grant did not find the cigarette “for the good reason that the person (Madame Coulomb) who was to put it there never went near the place . . . Had I said that I could not make up my mind to do such a thing she would have been furious, and I should have felt her resentment”.

There appear two or three difficulties, besides the detailed description given the day *after* the fact to the “person who was to put it there”. Madame Blavatsky had been in Simla a month, and any instructions concerning this phenomenon must have been written and sent by post: no letter of instructions was produced—doubtless because the Coulombs absolutely ignored the circumstances, house, persons, etc.

Then, two halves of cigarettes rolled by two people would not fit.

Then, there is no record of any of these “hair” and “cigarette” and “Wimbridge” phenomena at Bombay, to which Mme. Coulomb refers as though they happened one a week. Not one little record! And, *finally*, after the Rev. Patterson had published the letter above, Captain Maitland wrote to the “Madras Mail”, saying that he, and he alone, had selected the spot a few minutes before, on the Sunday evening, among a crowd of witnesses.

O Members of the S.P.R.! look at page 268 of Hodgson’s Report, and see of what your Society was capable in 1885. Knowing all the particulars given in Maitland’s letter, Hodgson used the incident, actually quoting Mme. Coulomb’s assertion that she was the person “who was to put it there, but never went near the place”. Hodgson does *not* quote the first part of the letter, but does use the “note on the fly-leaf”, rejected by Gribble. Experts . . . !

4.

Letter IV. (P. 18.)

Dated, “Simla, 15.” October must be intended.

“My dear Mad. Coulomb, Programme *entirely changed*. We go to Amritsir and Lahore on the 21st, and I can *send you no more telegrams*. Too thin. The things ought to be allowed to remain permanently, i.e., for a whole *appointed* week, and found there at any time during this week. Then—change place and I, notified. The *fiasco* of the Watson’s hotel [Maitland cigarette!] was too much. Did you receive my two notes through Damodar? Enough if the cigarette is found on the W. cupboard and the note I enclose on my writing-desk. All things sent in red jacket useless—except hair perhaps .....

Why Madame Blavatsky should not be able to send any *more* telegrams is wrop in the mystery that the Coulombs had not a ghost of a telegram to show. Except the genuine news of the change of programme, the screed seems merely concocted to bolster up the previous ones, especially to prove that Mme. C. was "the person to put it there" in the Maitland cigarette "*fiasco*"!

5.

Letter V. suddenly remembers the handkerchief again, after all this time. It must be remembered that these fraud letters are only a few among the seventy that H.P.B. wrote to the Coulombs in four years. If we had the ones in between, that, admittedly, contain no fraud allusions, the fraud screeds would appear like sudden, isolated whalespouts in a domestic duck-pond.

Letter V. (P. 14.)

"Je crois que le mouchoir est un coup manqué. Laissons cela, Mais toutes les instructions qu'elles restent *in statu quo* pour les Maharajas de Lahore ou de Benares."

"I believe the handkerchief is a failure. Let it go. But let all the instructions remain *in statu quo* for the Maharajahs of Lahore or Benares."

There was no Maharajah of Lahore, and no-one would know this better than H.P.B., who, immediately after leaving Simla, was the guest for a week of the Maharajah of Benares. It is easy enough to trace the Coulombs' downfall on this point. The sentence in Letter II, *we go to Lahore and Benares, where we are going on a visit to the Rajah*, was a genuine bit in some letter of domestic news; and it led the ignorant Coulombs into a booby-trap. Madame Blavatsky seems to refer to only one Rajah of both cities. In their perplexity, obstinately anxious to compromise Madame Blavatsky in the highest quarters, they take a safe line and write: "Let the instructions remain *in statu quo* for the Maharajahs of Lahore or of Benares".

The Maharajah of Benares one day brought his treasurer with him to H.P.B. and offered her what she pleased in rupees if she would show him some miracles. She refused, but as soon as he had left, did a number of phenomena

for poor visitors ("Old Diary Leaves", Vol. 2, p.275.). The Maharajah invited her to come again . . . as, no doubt, did His Phantom Highness of Lahore.

One would have *thought* that this single screed would have sufficed to put an end to communication between the Rev. Patterson and Mme. Coulomb. A very few questions would have thrown her into complete confusion over these alleged instructions to humbug a personage who did not exist. The least enquiry would have informed him that Madame Blavatsky and Olcott had actually been the guests of the Maharajah of Benares, and, therefore, that this paper must have been forged by these ignorant servants. The only possible conclusion is that any stone was good enough to fling against Blavatsky.

\* \* \*

And here again, we have a letter talking *about* instructions, but not the tiniest line *with* the instructions. Yet, H.P.B., being at Simla all this time, they must have been written and sent by post. Some unfamiliarity with royal palaces and what might, or might not, be done therein, may have made the worthy couple cautious of composing "instructions" that would turn out only "too thin". I have noted that there is no record of any handkerchief phenomenon at Simla that would have permitted of Mme. C.'s assistance, even on the assumption of fraud; and that the two phenomena done there were quite successful. Now, comes some more "hair" and cigarette" and "Wimbridge" stuff:

"Je vous écrirai d'Amritsar ou Lahore! Mes cheveux feraient bien sur la vieille tour de Sion (Mais vous les mettez dans une enveloppe — un sachet curieux—et le pendrez en le cachant) ou bien à Bombay. Choisissez bon endroit et écrivez moi à Amitsar *poste restante*, puis vers le 1er du mois à Lahore. Adressez votre lettre à mon nom. Rien de plus pour S.—il en a vu

"I shall write to you from Amritsar or Lahore. My hair will do well on the old tower of Sion (but you should put it in an envelope—a sachet of some peculiar kind—and hang it where you hide it) or even in Bombay. Select a good spot and write to me at Amritsar *poste restante*, and then after the first of the month to Lahore. Address your letter in my name. Nothing more

assez. Peur de manquer la poste, à revoir. Avez-vous mis la cigarette sur la petite armoire de Wimb—? Faites donc quelque chose pour le vieux, il padre di Damodar. . . H.P.B.”

for S.—he has seen enough. I am afraid of missing the mail, so à revoir. Have you put the cigarette on the cupboard of Wimb—? Do something for the old man, Damodar’s father . . . . . H.P.B.”

\* \* \*

There was no phenomenon done on any “tower of Sion” or anywhere “in Bombay”. Perhaps Mme. C. did not succeed in “selecting a good spot”! The “cupboard of Wimb—” plays absolutely no part in any Bombay phenomena on record, neither was any hair ever found in any “sachet curieux”. Nothing could better demonstrate the ignorance of the Coulombs as to what phenomena really did happen. As for doing “something” for Damodar’s father, the only thing Mme. C. ever did was to massage his bad leg. But every little “Chops and tomato sauce” remark helps. Hodgson utilised this one as highly suspicious. H.P.B. probably wrote it in some letter as the Coulomb had promised to use her skill on the leg.

\* \* \*

6.

Letter VI refers to the removal of the Bombay headquarters from Girgaum to “Crow’s Nest”. Mme. C. was still looking for the new house, and the first sentence reads naturally enough.

Letter VI (.P 30.)

“Ma chère Mad. Coulomb, Je vous prie de veiller à tout dans notre déménagement. Choisissez bien la maison. Qu’elle soit utile; que la vostra camera si trova sopra la testa d’un certo Signore Pres. a—altra roba.

My dear Madame Coulomb, I beg you to take care of everything in the removal. Choose a good house. *Let it be useful.* Let your room be above that of a certain Mr. President. “Ed altra roba.” You know the rest.

\* \* \*

“Choose a good house. *Let it be useful.*” Chops and tomato . . .

Mme. C. comments: “I am obliged to mention these seeming trifles because later on in my story, they will be very important.” The room above the head of the President, Olcott, did not become very important because it never materialised. Moreover, Mme. C. is not supposed to be mentioning trifles on her own account, but quoting from a letter of instructions; but a slip more or less is not “very important” in this *gâchis*—rank with foul, futile brains—that was allowed to serve to ruin one of the greatest women who ever lived.

7.

On page 26, Mme. C. writes: “Now, let me tell you about the phenomenon known under the name of the cup phenomenon.”

This was the production of a seventh cup and saucer at the Sinnett picnic of Oct. 3rd. Only six cups for six persons had been packed, the seventh being needed because a seventh person, a judge, rode up and joined the party at the last minute. When it was found that there were not enough cups, someone jokingly asked Madame Blavatsky to produce one. She said that she would try, and presently told the party that a cup and saucer matching the set would be found buried in the roots of a tree; and there they were found. The “Journal of Science”, commenting on this phenomenon, wrote, “The theory of fraud literally bristles with difficulties”. But our friend, the redoubtable Major Henderson, after having been presented with his diploma, and perhaps realising that the Chief of Police simply *couldn’t* be a member of the Theosophical Society, gave his opinion that the cup and saucer might have been introduced through a tunnel and then covered over. It seems surprising that a Chief of Police would not have noticed at first whether a tunnel were possible or could not even distinguish recently-turned earth from earth that had lain for ages around the roots of a tree: it was he himself who did the digging. But, anything was better, no doubt, than having to proclaim himself a Theosophist! So, on page 66, 1st ed. of “The Occult World”, Sinnett had to write: “Someone conceived that it was not scientifically perfect [as a test phenomenon] because it was theoretically possible that by means of some excavation

below the place where the cup and saucer were exhumed, they might have been thrust up into the place where we found them, by ordinary means”.

Mme. C. quotes from the “Occult World” the whole of Sinnett’s long story, and then concludes:

“The opinion of these gentlemen with regard to the possibility of the cup and saucer being thrust up into the hole made for the purpose is perfectly correct, *because this is exactly the way in which he who put the cup and saucer there explained it to me.* This being the case, no further explanation is necessary, because science has no business in this phenomenon.”

Members of the S.P.R. may be slightly comforted one day to note that even their Hodgson did not venture to reproduce this as evidence in his Report. Yet his own explanations are equally impudent. In fact, while prudently ignoring his *source of information*, he not only repeats Mme. C.’s statement in his own words, but slyly names her confidant as Babula, H.P.B.’s servant. He seizes the opportunity to state “on good authority” that Babula had formerly been in the service of a French conjuror, a *canard* that the “authority”, Mme. Coulomb, had perpetrated, and that Hodgson had read, on page 20 of her pamphlet. Babula was only fifteen, and his former employer was the respectable steward of the Byculla Club, Bombay (“O.D.L.”, Vol. 2, p.64.). What conjuring may have had to do, anyway, with digging a hole, may be left to the S.P.R.

\* \* \*

“The theory of fraud literally bristles with difficulties.”

However, there *was* Mme. C.’s declaration and *italicised*, too. What more could be desired?

Well, it might have been more polite of the “Madame B.” of the “frauds” to have confided in, so to speak, her bosom-confederate, and not have reduced her to tattling with the servant!

### III.

At “Crow’s Nest”, Breach Candy, Bombay. Dec. 1880.

#### I.

H.P.B. returned to Bombay from Simla, Benares and other northern towns on Dec. 28th; to “Crow’s Nest”, the new house.

Miss Bates and Mr. Wimbridge left the Society. Miss Bates took to journalism, and Wimbridge was financed by a Theosophist in an arts and crafts shop, through the kind offices of Olcott, for which the gentleman proved duly ungrateful. Mme. C. had gained the first step up and now, in the new kitchen, reigned alone and supreme. Coulomb had been found different jobs by Olcott, but he was still “difficult about employers”. He was gradually working his way completely into the house.

“For a few months”, writes Mme. C. (P. 30), “we were engaged in getting the house ready, and here I can say for the truth that we worked incessantly, and very often we used to go to bed so tired that we could not sleep. But this, although considered necessary and right, yet it did not satisfy Madame’s Theosophical object; she wanted work of another kind, but did not dare to express her wish in so many words.”

Well, we have heard about the handkerchiefs, with telegrams from Mr. J. Morgan, and the hair, and the cigarettes, and the figure in the garden, and the slit in the ceiling-cloth, and the instructions for the Maharajahs of Lahore or of Benares . . . there seems no reason why Madame Blavatsky should suddenly show timidity towards such accommodating confederates. But Mme. C. also suddenly becomes ingenuous in telling what was “wanted”, namely a dummy head of human size: “What can this mean? I wondered. But, knowing how disagreeable she could make herself, I complied with her wish. She cut a paper pattern of the face I was to make, which I still have; on this I cut the precious lineaments of the beloved Master, but to my shame, I must say that, after all my trouble of cutting, sewing and stuffing, Madame said that it looked like an old Jew. Madame, with a graceful touch of her painting brush, gave it a little better appearance. But this was only a head, without bust, and

could not very well be used, so I made a jacket, which I doubled, and between the two cloths I placed stuffing to form shoulders and chest; the arms were only to the elbows, because when the thing was tried on, we found the long arm would be in the way of him who had to carry it."

I fear that readers who may have read the testimony of the many witnesses, both Indians and Europeans, who saw the "old Jew", may doubt that I am transcribing correctly. I am.

\* \* \*

Extract from "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy", No. I, p.140, 1909 ed: "On the 29th of January, 1881, a Brother stood with the moonlight shining on his face, and returned a salute." [Distance measured 17 paces; and Indian moonlight!].

P. 101: "Dec. 1881 . . . a man on the balcony . . . moonlight shining full on him . . . Olcott and Damodar at once recognised him as the 'Illustrious'". [Mahatma M. Ramaswamier, Registrar of Tinevelly, who tells the story, met the Mahatma in person in Sikkim, on Oct. 5th, 1882, instantly recognised him, and had a long conversation on Theosophical affairs.]

P. 105: "Mr. Ross Scott (Govt. engineer) suddenly saw the figure of a man step into the room that was brilliantly lighted . . . and at once recognised him from a portrait [of M.] . . . We all saw him most distinctly." [Five witnesses, and Olcott and Madame Blavatsky.]

P. 149: "This brother, Koot Hoomi, was sometimes standing and walking in the garden here and there, at other times, floating in the air." This testimony came from Martandrao and others, including Bhavani Shankar, recently deceased, 1936, after a life that may be called saintly even in a land of saints. Hodgson uses his most brutal nib against this pure young Hindu and his co-chela, Damodar; these two youths must, in fact, unconsciously have made young Hodgson feel small, very.

Mohini's evidence before the S.P.R. Committee, regarding an astral appearance of Mahatma K. H.: "The figure came so close that I think that if I had put out my hand, I could have touched it". Mohini, when replying to a question, said

that he had recognised his Master from a portrait; being a chela, he was forbidden by the rules to say, without permission, what might seem like boasting, that he had seen the Mahatma in person. But, actually, he had met him in Madras Presidency shortly before the astral appearance, and was in good case to recognise him. (Letter from Mohini to "Pall Mall Gazette", Sep. 30. 84.)

