

THE IDYLL OF THE
WHITE LOTUS

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BY
MABEL (COLLINS) COOK

TOGETHER WITH AN
EPITOME OF THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS
AND
ESOTERIC THEOSOPHY

BY
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TO
THE TRUE AUTHOL,
THE INSPIRER OF THIS WORK,
IT IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THE ensuing pages contain a story which has been told in all ages and among every people. It is the tragedy of the Soul. Attracted by Desire, the ruling element in the lower nature of Man, it stoops to sin ; brought to itself by suffering, it turns for help to the redeeming Spirit within ; and in the final sacrifice achieves its apotheosis and sheds a blessing on mankind.



THE
IDYLL OF THE WHITE LOTUS.

PROLOGUE.

BEHOLD I stood alone, one among many, an isolated individual in the midst of a united crowd. And I was alone, because, among all the men, my brethren, who knew, I alone was the man who both knew and taught. I taught the believers at the gate, and was driven to do this by the power that dwelled in the sanctuary. I had no escape, for in that deep darkness of the most sacred shrine, I beheld the light of the inner life, and was driven to reveal it, and by it was I upheld and made strong. For indeed, although I died, it took ten priests of the temple to accomplish my death, and even then they but ignorantly thought themselves powerful.



BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

ERE my beard had become a soft down upon my chin, I entered the gates of the temple to begin my noviciate in the order of the priesthood.

My parents were shepherds outside the city. I had never but once entered within the city walls until the day my mother took me to the gate of the temple. It was a feast day in the city, and my mother, a frugal and industrious woman, thus fulfilled two purposes by her journey. She took me to my destination, and then she departed to enjoy a brief holiday amid the sights and scenes of the city.

I was enthralled by the crowds and noises of the streets. I think my nature was always one that strove to yield itself to the great whole of which it was such a small part—and by yielding itself, to draw back into it the sustenance of life.

But out of the bustling throng we soon turned. We entered upon a broad, green plain, upon the further

side of which ran our sacred, beloved river. How plainly I behold that scene still! On the banks of the water I saw the sculptured roofs and glittering ornaments of the temple and its surrounding buildings shining in the clear morning air. I had no fear, for I had no definite expectations. But I wondered much whether life within those gates was as beautiful a thing as it seemed to me it must be.

At the gate stood a black-robed novice speaking to a woman from the city, who carried flasks of water which she urgently prayed one of the priests to bless. She would then have for sale a precious burden—a thing paid dearly for by the superstitious populace.

I peeped through the gate as we stood waiting for our turn of speech, and beheld a sight that struck me with awe. That awe lasted a long time, even when I had entered into almost hourly familiarity with the figure which so impressed me.

It was one of the white-robed priests, pacing slowly down the broad avenue towards the gate. I had never seen one of those white-robed priests before, save on the single occasion when I had before visited the city. I then had seen several upon the sacred boat in the midst of a river procession.

But now this figure was near me, approaching me—I held my breath.

The air was indeed very still, but those stately white garments looked, as the priest moved beneath the shadow of the avenue, as if no earthly breeze could stir them. His step had the same equable character. He moved, but it seemed scarcely as though he walked in the fashion that other and impetuous mortals walk. His eyes were bent on the ground, so that I could not

see them; and, indeed, I dreaded the raising of those drooping lids. His complexion was fair, and his hair of a dull gold color. His beard was long and full, but it had the same strangely immovable, almost carven look, to my fancy. I could not imagine it blown aside. It seemed as though cut in gold, and made firm for eternity. The whole man impressed me thus—as a being altogether removed from the ordinary life of man.

The novice looked around, his notice attracted probably by my intense gaze, for no sound reached my ears from the priest's footfall.

“Ah!” he said, “here is the holy priest Agmahd, I will ask him.”

Closing the gate behind him, he drew back, and we saw him speak to the priest, who bowed his head slightly. The man returned, and taking the water flasks from the woman, carried them to the priest, who laid his hand for a second upon them.

She took them again with profuse thanks, and then we were asked our business.

I was soon left alone with the black-robed novice. I was not sorry, though considerably awed. I had never cared much for my old task of tending my father's sheep, and of course I was already filled with the idea that I was about to become something different from the common herd of men. This idea will carry poor human nature through severer trials even than that of leaving one's home forever and entering finally upon a new and untried course of life.

The gate swung to behind me, and the black-robed man locked it with a great key that hung to his waist. But the action gave me no sense of imprisonment,—

only a consciousness of seclusion and separateness. Who could associate imprisonment with a scene such as that which lay before me?

The temple doors were facing the gate, at the other end of a broad and beautiful avenue. It was not a natural avenue formed by trees planted in the ground, and luxuriating in a growth of their own choosing. It was formed by great tubs of stone, in which were planted shrubs of enormous size, but evidently trimmed and guided most carefully into the strange shapes they formed. Between each shrub was a square block of stone, upon which was a carven figure. Those figures nearest the gate I saw to be sphinxes and great animals with human heads; but afterwards I did not dare raise my eyes to gaze curiously upon them; for I saw again approaching us, in the course of his regular walk to and fro, the golden-bearded priest Agmahd.

Walking on by the side of my guide, I kept my eyes upon the ground. When he paused I paused, and found that my eyes fell upon the hem of the priest's white robe. That hem was delicately embroidered with golden characters: it was enough to absorb my attention and fill me with wonder for a while.

"A new novice?" I heard a very quiet and sweet voice say. "Well, take him into the school; he is but a youth yet. Look up, boy; do not fear."

I looked up, thus encouraged, and encountered the gaze of the priest. His eyes, I saw, even then in my embarrassment, were of changing color—blue and gray. But, soft-hued though they were, they did not give me the encouragement which I had heard in his voice. They were calm indeed: full of knowledge: but they made me tremble.

He dismissed us with a movement of his hand, and pursued his even walk down the grand avenue; while I, more disposed to tremble than I had been before, followed silently my silent guide. We entered the great central doorway of the temple, the sides of which were formed of immense blocks of uncut stone. I suppose a fit of something like fear must have come upon me, after the inquisition of the holy priest's eyes; for I regarded these blocks of stone with a vague sense of terror.

Within I saw that, from the central doorway, a passage proceeded in a long direct line with the avenue through the building. But that was not our way. We turned aside and entered upon a network of smaller corridors, and passed through some small bare rooms upon our way.

We entered at last a large and beautiful room. I say beautiful, though it was entirely bare and unfurnished, save for a table at one corner. But its proportions were so grand, and its structure so elegant, that even my eye, unaccustomed to discern architectural beauties, was strangely impressed with a sense of satisfaction.

At the table in the corner sat two other youths, copying or drawing, I could not quite see what. At all events I saw they were very busy, and I wondered that they scarcely raised their heads to observe our entrance. But, advancing, I perceived that, behind one of the great stone projections of the wall, there sat an aged white-robed priest, looking at a book which lay upon his knee.

He did not notice us until my guide stood deferentially bowing right in front of him.

“A new pupil?” he said, and looked keenly at me out of his dim, bleared-looking eyes. “What can he do?”

“Not much, I fancy,” said my guide, speaking of me in an easy tone of contempt. “He has been but a shepherd lad.”

“A shepherd lad,” echoed the old priest; “he will be no use here, then. He had best work in the garden. Have you ever learned to draw or copy writing?” he asked, turning upon me.

I had been taught these things as far as might be, but such accomplishments were rare, except in the priestly schools and among the small cultivated classes outside the priesthood.

The old priest looked at my hands, and turned back to his book.

“He must learn some time,” he said; “but I am too full of work now to teach him. I want more to help me in my work; but with these sacred writings that have to be closed now, I cannot stay to instruct the ignorant. Take him to the garden, for a while at least, and I will see about him by-and-by.”

My guide turned away and walked out of the room. With a last look around at its beautiful appearance, I followed him.

I followed him down a long, long passage, which was cool and refreshing in its darkness. At the end was a gate instead of a door, and here my guide rang a loud bell.

We waited in silence after the bell had rung. No one came, and presently my guide rang the bell again. But I was in no hurry. With my face pressed against the bars of the gate, I looked forth into a world so

magical, that I thought to myself, "It will be no ill to me if the blear-eyed priest does not want to take me from the garden yet a while!"


It had been a dusty hot walk from our home to the city, and there the paved streets had seemed to my country-bred feet infinitely wearisome. Within the gates of the temple I had as yet only passed down the grand avenue, where everything filled me so deeply with awe, that I scarce dared look upon it. But here was a world of delicate and refreshing glory. Never had I seen a garden like this. There was greenness, deep greenness; there was a sound of water, the murmuring of gentle water under control, ready to do service for man, and refresh in the midst of the burning heat which called the magnificence of color and grand development of form into the garden.

A third time the bell rang—and then I saw, coming from among the great green leaves, a black-robed figure. How strangely out of place did the black dress look here! and I thought with consternation that I should also be clothed in those garments before long, and should wander among the voluptuous beauties of this magical place like a strayed creature from a sphere of darkness.

The figure approached, brushing, with its coarse robe, the delicate foliage. I gazed with a sudden awakening of interest upon the face of the man who drew near, and into whose charge I supposed I was to be committed. And well I might; for it was a face to awake interest in any human breast. .



CHAPTER II:

“HAT is it?” asked the man querulously, as he looked at us through the gate. “I sent fruit and to spare into the kitchen this morning. And I can give you no more flowers to-day; all I have to pluck will be wanted for the procession to-morrow.”

“I am not wanting your fruit or your flowers,” said my guide, who seemed fond of adopting a lofty tone. “I have brought you a new pupil, that’s all.”

He unlocked the gate, motioned me to pass through, and shutting it behind me, walked away down the long corridor (which now, looking back from the garden, seemed so dark) without another word.

“A new pupil for me! And what am I teach you, child of the country?”

I gazed upon the strange man in silence. How could I tell what he was to teach me?

“Is it the mysteries of the growth of the plants you are to learn?—or the mysteries of the growth of sin and deceit? Nay, child, look not so upon me, but ponder my words and you will by-and-by understand them. Now, come with me, and fear not.”

He took my hand and led me under the tall-leaved plants towards the sound of water. How exquisite it seemed to my ears, that soft, bright, musical rhythm!

“Here is the home of our Lady the Lotus,” said the man. “Sit down here and look upon her beauty while I work; for I have much to do that you cannot help me in.”

Nothing loth, indeed, was I to sink upon the green grass and only look—look in amazement—in wonder—in awe!

That water—that delicate-voiced water—lived only to feed the queen of flowers. I said to myself, thou art indeed the Queen of all flowers imaginable,

THE WHITE LOTUS.

And as I gazed dreamingly in my youthful enthusiasm upon this white bloom which seemed to me, with its soft, gold-dusted heart, the very emblem of pure, romantic love—as I gazed the flower seemed to change in shape—to expand—to rise towards me. And lo, drinking at the stream of sweet sounding water, stooping to take its refreshing drops upon her lips, I beheld a woman of fair skin with hair like the dust of gold. Amazed, I looked and strove to move towards her, but ere I could make any effort my whole consciousness left me, and, I suppose, I must have swooned away. For, indeed, the next that I can recall I lay upon the grass, with the sense of cool water upon my face, and opening my eyes, I beheld the black-robed, strange-faced gardener leaning over me.

“Was the heat too much for thee?” he asked, his brow knit in perplexity. “Thou lookest a strong lad

to faint for the heat, and that, moreover, in a cool place like this."

"Where is she?" was my only reply, as I attempted to rise upon my elbow and look towards the lily bed.

"What!" cried the man, his whole countenance changing, and assuming a look of sweetness that I should never have supposed could appear upon a face so naturally unbeautiful. "Hast thou seen her? But no—I am hasty in supposing it. What have you seen, boy?—do not hesitate to tell me."

The gentleness of his expression helped my scattered and startled senses to collect themselves. I told him what I had seen, and, as I spoke, I looked towards the lily bed, hoping, indeed, that the fair woman might again stoop to slake her thirst at the streamlet.

The manner of my strange teacher gradually changed as I spoke to him. When I ceased describing the beautiful woman, with the enthusiasm of a boy who has never seen any but his own dusky-skinned race, he fell upon his knees beside me.

"Thou hast seen her!" he said in a voice of deep excitement. "All hail! for thou art destined to be a teacher among us—a help to the people—thou art a seer!"

Bewildered by his words, I only looked upon him in silence. After a moment I grew terrified, for I began to think he must be mad. I looked around, wondering whether I could return to the temple and escape from him. But even as I debated within myself whether to venture upon this, he rose and turned upon me with the singular sweet smile, which appeared to cover and hide the ugliness of his strongly marked features.

"Come with me," he said; and I rose and followed

him. We passed through the garden, which was so full of attractions for my wandering eyes that I loitered on my path behind him. Ah, such sweet flowers ; such rich purples and deep-hearted crimson. Difficult I found it not to pause and inhale the sweetness of each fair-faced blossom, though still they seemed to me, in my so recent adoration of its beauty, to but reflect the supreme exquisiteness of the white lotus flower.

We went towards a gate in the temple : a different one from that by which I had entered the garden. As we approached it, there issued forth two priests clad in the same white linen robes as I had seen worn by the golden-bearded priest Agmahd. These men were dark ; and though they moved with a similar stateliness and equilibrium, as though indeed they were the most firmly rooted growth of the earth, yet to my eyes they lacked a something which the priest Agmahd possessed—a certain perfection of calm and assuredness. They were younger than he, I soon saw ; perhaps therein lay the difference. My dark-visaged teacher drew them aside, leaving me to stand in the pleasant shadow of the deep-arched doorway. He spoke to them excitedly, though evidently with reverence ; while they, listening with quick interest, glanced ever and anon towards me.

Presently they came to me, and the black-robed man turned and moved over the grass, as though returning on the way we had come together. The white-clad priests, advancing under the doorway, spoke together in low whispers. When they reached me they motioned me to follow them, and I did so : passing through cool, high-roofed corridors and gazing idly, as was always a foolish habit of mine, upon everything I passed ; while

they, still whispering together as they preceded me, would now and then cast looks upon me, the meaning of which I could not understand.

Presently they turned out of the corridors, and entered into a large room similar to the one I had already seen, where the old priest was instructing his copyists. This was divided by an embroidered curtain which fell in majestic folds from the lofty roof to the ground. I always loved beautiful things, and I noticed how, as it touched the ground, it stood firm with the stiffness of the rich gold work upon it.

One of the priests advanced, and drawing back one side of the curtain a little, I heard him say—

“My lord, may I enter?”

And now I began to tremble a little again. They had not looked unkindly upon me, yet how could I tell what ordeal awaited me? I looked in fear upon the beautiful curtain, and wondered, in some natural fear, who sat behind it.

I had not overlong in which to tremble and be afraid of I knew not what. Ere long the priest who had entered returned, and accompanying him I saw was the golden-bearded priest Agmahd.

He did not speak to me, but said to the others—

“Wait thou here with him, while I go to my brother Kamen Baka.”

And saying this, he left us alone again in the great stone room.

My fears returned trebly upon me. Had but the stately priest given me a glance which held kindness in it, I had not so yielded to them, but now I was again plunged in vague terrors of what next should come upon me; and I was weakened also by the swoon

which had but so recently prostrated me. Trembling, I sank upon a stone bench, which ran around the wall ; while the two dark-haired priests talked together.

I think the suspense would soon have brought another lapse into unconsciousness upon me, but suddenly I was again awakened to the doubts and possibilities of my position by the entrance of Agmahd, accompanied by another priest of most noble appearance. He was fair-skinned and fair-haired, though not so fair in either as Agmahd ; he shared with him the stately immobility of appearance which made Agmahd an object of the deepest awe to me ; and in his dark eyes there was a benevolence which I had not yet seen in any of the priests' countenances. I felt less fearful as I looked upon him.

"This is he," said Agmahd, in his musically cold voice.

Why, I wondered, was I thus spoken of ? I was but a new novice, and had already been handed over to my teacher.

"Brethren," cried Kamen Baka, "is it not best that he should be clothed in the white garment of the seer ? Take him to the baths ; let him bathe and be anointed. Then will I and Agmahd my brother put upon him the white robe. We will then leave him to repose, while we report to the company of the high priests. Bring him back here when he has bathed."

The two younger priests led me from the room. I began to see that they belonged to an inferior order in the priesthood, and, looking on them now, I saw that their white robes had not the beautiful golden embroidery upon them, but were marked with black lines and stitchings around the edges.