"An old Jew . . . Madame gave it a little better appearance . . . !"

Now, to have done with these lies as soon as convenient—two widely differing persons were seen by the witnesses, two Masters . . . and Mme. C. forgetfully claims to have made only one dummy.

Even this one dummy, she declares she destroyed "in a fit of disgust at the imposture" (P. 42); and she says not a word about ever having made a second "old Jew". In fact, she hurries rather disrespectfully past this masterpiece that deceived so many highly competent Indians and Europeans, disposes of it in half a page. And yet, it must have been a remarkable creation. A cloth face, with painted eyes, that could not only deceive dozens of persons at distances of a yard to a few yards, but that could go dark and black-eyed to suit Mahatma M. and fair and light-eyed to suit K.H.!

A dummy bust that could stay on while Mr. Coulomb flitted up and down the rocky hillside, almost a precipice, behind "Crow's Nest", floated over trees and a field of thorn—and, apparently, not even strapped on; for, once, Dec. 31, 81, Mr. Coulomb seems to have got it off, stripped his robes, hidden these, taken a book and sat down quietly reading in just the time for three excited men to rush up a flight of steps. He must have left the room, and returned to it too, as he was in Olcott's quarters and could not hide the dummy there. ("Hints", etc. P. 100.). All this risk of an infuriated kicking from Olcott with immediate expulsion from headquarters for Coulomb, and, for Madame Blavatsky, the end of her career, with exposure by Ramaswamier, Registrar of Tinevelly—all this, just to drop a letter over a balcony! Truly, in 1885, people could believe anything of Madame Blavatsky; but Ramaswamier's statement in "Hints" shows that Coulomb's tale *could not* be true.



The appearance of Mahatma K. H. to Mohini, although it does not come in our period, deserves a special note, for this was the occasion on which, as she told Hodgson, Mme. Coulomb made her one and only appearance as a "Mahatma". True, she forgot to mention this performance in her book, but she remedied the blank when Hodgson appeared in Madras with Mohini's evidence to the Committee under his arm. Babula, as I find, was away, wherefore *he* could not be credited with the performance; and I expect to come across some little bit of data somewhere to show that Coulomb, also, was away, or known to have been out that evening—since Mme. C. fills the bill. Someone had to be found to fill it, Mohini being a dangerous witness to the reality of the astral appearances. Mme. C. remembers for Hodgson that she "dressed in the bathroom and crawled through the double back of a cupboard that led into the Occult Room and so got out on the balcony" (S.P.R. Report, p.243.). She must have experienced some difficulty in crawling through, dressed in the dummy (destroyed two years before!) and long robes and carrying a large bunch of roses—for the cupboard was a bookcase with shelves! The lies in this narrative are so complicated that I cannot deal with them here. They seem to have driven Hodgson far along the path that led to his collapse on the mediumistic Mrs. Piper's bosom. Briefly, Mme. C. gets *in*, but she can't get out! She tells the best tale she can, but it is a wild misfit, and Hodgson has to supply her with a plausible exit; so he says that anyone *might* have escaped by jumping down a twenty-foot wall or climbing down with the aid of a twenty-foot ladder. "Indeed", writes this Immortal, "I have often myself as a lad performed a greater 'drop' feat than would be required for leaving the terrace without even the help of a ladder". I do not *expect* to be believed faithful in transcribing, so I repeat the number of the page: 243, Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, December, 1885.

Mme. C., however, did *not* say that she, an elderly lady, clad in Mahatmic robes and balancing a dummy head and shoulders on her own, jumped down a twenty-foot wall or even climbed down a ladder.

Mme. C. says that, during the spring of 1881, Madame Blavatsky was cross and rageful. I daresay that she was. She was engaged in a war with A. O. Hume, who had become benevolently insulting; had a fortnight's row with Olcott who proposed to leave her alone for six months while he toured Ceylon, and she dreaded to be left; she had been in intermittent agony for many months with broken-bone fever and rheumatism that swelled her arms to the shoulders; the climate of Bombay killed her several times a week; there was very little money in the camp; etc., etc. One might be cross, especially with the newspapers attacking and slandering one every week or so. It is probable, also, that in a fit of irritation at the extraordinary bills Mme. C. presented for payment, she told the Coulombs that they would have to buy themselves the quantities of extra bread they appear to have consumed (P. 30.); but, as probably, H.P.B. forgot it next day. Mme. C. had control of the kitchen and the tradesmen, and one would perhaps be doing her no injustice to conclude that she never paid for an ounce out of her own pocket. She writes bitterly about this bread incident, four years later, and with her purse stuffed with pilfered Adyar money. One almost hopes that she really had something to complain of.

She is now, on page 31, scurrying past the "old Jew". "This was not all. A trap was the next thing Madame desired to have; it was made, fixed, and ready for use. Oh, a trap this time, what can she mean? . . . The arrival of Mr. Sinnett . . . made the trap very useful and it was instrumental in aiding to spread the theosophical fame in Bombay. This occurrence I report here from the 'Theosophist'". And she does report at great length an article only one paragraph of which has anything to do with her subject, the trap: "Mr. Sinnett had been expecting a reply to a recent letter he had written to Mahatma K. H., and after breakfast, while he was sitting at a table in broad daylight, the expected answer was suddenly dropped on the table before him."

Mme. C. comments: "This phenomenon is so much more important because according to Mr. Sinnett's declaration it leaves no room for doubt, and because he does not admit the possibility of anyone but his illustrious friend having written the said letter. To this I shall say for the truth that Madame Blavatsky wrote before me the *latter part* of the letter, that I saw it addressed and given into the hands of Mr. Coulomb, telling him to put it in the *Astral Post Office*. Concerning the way in which the letter reached Mr. Sinnett, which he assumes to have dropped out of nothing, I must say that he is mistaken there, because it was done in the following manner: An ingeniously and well-combined trap was fixed on the floor of the garret above Mr. Sinnett's room; the floor was a boarded one, and between the boards was a space sufficiently wide to permit a thick letter to slip through easily. The aperture of the *trap* met with that of the boards, so that once the letter was freed from the arrangement which retained it, it slipped down, and being heavy, did not flutter in space, but fell right on the table before him.

"In order that you may easily understand how the letter slipped through, I shall have to tell you that the opening of the trap was performed by the pulling of a string, which after running from the trap, where it was fastened, all along the garret above Mr. Sinnett's room to that part of the garret above Madame Blavatsky's bedroom, passed through a hole and hung down behind the door and the curtain of her room, which was adjoining to that of Mr. Sinnett".

Unfortunately, this ingeniously and well-combined trap shared the fate of "Mr. Morgan's" telegrams: it was one of the damning bits of evidence that the Coulombs did *not* preserve. Mme. C. forgets to say what became of it.

Perhaps most people will be in my case of knowing nothing about traps and, so, unable to determine whether or no Mme. C. is talking nonsense, especially as she is vague about the "arrangement" that retained the letter. What does occur to me is that the ceiling was very high, so high that, in order to reach the trap-door in H.P.B.'s room, it was necessary to hold a ladder on a table (S.P.R. Private and Confidential Report, p.253.). As the string came through a hole in the ceiling and hung down behind the door, there must have been one or two, or several, feet of string perpetu-

ally visible between the ceiling and the door; visible to Olcott, doctors, nurses, visitors, servants who entered Madame Blavatsky's room. There were a great number of letters dropped in this guest-room, several under circumstances that rather put the trap out of countenance; we shall come to these presently.

But it is startling to realise that this ladder business had to be done each time! There were usually five servants at headquarters, but none of them ever breathed a word about having seen Mr. Coulomb carrying in the ladder, not even any who had left or been dismissed by Mme. C. Damodar lived on the premises and, as Mme. C. represents him to have been a dupe the *whole* time she was employed, he must have been got out of the way on each occasion; yet, we know that he was present, also, that he was almost never out of the house, working all day and late into the nights. We know from Sinnett ("Incidents in the life of Madame Blavatsky", p.185) that the verandah-room in front of H.P.B.'s bedroom was a regular fair from morn to night, visitors always waiting. No matter when Coulomb carried in the ladder, he must have been seen by someone, either from inside the house or from the verandah and the gardens that ran all around. However, he *never was seen*, and this fact must suffice for us.

\* \* \*

But, more objections suggest themselves. Sinnett's room, the guest-room, was rarely empty. When Madame Blavatsky was away, later in the autumn of 1881, the room was occupied by S. J. Padshah, and a letter dropped for him, not on the big table in the middle of the room, where Sinnett's had dropped, but close by the bed. So trap and crevice must have been moveable (Adyar Report, p.72.). On another occasion ("Hints on Esoteric Theosophy", No. I, p.152.), more than a dozen people joined hands and stood in this room *waiting and watching* for a letter; and this letter (a double letter, with enclosure) fell slantingly and dropped, not on the table, but on the floor; again, (Ibid, P. 145.), seven people watched and waited, and the letter fell at the foot of one of the party. And then, the Hon'ble Professor Smith

of Sydney University, tells a disconcerting story (Ibid, P. 137.). He says that, in January, 1882, seven months after the Sinnett letter, Olcott said to him at tiffin that, if the Professor should receive any letters during his stay at headquarters, there might be some Mahatmic writing in one of them. "I replied", states Professor Smith, "That there would be 'no chance' of that as no-one would write to me." Madame Blavatsky then, looking fixedly for a little, said, 'I see a Brother here. He asks if you would like some such token as that we have been speaking of.' I replied that I would be much gratified. She rose from the table and told us to follow her. Taking my hand, she led me along the verandah, stopping and looking about her at some points, until we reached the door of my bedroom . . . She then desired us to sit down, and in so doing, took both my hands in hers. In a few seconds a letter fell at my feet. It seemed to me to appear first a little above the level of my head. On opening the envelope I found . . . the following words written with red pencil: 'NO CHANCE of writing to you inside your letters, but I can write direct.'

Quick work with the ladder! However, Mme. Coulomb omits this phenomenon, Mr. C. offers no explanation to Hodgson, and Hodgson himself finds it convenient to ignore the whole business. He also ignores Padshah's testimony. One almost universal testimony on the occasions of these *apports* is that the letters were first seen close to the heads of the witnesses; not one mortal soul ever saw them coming through the crevice.

Hodgson devotes many pages to the Trap and the Crevice. *Two years* after the house was abandoned, he went to Bombay. And there was the Crevice! A huge Crevice: "I could easily have pushed a copy of our Proceedings through it". This tallies nicely with Sinnett's published statement that his letter was on thirty-eight pages of heavy draft paper. Members of the S.P.R.! you may read that on page 254, and reflect that your predecessors were so fanatical as to accept as evidence what would be rejected by the commonest jury taken from the street. And let us hope that you may set to work to clean up your house—for that Crevice is wide enough to push you all through it, let alone a mere copy of your Proceedings.

A self-confessed couple of scoundrels *say* that there were a trap and a crevice, and a man goes to the house and finds "a crevice plainly visible". The Lord defend us from the judge who would let such a witness walk free out of Court!

What Hodgson omits to say is whether he asked Coulomb for a design and a description of the *trap*, and what became of it? "The appearance of the garret corresponded so accurately with M. Coulomb's detailed description as to convince me that he was familiar with it." The appearance—what? An empty garret with two years dust in it is all that Hodgson can have seen. What "accurate detail?" And should Coulomb, the handy-man of the house, never have been up in the garret? The trap must have been *screwed into the floor* above the crevice; a strong trap that could take thirty-eight pages of foolscap; a trap so "well-combined" that it could be worked by a simple string nearly a dozen yards away and pulling over an angle! Screw-marks? We hear nothing of such, or of what the trap was like or how the trap was secured, or anything at all. "Mr. Coulomb asserts" was good enough for the "boobs" of 1885. It is not good enough for us. We may be absolutely certain that Hodgson and Coulomb had a talk about all these things, and that Hodgson's omissions were inspired by a kind of diabolically cunning prudence. In the same way, he *omits* to procure a design and detailed description of the "Shrine" from Coulomb—who designed it! He frequented this man in Madras for three months . . . !

\* \* \*

H.P.B.'s final epithet for the "Psychists" was "Brass-clad donkeys!" But Hodgson was something cunninger than your donkey, although brass-clad. And he had behind him, actually paying his expenses privately, one of the most inquisitorial characters who ever hunted, and who, alone, would have sufficed to put back psychic research for a century: Professor Sidgwick. There were also others on that Committee who regarded psychic persons as *wild game*. And this group created such an atmosphere that the modern student, looking back, beholds a scene from the dark ages, a mob,

ever-growing, sneering, jeering, adopting any rabid suggestion so long as this gave a lead to the persecution of Blavatsky. Thank whatever gods there be that the time was 1885 and not 1485, for this mob then would have piled up the faggots!

4.

A moment in the company of H.P.B.

G. R. S. Mead writes of her in the Memoriam: "One of the greatest proofs to me of H.P.B.'s extraordinary gifts and ability . . . was the way in which she wrote her articles and books. I knew every book she had in her small library, and yet day after day she would produce quantities of manuscript abounding in quotations, which were seldom inaccurate. I remember almost the last day she sat at her desk, going into her room to query two Greek words in a quotation, and telling her that they were inaccurate . . . the correction of the words I objected to required precise scholarship. 'Where did you get it from?' I asked her. 'I'm sure I don't know, my dear', was her somewhat discouraging rejoinder, 'I saw it!', adding that she was sure she was right . . . However, I persuaded her that there was some mistake, and finally she said, 'Well, of course, you are a great Greek pundit, I know, but you are not going to sit upon me always. I'll try if I can see it again, and now get out', meaning that she wanted to go on with her work, or at any rate had had enough of me. About two minutes afterwards, she called me in again and presented me with a scrap of paper on which she had written the two words quite correctly, saying, 'Well, I suppose you'll be a greater pundit than ever after this.'"

And here she is, herself describing to Sinnett how she went to see the Mahatmas on September 19th, 1882: "Darjeeling . . . Had I not gone *incognito* so to say, till I reached the hills and turned off the railway to enter Sikkim, I would never have been allowed to enter it unmolesed, and would not have seen K. H. and M. in their bodies both. Lord I would have been dead by this time. [She had left Bombay, suffering from boils and ulcers, terribly ill, and came back, as K. H. said, "mended".] Oh the blessed blessed two days! It was like the old times when the bear paid me a visit.

The same kind of wooden hut, a box divided into three compartments for rooms, and standing in a jungle, on four pelican's legs; the same yellow chelas gliding noiselessly; the same eternal 'gul-gul-gul' sound of my Boss's inextinguishable chelum pipe; the old familiar sweet voice of your K.H. (whose voice is still sweeter and face still thinner and more transparent), the same *entourage* for furniture—skins, and yak-tail stuffed pillows and dishes for salt tea, etc. Well when I returned to Darjeeling, sent away by them—'out of reach of the chelas who might fall in love with my beauty', said my polite Boss—on the following day I received the note I enclose from the Deputy Commissioner warning me *not* to go to Tibet!! He locked the stable door after the horse had been already out."

One day, maybe, the world will begin to realise that adepts do exist, have always existed, and always will exist, and that they are to be found *if they wish* . . . not unless, even if you go after them with an army: and that the marvellous creature called Helena Petrovna was one of their *chelas*.

5.

Back to these Coulombs and Hodgsons with their traps and crevices and slits in the ceiling-cloth.

It is conceivable that the Coulombs really believed that Madame Blavatsky *must* have used a trap to drop these letters or that Babula, her servant *must* have monkeyed up somehow and pushed them through a crevice. The absence of any such huge crevice in a room where the recipient of the letter had only to gaze up to see, and the absence of any trap or marks of a trap would not trouble them years later when they were concocting their story. What simpler than to say that there were a trap and a crevice and that Mr. Coulomb did the trick?

It is possible, too, that Mme. C., with her eye at a spyhole, saw H.P.B. writing on foolscap and even saw this same foolscap later in Sinnett's hands.

This seems to have been one of several occasions when H.P.B. vainly endeavoured to initiate Sinnett into the mysteries of occult science. Sinnett described the incident in detail to the S.P.R. Committee; but they *omitted all* his

evidence from the Private and Confidential Report! However, by one of the eternal "chances" that surround H.P.B., Hodgson uses a bit of Sinnett's deposition, and just the bit we need (S.P.R. Report, Dec. 1885, p.258): "I had been expecting a letter from Koot Hoomi, but on my arrival at Bombay I did not find one awaiting me at headquarters. I had written asking him several questions. I had got in late at night, and on the following morning I was walking about the verandah talking to Madame Blavatsky. We went into a room that I had occupied as a bedroom—a big room, with a large table in the middle of it. I sat down while we were talking, and she occupied another chair at a considerable distance from me. I said, 'Why on earth have I not had a letter in answer to mine?' She replied, 'Perhaps he will send it to you. Try to exercise your will-power; try to appeal to him. Ask him to send it to you.' I retorted, 'No, I will wait his time; he will send it sooner or later, no doubt.' At that moment a packet fell before me on the table. It was a large envelope containing at least thirty pages of manuscript—heavy draft paper. The packet only came into view a few feet—two perhaps—above the table, though I do not attach much importance to the precise distance, as in a case of that sort the eye cannot be certain to a foot. The room was brilliantly light, this being in the morning."

Hodgson drags this in simply in order to comment: "It is to be inferred from Mr. Sinnett's account that he made no examination of the ceiling." No, neither he nor Professor Smith nor Ross Scott, nor Judge Khandalwala, nor Taty, nor Padshah, nor any of the hundred persons who passed in and out of that room in the two years while letters were dropping there; none of them ever looked up, none of them ever saw the Crevice "through which I could have pushed a copy of our Proceedings".

H.P.B. probably transcribed this letter from dictation, in the K.H. script, that could be passed to chelas, as some particular script is passed to ordinary mediums when under "control", and that no "sitter" can get no matter how much he tries. She asked him to use his will-power and so participate in the phenomenon; but he "retorted", with his unhappy kind of lofty humility, that the Master would do as he pleased. Had he obeyed and entered the circle, he

might have seen something of the process of an *apport*, even seen the astral form of the operating chela, and so had his mind cleared up forever. That he should have gone on supposing that the Mahatma would expend the phenomenal power necessary to bring thirty-eight pages of draft paper directly from Tibet is no-one's fault but his own. We know, from the "Mahatma Letters", that he had been already given many opportunities to clear his mind of romance and learn the truth about the phenomena. But he preferred to regard himself as a favourite who needed to make no unusual effort, and the Masters as "flapdoodle gods" instead of "superior scientists" (H.P.B.). He continued to believe that every *chit* he received came straight from the snowy range, although H.P.B. had told him from the first, at Simla, Oct. 1880, that even the first letter he then received was not written by the hand of K.H. himself (*Mahatma Letters*, p.424.).

## 6.

Mme. C. is never at a loss for an "explanation". She and her husband had had long enough to puzzle out how the phenomena, in which they did not believe—*might have been* done. A letter fell, not in the Crevice room, but in the open porch. Seven witnesses, besides Madame Blavatsky. "The explanation is this," says the gabbling Mme. C.: "a common frame of a hanging lamp with its shade was suspended in the middle of the porch; on this shade was lying the letter, which by the means of a string running from the shade to the roof of this porch and from there through the venetians of the occult room [guest-room], was by the servant pulled from there."

Simple. Seven people never see the letter lying a whole evening on the shade of the lamp, none see the string "running from the shade to the roof and from there", etc. A clever servant, too! Not many of us could pull a letter off a lamp in the middle of a porch large enough to accommodate eight people, by a string passing through the venetian blinds of a window six or more yards away without letting the released end of the string drop, according to gravity, or make a horrible noise under a frantic pull.

Bagula, the servant, was the *only* person besides Madame

Blavatsky whom the Coulombs ventured to attack. Whatever phenomenon they cannot for some reason credit to their own fraudulent participation, they credit to his. Hodgson, too, was very brave in attacking Babula. In fact, as Sinnett said, he made of him a European celebrity, charging him with feats of dexterity that would have made the fortune of several Maskelynes and Cooks. But all the Theosophists knew that he was a good boy. His devotion to H.P.B. belongs almost to romance, and when she died, in 1891, after seven years' parting, he did what he could—cut out an obituary leader in an Indian paper and sent it to London, with a few words in the English he had begun to learn to pen a bit: "I write this note with tears in my eyes".

7.

Mme. C., p.40; "Now, having given my readers as clear an explanation as I could of how the greater part of the phenomena which took place at Bombay were done, I think I may introduce to the public a paragraph by Colonel Olcott in 'Hints on Esoteric Theosophy', No. I, p.96, which I think will show to every reasonable person that the very fact of the Colonel's rejecting the possibility of machinery confirms their existence; here is the paragraph:

"The Brothers mainly appear where we are simply because *there* they have the necessary conditions. Our houses . . . are certainly not prepared with machinery, but with a special magnetism . . . Sometimes they send every one of us out of the house if they desire specially to magnetise the place."

"With regard to the Brothers sending us all out of the house, as the text says, the reason of this order, which is always pronounced through their medium, Madame Blavatsky, is still more easily explained. If these injunctions were not given, how could things be prepared? The long ladder must be got in and placed to the opening on the ceiling to go and put [sic] the letter in the trap, pass the string in the guiding-rings [more screw-marks!], try how it works. All this demands privacy. And again, how could Koot-Hoomi be taken out of the box to examine the damage made to his head from the last exhibition if people were not

sent out of the apartment? . . . We must admit that all these precautions are indispensable."

I have quoted at some length to give "my readers" a notion of the impudence of this scribbling rogue, and of the insufferable familiarity with which the Rev. Patterson allowed her to approach his congregation.

But *yes*—"we must admit that all these precautions were indispensable". The which makes it the more certain that never was any phenomenon requiring the use of the ladder performed in that house always full of people. Still, if the ladder were "got in and placed", etc., when "all of us" had been sent out of the house, there would seem to have been *some* sort of magic about! And then, again, if the dummy could only be taken out of the box "to examine the damage" under these same precautionary conditions, the appearance of astral figures near the crowded verandah, that actually looked into H.P.B.'s bedroom, two or three times—as happened—in one evening, can scarcely be accounted for by assuming that Mr. Coulomb, and then Babula, dressed up in the dummy . . . this one dummy that served for the two different personages. "All this demands privacy."

\* \* \*

There follows a paragraph that is scented altogether of the padri, and Mme. Coulomb may be absolved from writing it; "As to what has been the motive of Colonel Olcott in writing such a paragraph as the one referred to is easily understood, and leads one to think that the first impression which occurred to Colonel Olcott was that the opinion of serious people would be that these phenomena were performed by the means of some apparatus; but his bigotry and blind faith in this new doctrine forbade him to say that which his intuition had dictated to him, and he preferred accepting a theory which will bear no testing to a rational certainty."

One cannot criticise Mme. C. as illiterate, because she was using a foreign language; but she was incapable of penning the above paragraph. Even in some passages that I have quoted as coming from her, the pen of a clerical colleague seems to have supplied more than a few phrases. A modicum of scholastic training gone awry peeps out where "the very fact of the Colonel's rejecting the possibility of machinery

confirms their existence". The Colonel had a sufficient motive; he was replying to the incessant attacks by these very padris on the genuineness of H.P.B.'s phenomena. Olcott said that Mme. C. could scarcely write a sentence in good grammar. The Bedlamite composition of most of this pamphlet may be partly accounted for by the circumstance that the Coulomb couple were foreigners. He was a clever designer and draughtsman, could read English, and he seems to have copied H.P.B.'s handwriting fairly well; but there must have been some desperate moments between these two in their efforts to sustain each other's lies in a foreign language. Not surprising that nearly all the "fraud" passages are penned in French!

IV.

FIVE LETTERS. Autumn, 1881.

I.

Mme. Coulomb is sparing of details regarding the household. In fact, except that H.P.B. was difficult to please, she says little about life at headquarters, where, as we shall find, she was not exactly a guardian of the angelic sort. In August, 1881, H.P.B. left again for Simla, this time as guest, of A. O. Hume, with A. P. Sinnett, whose wife was in England. Suddenly, Mme. C. sends up a red whalespout, and a very curious one. In reading the extract she gives allegedly from Madame Blavatsky, we need to reflect that, to the very end, H.P.B.'s real letters prove, beyond all cavil, that she regarded *Mr.* Coulomb as a most honourable and devoted servant!

Letter VII. (P. 47.)

Car, sachez le bien, et je l'ai dit à Mr. Coulomb au chemin de fer. Pour les forcer à *me tourner le dos* il vous faudrait plus que l'exhibition d'un mannequin. J'ai mille cordes à mon arc, et Dieu lui même ne pourrait ouvrir les yeux à ceux qui croient en moi.

Si vous n'êtes pas aussi aveugle que de ne pas voir que même me feriez vous le plus grand mal en votre puissance—et vous savez ce que c'est—vous ne changeriez pas ma position d'un pouce; que je pourrais perdre P—et B—*jamais* ni le C—ni D—ni S—.

For, mark it well, and I have said it also to Mr. Coulomb at the railway station. To force them to *turn their back upon me* will take more than the exhibition of a puppet. I have a thousand strings to my bow, and God himself could not open the eyes of those who believe in me.

If you are so blind as not to see that even if you were to do me the greatest injury in your power—and you know what it is—you would not change my position by an inch; but that I should ever lose P—and B—*never*, neither the C—nor D—nor S—.

\* \* \*

And with this unexhausted alphabetical stretch, comically reminiscent of the "Z nor B, hein?"—with this letter in her possession, Mme. C. allowed herself to be bullied over trifles such as the bread! However, the point even more noticeable is that the extract represents H.P.B. as in a fury after being menaced (and when one reflects *what* that fury would be!) and departing—leaving the "puppet" in the enemy's hands to be "exhibited" at their discretion! Idiocy would not suffice in accepting such "evidence"; malice would have to be added.

What *was* happening at this period is indicated in a letter from Col. Olcott to Mme. C. (P. 48). The lady reproduces this to show "my readers" that she had been piously desirous of warning *Europeans*, at least, about the frauds at headquarters:

"Colombo, Sunday, 25th September (1881).

"My dear Madame Coulomb, [*a line of dots*]

"Another request I have to make. Kindly abstain from talking about us and our religious views with the Rev. Bowen, who is, notwithstanding all his personal merit, our bitter enemy; and with the young men in the house—Padshah and Damodar—with whom you can never agree on religious subjects. You are entitled to your own opinions, just as we are, but why make strife and trouble in the house to no purpose? . . . I would also, if I were you, avoid discussing the Society with any outsider, no matter whom; for it looks bad that one so intimately connected with us as yourself, should be thought to be so totally at variance with the views and objects of the Society's Founders. Pardon the plain speaking of a friend.

I most sincerely hope that by this time Mr. Kassandra has come to a just arrangement with your good husband.

"Faithfully, yours, H. S. Olcott."

In "Old Diary Leaves", Olcott repeats a statement made by Major-General Morgan to the Adyar Defence Committee, namely, that Mme. C. had, in 1881, tried to sell "secrets" to the "Bombay Guardian", a journal edited by the Rev. Bowen, who seems to have sent her packing. This late publication of Olcott's letter, under the auspices of the Rev. Patterson,

looks like a shot at poor Mr. Bowen to show him what a prize he had thrown away.

Olcott's letter indicates the general opinion that Mme. C. was a bad-tongued old fool, and her *good husband* not to blame for her outbreaks. This opinion seems to have been held to the end and largely accounts for the fact that the domestically precious couple were kept on.

2.

No sooner was H.P.B. gone, than Mme. C. had begun to vent her rage to rule on Damodar, who had long been an inmate at headquarters, and on S. J. Padshah, a Parsee poet, who had joined the Society and had been invited to occupy the guest-room until H.P.B.'s return. She made life wretched for them. It was at this period that she began openly to declare that the phenomena were done by the help of the Devil; not very complimentary to herself and spouse if it were they who assisted with the "puppet".

Apparently oblivious of the recent threats about the "puppet", or perhaps thinking that Mr. Coulomb had had his chignon sufficiently dressed "at the railway station", and would threaten no more—the "Madame Blavatsky" of the fraud letters confidently writes from Simla.

Letter VIII. P. 44.)

"Ma chère Amie, Je n'ai pas une minute pour répondre. Je vous supplie faites parvenir cette lettre (here enclosed) à Damodar *in a miraculous way*. It is *very* important. Oh, ma chère, que je suis donc malheureuse! De tous côtés des désagréments et des horreurs.

"My dear Friend, I have not a minute to reply. I beg you to send this letter (here enclosed) to Damodar *in a miraculous way*. It is *very* important. Oh my dear, how unhappy I am! on every side unpleasantness and horror.

"Yours entirely, H.P.B."

"Toute à vous, H.P.B."

The *really* important thing must have struck Hodgson as exceedingly "unpleasant", namely the fact that this note pro-



duced by Mme. C. indicates Damodar as merely a dupe and not a confederate.