How delicious, after all my weariness, was the scented bath which they led me to! It soothed and eased my very spirit. When I left it I was rubbed with a soft and sweet oil, and then they wrapped me in a linen sheet, and brought me refreshment—fruits, oiled cakes, and a fragrant draught that seemed to both strengthen and stimulate me. Then I was led forth again to the chamber in which the two priests awaited me.

They were there, with another priest of the inferior order, who held in his hands a fine linen garment of pure white. The two priests took this, and, as the others drew away the sheet from my form, they together put it upon me. And when they had done so, they joined their hands upon my head, while the other priests knelt down where they stood.

I knew not what all this meant—I was again becoming alarmed. But the bodily refreshment had done much to soothe my soul, and when, without further ceremony, they sent me away again with the two inferior priests, with whom I felt a little familiarized, my spirits arose, and my step became light.

They took me to a small room, in which was a long, low divan, covered with a linen sheet. There was nothing else in the room, and indeed I felt as if my eyes and brain might well remain without interest for a while; for how much had I not seen since I entered the temple in the morning! How long it seemed since I had let go my mother's hand at the gate!

“Rest in peace,” said one of the priests. “Take your fill of sleep, for you will be awakened in the first cool hours of the night!”

And so they left me.



CHAPTER III.



LAY upon my couch, which was soft enough to make it very welcome to my weary limbs, and before long I was buried in profound sleep, notwithstanding the strangeness of my surroundings. The health and faith of youth enabled me to forget all the newness of my position in the temporary luxury of complete rest. Not long afterwards I have entered that cell to gaze upon that couch, and marvel where the peace of mind had flown that had been mine in my ignorant boyhood.

When I awoke it was quite dark, and I started suddenly to a sitting posture, vividly conscious of a human presence in the room. My wits were scattered by my sudden awakening. I thought myself to be at home, and that it was my mother who was silently watching beside me.

“Mother,” I cried out, “what is the matter? Why are you here? Are you ill? Are the sheep astray?”

For a moment there was no answer, and my heart began to beat rapidly as I realized in the midst of the blank darkness that I was not at home—that I was indeed in a new place—that I knew not who it might

be that thus silently watched in my room. For the first time I longed for my little homely chamber—for the sound of my mother's voice. And, though I think I was a brave lad, and one not given to womanish weakness, I lay down again and wept aloud.

"Bring lights," said a quiet voice; "he is awake."

I heard sounds, and then a strong fragrance crept to my nostrils. Immediately afterwards two young novices entered at the door, bearing silver lamps, which threw a sudden and vivid light into the room. Then I saw—and the sight so startled me that I ceased to weep and forgot my home-sickness—I saw that my room was quite full of white-robed priests, all standing motionless. No wonder, indeed, that I had been overpowered by the sense of a human presence in my room. I was surrounded by a silent and statuesque crowd of men, whose eyes were bent upon the ground, whose hands were crossed upon their breasts. I sank back again upon my couch and covered my face; the lights, the crowd of faces, overpowered me; and I felt strongly disposed, when I had recovered from my astonishment, to begin weeping again from sheer bewilderment of ideas. The fragrance grew stronger and more intense, the room seemed filled with burning incense; and, opening my eyes, I saw that a young priest on each side of me held the vases which contained it. The room, as I have said, was full of priests; but there was an inner circle close about my couch. Upon the faces of these men I gazed with awe. Among them were Agmahd and Kamen, and the others shared with them the strange immobility of expression which had affected me so deeply. I glanced from face to face and covered my eyes again, trembling. I felt as though walled in

by an impenetrable barrier; I was imprisoned, with these men around me, by something infinitely more impassable than stone walls. The silence was broken at last. Agmahd spoke.

“Arise, child,” he said, “and come with us.” I arose obediently, though truly I would rather have remained alone in my dark chamber than have accompanied this strange and silent crowd. But I had no choice save silent compliance when I encountered the cold, impenetrable blue eyes which Agmahd turned upon me. I arose, and found that when I moved I was enclosed by the same inner circle. Before, behind, and at the side of me they walked, the others moving in orderly fashion outside the centre. We passed down a long corridor until we reached the great entrance door of the temple. It stood open, and I felt refreshed as by the face of an old friend by the glimpse I got of the starlit dome without. But the glimpse was brief. We halted just inside the great doors, and some of the priests closed and barred them; we then turned towards the great central corridor which I had observed on my first entrance. I noticed now that, though so spacious and beautiful, no doors opened into it, save one deep-arched one right at the end, facing the great temple avenue. I wondered idly where this solitary door would lead.

They brought a little chair, and placed it in the midst of the corridor. On this I was told to sit, facing the door at the far end. I did so, silent and alarmed;—what meant this strange thing? Why was I to sit thus, with the high priests standing around me? What ordeal was before me? But I resolved to be brave, to have no fear. Was not I already clothed in a pure

white linen garment? Truly it was not embroidered in gold; but yet it was not stitched with black, like that of the younger priests. It was pure white; and priding myself that this must mean some sort of distinction, I tried to sustain my failing courage by this idea.

The incense grew so strong that it made my head confused. I was unaccustomed to the scents which the priests so lavishly scattered.

Suddenly—without word or any sign of preparation—the lights were extinguished, and I found myself once more in the dark, surrounded by a strange and silent crowd.

I tried to collect myself and realize where I was. I remembered that the mass of the crowd was behind me, that in front of me the priests had parted, so that, though the inner circle still separated me from the others, I was looking, when the lights were put out, straight down the corridor towards the deep-arched doorway.

I was alarmed and miserable. I curled myself together on my seat, intending to be brave, if need be, but in the meantime to remain as silent and unobtrusive as possible. Much did I dread the calm faces of those high priests whom I knew to be standing immovably beside me. The absolute silence of the crowd behind filled me with terror and awe. I was at some moments so full of alarm that I wondered whether, if I arose and moved straight down the corridor, I could escape from between the priests unnoticed. But I dared not try it; and indeed the incense combined with the effects of the subtle drink and the quiet were producing an unaccustomed drowsiness.

My eyes were half closed, and I think I might soon have fallen asleep, but my curiosity was suddenly aroused by perceiving that a line of light showed around the edges of the doorway at the far end of the corridor. I opened my eyes wide to look, and soon saw that slowly, very slowly, the door was being opened. At last it stood half-way open, and a dim suffused kind of light came forth from it. But at our end of the corridor the darkness remained total and unrelieved, and I heard no sound or sign of life, save a low, subdued breathing from the men who surrounded me.

I closed my eyes after a few moments; for I was gazing so intently out of the darkness that my eyes grew wearied. When I opened them again I saw that there stood a figure just outside the doorway. Its outline was distinct, but the form and face were dim, by reason of the light being behind; yet, unreasonable as it was, I was filled with a sudden horror—my flesh crept, and I had to use a kind of physical repressive force in order to prevent myself from screaming aloud. This intolerable sense of fear momentarily increased; for the figure advanced towards me, slowly, and with a kind of gliding motion that was unearthly. I saw now, as it neared, that it was robed in some kind of dark garment, which almost entirely veiled form and face. But I could not see very clearly, for the light from the doorway only faintly reached out from it. But my agony of fear was suddenly augmented by observing that, when the gliding figure nearly approached me, it kindled some kind of light which it held, and which illumined its dim drapery. But this light made nothing else visible. By a gigantic effort I removed my fascinated gaze from the mysterious figure, and turned

my head, hoping to see the forms of the priests beside me. But their forms were not to be seen—all was a total blank of darkness. This released the spell of horror that was on me, and I cried out—a cry of agony and fear—and bowed my head in my hands.

The voice of Agmahd fell upon my ear.

“Fear not, my child,” he said in his melodious, undisturbed accents.

I made an effort to control myself, helped by this sound which savored at least of something less unfamiliar and terrible than the veiled figure which stood before me. It was there—not close, but close enough to fill my soul with a kind of unearthly terror.

“Speak, child,” said again the voice of Agmahd, “and tell us what alarms thee?”

I dared not disobey, though my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth; and, indeed, a new surprise enabled me to speak more easily than otherwise I could have done.

“What,” I exclaimed, “do you not see the light from the doorway, and the veiled figure? Oh! send it away; it frightens me!”

A low, subdued murmur seemed to come from all the crowd at once. Evidently my words excited them. Then the calm voice of Agmahd again spoke:—

“Our queen is welcome, and we do her all reverence.”

The veiled figure bowed its head, and then advanced nearer. Agmahd spoke once more, after a pause of total silence—

“Cannot our lady make her subjects more open-eyed, and give them commands as before?”

The figure stooped, and seemed to trace something

on the ground. I looked and saw the words in letters of fire, which vanished as they came—

“Yes; but the child must enter my sanctuary alone with me.”

I saw the words, I say, and my very flesh trembled with horror. The unintelligible dread of this veiled form was so powerful that I would rather have died than fulfil such a command. The priests were silent, and I guessed that, as the figure, so the fiery letters were invisible to them. Immediately I reflected that if, strange and incredible as it seemed, it were so, they would not know of the command. Terrified as I was, how could I bring myself to frame the words which should bring upon me an ordeal so utterly dreadful?

I remained silent. The figure turned suddenly towards me and seemed to look on me. Then again it traced, in the swiftly vanishing, fiery letters—“Pass on my message.”

But I could not; indeed, horror had now made it physically impossible. My tongue was swollen, and seemed to fill my mouth.

The figure turned to me with a gesture of fierce anger. With a quick, gliding movement, it darted towards me, and drew the veil from its face.

My eyes seemed to start from their sockets, as that face was upturned close to mine. It was not hideous, though the eyes were full of an icy anger—an anger that flashed not, but froze. It was not hideous, yet it filled me with such loathing and fear as I had never imagined possible, and the horror of it lay in the fearful unnaturalness of the countenance. It seemed to be formed of the elements of flesh and blood, yet it impressed me as being only a mask of humanity—a

fearful, corporeal unreality—a thing made up of **flesh** and blood, without the life of flesh and blood. Into a second were crowded these horrors. Then with a piercing shriek, I swooned for the second time in that day—my first day in the temple.





CHAPTER IV.



WHEN I awoke I felt my body to be covered with a cold dew, and my limbs seemed lifeless. I lay helplessly wondering where I was.

It was still and dark, and at first the sense of solitary quiet was delightful. But soon my mind began to review the events which had made the past day seem like a year to me. The vision of the white Lotus-flower grew strong in my eyes, but waned as my terrified soul flew on to the recollection of that later and most horrible sight—that which, indeed, had been the last before them, until now when I awoke in the darkness.

Again I saw it: again, in my imagination, I saw that uplifted face—its ghastly unreality, the cold glare of its cruel eyes. I was unstrung, unnerved, exhausted—and again, though now the vision seemed but my own imagination, I cried aloud in terror.

Immediately I saw a light approach the doorway of my room, and a priest entered, carrying a silver lamp.

I saw by its rays, that I was in a chamber which I had not before entered. It seemed full of comfort.

I saw that soft falling curtains made it secluded, and I felt that the air was full of a pleasant fragrance.

The priest approached, and as he neared me he bowed his head.

"What needs my lord?" he said. "Shall I bring fresh water if thou art thirsty?"

"I am not thirsty," I answered; "I am afraid—afraid of the horrible thing which I have seen."

"Nay," he answered, "it is but thy youth that makes thee afraid. The gaze of our all-powerful lady is at all times enough to make a man swoon. Fear not, for thou art honored in that thine eyes have vision. What shall I bring to give thee ease?"

"Is it night?" I said, restlessly turning upon my soft couch.

"It is near morning now," answered the priest.

"Oh that the day would come!" I exclaimed; "that the blessed sun should blot from my eyes the thing that makes me shudder! I am afraid of the darkness, for the darkness is the evil face!"

"I will stay beside your bed," said the priest quietly. He placed the silver lamp upon a stand and sat down near me. His face relapsed into instant composure, and ere he had been there a moment he seemed to me naught but a carven statue. His eyes were cold: his speech though full of kind words, had no warmth in it. I shrank away from him; for as I looked on him the vision of the corridor seemed to rise between us. I bore this a while, trying to find comfort in his presence; but at length I burst forth in words, forgetting my fear of giving offence, which had kept me until now so obediently quiet.

"Oh, I cannot bear it?" I cried. "Let me go away;

let me go out—into the garden—anywhere! The whole place is full of the vision. I see it everywhere. I cannot shut my eyes against it? Oh, let me—let me go away!”

“Rebel not against the vision,” answered the priest. “It came to thee from the sanctuary—from the most sacred shrine. It has marked thee as one different from others, one who will be honored and cared for among us. But thou must subdue the rebellion of thy heart.”

I was silent. The words sank like cold icicles upon my soul. I did not grasp their meaning—indeed, it was impossible that I should; but was sensitively alive to the chill of the speech. After a long pause, in which I tried hard to put thought out of my mind, and so to obtain release from my fears, a sudden recollection seized me with an agreeable sense of relief.

“Where,” I said, “is the black man whom I saw in the garden yesterday?”

“What?—the gardener, Seboua? He will be sleeping in his chamber. But when the dawn breaks he will rise and go out into the garden.”

“May I go with him?” I asked, with feverish anxiety, even clasping my hands as in prayer, so distressed was I lest I should be refused.

“Into the garden? If you are restless, it will soothe the fever that is upon your frame, to go among the morning dews and the fresh flowers. I will call Seboua to fetch you, when I see the dawn breaking.”

I heaved a deep sigh of relief at this easy assent to my prayer; and turning away from the priest, lay still with closed eyes, trying to keep all horrid sights or imaginings from me by the thought of the sense of de-

light which would soon be mine when I should leave the close, artificially perfumed chamber for the sweetness and free inbreathing of the outer air.

I said no word, waiting patiently; and the priest sat motionless beside me. At last, after what seemed to me hours of weary waiting, he rose and extinguished the silver lamp. I saw then that a dim gray light entered the room from the lofty windows.

"I will call Seboua," he said, turning to me, "and send him to you. Remember that this is your chamber, which is henceforth to belong to you. Return here before the morning ceremonies; there will be novices waiting with the bath and oil for your anointment."

"And how," said I, much terrified at the idea of being, by some strange destiny, so important a person,— "how shall I know when to return here?"

"You need not come till after the morning meal. A bell rings for that; and, moreover, Seboua will tell you." With these words he departed.

I was full of pleasure at the thought of the fresh air which would revive my unnaturally wearied body; and I longed to see Seboua's strange face, and the sweet smile which would now and again obliterate his ugliness. It seemed as though his had been the only human face I had seen since I parted with my mother.

I looked to see if I still wore my linen garment so that I was ready to go with him. Yes, it was on me, my pure white dress. I looked on it with a sense of pride, for I had never worn anything so finely woven before. I was so far restored to quietude by the idea of being again with Seboua that I lay looking idly at my dress, and wondering what my mother would have thought, seeing me clad in this fine and delicate linen.

It was not long before I heard a step which roused me from my dreaming; Seboua's strange visage appeared in the doorway; Seboua's black form advanced towards me. He was ugly—yes; uncouth—yes; black and without any fairness of appearance. Yet as he entered and looked on me, the smile which I remembered again irradiated his face. He was human!—loving!

I stretched out my hands to him as I rose from my couch.

“O Seboua!” I said, the tears rising in my foolish boy's eyes as I saw this gentleness upon his face—“Seboua, why am I here? What is it that makes them say I am different from others? Seboua, tell me, am I again to see that awful form?”

Seboua came and knelt beside me. It seemed natural in this black man to kneel down when a sense of awe overcame him.

“My son,” he said, “thou art gifted from heaven with unclosed eyes. Be brave in the possession of the gift and thou shalt be a light in the midst of the darkness that is descending upon our unhappy land.”

“I don't want to be,” I said fretfully. I was not afraid of him, and my rebellion must out. “I don't want to do anything which makes one feel so strange. Why have I beheld this ghastly face which even now comes before my eyes and blots out from them the light of day?”

“Come with me,” said Seboua, rising instead of answering my question, and holding out his hand to me. “Come, and we will go among the flowers, and talk of these things when the fresh airs have cooled thy brow.”

I rose, nothing loth, and hand in hand we passed

through the corridors until we reached a door that admitted us to the garden.

How can I describe the sense of exhilaration with which I drank in the morning air? It was incomparably greater and keener a delight than anything in the world of nature had ever before imparted to me. Not only did I pass out of a secluded and scented atmosphere, different from any to which I had been accustomed, but also the terrified, over-excited mental state which I was in was infinitely cooled and re-assured by the renewed sense that the world was still beautiful and natural outside the temple doors.