A second important thing is that Damodar testified to the Adyar Committee (P. 103, et seq.), with a wealth of detail that must seriously have pained him as a *chela* speaking of a Master, that, in four years, he had received only four letters from Mahatma K.H. during all the many absences of H.P.B. The first of these concerned a letter he had received from his father only a few hours before, and this Mahatmic letter was written in Hindi. The second referred to his troubles about a newspaper incident that had occurred that same morning, H.P.B. being at Simla. The third letter fell in presence of Mr. Coulomb, but while this gentleman had one hand engaged with a cigarette and the other with a match. Transcendental conjuror as Coulomb figures at times, neither he nor anyone, Damodar declared, could have supplied the very private contents of the letter. The fourth dates 1883, out of our period. It was received in presence of other chelas under circumstances that, if it were fraudulent, would have obliged Madame Blavatsky to increase the speed of the Govt. mail from Adyar to Ootacamund by twenty-four hours.

3.

Letter IX. (P. 42.) C.W. VI. 296-299

The reference to Padshah at headquarters dates this letter as in autumn, 1881. It is very long, so I shall break it up and comment wherever the baffling taradiddle gives a chance. Mr. C. has evidently been quite forgiven for his little threat to exhibit the puppet and ruin the Society, for he is included.

“Mes chers Amis, Au nom du ciel ne croyez pas que je vous oublie. Je n'ai pas le temps matériel pour respirer—voilà tout! Nous sommes dans la plus grande crise, et je ne dois pas PERDRE LA TETE.”

“My dear Friends, In the name of heaven do not think that I have forgotten you. I have not even time to breathe—that is all! We are in the greatest crisis, and I must not LOSE MY HEAD.”

I pause to agree with Damodar's remark to the Adyar Committee that there was no particular crisis on during

H.P.B.'s 1881 Simla visit; and I had noted my opinion long before reading his testimony. H.P.B. had the usual rows with Hume, whose guest she was, and she may have written to Madame Coulomb something about it by way of letting off steam; but there was nothing about which she “dared” not write. The following lines are sufficient *daring*!

“Je ne puis ni ose rien vous écrire. Mais vous devez comprendre qu'il est *absolument nécessaire* que quelque chose arrive à Bombay tant que je suis ici. Le Roi at Dam. *doivent* voir et recevoir la visite d'un de nos Frères et—s'il est possible que le premier reçoive une lettre que j'enverrai. Mais les voir il est plus nécessaire. Elle devrait lui tomber sur la tête comme la première et je suis en train de supplier 'Koothoomi' de la lui envoyer. Il doit battre le fer tant qu'il est chaud.”

“I cannot and dare not write anything to you. But you must understand that it is *absolutely necessary* that something should happen in Bombay while I am here. The King and Dam. *must* see one of the Brothers and receive a visit from him; and if possible, the first must receive a letter which I shall send. But to see them (the Brothers) is still more necessary. The letter must fall on his head like the first, and I am begging 'Koot Hoomi' to send it to him. We [sic: he] must strike while the iron is hot.”

Hodgson says, “Madame Coulomb asserts that by the ‘King’ was meant Padshah”. H.P.B. replied that she never called Padshah “the King”. Padshah, himself testified to the Adyar Committee. Unfortunately, only extracts were given in the Report, a profound mistake; still, we have the essential. Padshah stated that he only received *two* letters from Mahatma K.H. in all his years of probation; and one of these came while H.P.B. was in the house. The other came while H.P.B. was at Simla, 1881; K.H.'s letter to Padshah about a poem was written over a sheet of a letter from Sinnett to Padshah. Sinnett's writing, still showing through in places, had been partially “faded out”; and I think that most critics would agree with the poet that the K.H. style and matter do not suggest Madame Blavatsky.

The “fraud” letter goes raving on:

“Agissez *indépendamment* de moi, mais dans les habitudes et customs des Frères. S’il pouvait arriver quelque chose à Bombay qui fasse parler tout le monde—ce serait merveilleux! Mais quoi? Les Frères sont inexorables. Oh, cher M. Coulomb, sauvez la situation et faites ce qu’ils vous demandent.”

*But what?* Who are these “inexorable Brothers”? Mr. Coulomb *himself*, according to his own statements! He was “Koot Hoomi”, with a dummy head on. And he is asked to “act” according to his own “habits and customs”! Nothing happened to shake the world while H.P.B. was at Simla; nothing happened at all. As in the case of *so many* of these pretended letters of instructions, there was no practical sequence, no outcome, all ends in “hot air”; no action following on the instructions can be traced.

“J’ai toujours la fièvre un peu. On l’aurait à moins! Ne voilà-t-il pas que Mr. Hume veut voir Koothoomi *astralement* de loin, s’il veut, pour pouvoir dire au monde *qu’il sait* qu’il existe et *l’écrire* dans tous les journaux car jusqu’à présent il ne peut dire qu’une chose c’est qu’il *croit* fermement et positivement, mais non qu’il *le sait* parcequ’il l’a *vu de ses yeux* comme Damodar, Padshah, etc. Enfin, en voilà d’un problème!”

Regarding Hume’s desire to see the Brothers and be assured for himself that they existed, Mme. C. had only to read “Hints”, p.115, where, not only are Hume’s doubts stated,

“Act *independently* of me, but in the habits and customs of the Brothers. If something could happen in Bombay that would make all the world talk, it would be grand! But what? The Brothers are inexorable. Oh, dear Mr. Coulomb, save the situation and do what they ask you.”

“I am always feverish. How can it be otherwise! Imagine! Mr. Hume wants to see Koothoomi *in his astral form* at a distance, so that if he complies (with his request) he may be able to say to the world that *he knows* he exists, and *to write* it in all the papers; for at present he can only say one thing, viz.—that he *believes* firmly and positively, but not that he *knows* it because he has seen *with his own eyes*, as Damodar, Padshah, etc., have. There is a problem.”

but an almost exact date for a conversation on the subject between him and H.P.B. is given. Mme. C. would have no difficulty at all in concocting a letter to fit the period. For the rest, it is my opinion that Mme. C. had got hold of some genuine letter from H.P.B. to Damodar or Olcott, saying that Hume desired to see Mahatma K.H., but that the Chiefs were inexorable and that K.H. would not be permitted by the occult laws to appear to Hume. All this is borne out by the “Mahatma Letters” on this question. The Coulomb could only have got hold of the information by eaves-dropping of some kind, and some of her phraseology suggests that she pilfered a letter.

“Comprenez donc que je deviens folle et prenez pitié d’une pauvre veuve. Si quelque chose *d’inouï* arrivait à Bombay, il n’y a rien que Mr. Hume ne fasse pour Koothoomi sur sa demande. Mais K.H. ne peut pas venir ici les lois occultes ne le lui permettent pas. Enfin, à revoir. Ecrivez moi. A vous de cœur, H.P.B.

“Demain je vous enverrai les deux lettres. Allez les chercher à la poste à votre nom, E. Cutting=Coulomb.

“P.S. Je voudrais que K.H. ou quelqu’un d’autre se fasse voir avant le reçu des lettres!”

“Understand then that I am going mad, and take pity on a poor widow. If something *unheard of* should take place at Bombay, there is nothing that Mr. Hume would not do for Koothoomi on his demand. But K.H. cannot come here for the occult laws do not permit him to do so. Goodbye. Write to me.

Heartily yours, H.P.B.  
“I will send you the two letters tomorrow. Go and ask for them at the post-office in your name, E. Cutting=Coulomb.

“P.S. I wish K.H. or someone else would make his appearance before the receipt of the letters.”

This letter, that betrays the clever scheme, is supposed to have gone to headquarters, where Mme. C. ruled the postbag like everything else; yet, the letters carrying out the scheme cannot go there! The conspiratorial atmosphere is thickened, however; the main point. The next letter accounts perhaps for the fact that “Miss Cutting” had no envelopes to exhibit.

## Letter X.

“Ma chère Madame Coulomb, Il m'est impossible d'envoyer cela poste restante, car je crois que Mr. Hogg *sait tout ce qui se passe à la poste*, et une lettre de moi à vous p.r. provoquerait tout de suite un soupçon.

.....

Envoyez moi donc l'adresse de Mr Coulomb à *son moulin*, le nom du propriétaire, et je pourrais adresser là. Enfin je vous envoie cela de la part d'un Mr. Henri Morel, ingénieur français. Dites que c'est des projets de machine qu'il vous envoie par mon entremise, et j'écris la même chose à Damodar.

.....

From the lines of dots, we may infer (1) that the omitted sentences were irrelevant to the plot, and maybe Madame Blavatsky merely broke off to remind Mme. C. that Monday was washing-day; (2) that they related to the plot, but that Mme. C. wished to spare “my readers” something too horrible for print; (3) that the Rev. Patterson considered them “too thin”; (4) that the dots signify nothing but Mme. C.'s dramatic itch.

Nothing ever seems to have been heard of any Mr. Henri Morel, French engineer, neither, apparently, did the Rev. Patterson use any third degree method to extract from Coulomb what were these “plans of machinery”. All remains wrapped in mystery.

“My dear Madame Coulomb, I find it impossible to send this poste restante, because I think that Mr. Hogg *knows everything that goes on in the post-office*, and a letter from me to you p.r. would at once excite suspicion.

.....

Then send me Mr. Coulomb's address at *his mill*, the name of the owner of it, and I shall be able to address there. In a word, I shall send you this on the part of a Mr. Henri Morel. Say that they are plans of machinery which he sent you through me, and I write the same thing to Damodar.

.....

“Per l'amore de San Jiu-  
 seppe fatte l'affare bene. Il  
 y a deux lettres et un paquet,  
 il faut les délivrer les deux à  
 leur adresse, s'il était seule-  
 ment possible de faire tomber  
 le paquet et la lettre en même  
 temps sur le nez du Roi, ce  
 serait magnifique. Quant à  
 l'autre—bah! Je le laisse à  
 votre discretion.

For the love of St. Joseph  
 do the thing well. There are  
 two letters and a parcel, the  
 two must be delivered to their  
 address. If it were possible  
 that the letter and the parcel  
 should fall at the same mo-  
 ment on the nose of the King,  
 it would be magnificent. As  
 to the other—I do not care! I  
 leave it to your discretion.

.....

More washing-day, perhaps. As has been stated, only one letter came for Padshah from Simla, and no packet; so, even for the love of St. Joseph, Mme. C. does not seem to have “done the thing well”. A. O. Hume published his belief that Madame Blavatsky never wrote such letters, for, whatever she was, she was no fool.

But, on the assumption that she did write them—how painfully at fault was the vigilance of Mr. Hogg, Post-Master General! Not only did he know *nothing* that was going on in his post-office, not only did he let slip *this* incriminating letter to the Theosophical headquarters, but every one of the rest! Did his all-knowing eye bend over the letters and parcel sent from Simla to Coulomb, a foreign mechanic (who lived at the Theos. headquarters) “at his mill”? No. And a *bomb* might have been in that packet! It must be admitted that by producing these letters, *if genuine*, Madame and Monsieur Coulomb conclusively prove that both Mr. Hogg, and Major Henderson, Chief of Police, with the whole Indian C.I.D. at his orders, were criminally below their appointments. Here was a highly suspected Russian woman sending conspiratorial letters galore, and this during the years when we were fearing a Russian invasion of Afghanistan. And nobody “pinched” her! To whom else may she not have written?—and on subjects far more devastating to the British Empire than “puppets” and “cigarettes” and “hair”! *Who knows*, WHO KNOWS what Mr. Henri Morel's plans of machinery did not cost us in blood and treasure in the year 1881?

I leave it to the Indian Government.

Letter XI is in English—up to a certain point; we shall see what point.

Letter XI. (P. 41.)

“My dear Mme. Coulomb, I am obliged to remain till the 25th of October, as I can make 200 Rupees, offered me by the Foreign Office for translating a book of Russian statistics. Say so to Damodar. Don't give yourself the trouble of setting the house. When I leave here, I will have to stop at various places, as I have promised to pay visits to several persons, and have to see some Fellows on my way back. I may be detained till end of November. I cannot go to Ceylon now. In January, I will go to Calcutta—to Mrs. Gordon—to establish a branch, and I want Olcott to come back and go together to Bombay again from Calcutta. I may not go to Ceylon before the spring.

“Say to Damodar that his idea of establishing headquarters at Simla is absurd. He must have been influenced by Mr. Hume (magnetically) as it is Mr. Hume's hobby. If I change my headquarters—and we have to do it, for I hate Bombay—I will have headquarters at Calcutta and Ceylon, going to Simla every summer for two or three months. The rent for a cottage of three rooms is 2,000 rupees, and everything dear in proportion. Hume and Damodar are both crazy.”

So far, credibly what a lady might write to her major-domo. But then, without so much as a dot, comes a screech in French:

“Oh, mon pauvre Christofolo! Il est donc mort, et vous l'avez tué? Oh! ma chère amie, si vous saviez comme je voudrais le voir revivre!

.....  
“Ma benediction à mon pauvre Christofolo. Toujours à vous. H.P.B.”

“Oh, my poor Christofolo! He is dead then, and you have killed him? Oh my dear friend, if you only knew how I would like to see him revive!

.....  
“My blessing on my poor Christofolo. Ever yours, H.P.B.”)

\* \* \*

Mme. C. explains in a footnote: “Christofolo was our ‘occult name’ for the doll (Koot-Hoomi); I had burnt him in a fit of disgust at the imposture”.

So the “puppet” was gone. This puppet that Monsieur and Madame had been threatening to exhibit, but did not exhibit, even to the Rev. Bowen, even to the “Bombay Gazette” that would have made it instantly world-famous . . . this Marvel that could deceive the most competent persons and change from one Mahatma to another!

Yet—the *appearances continued*. In fact, those to Ramaswamier (M.), Ross Scott (M.), and Mohini (K.H.) occurred, respectively, two months, three months and two years and four months *after* the auto-da-fé. When Hodgson came to India, Mme. C. rectified this blunder in the forged letters, and the S.P.R. solemnly records (Report P. 213): “Madame Coulomb declares that she had burned the dummy ‘in a fit of disgust at the imposture’, but that she afterwards made another”.

The whole thing being a criminal conspiracy, perhaps the appropriate comment would be—“Laughter in Court”.

#### IV. . . I.

One letter. Darjeeling, Autumn, 1882.

In the middle of this chaos of undated and unaddressed screeds, Mme. C. suddenly jerks a year ahead to Darjeeling, where H.P.B. stayed in September and October, 1882. I will not give the main part of the letter in French, as it consists of ordinary news, but only the usual finishing “plot” paragraph.

Letter XII. (P. 44.)