Seboua, looking in my face, seemed by some subtle sympathy to detect my vague thoughts and interpret them to me.

“The sun still rises in all his magnificence,” he said. “The flowers still open their hearts to his greeting. Open thou thine, and be content.”

I did not answer him. I was young and untaught. I could not readily answer him in words, but I looked up in his face as we moved across the garden, and I suppose my eyes must have spoken for me.

“My son,” he said, “because in the night you have been into the darkness, there is no reason to doubt that the light still is behind the darkness. You do not fear when lying down to sleep at night that you will see the sun in the morning. You have been into deeper darkness than that of the night, and you will see a brighter sun than this.”

I did not understand him, though I revolved his words in my mind. I said nothing, for the sweet air, and the sense of human sympathy, were enough for me. I seemed careless of hearing words, or understanding

my experiences, now that I was out in the fresh air. I was but a boy, and the sheer delight of my reviving strength made me forget all else.

This was natural; and all that was natural seemed to me, to-day, to be abundantly full of charm. Yet no sooner had I entered the natural once more and begun to revel in my return to it, than suddenly and unawares I was taken out of it.

Whither? Alas! how can I tell? There are no adequate words in the languages of the world to describe any real thing which lies outside the circle that is called natural.

Surely I stood with my own feet upon the green grass—surely I had not departed from the spot whereon I stood? Surely Seboua stood by me? I pressed his hand. Yes, it was there. Yet I knew by my sensations that the natural had yielded me up, and that again I was within the world of feeling—sight—sound which I dreaded.

I saw nothing—I heard nothing—yet I stood in horror, trembling as the leaves tremble before a storm. What was I about to see? What was near me? What was it that drew a cloud across my eyes?

I closed them. I dared not look. I dared not face the dimness of the realities around me.

“Open thine eyes, my son,” said Seboua, “and tell me, is our lady there?”

I opened them, dreading to behold the awful face which had filled me with fear in the darkness of the night. But no—for a moment I saw nothing—and I sighed with relief, for I always expected to see that face uplifted close to mine, with a grin of anger upon it. But in another second my frame thrilled with delight.

Seboua had brought me, without my perceiving it, close beside the lotus tank ; and I saw, stooping as before, to drink the clear flowing water, the fair woman whose long golden hair half hid her face from me.

“ Speak to her ! ” cried Seboua. “ I see by thy face that she is before thee. Oh, speak to her ! Not in this generation has she spoken with her priests—speak to her, for indeed we need her help ! ”

Seboua had fallen on his knees by my side, as yesterday he had done. His face was full of earnestness and glow—his eyes full of a prayer. Looking into them I sank back overcome, I could not tell by what, but it seemed as though the golden-haired woman called me to her, and as though Seboua pushed me towards her, yet in my body I was no nearer to her ; but in my consciousness I appeared to rise and move towards the lily tank, until, leaning upon its ledge, I touched her garment where it fell upon the surface of the water. I looked up into her face, but I could not see it. Light radiated from it, and I could only look at it as I might look upon the sun. Yet I felt the touch of her hand upon my head, and words crept into my mind which emanated from her, though I was scarcely conscious that I heard them.

“ Child with the open eyes,” she said, “ thy soul is pure, and upon it is laid a heavy task. But keep thou near to me who am full of light, and I will show thee the way to plant thy feet.”

“ Mother,” said I, “ what of the darkness ? ”

I scarce dared frame my question more plainly. It seemed that if I spoke of that terrible face it would appear in anger before me. I felt a thrill pass through me from her hands as I uttered the words. I fancied

that it must be anger which was about to descend on me, but her voice passed into my consciousness as sweetly and softly as raindrops, and imparted to me the same sense of divine sending that we dwellers in a thirsty land associate with the advent of the sweet moisture.

“ The darkness is not to be feared ; it is to be conquered and driven back, as the soul grows stronger in the light. My son, there is darkness in that innermost sanctuary of the temple, because the worshippers therein cannot bear the light. The light of your world is excluded from it, that it may be illumined with the light of the spirit. But the blind priests, hid in their own conceit, comfort themselves with the brood of darkness. They mock my name by using it ; tell them, my son, that their queen holds no sway in the realms of darkness. They have no queen ; they have no guide but their blind desires. This is the first message you are charged with—did they not ask for one ? ”

At this moment I seemed drawn back from her. I clung to her garment hem, but my hands were powerless ; as I lost my hold upon her I seemed also to lose the sense of her presence. I was conscious only of an intolerable feeling of physical irritation. My eyes had closed, helplessly, as I drew from her ; I opened them with an effort. I saw before me only the lotus tank, filled with blossoms of the queen of flowers—filled with blossoms which floated royally upon the surface of the water. The sunshine lay upon their golden hearts, and I saw in them the color of golden hair. But a voice, full of wrath, though speaking slowly and with deliberate intonation, aroused me from dwelling upon the fringe of my dream.

I turned my head and beheld, to my amazement, Seboua standing between two novices ; his head bowed, his hands crossed. Near to me stood the high priests Agmahd and Kamen ; Agmahd was speaking to Seboua. I soon gathered that he was in disgrace on account of me, but I could not discover what he had done.

Agmahd and Kamen placed themselves on either side of me. And I understood that I was to walk between them. We advanced in silence towards the temple, and entered again its gloomy gates.





CHAPTER V.



WAS led into the hall where the priests had been taking their morning meal. The room was almost deserted now; but Agmahd and Kamen remained talking, in their low subdued tones, by one of the windows, while two novices led me to a place by the table, and brought me oiled cakes, fruit, and milk. It was strange to me to be waited on by these youths, who did not speak to me, and whom I regarded with awe as being more experienced than myself in the terrible mysteries of the temple. I wondered, as I ate my cakes, why they had not spoken to me, any of the novices whom I had seen; but looking back over the brief time which I had spent in the temple, I recollected that I had never been left alone with one of them. Even now, Agmahd and Kamen remained in the room, so that, as I saw, a silence of fear was upon the faces of the youths who served me. And I fancied it to be a fear, not as of a schoolmaster who uses his eyes like ordinary mortals, but as of some many-sighted and magical observer who is not to be deceived. I saw no gleam of expression on the countenance of either of the youths. They acted like automata.

The exhaustion which had again taken possession of my frame was lessened by the food, and when I had eaten I rose eagerly to look from the high window, to see if Seboua were in the garden. But Agmahd advanced, stepped between me and the window, and gazed upon me with the immovable look which made me dread him so deeply.

“Come,” he said. He turned and moved away; I followed him with drooping head, and all my new energy and hope departed; why, I knew not; I could not tell why I gazed upon the embroidered hem of the white garment—which seemed to glide so smoothly over the ground in front of me—with a sense that I was following my doom.

My doom! Agmahd the typical priest of the temple, the real leader among the high priests. My doom.

We passed down the corridors till we entered upon the wide one which led from the gate of the temple to the holy of holies. A horror filled me at the sight of it, even with the sunlight streaming through the gateway, and making mock of its unutterable shadows. Yet so deep was my dread of Agmahd, that, left thus alone with him, I followed him in perfect obedience and silence. We passed down the corridor—with each reluctant step of mine I drew nearer to that terrible door whence, in the darkness of the night, I had seen the hideous form emerge. I was scanning the wall with the kind of terror with which a tormented soul might gaze upon the awful instruments of spiritual inquisition. It is impossible, once looking upon some impending doom with open eyes, not to remain gazing thereon with abject yet riveted attention. Such did I in my blind fear bestow upon the walls of the long cor-

ridor, which, to my fancy, as we moved down it, seemed to close upon us and to shut us from all the bright, beautiful world which I had lived in until now.

Scanning thus intently these smooth and terrible walls, I perceived, as we approached it, a little door which stood at right angles with the door of the sanctuary. It would have escaped any observation but one unnaturally tense; for the darkness at this far end of the corridor was deep indeed, by contrast with the glowing sunlight we had left at the other.

We approached this door. As I have said, it stood at right angles with the wall of the sanctuary. It was close to the door of it, but it was in the wall of the corridor.

My steps seemed to be taken without my own volition now; certainly my will would have carried me back to the sunshine which made the world beautiful with flowers—which made life seem a glorious reality, and not a hideous and unimaginable dream!

Yet there it was—the door—and Agmahd stood, his hand upon it. He turned and looked at me.

“Have no fear,” he said, in his calm, equable tones. “Our sanctuary is the centre of our home, and its near neighborhood is enough to fill us with strength.”

I passed through the same experience as when first Agmahd encouraged me by his voice in the garden. I raised my eyes, with an effort, to his, that I might discover whether there was the same encouragement in his beautiful countenance. But all that I saw was the intolerable calm of those blue eyes; they were pitiless, immovable: my soul, aghast, beheld in them at that moment fully the cruelty of the beast of prey.

He turned from me and opened the door; and, pass-

ing through it, held it open that I might follow him. I followed him—yes, though my steps seemed to recoil upon myself and lead me to the deeps.

We entered a low-roofed room, lighted by one broad window, high in the wall. It was curtained and draped with rich material; a low couch stood at one side of the room. When my glance fell on the couch I started; why, I know not; but I at once thought it to be the couch which I had slept on in the last night. I could look at nothing else, though there were many beautiful things to look at, for the room was adorned luxuriously. I only wondered, with a shrinking heart, why that couch had been removed from the room in which I had slept.

While I looked on it, lost in conjecture, I suddenly became conscious of silence—complete silence—and of loneliness.

I turned with a sudden alarm.

Yes! I was alone. He was gone—the dread priest Agmahd—he had gone without another word, and left me in this room.

What could it mean?

I crossed to the door and tried it. It was fast closed and barred.

I was a prisoner. But what could it mean? I looked around the massive stone walls—I glanced up at the high window—I thought of the near neighborhood of the sanctuary—and I flung myself upon the couch and hid my face.

I imagine that I must have lain there for hours. I did not dare to arise and make any disturbance. I had nothing to appeal to but the blue, pitiless eyes of the priest Agmahd. I lay upon my couch with fast-

closed eyes, not daring to face the aspect of my prison, and praying that the night might never come.

It was yet the early part of the day, that I felt sure of, although I knew not how long a time I had passed in the garden with Seboua. The sun was high, and streamed in at my window. I saw this as, after a long time had passed, I turned and looked around my room with a sudden and alarmed glance. I had the idea that some one was in it—but, unless hidden behind the curtains, no visible form was in the room.

No, I was alone. And as I gathered courage to look up to the sunlight that made my window a thing glorious for the eyes, I began to realize that it still veritably was in existence; and that, notwithstanding my recent hideous experiences, I was nothing but a boy who loved sunshine.

The attraction grew very strong, and at last fanned itself into the wish to climb up to the high window and look. The passion which caused me to desire so ardently to do this, having once thought of it, I can no more account for than I could for most of the inquisitive and headstrong purposes of a boy's brain. At all events I rose from my couch—casting all terror of my surroundings to the winds, now that I had a purpose sufficiently childish to absorb me. The wall was perfectly smooth; but I fancied that, by standing on a table that was beneath the window, I could reach the sill with my hands, and so raise myself up to see out. I soon climbed the table, but I could barely reach the sill with upstretched arms. I jumped a little, and just catching hold of the sill managed to draw myself upwards. I suppose that part of the enterprise must have been the delight to me; for I certainly did not

anticipate seeing anything but the temple gardens.

What I saw, though there was nothing perhaps very startling, sobered my enjoyment.

The gardens were not there. My window looked out upon a small square piece of ground, which was surrounded by high blank walls. I soon saw that these were evidently walls of the temple, not outer walls. The piece of ground was enclosed in the very heart of the great building, for I could see its columns and roofs rising beyond each side, and the walls were blank. Mine was the only window I could perceive any trace of.

At that moment I heard a faint sound in the room, and, quickly letting myself drop, I stood upon the table, looking round in consternation. The sound seemed to proceed from behind a heavy curtain that half covered one wall. I stood breathless, and, even in this broad daylight and gleaming sunshine, somewhat in terror of what I might see. For I had no idea that there was any mode of entrance but that door by which I had come, so that I scarce dared to hope for a wholesome human presence!

These fears soon vanished, however, for the curtain was drawn a little back, and a black-robed novice—whom I had not seen before—crept from out its shelter. I wondered at his stealthy manner; but I had no fears, for he held in his hand a glorious blossom of the royal white lotus flower. I sprang from the table and advanced towards him, my eyes upon the flower. When quite close he spoke, very low and quickly.

“This,” he said, “is from Seboua. Cherish it, but let none of the priests see it. Cherish it, and it will help you in hours when you will need help; and

Seboua urges that you remember all the words he has said to you, and that you trust, above all, to your love for the truly beautiful and to your natural likes and dislikes. That is the message," he said, stepping back towards the curtain. "I am risking my life here to please Seboua. Be careful that you never come near this door, or show that you know it exists; it opens into the private room of the high priest Agmahd, into which none dare enter save on peril of intolerable punishment."

"And how have you come through?" I asked in great curiosity.

"They are engaged in the morning ceremonies—all the priests—and I succeeded in escaping unseen to come to you."

"Tell me," I cried, holding him even as he endeavored to hurry through the door, "why did not Seboua come?"

"He cannot—he is closely watched that he may make no effort to get near you."

"But why is this?" I exclaimed in dismay and wonder.

"I cannot tell," said the novice, extracting his garment from my grasp. "Remember the words I have said."

He hastily passed through the door and closed it behind him. I found myself half smothered by the heavy curtain, and, as soon as I could recover from my amazement at this sudden appearance and disappearance, I moved it aside and stepped out, the lily in my hand.

My first thought, even before I would let myself think over the words which I was to remember—was

to place my precious flower in some safe place. I held it tenderly, as though it were the breathing form of one I loved. I looked around anxiously, wondering where it would be both unseen and yet preserved.

I saw, after a few moments spent in hasty inspection, that just behind the head of my couch there was a corner which the curtain fell a little away from. Here, at least, I might place it for a while; it would have room to breathe, and would not be seen unless the curtain were moved away—and behind my couch seemed a less likely place for it to be discovered in than any other. I hastily placed it here, afraid to keep it in my hand lest the ceremonies should be over and Agmahd enter my room. So I hid it, and then looked around for some vessel of water in which I might place it, for it occurred to me that, if I did not supply it with some of that element which it so dearly loved, it would not live long to be my friend.

I found a little earthen jar of water and placed it in it, wondering the while what I should do if the priests, discovering its absence, should ask me for it. I could not tell what to do in such an emergency; but, if the flower were discovered, I could only hope that some inspiration would be given me by which I might avoid throwing further blame upon Seboua; for, though I could not understand why or how, it was very evident that he had been blamed for something in connection with me.

I went and sat on the couch, to be near my beloved flower. How I desired that I might place it in the sunshine and revel in its beauties!

In this way the day passed. No one came near me. I watched the sun pass away from my window. I

watched the shadows of evening descend upon it. I was still alone. I do not think I grew more terrified. I do not remember that the coming night brought with it any agony of fear. I was filled with a deep calmness, which either the long undisturbed hours of the day had produced, or else it was wrought by the beautiful though unseen flower; for that was ever before my eyes in all its radiant and delicate beauty. I had none of the intolerable visions which I had been unable to drive from me in the former night.

It was quite dark when the door which communicated with the corridor opened, and Agmahd entered, followed by a young priest, who brought me food and a cup of some strange sweet-smelling syrup. I should not have stirred from my couch had it not been that I longed for food. I had not thought of it before, but I was indeed faint and fasting. I rose eagerly, therefore, and, when the young priest brought the food to my side, I drank first of the syrup—which indeed he offered me first—for my exhaustion suddenly became plain to me.

Agmahd looked on me as I drank. When I had put down the cup, I raised my eyes to his with a new defiance.

“I shall go mad,” I said boldly, “if you leave me in this room alone. I have never been left alone so long in all my life.”

I spoke under a sudden impulse. When I had been passing the long hours in solitude they had not seemed so terrible; but now, with a quick apprehension of the evil of this solitariness, I spoke out my feeling.

Agmahd said to the young priest—

“Set the food down, and fetch hither the book that lies upon the couch in my outer room.”

He departed on his errand. Agmahd said nothing to me; and I—having said my say, and not having, as I rather expected, been annihilated for it—took up an oiled cake from the platter, and cheerfully went on with my meal.

Five years after I could not have faced Agmahd in this way. I could not have eaten my fill having just defied him. But now I was elated by the supreme ignorance and indifference of youth. I had no measuring line for the depths of the priest's intellect—the wide embracingness of his stern cruelty. How should I have? I was ignorant. And, moreover, I had no clue to the mode of his cruelty—the purpose, the intention of it. I was in the dark altogether. But I was well aware that my life in the temple was not what I had looked for if it was to be like this, and I already cherished boyish notions of escaping from it (even down the terrible corridor) if I were to exist after such an unhappy fashion. I little knew when I thought of this how well I was guarded.

Agmahd said no word while I ate and drank, and presently the young priest opened the door and entered, bearing in his hands a large black book. He placed it on a table which Agmahd told him to draw near to my couch. A lamp was then brought by him from a corner of the room and placed on the table. He lighted it, and this done, Agmahd spoke:

“You need not be lonely if you look within those pages.”

So saying, he turned and left the room, followed by the young priest.

I opened it at once. It seems, looking back on that time, that I was to the full as inquisitive as most boys; at all events, any new object riveted my attention for the time being. I opened the black covers of the volume and gazed on the first page. It was beautifully colored, and I looked in pleasure at the colors a little while before I began to spell out the letters. They stood out from a gray background in letters of so brilliant a hue that they seemed like fire. The title was—"The Arts and Powers of Magic."

It was nonsense to me. I was a comparatively uneducated boy, and I wondered what companionship Agmahd supposed such a book could afford me.

I turned idly over its pages. They were all unintelligible to me, by very reason even of the words used, apart from the matter. The thing was ridiculous, to have sent me this book to read. I yawned widely over it, and closing the book was about to lie down again upon my couch, when I was startled to observe that I was not alone. On the other side of the little table whereon my book and lamp were, stood a man in a black dress. He was looking earnestly upon me, but when I returned his gaze he seemed to retreat from me a little. I wondered how he could have entered so noiselessly and approached so near me without sound.





CHAPTER VI.

“**H**AVE you any wish?” said the man in a clear, but very low voice.

I looked at him in surprise. He was a novice, it seemed, by his dress; yet he spoke as though he could gratify my wish—and that, too, without the tone of a mere servant.

“I have just taken food,” I answered. “I have no wish—but for freedom from this room.”

“That,” he answered quietly, “is soon gratified. Follow me.”

I stared in astonishment. This novice must know my position—must know of Agmahd’s will with regard to me. Dare he thus defy him?

“No,” I answered; “the high priests have imprisoned me here; if I am found escaping I shall be punished!”

“Come!” was all his answer. And as he spoke he raised one hand commandingly. As in physical pain, I cried aloud; why, I could not realize. Yet my sense seemed to be that I was held as by a vice—that some intolerable power grasped my frame and shook it. A second after I stood beside my mysterious visitor, my

hand tight clasped in his. "Look not back!" he cried. "Come with me."

And I followed him. Yet, at the door I desired to turn my head to look; and by what seemed a great effort, I did so.

Little marvel that he bade me not look back! Little marvel that he strove to hurry me from the room, for when my eyes had once turned I remained spellbound, gazing—resisting his iron grasp.

I saw myself—or rather my unconscious form—and then, for the first time, I understood that my companion was no denizen of earth—that I had again entered the land of shadows.

But this wonder was wholly swallowed up in a larger one—one sufficient to make me strong against the effort of my companion to draw me from the room.

Leaning over the couch—standing behind it and bending forward, in that delicious drooping attitude in which I had first seen her when she stooped to drink the water—I saw the Lily Queen.

And I heard her speak. Her voice came to me like the dropping of water—like the spray of a fountain.

"Wake, sleeper—dream no more, nor remain within this accursed spell."

"Lady, I obey," I murmured, within myself, and instantly a mist seemed to enwrap me. I was but dimly conscious—yet I knew that, in obedience to the wish of the beautiful queen, I was endeavoring to return to my natural state. I succeeded by degrees, and opened my eyes wearily and heavily, to behold a desolate empty room. The novice had left me—of that I was glad—but, alas! the Lady of the Lotus had left me also. The room seemed empty indeed, and my heart was

heavy as I looked around me. I felt the sweet Lady of the Flower more as a beautiful mother in my childish heart, than as a queen. I yearned for her soft presence. But it was not there. I knew only too well that she was not in the room hidden from me. I felt her absence with my soul as well as perceived it with my eyes.

I raised myself languidly enough, for, indeed, this last struggle had out-wearied me, and went to the corner behind my couch where my dear flower was hid. I drew back the curtain a little way, to look at my treasure. Alas! it was already drooping its lovely head! I sprang forward to assure myself that I had indeed given it water. Yes, its stem was deeply plunged in its loved element. Yet the flower drooped like a dead thing, and the stem bent inertly over the edge of the vessel.

“My flower,” I cried, kneeling down beside it, “art thou too gone?—am I quite alone?”

I took the languid flower-form from the vessel and placed it upon my breast, within my robe. And then, wholly disconsolate for the moment, I flung myself again upon my couch and closed my eyes, endeavoring to make them dark and visionless.

How?—who knows the way to hide visions from the inner eye, that eye which has the terrible gift of sight which no darkness can blind? I did not, then, at all events.

The night had descended on the earth, when I aroused myself from my long and silent rest. It was moonlight without, and a silvery streak of light entered at the high window and streamed into my room. Just within that streak of light came the hem of a white

garment; a hem gold-embroidered. I knew the embroidery—I raised my eyes slowly, for I expected to recognize Agmahd, as indeed I did. He stood just within the dim shadow; but his bearing was not easily confused with that of another man even if his face were unseen.

I lay perfectly still; yet he seemed immediately to know that I was awake.

“Rise,” he said. I rose, and stood beside my couch, with wide eyes of fear fixed upon him.

“Drink that which is beside you,” he said. I looked and saw a cup full of red liquid. I drank it, blindly hoping it might give me strength to bear whatever ordeal the silent hours of this night might be destined to bring upon me. “Come,” he said; and I followed him to the door. I half unconsciously cast a glance up to the window, in the thought that perchance fresh air and freedom lay before me. Suddenly I felt myself blinded—quickly I put my hand to my eyes; a soft substance was bound over them. I was silent with the silence of wonder and of fear; I felt myself supported and led onward carefully. I shuddered as I thought that it must be the arm of Agmahd which upheld me, but I submitted to the contact, knowing that I was powerless to resist it.

We moved onwards slowly; I was conscious of leaving my own room and of traversing some distance beyond it, but how far or in what direction I was unable to guess, bewildered as I was by my blindfold state.

We paused in utter silence; the arm around me was removed, and I felt the bandage taken from my eyes. They opened upon a darkness so complete that I raised my hand to assure myself that the kerchief was not

still upon them. No—they were free—they were open—yet they gazed upon nothing but a blank wall of deep and total darkness. My head was full of pain and dizziness—the fumes of the strong syrup that I had drunk seemed to have filled it with confusion. I remained motionless, hoping to recover myself and realize my position.

While I waited, I suddenly became conscious of a new presence close beside me. I did not shrink from it. I seemed to know it to be beautiful, to be friendly and glorious. I was thrilled with a yearning, an indescribable sense of leaning in spirit towards the unknown presence.

Amid the silence suddenly came low, sweet speech close to mine ear.

“Tell Agmahd that he disobeys the law. One priest alone may enter the holy of holies, and no more.”

I recognized the liquid water-like voice of the Lily Queen. Although I was unaware of the priest’s presence I unhesitatingly obeyed my queen.

“One priest *alone* may enter the holy of holies,” I said, “and no more. Agmahd being here the law is disobeyed.”

“I demand to hear the utterance of the queen,” came the reply in the solemn tones of Agmahd.

“Tell him,” said that other voice which thrilled my soul and made my frame vibrate, “that had I been able to reveal myself in his presence I had not waited for you.”

I repeated her words. There was no answer, but I heard a movement—footsteps—and a door closed softly.

Immediately a soft hand touched me. I was simultaneously conscious of the touch, and of a faint light upon my chest. I felt in a second that the hand was put within my dress to draw forth the withered lily which I had hid there. But I did not attempt to hinder this, for, looking up as a light attracted my eyes, I beheld standing before me the Lily Queen. My queen, as in my boyish heart I had begun to call her, I saw dimly and as enveloped in a shadowy mist, but yet plainly enough to make me rejoice in her near presence. And as I looked I saw that she held close to her bosom the withered flower which she had taken from mine. And I saw, wonderingly, that it faded yet more, grew dimmer, and wholly vanished. Yet I did not regret it, for, as it died away, she grew more bright and distinct to my sight. When the flower had wholly disappeared she stood beside me, clear and distinct, illuminated by her own radiance.

“Fear no longer,” she said; “they cannot harm thee, for thou hast entered within my atmosphere. And though they have placed thee in the very dungeon of vice and falsehood, have no fear, but observe all things, and remember what thine eyes perceive.”

The darkness appeared to become illumined by her confident and gracious words. I grew bold and full of strength.

She held out her hand and touched me gently. The touch filled me with a fire that excelled any warmth I had ever experienced.

“The royal flower of Egypt dwells upon the sacred waters, which in their purity and peace fitly form its eternal resting-place. I am the spirit of the flower; I am sustained upon the waters of truth, and my life

is formed of the breath of the heavens, which is love. But the degradation of my earthly resting-place, over which my wings of love yet brood, is driving from it the light of heaven, which is wisdom. Not long can the spirit of the royal lotus live in darkness; the flower droops and dies if the sun be withdrawn from it. Remember these words, child, grave them upon your heart, for as your mind becomes capable of grasping them, they will enlighten you in many things."

"Tell me," I said, "when may I again visit the lilies? Will you not take me there in to-morrow's sunshine? Now it is night, and I am tired; may I not sleep at your feet, and to-morrow be with you in the garden?"

"Poor child," she said, stooping towards me so that her breath fanned me, and it was sweet like the scent of wild flowers, "how hardly have they taxed thee! Rest here in my arms, for thou art to be my seer, and the enlightener of my loved land. Strength and health must dwell upon thy brow like jewels. I will guard thee; sleep, child."

I lay down at her bidding, and though I knew that I was upon a cold, hard floor, I felt that my head rested upon an arm soft and full of magnetic soothing; and I fell into deep, dreamless, undisturbed slumber.

There was writ in Agmahd's secret volume of records but one word that night,—“Vain.”





CHAPTER VII.

A WHITE flower was in my hand when I awoke. Its beauty filled my heart with gladness, I looked on it and was refreshed and content, as though I had slept in my mother's arms, and this was her kiss on my lips, for I held the flower, a half-blown lotus-blossom, close to my mouth. I did not wonder at first how I had obtained it, I only looked upon its beauty and was happy, for it made me know that my queen, my one friend, did indeed guard me.

Suddenly I saw some one enter the room, yet she did not so much enter it, as seem to come out of the shadow. I lay, as now I saw, on the couch in the room to which Agmahd had brought me. I was scarcely aware of how, or in what place, I had spent the dark hours of the night, but I felt that it was in his arms I had been carried back to my couch. I was glad to be there again, and I was glad to see this child that approached me. She was younger than myself, and bright as the sunshine. She came near to me, and then paused; I put out my hand to her.

“ Give me the flower,” she said.

I hesitated, for the possession of the flower made me happy, but I could not refuse her, for she smiled, and none within the temple had smiled on me till now. I gave her my blossom.

“ Ah!” she cried, “ there is water on its leaves !” and she flung it away from her as if in disgust. I started from my couch in angry haste to rescue my treasure. Instantly the child snatched it up again, and fled from me with a cry of laughter. I followed her at my utmost speed. I was only a boy, and like a boy I chased her, for I was angry, and determined she should not win. We sped through great rooms wherein we saw no one, the child darting through the great curtains, and I following with the swiftness of a lad of the country. But suddenly I came against what seemed to me a wall of solid stone. How was it she could have eluded me? for I was close on her footsteps. I turned back in a passion of rage that made me blind, but I was silenced and stricken into quiet, for the priest Agmahd stood before me. Had I done wrong? It could not be, for he was smiling.

“ Come with me,” he said ; and spoke so gently that I did not fear to follow him. He opened a door, and I saw before my eyes a garden full of flowers, a square garden enclosed in hedges, thickly covered too with flowers, and this garden was full of children, all running hither and thither as swiftly as possible, in the intricacies of some game I did not understand. There were so many, and they moved so swiftly, that at first I was bewildered, but suddenly I saw the child among them who had taken my flower. She wore it on her dress, and she smiled in mockery as she saw me. I

plunged into the crowd immediately, and seemed, though I knew not how, at once to obey the laws of the game or dance. I scarce knew which it was, for though I moved rightly among them, I could not tell what object they had in pursuit. I followed, and chased the figure of the girl. Although I did not succeed in approaching her, so swift was she, yet I grew quickly to enjoy the motion, the excitement, the merry faces, and laughing voices. The scent of the innumerable flowers filled me with delight, and I became passionately desirous to possess myself of some of them. I forgot the lotus blossom in thinking of these others, and yet I hurried on in the maze of the dance, promising myself a great cluster of flowers when the dance ceased; at that moment I did not fear Agmahd or his displeasure, even if this garden were his. Then suddenly I heard a shout of a hundred gay children's voices.

“He has won it! He has won it!”

It was a ball, a golden ball, and light, so light, that I could throw it far, far up in the sky; yet it always return to my uplifted hands. I had found it at my feet when I heard the others shout, and immediately I knew the ball was mine. Now, I saw there was no one near me but the child who had taken my lotus flower. It was not on her dress now, and I had forgotten it. But she was smiling, and I laughed to see her. I threw her the ball, and she threw it back to me, from one end of the garden to the other.

Suddenly a bell rang out clear and loud in the air. “Come,” she said; “it is school-time, come.” She caught my hand and threw the ball away. I looked longingly after it.

"That was mine," I said.

"It is no use now," she answered. "You must gain another prize."

We ran away, hand in hand, through another garden into a great room which I had not seen before. The children with whom I had played were here and a great many more. The air was heavy and sweet in this room. I was not tired, for I had but just risen from my long sleep and the morning was yet fresh, but now that I entered this room I felt weary and my head burned.

Very soon I fell asleep, hearing the children's voices round me. When I awoke it was to hear a shout like that in the garden. "He has won it! He has won it!"

I stood upon a kind of throne—a lofty seat of marble. And I could hear my own voice in the air. I had been speaking. The children were round me, but they were clustered upon and about the marble seat. I remembered that the child who brought me here had said the teacher stood upon this throne. Why then were we, the children, here? I looked, and lo, I saw that the room was full of priests! They stood in the place of the taught. They stood silent, immovable. Again I heard the children cry, "He has won it! He has won it!" I sprang from the throne in a sudden frenzy, I knew not why. As I stood upon the ground I looked and saw that the children were gone. I could not see any one of them but the child who had brought me here. She was standing on the throne, and she laughed and clapped her hands with glee. I wondered what it was that pleased her, and looking down I saw that I stood in a circle of white robed priests who had prostrated themselves until their foreheads touched the ground. What

did this mean? I could not guess, and stood still in terror, when suddenly the child cried out as if in answer to my thought, "They worship you!"

My wonder at her words was not greater than another wonder which fell on me. For I understood that I alone heard her voice.





CHAPTER VIII.



I WAS taken back to my own room, and there the young priests brought me food. I was hungry, for I had not broken my fast, and I found the food exquisite. The young priests who brought it to me fell on one knee when they offered it; I looked wonderingly at them, for I could not guess why they should do so. Many of them came with fruits and rich syrup and delicate sweetmeats, such as I had never seen, and with flowers. Great clusters of flowers were brought and placed near me, and bushes covered with blossoms were put against the wall. I cried out with pleasure to see them, and as I cried out I saw Agmahd standing within the shadow of the curtain. His eyes were on me, cold and smileless. Yet I did not fear him now; I was full of a new spirit of pleasure, which made me bold. I went from flower to flower, kissing the blossoms. Their scent filled all the room with its richness. I was glad and proud, for I felt as if I need no longer be afraid of this cold priest, who stood motionless as though cut in marble. This sensation of fearlessness lifted a weight of agony from my childish soul.

He turned and vanished, and as he passed under the curtain I saw the child at my side.

“See,” she said, “I brought you these flowers.”

“You!” I exclaimed.