“My dear Friend, You complain of my never writing to you, and I have already written you two letters without you having answered me. I send you a telegram which I have received from Subba Rao. As you see, he writes me that the

house is bought, and asks me when I am coming. Tell Colonel, I beg you, to get ready, and not to make a fool of himself by saying that he has 'nothing to do with that'. He has fired up and taken offence at nothing, and now he sulks. Tell him that if he plays me this trick, I shall not return at all, there!"

The "house" referred to was the present headquarters at Adyar, Madras. Subba Rao was conducting the negotiations for buying the property. The letter indicates that Mme. C. was occasionally used by H.P.B. and Olcott as a go-between, a kind of buffer, during their differences of opinion; an indiscreet course of action, and that finally encouraged the housekeeper to "boss" them both to some extent.

"Baboula is hardly convalescent. Poor boy, he was on the point of death; and it is now a month since he fell ill, and it is only at this time that I find out how useful and necessary he is to me. I can tell you that I have suffered a great deal, sick as I am, and all alone. It is extremely cold here. I shall leave this in three days. I shall pay a visit of a few days to Mrs. Gordon in Calcutta, and then I shall go to Sinnett at Allahabad. The little one is a real jewel, but the big one is an imbecile jealous, quarrelsome and doubting, etc." .....

\* \* \*

These dots, that always come just when the plot is thickening.

"The "imbecile" referred to in the sudden whalespout was Mr. Casava Pillay, who testified to the Adyar Defence Committee (Report, p.87, et seq.). In Vol. I. of this "Defence" series, I trace the story of H.P.B.'s trip to the Himalayas, but it might well take a long section all to itself; maybe it will one day. This journey makes one of the most fascinating among the many thrilling Theosophical histories (of the which, to my perennial amazement, I find some Theosophists almost as ignorant as the outside public!). How H.P.B. and Pillay and a chela sent from the Nilgherries to conduct her started from Bombay together, and how H.P.B. was whisked off, apparently at the next station, for we find

Pillay travelling all alone up north and believing H.P.B. to be still at Bombay! . . . but this must be reserved for another day. Mme. C.'s page 49 states some of her invaluable opinions about Mahatmas and Chelas. She seems to have done a little eaves-dropping when the party started north, but her efforts to appear well-informed merely serve to show how completely she and her husband were left out of the mysteries. She tries to represent Pillay, "the big one", and Babaji, "the little one", as falsely playing the *chela* at Darjeeling.

\* \* \*

Pillay states that he had seen Mahatma K.H. in vision repeatedly since 1869 in his native Nellore, where he was Inspector of Police. In 1881, he joined the T.S. In 1882, he received at Bombay headquarters a Mahatmic communication ("Letters from the Masters", Vol 2, p.116.). The same night, he was visited by K.H. in astral form in his room and had a conversation with him in Telegu, during which the Mahatma desired him to proceed to Darjeeling and meet him in a place beyond the Himalayas. Every detail of this adventure is found borne out here and there in the records. What concerns us here is Pillay's testimony concerning himself as "the imbecile". He states:

"The letter published, must from its reference to my presence at Darjeeling, have been written about 26th, 27th or 28th of September, 1882, as I arrived there on the 27th. But, from its mention of Babula's illness and the statement that Madame Blavatsky 'would leave Darjeeling within two or three days', it must clearly have been written about the 20th or 25th of October. Babula fell ill two or three days prior to my arrival on the 27th, and continued ill a month. If the letter was written towards the end of October, there was no necessity for Madame Blavatsky (who knew perfectly well I was then at Nellore and had written me letters dated Oct. 9th and 13th), to write about me to Madame Coulomb—who saw me on my return to Bombay."

There is what comes of concocting letters about persons when you are not informed of the circumstances. Perhaps Mme. C. had some doubts herself as to the sufficient proof of fraud in the above, for she offers two lines of washing-day dots and then something quite unmistakable:

"Veuillez, O Sorcière à mille ressources, demander à Christofolo quand vous le verrez de transmettre la lettre çl-incluse par voie aérienne astrale, ou n'importe comment. C'est très important. A vous, ma chère. Je vous embrasse bien.

Yours faithfully,  
LUNA MELANCONICA.  
*Je vous supplie FAITES LE BIEN.*"

"Be good enough, O sorceress of a thousand resources, to ask Christofolo, when you see him, to transmit the letter herewith enclosed, by an aerial or astral way, or it makes no matter how. It is very important. (My love) to you, my dear. I embrace you.

Yours faithfully,  
LUNA MELANCONICA.  
*I beg you DO IT WELL.*"

\* \* \*

We never hear to whom this "very important" letter was addressed, or how it was delivered, but "anyhow" gives a considerable scope for operations, and we may conclude that it was carefully delivered in this manner. The same kind of reasoning, applicable to so much in this pamphlet, may help us to settle the question—"What did LUNA MELANCONICA signify?" Mme. C. says on page 62 that it meant the hole at the back of the "Shrine", but here above, she seems to offer it to "my readers" as the signature of Madame Blavatsky. Also, she says that "Christofolo" now means Mr. Coulomb. Bedlam! So murmuring, "Anyhow", I pass on.

2.

After Madame Blavatsky had left for Darjeeling, another chela, Ramaswamier, started after her by order of his Master, and this Master he met personally in Sikkim, on October 5th. Perhaps the most precious of Mme. C.'s opinions would have been that regarding the identity of this Mahatma, but, after raising expectations, she becomes infected with mystery and retires with sealed lips (P. 49):

"Mr. Ramaswamier I mention, because I hope soon to be able to smell the aura of the Mahatma he met on horseback on the territory of Sikkim."

I searched carefully, but found not another word of enlightenment about this. It is more than possible that she did

invent some yarn that even the padris found rather "too thin", and cut out, the lady's acquaintance with things as they might happen in Sikkim being inconsiderable. "Anyhow", we hear no more. Instead, she pens a few dark, but vague, remarks about Pillay, the which prove *once more* that she was told nothing whatever about the chelas and their journey, was left a complete outsider; and this, after nearly three years of faithful confederacy in fraud! Indeed, she declares inconsequently, that "all these absurd mysteries disgusted" her and Mr. Coulomb so much that they decided to leave the Society and remain aloof in Bombay, "where we had very good friends, who kindly offered to help us and give us a home". These good friends were no other than Dr. Dudley, then President of the Bombay branch of the T.S., and his wife, who seem to have felt that enticement of the useful couple employed at headquarters was compatible with their pledge of loyalty to the Society. Unfortunately, the Coulombs did not leave.

\* \* \*

During this year, 1882, the negotiations were concluded for the property at Adyar, Madras. On December 17th, the whole household removed to the new headquarters, and "Crow's Nest" of Crevice fame was left to the rats until Mr. Hodgson of the S.P.R. came to pay them a visit.

V.

FINALE. I.

As I shall deal exhaustively in my next volume with the Shrine Room at Adyar and the phenomena that happened there, and as the next few pages of Mme. C.'s pamphlet are devoted to these same subjects, I pass for the present over these pages to the period after H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott had left for Europe, on Feb. 20th, 1884, and the Board of Control that had been set up in charge of the Adyar household had decided on the expulsion of the Coulombs and was soon to serve the couple with notice to quit.

The circumstances may be stated rapidly here without going into the details.

Dr. Hartmann, the President of the Board, and his colleague, Mr. St. George Lane-Fox, were newcomers to headquarters; and it is rather clear that they exercised the zeal of newcomers suddenly placed in a position of control. Both considered that the Society was not run on "proper" lines; it was too happy-go-lucky altogether for them, and neither of them understood that this atmosphere was the very food of the Society, or that the creative genius of H.P.B. and the cementing genius of Olcott were quite sufficient to carry the Society past any temporary whirlpools due to lack of business methods, including even the absence of strict control over the pilfering Coulombs.

I judge that up to the departure of H.P.B. to Europe, the Coulombs had only vague notions of the possibility of making a few easy holes and traps to supplement the force of a little blackmail perhaps to be tried on some day, a few hundred rupees or so to be extracted over the Metrovitch affair, when they should have garnered sufficient sous to begin to put into shape a dream of Mme. C.'s, to set up a boarding-house of her own, with, perhaps, a little Society of her own, too, to give her social standing. Just before H.P.B. sailed, Feb. 1884, Mme. C., who had accompanied her to Bombay, had fancied that her dream was to become a sudden marvellous reality. She had asked Prince Harisinghji, a Theosophist, to lend her 2,000 rupees, and he had given an embarrassed consent. H.P.B. heard of this, and, getting the story from the

Prince, put an abrupt end to the Coulomb's aspirations. When leaving the ship, after saying goodbye to Madame Blavatsky, Mme. C. told Babula that she would be revenged on his mistress. I think that active plotting by the couple only began from this moment.

From a study of all the records available, I think it impossible that any of the holes and trap-doors subsequently shown by the Coulombs to the Board of Control, could have existed before H.P.B.'s departure, but that these were begun immediately on Mme. C.'s return to Adyar with the tale of her defeat, in a state of baffled hopes and of fury, bent on revenge. I think it may be shown that Mr. C. soon enough realised that he had bitten off more than he could chew, and could not hope to carry out his depredations in any manner to convince people who knew the building and all the details of daily Theosophical work and circumstances that the holes and traps could have been made while the usual routine was going on. This I will deal with in Vol. 3.

Coulomb, we will presume, set to work. But Mme. C., in the joy of anticipated revenge, was unable to check her tongue. On day, about March 10th, she snapped out at Damodar that Madame Blavatsky had asked her husband to make trap-doors. Damodar reported this immediately to Mr. Lane-Fox, who, with Dr. Hartmann, tried to set about investigations. But the Coulombs held the keys of H.P.B.'s rooms, where Mr. C. had been ordered to make some alterations, and they had a certain authority of position. Coulomb and wife had a tremendous row, and she declared that she had never said anything of the sort, that Damodar had "inferred" (P. 83) and misunderstood, etc. And, apparently, things went on as before the incident. But, Hartmann and Damodar had written to both H.P.B. and Olcott about the "trap-doors"; and the letters were on the way to Paris.

\* \* \*

On March 11th. Damodar received a note from Mahatma K.H. telling him to be charitable to Mme. C., she being a medium and irresponsible. At this time, Mr. Lane-Fox was contemplating a series of Theosophical lectures at Ootacamund and other stations in the Nilgherry Hills, taking Damodar as secretary. Obeying K.H., the Board gave leave to Mme. C. for a month's holiday at Ooty; she left on March 27th, and

Lane-Fox and Damodar followed on April 1st. On April 24th, while she was still at Ooty, a letter dated April 1st, Paris, arrived at Madrass for her from Colonel Olcott, the which letter was opened by her husband. Olcott said that he had received reports from Adyar that Mme. C. had been talking about trap-doors (see App. I. 3, for Olcott's letter), and generally slandering H.P.B. and the Society. He treated the affair as just one more of Mme. C.'s well-known outbreaks, said that she had already tried to unsettle him with "almost similar" stuff and pretended "secrets she knew", warned her that he was becoming quite disgusted, gave her a hint that her room would be more welcome than her company at Adyar and rebuked her for *disgracing her good honourable husband*.

By the same post came a letter to Mme. C. from H.P.B. This went to Ooty. H.P.B. treats the trap-door talk with ridicule and disgust, but the letter betrays much anxiety. Conscious of innocence about trap-doors, but aware that Mme. C. really had a hold over her in the Metrovitch affair, AND wanting the invaluable Mr. Coulomb to finish building her a new bedroom—H.P.B. pleads with Mme. C. not to make trouble. This letter makes no reference to any threat to produce letters. Mr. Gribble writes in his Report, p.22: "Although this letter is full of reproaches, there does not appear to be any reference to a threatened exposure by letters. It shows that previously to April 10th [sic, 1st], the C.'s must have made accusations of trickery, and indeed Dr. Hartmann himself says that, although the C.'s spoke of trickery, they did not say that they held any letters which would compromise Madame Blavatsky. (See leader in "Theosophist", Oct. 1884). There would therefore seem to be some reason to believe the statement of Mme. C. that it was not until they had been expelled from the Society that she made the threat of exposing Madame Blavatsky by publishing the letters. That Mme. C. had previously made a threat of some kind appears to be certain, because Dr. Hartmann (pamphlet, p.32, footnote) says that a letter from Madame Blavatsky to Mr. Lane-Fox, dated April 2nd, contained a "blackmailing letter" from Mme. Coulomb warning Madame Blavatsky to beware of the consequences of a rupture".

So, with all, these "fraud" screeds in her pocket, Mme. C. says nothing about letters. We may change Gribble's "some

reason to believe" into "no reason to doubt"! Mme. C. made no threats about producing letters because she had nothing to produce, *then*. She only worked out the letter scheme after the trap-doors had entirely failed to convince the Theosophists that these could possibly have already been used.

\* \* \*

The only reason why H.P.B. might have feared a rupture was because of the Metrovitch secret. When Subba Row, on the alert as legal adviser, asked H.P.B. if there could possibly be any compromising *letters* of which she needed to "beware", as it would be better to buy them at any price, she replied, No.

In her letter to Mme. C., however, there are several sentences that indicate premonition by H.P.B. that she was about to be sacrificed for the good of the Order to which she belonged and on which, by indiscretion, she had brought a publicity which, if not dangerous to this Order itself, was so to many exoteric Orders connected with it. She uses an obscure phrase that, later, was often on her lips: "If by accusing myself publicly . . . I can make the veneration for the Mahatmas greater—I shall do it without a moment's hesitation". This last bitter cup was not presented to her, but she had to pay a heavy penalty nevertheless. She was discredited. The Mahatmas were said not to exist—and popular curiosity about them died away.

\* \* \*

2.

Mr. Coulomb seized eagerly on the mild tone of Olcott's letter to his wife. By this time, the man must have been in a terrible stew with regard to the outcome of his trap-doors and the famous hole in the wall. This hole, that had to be big enough to admit a man when found, showed only an irregular break of 27 inches at highest *point* and 14 at widest. The wall was hollow and extremely thin, simply a chunam and plaster partition. Coulomb may well have feared that the whole caboodle would come down about his ears if he continued. I will not go into detail here because I shall deal with all this in my next volume, but



merely say that there was every reason for Coulomb to be in a terrible funk. He sent for his wife to return home, and, meanwhile, wrote to Olcott. This is the letter I spoke of as being published by Mme C. on page 89 of her pamphlet. Nothing could worse expose the cunning of the man and the lack of moral responsibility, even on the lowest level of self-preservation from judgment, than the publication of this letter by the couple themselves. The translation is Mme. C.'s.