“Yes, I told them you loved flowers. And these are strong and sweet; they grow in the earth. Are you tired, or shall we go out and play? Do you know that garden is our own, and the ball is there? Some one took it back for you.”

“Tell me,” I said, “why the priests kneel to me to-day.”

“Do you not know?” she said, looking at me curiously. “It is because you taught from the throne to-day, and spoke wise words they understood, but we could not. But we saw you had won a great prize. You will win all the prizes.”

I sat down upon my couch, and held my head with my hands and looked at her in wonder.

“But how could I do that and not know it?” I demanded.

“You will be great when you do not struggle, when you do not know it you will win all the prizes. If you are quiet and happy you will be worshipped by all these priests, even the most splendid.”

I was dumb with wonder for a moment, then I said—

“You are very little. How can you know all this?”

“The flowers told me,” she said with a laugh. “They are your friends. But it is all true. Now come and play with me.”

“Not yet,” I said. And indeed I felt my head was hot and heavy, and my heart filled with wonder. I could not understand her words.

"It is impossible I can have taught from the throne," I exclaimed.

"You did! and the high priests bowed their awful faces before you. For you told them how to perform some strange ceremony where you would be in the midst."

"I!"

"Yes, for you told them of what should be your dress, and how to prepare it, and what words to utter, as they placed it on you."

I watched her with passionate interest. "Can you tell me more?" I cried, when she ceased.

"You are to live among earth-fed flowers, and to dance with the children often. Oh, there were many things. But of the ceremony I cannot remember. But you will soon see, for it is to be to-night."

I started from my couch in a sudden frenzy of fear.

"Do not be afraid," she said with a laugh. "For I am to be with you. That makes me glad, for I belong to the temple, yet have I never been admitted to one of the sacred ceremonies."

"You belong to the temple! But they cannot hear your voice!"

"Sometimes they cannot see me!" she said, laughing, "only Agmahd can always see me, for I am his. But I cannot talk to him. I like you because I can talk to you. Come, let us go out and play. The flowers in the garden are as sweet as these, and the ball is there. Come."

She took my hand and went quickly away. I let her lead me, for I was lost in thought. But outside the air was so rich and sweet, the flowers so bright, the sun so warm, that soon I forgot my thoughts in happiness.



CHAPTER IX.



T was night. I was sleepy and content, for I had been happy and amused, running hither and thither in the sweet-scented air. All the evening I had slept on my couch among the flowers that made my room fragrant, and I dreamed strange dreams in which each flower became a laughing face, and my ears were full of the sound of magic voices. I awoke suddenly and fancied I must be still dreaming, for the moonlight came into my room and fell upon the beautiful blossoms. And I thought with wonder of the simple home I had been reared in. How had I ever endured it? For now it seemed to me that beauty was life.

I was very happy.

As I lay dreamily looking at the moonlight, the door in the corridor was suddenly opened from without. The corridor was full of light, such brilliant light that the moonlight seemed like darkness, and I was blinded. Then a number of neophytes entered my room, bringing with them some things that I could not see, because of the strong light. Then they went away and closed the door, leaving me alone in the moonlight, with two tall, white-robed, motionless forms. I knew

who was with me though I dared not look—it was Agmahd and Kamen Baka.

At first I trembled, but suddenly I saw the child glide forth from the shadow, her finger on her lips and a smile on her face.

“Do not be afraid,” she said. “They are going to put on you the beautiful robe you told them to prepare.”

I rose from my couch and looked at the priests. I was no longer afraid. Agmahd stood motionless, his eyes fixed on me. The other approached me, holding in his hands a white robe. It was of fine linen and covered with rich gold embroidery, which I saw formed characters I could not understand. It was more beautiful than Agmahd’s robe—and I had never seen anything so beautiful as that when I entered the temple.

I was pleased, and held out my hand for the robe. Kamen came close to me, and when I flung aside the one I wore, put this upon me with his own hands.

It was steeped with a subtle perfume, which I inhaled with delight. This seemed to me a royal robe!

Kamen advanced to the door and opened it. The brilliant light streamed in full upon me. Agmahd remained standing motionless, his eyes fixed on me.

The child looked upon me with admiration, and clapped her hands in delight. Then she held out one hand and took mine. “Come,” she said. I yielded, and together we went into the corridor, Agmahd close behind us. The scene we entered startled me, and I paused. The great corridor was full of priests, save just where I stood, close to the door of the holy of holies. Here a large space was left, and in this space stood a couch covered with silken drapery, embroidered

with gold, in characters resembling those upon my dress. About the couch was a bank or hedge of sweet-smelling flowers, and all around the ground was strewn with plucked blossoms. I shrank from the great crowd of motionless white-robed priests, whose eyes were fixed on me, but the beautiful colors pleased me.

"This couch is for us," said the child, and led me to it. No one else spoke or moved, and I obeyed her. We advanced, and upon the couch found our golden ball with which we had played in the garden. I looked in a sudden wonder to see if Agmahd watched us. He stood by the door of the holy of holies; his eyes were on me. Kamen stood nearer to us, and he was gazing at the closed door of the sanctuary, and his lips were moving as if he were repeating words. No one seemed angry with us, so I looked back at the child. She snatched up the ball and sprang to one end of the great couch; I could not resist her gaiety; I sprang to the other end of the couch, and laughed too. She flung me the ball; I caught it in my hands, but before I could throw it back to her, the corridor was plunged into complete profound darkness. For a moment my breath died away in the sudden agony of fear, but suddenly I found that I could see the child, and that she was laughing. I flung her the ball, and she caught it, and laughed again. I looked around, and saw that all else was black darkness. I thought of the awful figure I had seen before in the darkness, and I must have cried aloud with fear but for the child. She came to me and put her hand in mine.

"Are you afraid?" she said; "I am not. And you need not fear. They would not harm you, for they worship you!"

While she spoke, I heard music—gay, wonderful music—that made my heart beat fast and my feet long to dance.

A moment later and I saw the light come round the sanctuary door, and the door open. Was that awful figure coming forth? My limbs shook at the thought, but yet I did not lose all courage as before. The child's presence and the gay music kept from me the horror of solitude. The child rose, holding my hand in hers. We approached the sanctuary door. I was unwilling, yet I could not resist the guidance which led me on. We entered the door, and as we did so the music ceased. All was still again. But there was a faint light within the sanctuary which seemed to come from the far end of the chamber. The child led me towards this light. She was with me, and I was not afraid. At the end of the chamber was a small inner room, or recess, cut, as I could see, in the rock. I could see this, for there was enough light here. A woman sat on a low seat, her head bent over a great book, which she held open on her knee. My eyes were riveted to her instantly, and I could not remove them. I knew her, and the heart within me shuddered at the thought that she would raise her head, and I should see her face.

Suddenly I knew my companion, the child, was gone. I did not look to see, for my eyes were held by a supreme fascination, but I felt my hand had no answering clasp. I knew her presence was gone.

I waited, standing still as one of those figures carved in the avenue of the temple.

At last she lifted her head and looked at me. My blood shivered and grew cold. It seemed to myself

that I froze, for those eyes cut like steel, yet I could not resist or turn away, or even hide my eyes from that awful sight.

“You have come to me to learn. Well, I will teach you,” she said, and her voice sounded low and sweet like the soft tones of a musical instrument. “You love beautiful things and flowers. You will be a great artist if you live for beauty alone, but you must be more than that.” She held out her hand to me, and, against my will, I lifted mine, and gave it her, but she barely touched it; at the touch my hand was suddenly full of roses, and all the place was filled with their scent. She laughed, and the sound was musical; I suppose my face pleased her.

“Come now,” she said, “and stand nearer me, for you no longer fear me.” With my eyes upon the roses, I approached her; they held my sight, and I did not fear her when I did not see her face.

She put her arm round me and drew me close to her side. Suddenly I saw that the dark robe she wore was no garment of linen or cloth—it was alive—it was a drapery of coiling snakes, who clung about her and made folds that had seemed to me like soft hanging draperies when I stood a little away from her. Now terror overcame me; I tried to scream but could not, I tried to fly from her but could not. She laughed again, but this time her laugh was harsh. But while I looked all was changed, and her robe was dark—dark still but not alive. I stood breathless, wondering and cold with fear—her arm was still about me! She raised her other hand and placed it on my forehead. Then fear left me altogether; I seemed happy and quiet. My eyes were shut, although I saw; I was conscious, yet I

did not desire to move. She rose, and lifting me in her arms, placed me on the low stone seat where she had herself been sitting. My head fell back against the wall of rock behind me. I was dumb and still, but I could see.

She rose up to her full height and stretched her arms aloft above her head, and again I saw the serpents. They were vigorous and full of life. They were not only her dress but they were about her head. I could not tell if they were her hair or if they were in it. She clasped her hands high above her head, and the terrible creatures hung wreathing from her arms. But I was not afraid. Fear seemed to have left me forever.

Suddenly I became aware that there was another presence in the sanctuary. Agmahd was there, standing at the door of the inner cavern.

I looked in wonder at his face, it was so still; the eyes were unseeing. Then I knew suddenly that they were in very fact unseeing; that this figure, this light, I myself, were all invisible to him.

She turned to me, or leaned towards me, so that I saw her face, and her eyes were on mine; otherwise she did not move. Those eyes that cut like steel no longer filled me with terror, but they held me with a grasp as of some iron instrument. While I watched her, suddenly I saw the serpents change and vanish; they became long sinuous folds of some soft gray gleaming garment, and their heads and terrible eyes changed into starry groups of roses. And a rich strong scent of roses filled the sanctuary. Then I saw Agmahd smile.

“My Queen is here,” he said.

“Your Queen is here,” I said, and did not know I

had spoken till I heard my own voice. "She waits to know your desire."

"Tell me," he said, "what is her robe?"

I answered, "It shines and gleams, and on her shoulders are roses."

"I do not desire pleasure," he said; "my soul is sick of it. But I demand power."

Until now her eyes fixed on mine had told me what to speak; but now I heard her voice again.

"In the temple?"

And I repeated her words, unconscious that I did so till I caught the echo of my voice.

"No," answered Agmahd contemptuously. "I must go outside these walls, and mix with men, and work my will among them. I demand the power to do this. It was promised to me; that promise has not been fulfilled."

"Because you lacked the courage and the strength to compel its fulfilment."

"I lack those no longer," answered Agmahd, and for the first time I saw his face flame with passion.

"Then utter the fatal words," she said.

Agmahd's face changed. He stood still for some moments, and his face grew colder and more stony than any carven form.

"I renounce my humanity," he said at last, uttering the words slowly, so that they appeared to pause and rest upon the air.

"It is well," she said. "But you cannot stand alone. You must bring me others ready like yourself to brave all and know all. I must have twelve sworn servants. Get me these, and you shall have your desire."

“Are they to be my equals?” demanded Agmahd.

“In desire and in courage, yes; in power, no; because each will have a different desire; thus will their service be acceptable to me.”

Agmahd paused a moment. Then he said, “I obey my Queen. But I must be aided in so difficult a task. How shall I tempt them?”

At these words she flung out her arms, opening and shutting her hands with a strange gesture, which I could not understand. Her eyes gleamed like hot coals, and then grew cold and dull.

“I will direct you,” she answered. “Be faithful to my orders and you need not fear. Only obey me and you shall succeed. You have every element within this temple. There are ten priests ready to our hand. They are full of hunger. I will satisfy them. You I will satisfy when your courage and steadfastness is proved—not until then, for you demand much more than these others.”

“And whoshall be the one to complete the number?” asked Agmahd.

She turned her eyes again upon me.

“This child,” she answered. “He is mine—my chosen and favorite servant. I will teach him: and through him I will teach you.”





CHAPTER X.

“**T**ELL Kamen Baka that I know his heart’s desire, and that he shall have it, but that he must first pronounce the fatal words.” Agmahd bowed his head and turned away. He silently left the sanctuary.

I was again alone with her. She approached me and fastened her terrible eyes on mine.

While I gazed at her she vanished from before me, and in her place was a golden light which gradually shaped itself into a form more beautiful than any I had ever seen.

It was a tree full of foliage that hung soft like hair rather than leaves, and on each branch was a multitude of flowers growing in thick clusters, and among the flowers were a number of birds all golden and gay with brilliant colors, and they darted hither and thither among the glowing blossoms, till my eyes grew dazzled, and I cried aloud, “Oh give me one of these little birds for my own, that it may come to me and nestle as it does in those flowers.”

“You shall have a hundred of them, and they will so love you they will kiss your mouth and take food

from your lips. By-and-by you shall have a garden in which a tree like this shall grow, and all the birds of the air will love you. But first you must do my bidding. Speak to Kamen and bid him enter the sanctuary."

"Enter," I said, "the priest Kamen Baka shall enter."

He came and stood within the doorway of the inner cavern. The tree had vanished, and I saw before me the dark figure with its shining flowing robes and cruel eyes; they were fixed on the priest.

"Tell him," she said slowly, "that his heart's hunger shall be satisfied. He desires love!—he shall have it. The priests of the temple have turned cold faces towards him, and he feels that their hearts are as stone. He wants to see them on their knees around him, adoring him, willing slaves. He shall have it; for he shall take upon him this office, which until now has been mine. He shall gratify their heart's lust, and in return they will put him alone upon a pedestal above all but myself. Is the bribe great enough?"

She said these words in a tone of intense contempt, and I could read in her terrible face that she despised him for the narrow limit of his ambition. But the sting left the words as I repeated them.

Kamen bowed his head, and a strange glow of exultation came upon his face.

"It is," he said.

"Then pronounce the fatal words!"

Kamen Baka fell upon his knees and flung his hands high above his head. The look in his face changed to one of agony.

“From henceforward, though all men love me, I love no man !”

The dark figure swept towards him and touched his head with her hand. “You are mine,” she said, and turned away, a smile that was dark and cold like a northern frost upon her face. She gave me the idea of a teacher and a guide with Kamen; to Agmahd she had rather spoken as a queen might to her chief favorite, one whom she values and fears at once; one who has strength.

“Now, child, there is work to do,” she said, approaching me. “This book has written in it the hearts of the priests who shall be my servants. Thou art weary and must rest, for I will not that they injure thee. Thou must grow to a strong man worthy of my favor. But carry the book with thee in thy arms; and as soon as thou shalt wake in the early morn Kamen shall come to thee, and thou shalt read to him the first page of this volume. When he has succeeded in accomplishing the first task, then he shall again come to thee at early morn, and thou shalt read to him the second; and in this way the book will be finished. Tell him this; and bid him not despair at any time, because of difficulties. With each difficulty surmounted his power will increase, and when all is done he will stand supreme.”

I repeated these words to Kamen. He was standing now at the doorway, his hands clasped in front of him, and his head drooped low, so that I could not see his face. But as I ceased, he raised his head, and said, “I obey.”

His face wore still the strange gleam which I had seen on it before.

“Bid him go,” she said, “and he is to send Agmahd hither.”

When I repeated this, he quietly withdrew; and I could see by his movements that the place to his eyes was all darkness.

A moment later and Agmahd stood in the doorway.

She approached him and laid her hand upon his forehead. Immediately I saw a crown there; and Agmahd smiled.

“It shall be yours,” she said. “Say this to Agmahd; it is the greatest crown but one upon the earth; and that greater one he would not wear. Now bid him carry thee in his arms and lay thee on thy couch. But thou clasp tight the book.”

While I was repeating her words, she came to me and touched my forehead. A deep delicious languor came upon me, and I thought the words faded on my lips. But I could not say them again; all had vanished. I was asleep.





CHAPTER XI.



WHEN I awoke it was broad daylight; and I felt that I had slept a long deep sleep. My room was like a garden, it was so full of flowers. My eyes wandered around them in pleasure, but presently lighted on an object which kept them fixed. It was a kneeling figure in the midst of the room; a priest whose head was bowed low; but I knew it was Kamen Baka. I moved, and at the slight sound I made he raised his head and looked towards me. In moving, I found that the book lay beside me open. My eyes became fastened to the page. I saw words that shone, and unconsciously I read them aloud. I ceased at last, because no more was writ in plain language, but all was hieroglyphics.

Kamen Baka started to his feet. I looked at him, and saw his face was all alight with what seemed like wild exultation.

“He shall kiss my feet to day,” he cried out. Then observing my wondering gaze, he said, “Have you read all?”

“All that I can understand,” I answered. “The rest is in strange characters that I do not know.”