#### The Letter.

"Dear Sir, In the absence of my wife, who is at Ootacumund on account of her health, I have received the letter which you have sent her, and as she has authorised me to open her correspondence, I have read it. I am so indignant at the behaviour of the persons who have written to you such lies that I shall not transmit your letter to my wife, and I shall await your return in order that you may confront us with those persons who have written to you such things, and we shall see if they would dare to affirm before you and before us what they have written. Since ever we have been in the Society, we have always been exposed and accused unjustly, and this never openly, but always by calumnious letters. I cannot say that I had reason to be satisfied with the behaviour shown to me; nevertheless, I have borne all, I have said nothing and I have written nothing to you about it.

"If the object of these persons who have written to you such lies is to put us out of the Society, they need not have recourse to such vile means. I am very grateful to you for the kindness you have had to inform us of that which has been written to you; at least you give us the chance to clear ourselves, and this we will do at your return, so you will be able to judge for yourself. Permit me to say that accusations so badly grounded are not very brother-like on the part of those who have written them; and I shall be very happy if, on your return, I have the opportunity of knowing who these persons are, not only in order to speak my mind, but also to assign them before a court of law. I beg you to forgive me if my style is not correct, but I am so indignant against these persons that my blood boils.

"I beg you to excuse me for not having replied to your

letter from Suez; the reason is that, after having communicated it to Damodar, he told me that he had no funds in hand to pay the cost of the work, and few days later, all authority over the men employed on the estate was taken from me, consequently I now represent nothing but a Zero; but these slight unpleasantnesses are nothing to me, who have been brought up in the severe school of adversity and have been much tried.

"You may send a copy of this letter (this one that I am now writing) to the people who have written against us; in order to warn them that they will have to substantiate their calumnies.

"As I belong to the fatalist school—that is, I believe that nothing can change destiny or the course of events—I accept things as they come; therefore let us drop the subject, and allow me to congratulate you on the success and fame that you have obtained in Paris and that I hope may accompany you to London, and that you will return here triumphant. I thank you once more for your candour, and I believe that on your return you will find that we are worthy of your esteem.

"Meanwhile, accept, dear sir, the respectful salutations of your very devoted servant.

A. Coulomb."

\* \* \*

Had not this epistle arrived in Paris too late, Coulomb could have stopped up the hole in the wall, repapered, and blamed the damage on to the damp. Then, waving his "honneur", he could have defied the Board of Control to prove that *he* had ever said a word about trap-doors, given his wife a furious public scolding for her absurd tongue, the which rebuke she would have accepted with meekness and a sob in her handkerchief, and the world would never have heard of any "Coulomb scandal". Olcott needed to have the evidence almost before his eyes before he would believe that Coulomb was a rogue, and this evidence would not have been forthcoming. H.P.B. would have been only too glad to hear that the whole thing was just some more of Mme. Coulomb's "flapdoodle". Dr. Hartmann and Lane-Fox might have left the Society, but the Society had gone on before they joined and would have gone on after they resigned.

But all this was not to be And yet. it easily might have been!

Olcott despised Mme. Coulomb, but he trusted her husband. He trusted far less at that time Dr. Hartmann and Lane-Fox, was not at all at ease as to their intentions. A year later, they did make a plan, even, a plot, to weaken his authority as President of the Society and tried to set up a controlling Council to run the thing on business lines. Instead of a simple, almost communal, society, the T.S. was approaching the gilt line that all such societies must resolutely refuse to cross, or lose their character: the line where simply necessary possessions begin to swell to Vested Interests. There is only one way out of that. "Sell that thou hast", give all thou canst, and return to simplicity. Dr. Hartmann and Lane-Fox, a very wealthy man, certainly had notions of turning Adyar into a successful business, and their plans excluded Olcott as directing genius. From the first, almost, they and he had felt a mutual hostility, they far more than he; yet, he was certainly open to conviction, to say the least, about their secret intentions to displace him, and the cunning Coulomb seems to have understood the situation and felt that it would be easy enough to convince him that Hartmann and Lane-Fox were intriguing to supplant him.

\* \* \*

At this moment, extraordinary paragraphs began to appear in the papers, concerning the inside affairs of the Society; the world was informed that trouble was brewing between the Founders and the new European members—these, of course, being Hartmann and Lane-Fox. It was so much to the interest of the Coulombs to get this news going that one has small difficulty in accepting Hartmann's suspicion that Mme. C. herself inspired the paragraphs and circulated them through her friends, the padris.

Now, by the same mail as Coulomb sent his letter to Olcott, there went also to Olcott, from Madras, a mysterious document. It was sent anonymously. Written on headquarters notepaper, it was signed "Dr. Hartmann".

"Private.

Adyar, April 28, 1884.

"My dear Madame Coulomb, I was very glad to receive your kind warning: but I need a new and further explanation before I will believe in Madame Blavatsky's *innocence*. From the first week of my arrival, I knew she was a *trickster* for I had received intimation to that effect, and had been told so by Mr. Lane-Fox before he went to Ooty (and who added, moreover, that he had come from England with this purpose, as he had received secret instructions from the London Fellows) and even said that he felt sure she was a spy.)

"She is worse than you think, and she lied to me about lots of things, but you may rest assured that she shall not bambuzzle me. I hope to tell you more when I see you, upon your return from Ootacamund and show you that Col. Olcott is no better than he should be. Excuse short letter. I am writing in the dark.

"Yours faithfully, Dr. F. Hartmann."

\* \* \*

Dr. Hartmann says (P. 35. "Report" etc.): "The handwriting of this letter somewhat resembled my own". Olcott did not *immediately* send to Hartmann this screed that represents Mme. C. as defending H.P.B.'s "innocence" against Dr. Hartmann—assuring him of his belief that it was a forgery; he evidently was not at all so assured. He put the letter away from the time it reached him, about May 20th, until July 10th. On that day, while going through his papers, he found that the letter had a note on it in the script of Mahatma M.: "A clumsy forgery, but good enough to show how much an enterprising enemy can do in this direction". Then, Olcott sent it to Hartmann, with suitably fraternal compliments.

\* \* \*

Hodgson (S.P.R. Report, p.281) accuses Madame Blavatsky of having forged this letter, "for the purpose of thus preparing the way for her assertion that the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters were also forgeries".

If she had done so, she must have sent the forgery post-dated April 28th, from Paris by the mail leaving first week

in April, to be sent back anonymously by a confederate at Adyar to Olcott on the 28th.

Hodgson says, "This forged Hartmann document and also the endorsement thereon, are, in my opinion, the handiwork of Madame Blavatsky". Well, we shall see.

4

We next come to another Mahatmic document that Hodgson quotes on page 279. He says: "Madame Blavatsky no doubt wrote also to Mr. Damodar [on April 1st]. Her letters would reach Madras about April 24th, and Ootacamund on April 26th, on which date Mr. Damodar produced a Mahatma M. letter, declaring that it had fallen in his room: it was addressed to Dr. Hartmann, who has published the following portions of it:—

'For some time already the woman has opened communication—a regular diplomatic pourparlers—with the enemies of the cause, certain padris. She hopes for more than 2,000 rupees from them if she helps them [,] ruining or at least injuring the Society by injuring the reputation of the founders. Hence hints as to "trap-doors" and tricks. Moreover *when needed* trap-doors *will be found*, as they have been forthcoming for some time. They are sole masters of the top storey. They alone have full entrance to and control of the premises. "Monsieur" is clever and cunning at every handicraft—good mechanic and carpenter, and good at walls likewise. *Take note of this*—ye Theosophists. They hate you with all the hatred of failure against success; Society, Henry, H.P.B., theosophists, and aye—the very name of theosophy. The \*\*\* are ready to lay out a good sum for the ruin of the Society they hate. Moreover the J[esuits?] of India are in direct understanding with those of London and Paris. Keep all said above in strictest confidence if you would be strongest. Let her not suspect you know it, but if you would have my advice—be prudent, yet act without delay. M.'

"Mr. Damodar was instructed on the outside of the letter to let Dr. Hartmann have it without delay; and Dr. Hartmann was instructed in the document itself to show it to Mr. Lane-Fox. The writer of the letter was evidently unaware

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that Mr. Lane-Fox was with Mr. Damodar at Ootacamund, and that Dr. Hartmann was at Madras. Mr. Damodar, however, remedied the ignorance of 'Mahatma M.', and showed the letter to Mr. Lane-Fox before forwarding it to Dr. Hartmann."

\* \* \*

Incidentally, this incident probably served in many an *ashram* as a test of a chela's intuition and knowledge of the rules; but Mr. Hodgson's cocksure chortles do not concern us here. What does concern us is—that this Scotland Yardish gentleman accuses Madame Blavatsky of forging in Paris, on April 1st, a letter signed "M.", the which letter proves that she was *unaware that Dr. Hartmann was at Madras*;

and,

of forging a letter signed "Dr. Hartmann", the which letter must have been sent by her from Paris on April 1st or 2nd, and that proves that the writer was not only aware that Dr. Hartmann *was* at Madras, but was aware that *Mme. Coulomb had gone to Ootacamund and was still there on April 28th*.

And thus spake the S.P.R.!

4

Mme. Coulomb returned from Ooty on May 6th; and she and her spouse put their heads together to patch up the mess. On May 7th, she wrote a letter to H.P.B. On the title page of the Adyar Report there is an extract from this letter:

"I may have said something in my rage, but I swear on all that is sacred for *me* that I never said *fraud, secret passages, trap-doors*, nor that my husband had helped you in any way. *If my mouth has uttered these words, I pray the Almighty to shower on my head the worst maledictions in Nature.*"

The S.P.R. Report does not quote this. The members of the Society for Psychical Research were not allowed to hear of it. Neither did they hear of the following letter sent by the same mail. The translation is taken from the Adyar Report, p.129.

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Mr. Coulomb to Madame Blavatsky.

"Dear Madame, My wife has just returned and has brought me this short paragraph which concerns you. [The newspaper insinuated a possible split in the T.S.]; and I, out of friendship, send it on to you. She tells me that it is the general rumour that if Mr. Lane-Fox should take your place, your Society, which has cost you so much to build up, will suffer. 'Our dear Colonel and our dear Madame' say the majority, 'can never be replaced by others'.

"I beg you not to give credence to anything bad they may report to you about us before you hear us, and we have the chance to explain the truth. Those who are attacking us are only using it as a pretext for a covert attack on you. *And all they are doing is simply to make themselves masters of the situation and overthrow you.*

"I have already written you not to permit the meeting of June 18th to take place [This was a convention of representatives of the Society's Branches, ordered to meet on the date specified, for the purpose of legally ratifying a Deed of the Adyar property.], and it was in your own interest. Do not believe anything you hear; we have done nothing wrong; disabuse your mind of such a thought. Do not rush into anyone's open arms before knowing what sort of characters they are; and I implore you not to take away from me the care of your rooms—which is just what they are trying to effect; and I warn you that it is only that they may have a free field during your absence to accomplish all their intrigues.

May, 1884.

Your devoted friend, A. COULOMB."

\* \* \*

Our devoted friend makes it manifest as the sun on a bright day that Madame Blavatsky knew nothing of his hole and trap-door exploits in her room. And the S.P.R. Report totally ignores this letter!

\* \* \*

When Madame Blavatsky left for Europe, she told Damodar, Hartmann and the rest that they might use her rooms. (Mme. C. P. 76.) On March 6th, less than two weeks after her departure, Coulomb refused to allow Damodar upstairs *in the room where the hole was subsequently found* (affidavit P. 106.). A week later, Mme. C. snapped out at Damodar that Madame Blavatsky had ordered her husband to make trap-doors; and then denied having said it. And now, we find Madame Blavatsky's devoted friend imploring her not to give over to the Board of Control the keys of her rooms—these rooms, where the holes were! where she is supposed to *know* that the holes were!—swearing that he and his wife have done nothing wrong and pleading with her to wait and give them a chance to explain the truth.

Say—chance to mend the hole and return to normal. But Mahatma M. had taken command. Dr. Hartmann had already received M.'s advice to "act without delay" and had taken it. If H.P.B. had received Coulomb's "devoted friend" letter and his wife's "pray the Almighty" letter and the newspaper paragraph before the Board had begun to "act", she, who had received no orders at all, or even advice, would certainly have held up the whole business, refused to let the Coulombs be expelled by the "intriguers", and Olcott would have concurred. Instead of cabling, as soon she did, to Hartmann to take her keys from the Coulombs, she would have cabled him diplomatically to leave things alone until her return, etc., etc. But, by the time she got the letters, the whole cat was out of the bag.

It is now clear that Madame Blavatsky knew nothing of her "devoted friend's" holes and trap-doors in her rooms, the keys of which he was so desperately anxious she should not give over to the Board of Control. It is clear that Madame Blavatsky knew nothing of Madame Coulomb's movements, and therefore could not have written the forged "Hartmann document", that talks of Mme. C. at Ootacamund. And I think it is now clear enough who did write it, namely, Coulomb. In that document, Mme. C. is represented as having tried to convince Hartmann of Madame Blavatsky's innocence; and this is in the tone of Coulomb's letter where he represents himself and spouse as defending H.P.B. and Olcott against the plotters, Hartmann and Lane-Fox. The

Board had already shown the Coulombs that they would get short shrift, and nothing would have served the couple better than to aggravate the none too cordial relations already existing.

\* \* \*

5.

Lane-Fox and Damodar returned from Ootacamund, and Lane-Fox produced for Dr. Hartmann's gaze a bundle of affidavits that he had collected there from several European members of the Society. These testified to Mme. C.'s malice against Madame Blavatsky, secret slanderings and attempts to get money from the members. Dr. Hartmann then "acted" on Mahatma M.'s advice, and requested the Coulombs to leave the house. But the Coulombs wished to stay! They calculated that Olcott and Madame Blavatsky would take their letters at face value, and they declared that they would not leave until they got replies from Paris. Then, the Board formally summoned Mme. C. and expelled her, at the same time requesting the husband, against whom there was no evidence yet, to accompany her out of the house. Coulomb then played his last card. Mme. Coulomb writes (P. 109): "At the break of day, my husband, being still desirous to save Madame, called Damodar aside, and told him what he has stated in his affidavit".

\* \* \*

Damodar's affidavit: "This morning Mr. Coulomb called me aside, and said he wanted to talk to me privately, as he had to communicate a great secret. He asked me whether I was a friend of Madame Blavatsky, and whether I would promise secrecy in regard to what he was going to tell me. He then said that there was a secret passage behind the "shrine" and that he would therefore not give up the keys of Madame Blavatsky's rooms."

"May 16th, 1884. Damodar K. Mavalankar."