He turned instantly and left my chamber. I looked back at the page of the book which I had read to see what were the words which had so strangely excited him. They were now no longer intelligible to me—they too were writ in hieroglyphics—and I gazed at them in despair, for now I found I could remember no word of what I had read. I grew weary with puzzling over this strange thing, and at last I fell asleep again, my head upon the open pages of the mystic book. I did not rouse from the deep dreamless sleep in which I was, until a sound startled me. Two young priests were in my room; they carried cakes and milk, and fell upon their knees to offer me the food. I was afraid, or I should have laughed to see them thus kneeling to me, a boy of the country. When I had eaten, they left me, but I was not long alone. The curtain lifted, and at the sight of one who entered, I sprang to my feet and laughed with pleasure. It was Seboua, the gardener.

“How is it you have come to me?” I asked. “I thought indeed I was never to see you again.”

“Agmahd sent me here,” he said.

“Agmahd!” I cried in amazement. I approached him and pressed his arm between my hands.

“Oh yes, I am real,” he answered. “They cannot make a phantom of me. Do not doubt when you see me it is I myself.”

He spoke angrily and roughly, and for a moment I was afraid, but not for long. The strange smile came on his ugly face.

“You are to come with me into the garden,” he said, and held out his dark large hand. I put mine in it, and together we left my room and went quickly away through the large empty chambers and long passages of

the temple till we reached that narrow iron gateway through which I had first seen Seboua's face. As then, so now, the garden shone beyond, a vision of greenness and light and color.

"Oh! I am glad to come back here," I said.

"You came first to work; you were to be the drudge for me," said Seboua, gruffly. "Now all's changed. You are to play, not work, and I am to treat you like a little prince. Well! have they spoiled thee yet, I wonder, child? Would'st like to bathe?"

"But where," I said, "in what waters? I would love to plunge in and swim in some water that was cool and deep."

"Thou canst swim? and thou lovest the water? Well, come with me and I will show thee deep water that will be cool indeed. Come thou with me!"

He walked on, and I had to hurry to keep pace with him. He muttered to himself as he went, but I could not understand his words. Indeed, I did not listen, for I was thinking of how glorious the plunge into cool water would be on this warm languid morning.

We came to a place where there was a wide, deep pool, into which water came dropping, dropping, in a quick swift shower from some place above.

"There is water for thee," said Seboua, "and no flowers are there for thee to hurt."

I stood on the brink in the warm sunlight and flung my white robe from me. Then, with one instant of pause to look around and think how sweet the sun was, I plunged into the water. Ah! indeed, it was cold! My breath was almost gone with the sudden chill, but I struck out and began to swim, and soon began to glory in the sense of keen refreshment. I felt strong

and eager, here in the sweet fresh waters. No longer languid as amid the fragrant odors of the temple, or the rich scents of the flowers in my chamber. I was so happy, I wanted to stay a long while here in the water and the sun ; so presently I ceased swimming and let myself float idly, and closed my eyes that the sunlight should not blind me.

Suddenly I felt something so strange, I grew breathless, yet it was so gentle it did not terrify me. It was a kiss upon my mouth. I opened my eyes. There, beside me, lying upon the surface of the water, was my own Queen, the Lily Queen, the Lady of the Lotus. I uttered a cry of joy. Immediately all pleasure which I had had since last I saw her vanished from my mind. She was my Queen, my beautiful friend ; when she was there I had none other in all the world.

“Child, thou art come to me again,” she said, “but soon thou wilt leave me ; and how can I aid thee if thou forgettest me utterly ?”

I made no answer, for I was ashamed. I could hardly believe that I had indeed forgotten, and yet I knew that it was true.

“The waters thou liest in now,” she said, “come from that place where my flowers, the lotus blossoms, dwell in their glory. Thou wouldst die wert thou to lie thus in the water where they dwell. But this that drops from them has but little of their life in it, and has given up its own to them. When thou canst plunge into the water of the lotus tank, then thou wilt be strong as the eagle and eager as the young life of the newborn. My child, be thou strong ; listen not to the flattery which confuses thee ; listen only to the truth ! Keep in the sunlight, dear child, and let not the phan-

toms delude thee; for there is the life of lives awaiting thee, the pure flower of knowledge and love is ready for thee to pluck. Wouldst thou be a tool, a mere instrument in the hands of those who desire only for themselves? No! acquire knowledge and grow strong; then shalt thou be a giver of sunshine to the world. Come, my child, give me thine hand; rise in confidence, for this water will support thee; rise and kneel upon it and drink of the sunshine; rise and kneel upon it, and address thyself to the light of all life, that it may illumine thee."

I rose, holding her hand. I knelt beside her. I rose again, and with her stood upon the water—and then I knew no more.

"Wouldst thou be a tool, a mere instrument in the hands of those who desire only for themselves? No! acquire knowledge and grow strong; then shalt thou be a giver of sunshine to the world."

These words seemed whispered in my ear as I awoke; I repeated them over and over, and remembered every separate word rightly. But they were vague and unmeaning to me; I had fancied I understood them when first I heard them, but now they sounded to me as the good words of the preacher sound to the dancers at the festivals.

* * * * *

I was a child when these words were breathed into my ear—a lad, helpless because ignorant and full of youth. Through the years of my growth, the cry to my soul from the Lily Queen rang dimly and without meaning in the obscure regions of my brain. They were to me as the song of the priest to the babe that hears but its music. Yet I never forgot them. My

life was given up to the men who held me in bondage, in spirit and in body; fetters lay heavy on my unawakened soul. While my body yielded dully to the guidance of its masters, I was a slave, yet knew that freedom existed beneath the free sky! But, though I obeyed blindly, and gave all my strength and powers to the base uses of the desecrated temple, in my heart I held fast the memory of the beautiful queen, and in my mind her words were written in fire that would not die. Yet as I grew to man's stature, my soul sickened within me. These words which lived like a star in my soul cast a strange light upon my wretched life. And as my mind developed I recognized this, and a heavy weariness, as of death or despair, shut away from me all the beauty of the world. From a gay child, a happy creature of sunshine, I grew into a sad youth, whose eyes were large and heavy with tears, and whose sick heart held hidden within it many secrets, but half understood, of shame and sin and sorrow. Sometimes, when I wandered through the garden I gazed into the still water of the lily tank and prayed to see again the vision. But it came not. I had lost the innocence of childhood, and had not yet won the strength of the man.





BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS in the garden of the temple, lying beneath a wide tree that cast deep shade upon the grass. I had been very weary, for all the night before I had been in the sanctuary, speaking the messages of the dark spirit to her priests. I slept a little in the warm air and awoke strangely full of sadness. I felt that my youth had gone, yet I had never enjoyed its fire.

On each side of me was a young priest. One was fanning me with a broad leaf that he must have plucked from the tree above. The other, leaning on one hand upon the grass, regarded me earnestly. His eyes were large and dark and pleasant, like the eyes of a kindly animal. I had often admired his beauty, and I was glad to see him at my side.

“You have been too much within doors. See now,” he said, when he saw my eyes open wearily, and gaze into his face. “They shall not kill thee with the ceremonies of the temple, even if thou art the only one that

can give them life. Wilt come into the town with us, and taste something different from the air of the temple?"

"But we cannot!" I said.

"Cannot," said Malen contemptuously. "Do you suppose we are prisoners here?"

"But even if we can find a way out the people will know us. The priests do not go among the people."

"The people will not know us," said Malen with a merry laugh. "Agmahd has given us liberty. Agmahd has given us power. Come, if thou wilt—we are going."

The two rose and held out their hands to help me to rise; but I was no longer weak. I sprang to my feet, and arranged my white garment. "Are we to wear these robes?" I asked.

"Yes, yes, but none will know us. We shall appear as beggars, or as princes; what we will; Agmahd has given us power. Come!"

I was as delighted as they at this prospect of adventure. We ran across the garden till we came to a narrow gate in the wall. Malen touched it, and easily pushed it open. We were outside the temple.

My companions, laughing and talking as we went, ran across the plain to the city. I ran too, and listened; but I understood little of what they said. Evidently they knew the city, which to me was only a name. True, I had walked through it with my mother, a barefoot country lad. But now, it seemed, I was to enter houses, and mix with great and rich people. I felt afraid at the thought.

We hurried on until we entered one of the busiest streets. It was crowded with gay people in beautiful

dresses, and all the shops seemed to sell only jewelry. Then we turned through a great gateway, into a courtyard, and from that passed into a marble hall where a great fountain played, and large flowering shrubs threw out a strong scent.

A wide marble stairway went out of this hall, and we immediately commenced to climb it. And when we reached the top Malen opened a door, and we entered a room all hung with golden tapestry, and where were a number of people whose dresses and jewels dazzled me. They were seated round a table drinking wine and eating sweetmeats. The air was full of talk and laughter, and heavy with perfume. Three very lovely women rose and welcomed us, each taking one of us by the hand, and giving us a place beside her. In a moment we seemed to be of the party, and to mingle our laughter with theirs, as though we had sat out all the feast. I know not whether it was the scented wine I drank or the magic touch of the beautiful hand that often touched mine, as it lay upon the embroidered table-cover—but my head grew light and strange, and I talked of things I did not know anything about till now, and laughed at sayings that an hour before would have seemed dull to me, because of my want of understanding.

She who sat next me pressed her hand in mine. I turned to look at her ; she was leaning towards me ; her face was brilliant with youth and beauty. Her rich dress had made me feel a child beside her, but now I saw that she was young, younger than myself, yet she was of such rich form and radiant loveliness that though a child in years she was a woman in charm. As I gazed into her tender eyes, it seemed to me that I knew her

well, that her charm was familiar, and the stronger for its familiarity. She spoke many words that at first I hardly understood, indeed scarcely heard. But gradually, as I listened, I grew to understand. She told me of her longing for me in my absence, of her love for me, and of her weariness of all others on the earth. "The room seemed dark and silent till you came," she said. "The banquet had no mirth in it. The others laughed, but their laughter sounded as sobs in my ears—the sobs of those in torment. Is it for me, who am so young and strong and full of love, to be so sad? No—no, it is not for me. Ah, lover, husband, leave me not again alone. Stay by my side, and my passion will make thee strong to fulfill thy destiny."

I rose from my seat suddenly, holding her hand clasped tight in mine.

"It is true," I cried in a loud voice. "I have done ill to neglect that which is the glory of life. I confess it, that thy beauty, which indeed is mine, had been blotted from my mind. But now I see thee with mine eyes I wonder I could ever have seen beauty in aught else in heaven or earth."

Suddenly, while I spoke, there was a movement among the startled guests. With wonderful rapidity, they left the table and were at once gone from the room. Only the two young priests remained. Their eyes were fixed on me. They seemed grave, serious, disturbed. They rose slowly. "You will not return to the temple?" said Malen. My answer was a gesture of impatience.

"Do you forget," he demanded, "that we were but to look at the follies of the city, that we might know of what clay men are made? You know that the initi-

ed priests must retain their purity. What of you, the seer of the temple? Even I, who am but a novice, dare not yield to the fierce longing for liberty that fills my soul. Ah, to be free! to be a child of the city, to know the meaning of life! But I dare not. Else am I less than nothing, I should have no place in the temple, no place in the world. How then will it be with thee, the seer? How are we to answer to Agmahd for thee?"

I made no answer. But she who sat beside me rose and advanced towards him. She took a jewel from her neck, and put it in his hand.

"Give him this," she said, "and he will ask no more."





CHAPTER II.

FROM this hour there is a time of which I cannot give so careful an account as of the other days of my life. It is blurred and veiled by the similarity of the emotions through which I passed. Indeed, they merged together and became one and the same. I drank deep of pleasure each day ; each hour it seemed to me that my beautiful companion grew more beautiful, so that I gazed upon her face in wonder. She led me through the rooms of our palace, and I could not stay to see their splendor, because always beyond were chambers yet more splendid. With her I wandered through the gardens, where the fragrant flowers grew in a profusion such as I had never seen in any other place. Beyond the gardens were meadows ; in the short, sweet grass grew many wild flowers, and lilies blossomed in the stream that ran through the fields. Here the city maidens came at evening, some to fetch water, some to bathe in the stream and sit afterwards upon its bank, and talk and laugh and sing until the night was half-spent. Their gleaming forms and sweet voices made the evenings doubly beautiful, and I would linger among them under the stars, and would often have

stayed until the dawn, the playmate of them all, but only whispering words of love to those who were most beautiful. And then, as they, singing in low voices, left me, she my own most beautiful went with me back to the palace, wherein we lived amid the city, yet apart from it. For we were happy as were none else within that city.

I cannot tell how long passed thus. Only I know that one day I lay within my own chamber, and she the most beautiful sang sweet low songs while her head lay upon my arm, when in a moment the song was hushed upon her lips and she lay pale and still. I heard, in the silence, a slow, soft footfall on the stairs. The door was opened, and Agmahd the high priest stood motionless within it.

He gazed at me one moment with his terrible eyes, that were cold as though they were jewels; there was a smile upon his face, but that smile struck me with fear, and I trembled.

“Come,” he said.

I arose unhesitatingly. I knew that I must obey. I looked not back until I heard a swift movement and a sob; then I turned. But she, the most beautiful, was gone. Had she fled from before this unexpected appearance in our chamber? I could not stay to see, or go to comfort her. I knew that I must follow Agmahd; I felt as I had never felt before, that he was my master. As I came to the doorway, I saw across the threshold a snake that reared its head at my approach. I sprang back with a cry of horror.

Agmahd smiled. “Do not fear,” he said. “This is a favorite of thy Queen, and will do her chosen servant no harm. Come!”

At his command I felt compelled to follow; I dared not disobey. I passed the snake with averted eyes, and as I reached the stairway I heard its hiss of anger.

Agmahd went through the gardens to the meadows beyond. It was evening, and already the stars were gleaming in the sky and the eyes of the maidens shone as they sat in groups by the side of the stream. But they did not sing as was their habit. In the midst of the stream was a boat, and in it two oarsmen. I recognized the young priests who had come with me to the city. Their eyes were downcast, and they did not raise them even at my approach. I understood as I passed by the girls that they had recognized old acquaintances and merry companions in those two young priests, and were amazed and full of wonder to see them in this dress, and of such changed demeanor.

Agmahd entered the boat; I followed him; and then we rowed silently towards the temple.

I had never seen the entrance to the temple from the water. I had heard when I was in the city with my mother that this entrance used to be often used, but now it was reserved only for festivals, so that I was much amazed to enter by this way. I was more amazed to find all the sacred precinct full of boats decorated with flowers and occupied by white-robed priests, who sat with their eyes downcast. But I soon saw that to-day was a festival.

This temple! It seemed a hundred years since I had dwelled within it. Agmahd himself looked strange and unfamiliar to me. Was I indeed grown much older? I could not tell, for I found no mirror in which to see my face, and I found no friend to ask. Only this I knew, that compared with the youth who ran from the

garden of the temple, eager for adventure, I was now a man. And I knew my manhood had come to me not in glory, but in shame. I was a slave. A deep gloom settled on my soul as we entered the temple. The boat was drawn up to some wide white marble steps, which were within the walls of the temple and beneath its roof. I had never known the great river was so near. When we had reached the top of the steps, Agmahd opened a door, and lo! we were immediately at the entrance of the holy of holies. Only a few faint torches, held by silent priests, lit the great corridor. It was but dusk outside, on the river; here it was like deep night. At a sign from Agmahd the torches were extinguished. But all light was not gone! for round the door of the sanctuary gleamed that strange light which once had so terrified me. It did not terrify me now. I knew what I had to do; and, unhesitatingly and without fear, I did it. I advanced, opened the door, and entered.

Within stood the dark figure, whose robes gleamed and whose eyes were cold and terrible. She smiled and put out her hand and laid it upon mine. I shuddered at the touch, it was so cold.

“Tell Agmahd,” she said, “that I am coming. That I will be beside you in the boat. That he is to stand in the midst with us, and my other servants to surround us. And that then, if all is done as I order, I will work a wonder before all the priests and before the people. And this I will do because I am well pleased with my servants, and because I desire them to have power and wealth.”

I said her words again; and when I had ceased Agmahd's voice came out of the darkness.

“The Queen is welcomed! The Queen shall be obeyed.”

A moment later and the torches were again lit. I saw that they were ten in number, carried by ten priests, who all wore white robes deeply embroidered in gold, as was that of Agmahd. Among them was Kamen Baka. His face looked strange to me. It was as the face of an ecstatic.

Agmahd opened the door which admitted us to the river steps. A different boat was moored here now. It was large, with a wide deck surrounded by vases, in which burned something strongly fragrant. Within these vases a circle was drawn in crimson, and mingled with that a figure which I could not understand. At the sides of the boat, below this raised deck, sat the rowers—white-robed priests. All were still and mute, waiting with downcast eyes. The boat was hung with thick garlands of flowers, massed together till they seemed like great ropes. A lamp was burning at each end.

We entered the boat. Agmahd went first and stood in the midst of the circle. I took my place at his side. Between us, clearly visible to my eyes, was the figure. She shed a light like that which illumined the sanctuary, only less brilliant. But I saw that none perceived her presence but myself.

The ten priests entered the boat also, and placed themselves within the crimson circle, thus completely enclosing us. Then the boat slowly swung from the steps. I saw that a number of boats were before and behind us, all hung with flowers and lamps, all filled with white-robed priests. Silently the procession shot

out upon the bosom of the sacred river and advanced towards the city.

When we were at last outside the temple, I heard a deep murmur rise and fill the air. It was so long and deep, it made me tremble with wonder but it disturbed none else, and soon I saw its meaning. As my eyes grew accustomed to the starlight, I saw that all the fields on each side of the river were full of a surging, swaying, mass of forms. A vast multitude of people crowded at the water's edge, and filled the fields as far as I could see. This was a great festival, and I had not known it. I wondered a while ; but soon I remembered that I had, indeed, heard it spoken of, but I had been so saturated with the immediate pleasures about me that I had not heeded. Perhaps, had I remained in the city till now, I should have mingled in the crowd ; but now I was isolated from the crowd, and, as it seemed to me, from all that was human. I stood silent and immovable as Agmahd himself. Yet, my soul was torn with a despair I could not understand, and crushed by a horror of the unknown which was yet to come.





CHAPTER III.

AS the boats glided down the river, suddenly the deep silence was broken by a burst of song. It came from the priests who rowed. From every boat the hymn rushed forth in a volume of sound, and I could see by the great movement, visible even in the dimness, that the people fell upon their knees. But they were silent; they adored and listened while the priests' voices rang out upon the air.

When the song ceased, there was a silence that was not broken for some minutes. The people remained motionless, kneeling, silent. But on a sudden they flung themselves prostrate upon the ground, and I could hear the sigh, the long breath of awe that came from the multitude: for the priests had burst out anew, with a cry of melodious triumph, and the words they uttered in so loud and strong a voice were these—

“The goddess is with us! She is in our midst! Fall down, O people, and worship!”

At this moment the figure which stood between me and the priest Agmahd turned and smiled into my face.

“Now my chosen servant,” she said, “I must ask your service. I have paid you beforehand that you

might not hesitate. But do not fear. You shall be paid again and that doubly. Give me your hands. Place your lips upon my forehead, and fear not, move not, utter no cry, whatsoever faintness, whatsoever tremor come upon thee. Thy life will become mine. I shall draw it from thee: but I shall return it. Is it not precious? Do not fear."

I obeyed her without hesitation, yet with dread unimaginable. But I could not resist her will. I knew myself her slave. Her cold hands clasped mine, and instantly it seemed that they were no longer soft, but had become rivets of steel, which held me fast and were inexorable. Impelled by my sense of helplessness, I dared the glitter of these terrible eyes, and drew close to her. I longed for death to release me, but I could hope for no other help. I placed my lips upon her forehead. The vapor from the lamps and vessels had filled my brain with a strange sleepiness, and I was dull and heavy. But now, as my lips touched her forehead, which scorched them, I knew not whether with cold or heat, a frenzied sense of joy, of lightness, of almost insane delight filled me. I knew myself no longer; I was swayed and dominated by a surging sea of emotions which were not my own. They swept through me, and their rush appeared to wash away my individuality utterly, and, as it then seemed, for ever. Yet I was not unconscious; my consciousness grew momentarily more intense and awake. Then, in one strange second, I forgot the lost individuality—I knew that I was living in the brain, in the heart, in the essence of that being who had so utterly dominated me. A wild cry, instantly hushed, rang out from the people. They saw their goddess. And I, looking

down, saw at my feet the seemingly dead form of a young priest, robed in white garments, gold-embroidered. I paused for one instant, in my joy of power to wonder, Was he dead ?





CHAPTER IV.

I COULD see the great multitude which was on each side clearly ; a light fell upon them which they did not perceive. It was not the starlight by which they saw, but a brilliance that came not from the heavens but from my eyes. I saw their hearts—I saw not their bodies but themselves. I recognized my servants, and my soul lifted itself as I perceived that nearly all of this multitude were ready to serve me. Mine was a worthy army ; they would obey, not from duty but desire.

I saw in each heart what was its hunger, and I knew that I could feed it. One long moment I remained visible ; then I left my chosen servants. I bade them draw near to the shore ; for now that I was no longer intent upon making myself seen by these dull eyes of men, I could speak to and touch those whom I chose. The strong life of the young priest was enough to feed the lamp of physical power for some time if I did not use it too swiftly.

I stepped upon the shore, and moved among the people, speaking into the ear of each the secret of his heart—more, I told him how to obtain that which he only thought of silently. No man or woman was without some longing which shame would have held them

forever from uttering even to a confessor. But I saw it, and made it no longer a thing of shame, and showed how small an effort of will, how slight a knowledge was needed for the first step in self-gratification. All through the throng I went, hither and thither, and as I passed I left a maddened and impassioned crowd behind me. At length the intoxication which my presence produced could no longer be held in check. With one voice the people burst out into a wild song that thrilled my blood, and made it burn within me. Have I not heard this song under other skies, sung in the voices and languages of all peoples? Have I not heard it from peoples who are long since extinct and forgotten? Shall I not hear it from peoples whose dwelling-places are not yet created? It is my song! It gives me life! Uttered silently in one heart, it is the cry of the unspoken passion, the hidden madness of self. When it comes from the throat of the multitude, shame is gone and concealment at an end. Then it is the frenzied utterance of the orgie, the outcry of the devotees of pleasure.

My work was done. I had lit a great fire which raged on like the fire in the forest. I turned back to the sacred boat where it awaited me. Motionless they stood there, waiting my return, those my chosen servants, the high priests of the temple. Ah, my mighty ones in passion! Kings in lust! Monarchs in desire!

And the young priest—was he still there? Still looking like one dead? Yes, he lay motionless, pallid, in the midst of the circle formed by the high priests, lying at the feet of Agmahd, who stood here alone.

As this thought came to me, I seemed suddenly to withdraw myself in some mysterious way from the sea

of passion in which I had been submerged. I knew myself again—that I was not the goddess, but had been only absorbed by her, sucked up into her embracing personality. Now I was again separated from her. But I did not return to that pale shape which so lifelessly lay upon the deck of the sacred boat. I was in the temple; I was in darkness; yet I knew that I was in the holy of holies.

A light came in the darkness. I looked, and, lo! the inner cave was full of light; and within it stood the Lady of the Lotus.

I was at the door of the inner cave, close to her, within the glance of her eyes. I tried to escape—I tried to turn—I could not. I trembled as I had never trembled before even with horror or dread.

For she stood silently, her eyes upon me. And I saw that they were full of a great anger. And she who had been to me a tender friend, gentle as a kind mother, now stood in her majesty before me, and I knew that I had angered a god the most to be dreaded of all that are known to men.

“Was it for this, O Sensa! beloved of the gods! that thou wert born? Was it for this that thine eyes were opened and thy senses made clear to perceive? Thou knowest it was not; yet those seeing eyes and those swift senses have at last served their master, and shown thee who and what it is thou hast been serving. Wilt thou serve her always? Now that thou art a man, choose! Art thou fallen so low that thou wilt be a slave forever? Go, then! I have come to cleanse my sanctuary. I will endure no longer. It shall be silent, and the people shall not know that any gods exist, rather than that they shall be lied to by false lips,

and tempted by the darkness. Go! None shall enter here again. I close the door! The sanctuary is dumb, and knows no voice. I sit here alone and silent; yea, through the ages I will dwell here without speech, and the people shall say I am dead. Be it so! In the ages to come my children will rise again, and the darkness shall break. Go! Thou hast chosen! Fall! Thy estate is lost. Leave me to my silence!"

She raised her hand with a gesture that bade me leave her. It was so imperative, so royal, that I could not disobey. I turned, I drooped my head, I went with sad steps to the outer door of the sanctuary. Yet I could not open it; I could not pass out; I could advance no further. My heart turned sick within me and held me back. I fell on my knees and cried out in a voice of agony, "Mother! Queen and Mother!"

A moment passed in an awful silence; I waited, I knew not for what. My soul was hungry and desperate. An awful memory came to me in the darkness and silence. I saw in the past not only pleasure, but deeds. I saw that I had done these blindly, accepting the stupefaction of my soul as men accept the dulness of wine. And I had done the work given me to do in a stupor, thinking not of it, but of the rewards, of each pleasure that was to come. I had been the mouthpiece, the oracle of her, that black soul, whom now I had seen, and whom now I knew. The past grew so terrible, so present, so fierce in its denunciation, that again I cried out in the darkness, "Mother! Save me!"

A touch came on my hand and on my face. I heard a voice in my ear and in my heart, "Thou art saved. Be strong." And the light came upon my eyes, but I could not see, for a rain of tears washed from them the frightful visions they had seen.



CHAPTER V.

I WAS no longer in the sanctuary. I felt the air on my face. I opened my eyes and saw the sky above me, and the shining stars in its depth. I was lying prostrate, and I felt strangely weary. Yet I was roused by the sound of a thousand voices, whose cries and songs struck on my ears. What could this be?

I raised myself. I was in the midst of the circle of priests, of the ten high-priests. Agmahd stood beside me; he was watching me. My eyes fixed on his face, and I could not look away. Pitiless, heartless, soulless! Had I feared him? This image, this unhuman being? I feared him no longer. I looked round at the priests who surrounded me. I read their faces; they were absorbed, self-conscious. Each and all were bitten and eaten by one deep desire, one hunger for gratification, which he cherished like a serpent, next his heart. I could no longer fear these men. I had seen the light. I was strong.

I rose to my feet. I looked round at the multitudes who crowded the banks of the river, beneath the clear sky. I understood then the strange voices I had heard. The people were mad; some with wine, some with

love, some with absolute frenzy. Numbers of small boats had crowded the water; the people had come in these to make offerings to the goddess whom they adored, and whom to-night they had seen, and heard, and felt. The sacred boat on which I stood was weighted and heaped with the offerings the people had flung into it, standing up in their low vessels, their rafts, by the side of ours. Gold and silver, jewels, and vessels of gold set with shining stones. Agmahd looked at these things, and I saw the smile on his lips. These riches might feed the temple, but for himself it was very different jewels he desired and worked for. My soul spoke suddenly unawares. I could look on and be silent no longer. I spoke in a loud voice, and commanded the people to hear me, and immediately there was a stillness which grew till it spread over the multitude.

“Listen to me, you that are worshippers here, of the goddess. What goddess is it you worship? Can you not tell by the words she whispers into your hearts? Look within, and if she has seared you with the fierce heat of passion, know she is no true god! For there is no truth save in wisdom. Listen, and I will speak to you words that have been uttered in the sanctuary, and breathed by the spirit of light, our Queen Mother. Know that in virtue, in true thoughts, in true deeds, only can you find peace. Is this dark orgie a fit surrounding for the goddess of truth? Are you her worshippers, who are drunk with wine and passion here beneath the open sky? You with wild words of impiety and frenzied songs on your lips, and thoughts of shame at your hearts, ready to spring boldly into deeds? No! down on your knees, and lift your hands

to heaven, and ask that beneficent spirit, our Queen of wisdom, who broods over you with wide wings of love, to forgive your shamelessness, to help you in a new effort. Hear me. I will pray to her, for I see her in her splendor. Speak to her the words I utter, and she shall surely listen, for she loves you even though you offend——”

A burst of melody, a number of strong voices singing, drowned my voice. The priests had burst out into song with the rich music of a hymn. The people, swayed by my voice and words, had in masses fallen upon their knees. Now, intoxicated by the music, they sang the hymn with fervor, and the volume of sound rose majestically into the sky. A strong sweet scent entered my nostrils. I turned from it with dislike, but already it had done its work. I felt my brain swoon.

“He is in an ecstasy,” said Kamen Baka.

“He is mad,” I heard uttered in another voice—a voice so cold, so enraged, I hardly recognized it. Yet I knew it was Agmahd who spoke.

I strove to answer him, for I was inspired in all I did by a new and strange courage, and I knew nothing of fear. But already the stupefying vapor had done its work. I was dumb, as in sleep; my head grew heavy. In a few seconds I was asleep.





CHAPTER VI.

WHEN I awoke I was in my old chamber in the temple; the one in which my first boyish terrors came to me.

I was very tired; so tired that the first sensation I experienced was that of intolerable weariness, which numbed all my body. I lay still a little while, thinking only of my discomfort.

Then suddenly the events of yesterday came into my memory. It was like the rising of the sun. I had found her again, my Queen Mother, and she had taken me back to her protection.

I rose, forgetting my pain and weariness. It was just dawn, and through the high window the faint gray light came softly into my room. It was brilliant with rich material and rich embroidery; full of strange and beautiful things which made it seem like a chamber for a prince. But for its peculiar shape and the high window, it could hardly have been recognized as the room which in my childhood had been made a garden of flowers for my pleasure.

The air within seemed to me heavy and dull; I longed to be outside, in the air, sweet with the newness of morning; for I felt that I too needed to be new-made

and strong with the strength of youth. And here the perfumed atmosphere, the heavy draperies and weight of luxury, oppressed me.

I lifted the curtain and crossed the great room which was next mine. It was empty and silent; so was the wide corridor. I went softly on through the long corridors, till I reached that in which the gate opened to the garden. Through the iron grating I could see the gleam of the grass as I approached it. Ah, that beautiful garden! Oh, to bathe in that sweet water of the lily tank!

But the iron door was fast locked; I could but look through at the grass and sky and flowers, and drink the sweet air in through the narrow openings. Suddenly I saw Seboua approaching down one of the garden walks. He came straight to the iron door within which I stood.

"Seboua!" I cried.

"Ah, thou art here," he said, speaking in his rough tones, "The man and the child are alike. But no longer may Seboua be thy friend. I have failed, and I may not try again. I angered both my masters when you were a child; I could not hold you fast for either. Be it so; you must now stand alone."

"Can you not open the gate?" was all my answer.

"No," he said; "and I doubt if it will ever be opened for thee again. What matters it? Art thou not the favorite priest of the temple, the darling, the cherished one?"

"No," I answered, "I am that no longer. They already say I am mad. They will say it again to-day."

Seboua looked at me earnestly. "They will kill you!" he said in a low voice full of tenderness and pity.

“ They cannot,” I answered, smiling. - “ My Queen will protect me. I must live till I have spoken all she wishes. Then, I care not.”

Seboua raised his hand from where it had remained hidden in the folds of his black dress. He held in it a bud of the lotus flower that lay in a green leaf which seemed its bed.

“ Take it,” he said. “ It is for thee ; it speaks a language that thou wilt understand. Take it, and may good go with thee. I that am dumb, save in common speech, yet am worthy to be a messenger. That makes me glad. But thou mayst rejoice, for thou canst hear and speak, learn and teach.”

Immediately he was gone ; while he had been speaking he had pushed the flower to me through one of the narrow openings of the grating. I drew it towards me carefully. I held it now in my hands ; I was content. I needed nothing else.

I went back to my room and sat down, holding the flower in my hand. It was the same thing over again as when I had, long ago, a mere child, sat in this same chamber, holding a lily and gazing into its centre. I had a friend, a guide ; a union with that unseen Mother of grace. But now I knew the value of what I held ; then I did not. Was it possible that it would be again taken from me so easily ? Surely no.

For I could understand its language now. Then it spoke to me of nothing save its own beauty ; now it opened my eyes, and I saw ; it unsealed my ears, and I heard.

A circle was round me ; such as had surrounded me when I had taugh, unknowingly, in the temple. These were priests, white-robed, as those had been who knelt

and worshipped me. But these did not kneel; they stood and gazed down upon me with profound eyes of pity and love. Some were old men, stately and strong; some were young and slender, with faces of fresh light. I looked round in awe, and trembled with hope and joy.

I knew, without any words to tell me, what brotherhood this was. These were my predecessors, the priests of the sanctuary, the seers, the chosen servants of the Lily Queen. I saw that they had succeeded each to each, keeping sacredly the guardianship of the holy of holies since first it was shaped out of the great rock, against which the temple rested.