\* \* \*

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Clearly, Coulomb expected that Damodar would take fright on account of H.P.B. and would use his influence to keep the Coulombs at Adyar and the matter a secret from the Board of Control. But, far from taking fright, Damodar immediately filed his affidavit.

Things moved rapidly. Subba Row, acting as the Society's lawyer, had, the day before, demanded of Mme. Coulomb a retraction of her malicious gossip to members, and threatened proceedings. She received this late on the day, the 16th, that Damodar made his affidavit. Still, she clung to her notion that the Society would not dare to prosecute her or even to turn her out. She replied, after a night's reflection, and doubtless, consultation with her padri friends:

"Sir, I received yesterday, at half-past four p.m., a registered letter bearing your signature. I must say that I feel sorry to be called upon to defend myself against some accusations stated in the letter; I would rather have been spared this disagreeable task, as the name of the Society is at stake, and would feel really happy if this delicate matter was left alone. But if the law calls me to state the truth I shall be obliged to do so. In this case, I beg you to assign me before any Court you like. I am, etc., E. Coulomb."

As a matter of fact, the Board of Control had not felt that it possessed the authority to expel the couple by force. Further letters had been dispatched to Paris, but there was not yet time for reply. However, on receipt of Damodar's affidavit, Hartmann cabled, and received on the 18th, cabled authority from Olcott and H.P.B. to expel the Coulombs. The next day, H.P.B. cabled to the Coulombs, "Sorry you go. Prosper." H.P.B. remained in two minds until the news arrived from Hartmann that a hole had actually been found in the wall in her room.

\* \* \*

Still, there had been no mention of any letters. Mme. Coulomb demanded 3,000 rupees from the Board as the price of her silence, but no-one cared whether she talked or not. The Hole and Trap-doors had been thoroughly examined, and the verdict was that no phenomena could possibly have been carried out by their means. Hartmann relates in his book (P. 47.) that, a few days after the hole was examined,

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Coulomb and wife, who were still in their bungalow in the compound, asked for an interview, when the man informed him that ten thousand rupees were put at his disposal if the Society were ruined. "His wife during that conversation was standing near the door listening and called out to her husband: 'Ne vous vous compromettez pas!' (Do not commit yourself!); but alas! the 10,000 rupees seem to have the same fate as the 2,000 rupees from Harisinghji, to appear for a moment on the horizon of Madame Coulomb, to vanish again before they are touched. Sad disappointment!"

Even at this interview, no letters were mentioned, and, as Hartmann remarks, "It is reasonable to suppose that, if they had already existed, my friend Mr. Coulomb would have informed me about it."

Naturally, for these letters would have been a trump card in the blackmail scheme. But then, they would have to have been produced on the spot, and they were not ready. It was only on August 9th, nearly three months later, that the lady took her packet to the Rev. Patterson, editor of the "Christian College Magazine".

6.

In September, the first batch of these screeds from Bedlam was published by the Rev. Patterson, and followed by a second lot in October. H.P.B. returned to India in December, bent on a libel suit; but Olcott had already been advised by a round dozen Indian judges and lawyers not to take the case to the Madras Court, for there was not the least hope of a just verdict. And then, there was this, that H.P.B. certainly did not know for many months afterwards (compare P. 100, "H.P.B. to Sinnett", with P. 122), namely, that Subba Row and all the other *chelas* were determined to resist any action that would drag the names of their Masters into a Court. It may be guessed without much doubt that they would all have vanished or gone to prison for contempt sooner than give evidence. When Hodgson appeared with his Scotland Yard note-book, the *chelas* led him a dance. They allowed him to believe what he pleased and they *denied* the facts when these threatened the sacredness of their vows; they acted as soldiers would to protect their regiment, and, if necessary, in their judgment, they would doubtless have lied to their last breath.

That their judgment was faulty and that they should have seen that mere refusal to answer was the right action and would have sufficed, may be gathered from the letter Mahatma K.H. caused to appear on June 7th, 1886, on the back of a letter from T. Tatyá to Olcott ("Letters from the Masters." Vol. 2, p. 7.), referring to the "questionable things" in which Damodar had "over-zealously taken part". I have heard a *Theosophist* say that this letter practically admits that there had been fraud! If that man, or anyone else, can bring me any data to prove that Damodar had ever committed the faintest shadow of fraud, I shall have to confess that my study of the records has been in vain. No. But it was sufficiently serious for a *chela* aiming at personal admission to the highest *ashram* to have blundered so badly as to give a Hodgson the chance of calling him a liar.

\* \* \*

When the missionaries found that H.P.B. would not be allowed to challenge them, they challenged. Mme. Coulomb instituted a suit against General Morgan, who had publicly called her a forger. This suit would have dragged H.P.B. into Court. She was still only too willing for this, and worked herself into such a state of fury at Olcott and the Committee of Defence that the doctors said that if she did not leave the country and get some peace, she would drop dead or go out of her mind. So, maybe with a shove from Tibet, she was induced to consent to leave; she was carried on board a steamer, arrived safely in Europe and—wrote the *Secret Doctrine*. Who could attempt a portrait of such a marvellous creature! H.P.B. out of reach as a witness, the suit was dropped.

7.

The end of the Coulombs is obscure. The missionaries, having no further use for the couple, got up a subscription to pay their fares out of India because, said the Rev. Patterson in the *Madras Mail*, of May 6th, 1885, "they are penniless, and it is impossible for them to earn a livelihood in this country". Even the Christians would not employ them. Whether the couple resisted this attempt to get rid of them, realising well that, once they left, there was nothing but

starvation ahead, whereas, by hanging about, they might extract a few rupees now and again—or what happened, remains a secret with the missionaries. Mme. Coulomb did not leave, for, in 1886, T. Taty reported to Olcott that she was living in beggary in Bombay.

I have been told that the couple separated, Coulomb going to Egypt, where he had relations, and Mme. disappearing from view altogether until she turned up arm in arm with the Rev. Patterson at the time of his 1889 renewed attack on Madame Blavatsky; an attack that Mrs. Besant speedily turned into a rout by a counter-attack in the "Methodist Times" of Nov. 28th. If not exactly arm in arm, Mme. C. was somewhere about, for one of the padris mentions her as assisting Patterson. A credible assumption would be that she had suffered the last indignity and been sequestered in some evangelical "home" for social outcasts.

\* \* \*

"I may have said something in my rage, but I swear on all that is sacred for me that I never said, *fraud, secret passages, traps*, nor that my husband had helped you in any way. *If my mouth has uttered these words, I pray the Almighty to shower on my head the worst maledictions in Nature.*"

\* \* \*

One wonders whether, after all, it were not a case for the alienist?

In the "Theosophist", Oct. 1925, Dr. J. H. Cousins reported a conversation he had with Sir William Barrett, F.R.S. Professor Barrett said that he "hoped that the Report, that was a blot on the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, would some day be withdrawn".

It is high time to withdraw!

End of Vol. 2.

## APPENDIX I.

### I.

From page 105, Coulomb pamphlet: "Report of the Proceedings of the General Council of the Theosophical Society (May 14th, 1884)."

The following is a summary of the charges brought against Madame Coulomb.

I. Four affidavits, that Mme. Coulomb repeatedly said to members, as well as outsiders, that the T.S. had for its object the overthrow of the British rule in India.

II. Nine affidavits . . . that she said that the objects of the Society were inimical to what she believed to be true religion.

III. Ten affidavits . . . that she said that the "occult phenomena" . . . were frauds, while on other occasions she said that they were the work of the devil.

IV. Four affidavits went to show that Mme. C. was guilty of attempting to extort money from members.

V. Three affidavits proved that she had wasted the funds of the Society.

VI. All the affidavits proved her guilty of lying and backbiting

VII. One affidavit proved that she had grossly slandered H.P.B.

VIII. Two affidavits showed that she had dissuaded people from joining the Society.

IX. All affidavits agreed that her presence at headquarters was causing an immense waste of time, energy and money.

X. Letters proved that a blackmailing letter was sent by Mme. C. to H.P.B.

### 2.

From Dr. Hartmann's pamphlet, p. 33. "Affidavits sent in . . . went to show that the Coulombs were guilty of gross misconduct . . . We therefore concluded to impeach them in a formal manner, and were engaged in drawing up the charges in my room when the astral body of a Chela appeared and handed the following letter to Damodar.

' So long as one has not developed a perfect sense of justice, he should prefer to err rather on the side of mercy than commit the slightest act of injustice. Madame Coulomb is a medium, and as such irresponsible for many things she may say and do. One must know how to act towards her to make her a very good friend. She has her own weaknesses, but their bad effects can be minimised by exercising on her mind a moral influence by a friendly and kindly feeling. Her mediumistic nature is a help in this direction, if proper advantage is taken of the same.

It is my wish, therefore, that she shall continue in charge of the household business, the board of control of course exercising a proper supervisory control and seeing in consultation with her that no unnecessary expenditure is incurred. A good deal of reform is necessary, and can be made rather with the help than the antagonism of Madame Coulomb. K.H.'

" This was rather like throwing cold water on the fire we had kindled to purify the Society . . . I rather reluctantly obeyed, and an armistice was concluded with the Coulobms by treating them with greater consideration . . . I even went so far as to offer them inducements to go to America, a plan with which they pretended to be delighted."

3.

A copy of the above letter was sent to Paris to H.P.B. and Olcott. The advice of the Mahatma, amounting to a command, was, of course, followed also by Olcott and H.P.B., as the letters below indicate. Nevertheless, there had been stormy scenes between Olcott and H.P.B. They seem to have given each other wounds that healed, indeed, but left permanent scars. Quite evidently, Olcott was not sure that there had been no collusion at all between H.P.B. and Madame Coulomb and had demanded of H.P.B. to get a satisfactory retraction from Mme. C. His letter to Mme. C. is cool enough, but H.P.B.'s shows to what a state of bewildered misery she had been reduced between the necessity of obeying the Mahatma, on the one hand, and, on the other, her feelings wounded by Olcott, her indignation at Mme. C.'s conduct and the struggle again here between a natural desire to get rid of her, a certain fear, ready to turn to challenge, of her gossip about the Cairo business, and a decided inclination to overlook anything possible for the sake of the domestic value of the housekeeper and of the handyman who was even then in the middle of building her a new room. This inclin-

ation cannot be set down to selfishness, for H.P.B. had only one idea in life—to get on with her work for the Society.

Olcott's letter to Mme. Coulomb.

Paris, 2.4.84.

Dear Madame Coulomb, We are all settled here in our temporary headquarters, and busy from morning to night. The Paris papers are full of us and the Society, our usual notoriety following us like our very shadows. On Saturday, Mohini and I go over to London and Madame B. is to become the guest of the Count and Countess A.—new members of the Society.

I have unpleasant news today from Adyar, about which I must speak to you plainly—as plainly as I ought in the capacity of your friend, which I suppose you have always taken me to be. My information is that you are talking about your having lent H.P.B. money in Egypt, which has not been refunded; that Mr. Coulomb has made trap-doors and other apparatus for trick manifestations by her; that you have serious secrets about her that you might reveal; and that you also express your hospitality to the T.S. Now, all this is nearly the same as you have told me personally, you will remember, and I must say that I have been saddened by the discovery that you have been circulating these stories to anyone besides myself, whose mind cannot be unsettled by any trivial things like these. I have never explained to you as clearly as I might that the Theosophical movement *does not rest at all for its permanency upon phenomena, and that even if you could prove that every supposed phenomenon ever witnessed by me or anyone else were false, it would not alter* my opinion one iota as to the benefit to be derived by the world from our Society's work. Nor would the Society be destroyed or even seriously checked. But neither you nor anyone can do this, for many of us have seen phenomena when Madame B. was far away from us, and these very letters received by S. Rao and others, and other phenomena taking place just as they did before H.P.B. left. So what is the good of telling such stories? And as to the money in Egypt, why keep that matter alive? If H.P.B. borrowed from you then, she has certainly shown herself your friend by sharing her home with you since you



joined us at Bombay. I shall not pretend to excuse her for any unkindness or injustice she may have shown you since then, for her nature is such as everyone knows it to be, and it would be foolish to try to cover it up with the varnish of compliment. I have always felt that in case you were a loyal member of the T.S., and were willing to work with us for the promotion of its interests, you were as much entitled to shelter, food, etc., as any other of us, and that no obligation was imposed upon you by accepting them from us. But I must tell you candidly, that I do *not* think it right or fair that you should continue to be a member of a Society which you thought flourishing by the aid of trickery and false representation. If I thought my Society *that*, I would leave it and wash my hands of it forever. And, if you do believe it so, and stay a member, why, you see that at once you as much as confess that you and your *good honourable* husband are knowingly parties to these disgraceful acts, and as guilty as H.P.B. herself. If you ever said that Mons. Coulomb helped make apparatus for trickery, that is just the same as to say that he, by keeping his mouth closed about it and allowing the fraud to go on, is doubly dishonourable. I cannot think that you would say such a falsehood, and I will not believe it until you yourself confess it. And finally, my dear Mme. C., what nonsense it is to give out, or let it be inferred, that you have any power to harm the T.S., or anyone at headquarters, by Black Magic, when I tell you that no one on earth, or any combination of men, can harm the Society, which rests upon the everlasting rock of truth, and is doing good every day to mankind. I do hope, too, as your well-wisher, that you will never seriously think that this harm could be wrought by combining yourself with Mr. Bowen, or the Bishop, or the Madras padris, or any of their societies. Such a plot would never succeed in doing more than to make a temporary annoyance, like the stupid scandals of the past at Bombay and elsewhere. While I live and work and can fight for the cause, it will be impossible to overthrow it.

So now that I have said my say in my usual plain but honest way, let us be friends and allies, as we have hitherto been, and with sincere regards to Mons. Coulomb,

I am, faithfully yours, H. S. Olcott.

Letter from Madame Blavatsky to Mme. Coulomb. (Mme. C.'s translation, corrected where incompetent.)

Paris, 1st April, 1884. [Should be 2nd.]

My dear Monsieur and Madame Coulomb,

I address this letter to you both, because I think it well that you should lay your heads together and think seriously about it. I have not been able to write to you before—I have been too ill for that. I will first transcribe certain passages from several letters that I have just received from Adyar. These extracts will be lengthy. I will not dwell on what is there said respecting Madame Coulomb and Mr. Brown, "who (Mme. C.), in his case, as she did in that of —, *tries her best to undermine the power of the Society by talking to him as she does against it.*" All that may or may not be serious. Neither is what Mr. Lane-Fox says in his letter, but see what is added: "She opposes *everything* that is intended for the benefit of the Society. But these are perhaps trifling things which might be counter-acted. More serious is the fact that she says she lent you money in Egypt". (That I have never hidden, I have told it to everybody; and at the time of the Wimbridge-Bates tragedy, I announced publicly that I was under obligation to you, since, when no-one would aid me—I, a stranger in Cairo—you alone and M. Coulomb helped me, gave me hospitality, loans of money, etc; I have always said *more even than you really did.* Well, I continue to copy)—"She says the money was never repaid; that *M. Coulomb has been constructing secret trap-doors for the production of occult phenomena;* that she could tell—the Lord knows what—if she wanted to; and lastly her foolish assertion that the Theosophical Society was founded to overthrow British rule in India . . . Madame Coulomb, ever since I knew her, expressed it to be her highest wish to get sufficient money to go to some other place, and for this object, she begged 2,000 Rupees from Hurrisingjee. She has told me many times that if she had only 2,000 Rupees, she would go like a shot. Mr. Lane-Fox has offered to give her the 2,000 Rupees, or provide for her in any way she wishes; but now,

she suddenly changes her attitude and insists on staying, saying that she has a paper from Colonel Olcott, in which he offers her a home for life in Adyar, and that she has positive orders from you (orders!!?) not only to remain here during your absence, but also to help herself from the funds of the Society, whenever she should want any money to buy dresses, etc."

Is it then because I really did say and have repeated to you, before Olcott, that, *as Theosophists and friends, you had a right to clothes and necessaries out of the Society's money*, that you are saying to them that M. Coulomb *has constructed secret trap-doors*, etc.!! Oh, Madame Coulomb! what have I done to you that you should try to ruin me in this way? Is it because for four years we lived together in poverty while I left everything in your hands, telling you all the time, "Take what money you need," that you seek to ruin me for life in the minds of those who, after turning their backs on me will turn them on you above all so that you will gain nothing, but lose friends who would otherwise have aided you. How can I believe that Madame Coulomb will so dishonour her husband and herself! They who write to me and the Colonel say: "her object in doing so looks as though she wanted to get money from Mr. Lane-Fox and remain here and"—but I am unwilling to write out the rest. I am keeping the letters, and *if we ever meet again*, you shall see them. They add: "Furthermore, we have sufficient evidence *through herself*, that she is made use of by black magicians, not only to interfere with the welfare of the Society, but especially to exert a poisonous and detrimental influence on Damodar. As to her being an enemy of the Society, she does not even attempt to deny it". Further on it is said that M. Coulomb says the same things as *his wife*. *I do not believe it*. You are too proud and honest a man to do anything of the sort. You are ready to kill a man when in a rage. You would never go and denounce him. You would not accuse him *in secret* to his friends; and if Madame Coulomb, who would not hurt a fly, who has so much love for animals even—has done so, *it must be because she is ill*, does not know what she says, does not think of the terrible mischief she is doing to those who have never injured her, and of the harm she

does to herself and everyone! Why ever does she hate me? What have I done to her? I know I am quick-tempered, violent, that, unintentionally, I have perhaps offended her more than once. But what real harm have I ever done to her? Since our arrival at Adyar, I have truly and sincerely liked her, and since we left, have often thought of what I should buy her at Paris, things she needs, and of how I could get her two or three thousand rupees, so that she could pass the summers at Ootacamund or elsewhere and keep a boarding-house, do something for herself and you. I was never ungrateful, my dear M. Coulomb, never treacherous. And you, Madame Coulomb, do not tell me that you have never said all the above, as in the case of Hurrisingjee, for see what that poor boy, Damodar, says, who writes me a despairing letter. I copy again:

'I am between the horns of a dilemma . . . Master tells me that Madame Coulomb must be treated with consideration and respect, and on the other hand she tells me, and has been saying to everyone, *that you are a fraud* performing phenomena by means of secret spring trap-doors probably constructed by Monsieur Coulomb. This she did not assert to me, but only insinuated," etc. And further on ' . . . I entirely agree with the facts introduced in ———'s letter to you. Madame C. has been, according to *her confession*, exercising an influence prejudicial to the interests of the Society.'

Well, what reply have you to all that? *What result* are you aiming at, Madame Coulomb, by allowing people to believe that you can do *what you are incapable of doing*, that is, of employing black magic against the Society that protects you and works for you even if you do work for it (and God knows that we all owe you many obligations for all you have done for us since we came to Adyar). I declare certainly that you have worked for us and that you have a right to our gratitude, to clothing and food, to live at the Society's expense so far as its funds allow. I repeat this. But what ever purpose can you have in vilifying me secretly to those who love me and believe in me? What vengeance are you after, what have I done to you, I ask once more? Your doings will *never ruin the Society*, only myself, at most, in the estimation of my friends. The public has

always regarded me as a *fraud* and an *imposter*. One result you will attain, that people will say you also are a "fraud"; and worse, that you have done it *for gain*, this that cannot be charged against me, for I give all I earn to the Society, I half-kill myself for it. They will say that M. Coulomb and yourself have assisted me, *not out of friendship* (for your accusations and denunciations prove that, for some motive unknown to me, you hate me), but in the hope of *blackmailing*, as is said in one of the letters to Olcott. But that is horrible! You must really be ill; you must be so to act so foolishly! But understand that you cannot injure anyone at this time of day. It is too late. That similar phenomena, and even more marvellous (letters from Mahatma Koothoomi and our Master) have happened when I was thousands of miles away. That Mr. Hume at Simla, Col. Strange in Kashmir, Sinnett in London, Queensbury in New York, and Gilbert in Australia, have received the same day and hour a circular letter in the writing of the Mahatma when all were alone in their rooms. Where then were the *trap-doors* constructed by M. Coulomb? Exhibit one only, and that would reflect on you the first, and on poor me. People who see the Mahatma before them in Australia and London as at Adyar, who receive letters *in his handwriting* in reply to their letters written only two hours before, *will not believe you*, could not believe you; and remember that if I were exposed 20,000 times, *detected and convicted* of imposture, all that could do no harm to the cause, to the truth. If, by accusing myself publicly, proclaiming myself a fraud in all the papers, I could thus do any good to the Society and increase the veneration for the 'Brothers, Mahatmas', I should not hesitate a moment—would go to the stake for this *cause* that you hate so much.

And who was the *fraud* when (I a thousand miles away) Hurrisngjee had an answer to his letter that he had put in the *shrine*, and Srinavas Rao, also, as they write to us from Adyar? Did you write in the Mahatma's hand, did you make us of a *trap-door*? All the evil comes [*Tout le mal provient de ce que vous n'avez jamais voulu croire*. Mme. C. translates: "All the evil proved will be that you have never believed" etc.] from this, that you would never believe there were *real* Mahatmas behind the curtain. That you

disbelieve in real phenomena, and so you see *tricks in it all*. Well, *à la grâce de Dieu!* [Mme. C. translates this: "Ah well! (I commit myself) to the grace of God". But with H.P.B., it would mean no more than "Lord help us! Well, go on!"] Accuse me, denounce me, ruin H. P. Blavatsky, who has never hated or been treacherous to you, who half ruined the Society at the beginning in Bombay, to support and protect you against everyone—even the Colonel; and that when she could do so with no danger to herself. [*ce cela lorsqu'elle pouvait le faire sans aucun danger pour elle*; Mme. C. translates this: "and that when she was [not] able to do it without danger to herself." But "*aucun*" forbids such a rendering. I think that Madame Blavatsky was indulging in a little bit of bravado, saying to Mme. C., the present approver, that, even then, in Bombay, she did not fear betrayal of the only secret Mme. C. had, namely, the Metrovitch secret. But H.P.B. had feared this very much; and it is certain that Mme. C. only a month or two after her arrival, during a quarrel, had boasted to Miss Bates and Wimbridge, that she had a hold over Madame Blavatsky. S.P.R. Report, p.315.]

Do your will, good friend. But you, who talk so much of God and Christ, remember that if there is a God, he will **not reward you** for doing ill to those who have never done ill to you. Say what you please, but a living person is worth more than a dog or a beast in the economy of Nature. Mr. Lane-Fox and the Board of Trustees seem to have made changes in the house, sent away the coolies and the dogs, too? And I'd swear that Mme. Coulomb attributes all that to me! Well, you would be wrong. The Board arranged all *that* the last day at Bombay, when, having received [clairvoyantly; a fine instance of H.P.B.'s powers!] news of the death of my uncle, *I took no part*; did not even know what was done. Colonel, Dr. Hartmann and Mr. Lane-Fox arranged and settled everything. It is only today that I have asked Colonel to explain what took place. I even asked that Mr. Coulomb might be nominated a Trustee, so much I had need of him to build me a new room. The Colonel replied neither yes nor no. And today again, he has made a scene over all the money I spent through M. Coulomb for my rooms, etc. Do you know what he said

about the letters from which I have made extracts? "If Madame Coulomb, who has undeniably helped you with some phenomena, for she told this to me herself, were to proclaim it on the top of the roof, it would change nothing in my knowledge and that of Dr. Hartmann, Brown, Sinnett, Hume and so many others in the appreciation of Theosophy and the veneration for the Brothers. You alone would suffer. For even if you were to tell me that the Mahatmas do not exist and that you have tricked in every phenomenon produced by you, I would answer that YOU LIE, for we know the Mahatmas, and know that you could not—no more than fly on the moon—have produced certain of the best of your phenomena". There. Conclude from this what the truth is and what he thinks.

If I have not done more for you than I have, I had not the means. Wrapped up as I am *entirely* in the cause, I think of nobody. If I perish, let me perish, but let the cause flourish. If you compromise me in the eyes of Mr. Lane-Fox, Hartmann and the rest, very well, I will not return to Adyar, I shall stay here or in London, where I will prove by phenomena more marvellous than ever that they are real and that our Mahatmas exist, for there is one here in Paris and he will go to London also. And after I have proved it—where will be the *trap-doors* then? What will they be doing? Why do you make the Colonel hate you and go against you, as you have set against yourself everyone at Adyar? Why not quietly remain friendly and wait for better times, helping us to put the Society on a firm basis, with large funds from which all Theosophists who need protection could be helped? Why not accept the 2,000 rupees offered by Mr. Lane-Fox and pass the hot months at Ooty and the cold ones with us as in the past? It seems that Damodar has no money left in the cash-box. He asks us for money, us! And we spend, spend, and soon shall have nothing more, for no money has yet come in, and you, you want to lose, alienate from the cause the only man who can assist it, the only one who is rich. Instead of becoming friendly with him, you set him horribly against you. Ah, my good friend, how unfortunate and stupid, all this! Come, I bear you no grudge. I am so used to fear and to suffer that nothing surprises me. But what

does surprise me is to see an intelligent woman like you doing mischief for mischief's sake, and risking to be swallowed up in the pit you yourself have dug, you first! Enough! Believe both of you that I speak as a friend. I like M. Coulomb very much and until he tells me himself that I have been mistaken in him, that he has allowed you to talk of *trap-doors* without contradicting you, I will never believe that he has said such things. He is incapable of it. Undo, now, the evil you have done *unconsciously*—I feel sure, carried away by your nerves, your disease and sufferings, and the rage—caused by this Board of Trustees, that annoys me more than it does you. But if you choose to go on slandering me with not the least profit to yourself—do it; and may your Christ and God repay you.

After which, I sign, with a heartache that you can never understand—still your friend,

H. P. Blavatsky.

## APPENDIX II.

### I.

With reference to Vol. I, p. 48, line 26.

A correspondent points out that "seen" should read "heard".. This might have been a very serious mistake. Fortunately, if the *jemadar* had only heard, this equally gives a body to what is only shadowed in Damodar's diary, namely, that the latter was to proceed to Lhasa under high protection. I have certainly read somewhere that the *jemadar* witnessed the meeting between Damodar and the caravan. Perhaps some student can supply the reference? In 1886, Mahatma K.H. wrote that Damodar had arrived, and the following testimony appeared in the "Theosophist", September, 1889:

### NEWS OF DAMODAR.

The following letter has been forwarded to the *Theosophist* for publication. It is the reply of the Sriman Swamy, the Secretary of the Cow Memorial Fund (a movement for the protection of cattle and the improvement of agriculture, that promises to become national), to the enquiries of a friend of Damodar who had heard that the Swamy had lately visited Tibet, and was anxious to know whether he had heard or

seen anything of our absent brother. Since then, I have had two conversations with the Swamy, in the course of which he corroborated what he had said in his letter, and left on my mind the impression of being an able and sincere man, imbued with patriotic sentiments and perfectly loyal to the Empress and her Government; anxious only that the true state of affairs should be understood, and willing to trust to the justice and generosity of the English people to institute remedies for the evils that he believes to exist.

Richard Harte, Acting-Editor of the *Theosophist*.

Madras, August 7th, 1889.

To Dear Sir and Brother,

In reply to your enquiries I may say that I certify on my word as a *Sanyasi* that I have twice visited Tibet since the year 1879; that I have personally become acquainted with several Mahatmas, among them were the two known to the outside world as Mahatma "M." and Mahatma "K. H."; that I spent some time in their company; that they told me that they and other Mahatmas were interested in the work of the Theosophical Society; that Mahatma "M." told me he had been the (occult) guardian of Madame Blavatsky from her infancy.

And I further certify that in March, 1887, I saw Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar at L'hassa, in a convalescent state. He told me in the presence of Mahatma "K. H." that he had been at the point of death in the previous year.

(Signed) Sriman Swamy,  
Hon Sec. Cow Memorial Fund, Allahabad.

2.

Another correspondent points out that there is no record of exactly how far H.P.B. passed the frontier in 1854. (See Vol. I, p. 52.) There is not, so far, so the point cannot be discussed at present. But, whatever dangers H.P.B. may have encountered on this journey would scarcely equal those she must have surmounted in going to Tibet, in 1867, via the Karakorum Pass: ten days over boulders in an atmosphere frequently poisonous, and with not a human habitation on the way. The sight of the trail over and beyond this Pass,

strewn with skeletons of animals which had died under the strain, horrified, in 1884, Sir Francis Younghusband, who was, I believe, the first European to venture off the track in these regions. The "Canadian Theosophist" of June, 1927, gave the following:

"Major Cross, who, with his wife, Dr. Cross, and their daughter, have been visiting Toronto, gave a long, graphic and intensely interesting account of his travels in north-western Tibet, during which he traced the progress of a white woman in 1867, through the most difficult country to a lamasery far north, through the recollections of various old people who were impressed by the personality of this unusual visitor. He identified her with Madame Blavatsky, and the date was settled by those he talked with as having been ten years after the Mutiny. Major Cross said he was not a Theosophist, but could not help being interested in Madame Blavatsky's journey, as it had been related to him. He is manager or factor of tea and other estates of the Dalai Lama of Tibet, to which he is returning."