“Art ready to learn?” said one to me—one whose breath seemed to me to be drawn from long-forgotten ages.

“I am ready,” I said; and knelt upon the ground in the centre of that strange, holy circle. My body fell, yet my spirit seemed to soar. Though I knelt, I knew I was held up in soul by those who surrounded me. Henceforth they were my brethren.

“Sit thou there,” he said, pointing to my couch, “and I will talk with thee.”

I rose, and turning to go to the couch, saw that I was alone with this one who spoke to me. The others had left us. He came and sat beside me, and began to speak. He poured into my heart the wisdom of the dead ages; wisdom which lives forever, and is young when the race of its early disciples is no longer even a memory. My heart grew green with the freshness of this ancient knowledge and truth.

Throughout that day he sat beside me and taught. At night he touched my forehead with his hands and left me. As I lay down to sleep, I recollected that I

had seen none but my teacher since yesterday, nor had I tasted food. Yet I was not weary with learning, nor was I faint. I laid my flower beside me, and slept quietly.

When I awoke I started up, fancying some one touched my flower. But I was alone, and my flower was safe. A table stood near the heavy curtain which separated my room from the next; on this table stood food; milk and cakes. All yesterday I had not eaten: I was glad now of the food. I put my flower within my dress, and went to the table. I drank the milk and ate the cakes; and then, with new strength in me, I turned to go to my couch, and there meditate earnestly on what I had learned yesterday, for I knew that these were golden seeds which must bear fruits of glory.

But I stood still and my heart sank within me; for again I was surrounded by the beautiful circle. He who had taught me yesterday, looked at me and smiled, but he did not speak. Another approached me, took my hand and led me to the couch, and I was alone with him.

Alone, yet not alone, and never to be any longer alone, for he took my heart and soul, and showed them to me in their nakedness, unsoftened by any fancied sanctity. He took my past, and showed it to me in its simple, dark, unbeautiful poverty; that past which might have been so rich. Until now, it seemed to me I had been living in unconsciousness. Now, I was guided through my own life again, and bidden regard it with clear vision. The chambers I passed through were dark and dreary; some of them were full of horrors. For now I saw that I had been won by the magic which I myself had interpreted to Kamen Baka. Like

the others, I had existed for desire and its satisfaction. And steeped in the joys of pleasure, of beauty, I had been as one intoxicated, and knew not all that I did. Remembering my past, I saw the meaning of Seboua's words, which at the time I hardly understood. I had indeed been the darling of the temple, for when my body was steeped in pleasure, and silenced in the dim sleep of satiety, my lips and voice had become docile to the will of that dark mistress. Through my physical powers she made known her wishes, and obtained the service of those slaves who had bartered their all for the sake of gratification. By her fierce and terrible insight into the dark caverns of men's souls, she saw their needs, and with my speech she showed them how to obtain that which they longed for.

As I sat there, dumb and amazed at the visions which passed through my awakened memory, I saw myself first, a mere child, lulled from terror and alarm by pleasure. I saw myself within the temple, in its inner sanctuary, a creature helpless, a tool, a mere instrument played upon mercilessly. I saw myself later, a youth fresh and beautiful, lying unconscious on the deck of the sacred boat, rising in the frenzy of unconsciousness, and uttering strange words. I saw myself later, grown pale and faint, yet always the willing instrument, although the soul was beginning to stir and weary the body with its struggle; and now I saw that the soul had awakened, had touched its mother, the queen of light, and could never again be silenced.

The night came, and my teacher left me. None else had come to my chamber; no food had been brought to me since the early morning. I was faint with the terrible sights which I had seen in this short day. I

determined to go in search of the food I needed. I lifted the heavy curtain that covered the archway, which led into the great room beyond. A door was there—a massive door—such as might close the portal of a dungeon. Then I understood I was a prisoner, and now that I had recovered from my weakness and excitement, I was to have no food. Agmahd had seen that my spirit had awakened; he had determined to kill it within me, and preserve the mere broken body for his purpose.

I lay down upon my couch, and fell asleep with the drooping lily-bud upon my lips.

When I awoke, one stood beside me whom I knew to be my new teacher. I had met his smile when I had seen the beautiful circle around me. I sprang up gladly; from him I looked for encouragement. He came and sat beside me, and took my hand in his.

And then I knew that his smile was the light of a great peace. He had died in this chamber—died for the truth. He called me brother, and suddenly I became aware that the roses of my life had blown and fallen, and passed away forever. I had to live for the truth in the light of the pure spirit, and no suffering must make me afraid, and from the moment that his hand touched mine, I knew that no suffering could make me afraid. Until now, pain had always blinded me with terror, but now I knew that I could meet and grasp it with strong hands unterrified. I sank to sleep that night in an ecstasy; I knew not whether I waked or dreamed; but I knew that this my brother, whose physical life had been torn from him in the long ages past, had poured the strength of his fiery soul into mine, and that I could never lose it again.



CHAPTER VII.



ON the morrow when my eyes opened my bed was surrounded by the beautiful circle. They regarded me with grave looks ; I saw no smile on any face ; but the infinite tenderness which I felt from them gave me strength, I rose and knelt beside my couch, for I saw that some great moment was approaching.

The youngest and the brightest of them all left the circle and approached me. He knelt beside me and clasped my hands, holding within them the faded lotus-blossom which lay upon my pillow.

I looked up—the others were gone. I regarded my companion. He was silent ; his eyes were fixed on me. How young he was and beautiful ! Earth had left no soil on his spirit. I knew that its stain must be on mine until in the course of ages I had washed it clean again. I felt a fear of this my companion, he was so white and spotless.

As we remained thus in silence a soft voice fell on my ear.

“ Look not up yet,” whispered he who knelt at my side.

“ Twin stars of the evening, thou the last of the long

line of seers who have made the wisdom of the temple and crowned the greatness of Egypt with glory ! The night is at hand, and the darkness must fall and hide the earth from the beauty of the heavens above it. Yet the truth shall be left with my people, the ignorant children of earth. And it is for you to leave behind you a burning light, a record for all time which men shall look at and wonder at in ages hence. The record of your lives, and of the truth which inspired you, shall go to other races, in other parts of the dim earth, to a people who have only heard of the light, who have never seen it. Be strong, for your work is great. Thou, my child of the snowy soul, thou hadst not strength to battle alone with the growing darkness ; but now, give of thy faith and purity to this one, whose wings are smirched with stains of the earth, but who has gathered from that dark contact strength for the coming battle. Fight thou to the last for thy Queen Mother. Speak to my people, and tell them of the great truths ; tell them that the soul lives and is blessed, unless they drown it in degradation ; tell them there is freedom and peace for all who will free themselves from desires ; tell them to look to me and find rest in my love ; tell them there is the lotus-bloom in every human soul, and that it will open wide to the light unless they poison its roots ; tell them to live in innocence and seek after truth, and I will come and walk in their midst, and show them the way into that place of peace where all is beauty and all are content. Tell them I love my children, and would come and dwell in their homes and bring that content which is more than any prosperity, even unto these their hearths of the earth. Tell them this in a voice like a trumpet-call,

which cannot be misunderstood. Save those who will hear, and make my temple once more a dwelling for the Spirit of Truth. The temple must fall, but it shall not fall in iniquity. Egypt must decay; but it shall not decay in ignorance. It shall hear a voice it cannot forget; and the words which that voice utters shall be the hidden heirloom of ages, and shall again be spoken under another sky, and herald the dawn which must break through the long blackness. Thou, my youngest, thou who art both strong and weak, prepare! The struggle is at hand; do not flinch. One duty is thine; to teach the people. Do not fear that wisdom shall fail thy tongue. I, who am Wisdom, will speak in thy voice. I, who am Wisdom, will be at thy side. Look up, my child, and gather strength."

I raised my eyes, and as I did so felt the tightened grasp of the hand of my companion, who knelt at my side. I understood that he desired to give me courage to face the blinding glory which was before my eyes.

She stood before us, and I saw her as the flower sees the sun which feeds it. I saw her without disguise or veil. The fair woman who had soothed my boyish tears was lost in the god, the glory of whose presence filled my soul with a burning that seemed to me like death. Yet I lived; I saw; I understood.





CHAPTER VIII.



HE beautiful young priest rose and stood beside me, while I still gazed upon the glory.

“Hear me, my brother,” he said. “There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

“The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor has no limit.

“The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

“Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

“These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them. Farewell. It is sundown. They will come for you; be thou ready.”

He was gone. But the glory did not fade from be-

fore my eyes. I saw the truth. I saw the light. I remained, holding the vision with my passionate regard.

Some one touched me. I was awakened and stirred immediately by a sudden startling sense that the hour of battle had come. I rose and looked round. Agmahd stood beside me. He looked very serious; his face was less cold than was usual; there was a fire in his eyes such as I had never seen there before.

“Sensa,” he said in a low voice, very clear, that seemed like a knife, “art thou prepared? To-night is the last night of the Great Festival. I need your service. When last you were with us you were mad; your brain was frenzied with the follies of your own conceit. I demand your obedience now, as you have hitherto given it, and to-night you are needed, for a great miracle has to be worked. You must be passive, else you will suffer. The Ten have determined that, unless you are obedient as hitherto, you must die. You are too well versed in all we know to live, unless you are one of us. Your choice lies plain before you. Make it quickly.”

“It is made,” I answered.

He looked at me very earnestly. I read his thought, and saw that he had expected to find me sad with solitude, sick with the long fast, and broken in spirit. Instead, I stood erect, unexhausted, filled with fearlessness; I felt that the light was in my soul, that the great army of the glorious ones stood behind me.

“I have no fear of death,” I answered; “and I will no longer be the tool of men who are killing the royal religion of Egypt, the great and only religion of truth, for the benefit of their own ambitions and desires. I have seen and understood your miracles and the teach-

ings which you give to the people; I will aid you no longer. I have said."

Agmahd stood silent, regarding me. His face grew whiter and more rigid, as though cut in marble. I remembered his words that night in the inner sanctuary, when he said, "I renounce my humanity." I saw it was so, that the renunciation was complete. I could look for no mercy; I had to deal not with man, but with a shape animated by a dominant and absolutely selfish will.

After a moment's pause he spoke, very calmly—

"Be it so. The Ten shall hear your words and answer them; you have a right to be present at their deliberations; you are yourself as high in the temple as I myself. It will be a trial of strength against strength, of will against will. I warn you that you will suffer."

He turned away and left me, moving with that slow and stately step which had so fascinated me when a child.

I sat down upon my couch and waited. I was not afraid; but I could not think or reflect. I was conscious that a moment was at hand which would need all my strength; and I remained without motion and without thought, reserving all the force I possessed.

A star rose in front of me, a gleaming star, which seemed to me shaped like the full-blown lotus flower. Excited and dazzled, I rose and sprang towards it. It moved from me—I would not lose it, but followed eagerly. It passed through the doorway of my room into the corridor; I found that the door opened at my touch. I did not stay to wonder why it was unlocked, but followed the star and its light, which momentarily

grew clearer, and its shape grew more defined ; I saw the petals of the royal white flower, and from its yellow centre streamed the light that led me.

Swiftly and eagerly I went down the wide dim corridor. The great door of the temple was open, and the star passed through it into the outer air. I too went out of the temple door, and found myself in the avenue of strange statues. Suddenly I became aware that there was a presence at the outer gate which called me. I fled down the long avenue with feet that knew not whither they led me ; yet I knew that I must go. The great gates were locked ; but, so close to them that I felt as though I were in the midst of it, was a great crowd, a mass of people. They were awaiting the great ceremony, the final glory of the festival, which to-night was to take place at the portals of the temple itself. I looked up and saw the Queen Mother standing beside me. She had in her hand a flaming torch, and I knew that its light had formed the star which guided me hither. She it was, then, the light of life, who had led me. She smiled and was, in an instant, gone ; I was alone with my knowledge ; and the people, crowded together and plunged in ignorance, waited at the gates to be taught of the priests.

I remembered the words of my predecessor, my brother, who had given me the three truths for the people.

I lifted up my voice and spoke ; my words carried me on as though they were waves, and my emotion grew into a great sea upon which I was lifted ; and as I looked into the eager eyes and rapt wondering faces before me, I knew that the people also were being swept along on that swift tide. My heart swelled with the delight of

speech, of giving utterance to the great truths which had become my own.

At last I began to tell them how I had caught fire from the torch of holiness, and was resolved to enter upon a true life of devotion to wisdom, and to discard all the luxury which surrounded the priestly life, and to put aside forever all desires but those which belong to the soul. I cried aloud, praying all those who felt the light kindle within them, to enter upon a similar path, even in the midst of their life in the city or on the mountains. I told them that it was unnecessary because men bought and sold in the streets, that they should utterly forget and drown the divine essence within them. I bade them burn out by the light of the spirit the grosser desires of the flesh which held them back from the true doctrine, and sent them in throngs as devotees to the shrine of the Queen of Desire.

I paused suddenly with a heavy sense of weariness and exhaustion. I became aware that some one stood on each side of me; an instant later, I saw that I was surrounded. The ten high priests had formed a circle around me. Kamen Baka stood facing me, and fixed his eyes on mine.

I cried out aloud, standing there in the midst of this circle—

“O, people of Egypt, remember my words! Never again may you hear the messenger of the mother of our life, the mother of the God of Truth. She has spoken. Go to your homes and write her words on tablets, and grave them on stones, that people yet unborn may read them and repeat them to your children, that they shall know of the wisdom. Go, and stay not to witness the sacrilege of the temple which is to-night to be com-

mitted. The priests of the goddess desecrate her temple with madness and lust and rich filling of all desires. Listen not to their words, but go to your homes and ask of your own hearts their lesson."

My strength was gone. I could utter no word more. With drooped head and weary limbs, I obeyed the menacing circle which surrounded me, and turned my steps towards the temple.

In silence we moved up the avenue, and entered the doorway. Within it we paused. Kamen Baka turned and looked back down the avenue.

"The people murmur," he said.

Again we moved on down the great corridor. Agmahd came out of a doorway, and stood before us.

"Is it so?" he said in a strange voice. He knew what had happened by the group he regarded.

"What shall be done?" said Kamen Baka. "He betrays the secrets of the temple, and excites the people against us."

"He will be a great loss," said Agmahd, "but he has become too dangerous. He must die. Speak I well, brethren?"

A faint murmur passed round me from lip to lip. Every voice was with Agmahd.

"The people murmur at the gate," repeated Kamen Baka.

"Go to them," said Agmahd; "tell them this is a night of sacrifice, and the goddess will herself speak with her own voice."

Kamen Baka left the circle, and Agmahd immediately took his place.

I stood motionless, silent. I dimly understood that my fate was sealed, but I neither knew nor desired to

ask in what way I was to die. I knew myself to be utterly helpless in the hands of the high priests. There was no appeal from their authority, and the crowd of inferior priests obeyed them as slaves. I, one alone, was helpless amid this crowd, and under this absolute authority. I did not fear death, and I thought it due to the Queen Mother that her servant should go to her with all gladness. It was my last testimony on earth to her love.





CHAPTER IX.

I WAS taken into my own chamber, and there left alone. I lay down upon my couch and fell asleep, for I was very weary, and I was not afraid, it seemed to me that under my head was the tender arm of the Lady of the Lotus.

But my sleep was short. I was plunged in a deep unconsciousness, that was too sweet for any dream to enter, when suddenly I was roused by a vivid sense of being no longer alone. I awoke to find myself in darkness and silence, but I recognized the sensation. I knew I was surrounded by a great crowd. I waited motionless with watchful eyes for the light, wondering what presences it would reveal to me.

Then I became aware of something I had never felt before. I was not unconscious, yet I was helpless as though without sense or knowledge. I was not motionless from indifference or peacefulness. I desired to rise and demand that light should be brought, but I could neither move nor utter any sound. Some fierce will was battling with mine, so strong that I was all but utterly mastered, yet I struggled and would not

yield. I was determined not to be a blind slave, overpowered in the darkness by an unseen adversary.

It became terrible, this fight for supremacy. It became so fierce that at last I knew it was a fight for my life. The power that weighed me down desired to kill. What was it, who was it, that endeavored to draw my breath from out my body?

At last—I cannot tell how long this intense silent warfare was waged—at last the light came flashing round me on every side, as torch was lighted from torch. I saw dimly, for my sight was faint. I saw that I was in the great corridor before the door of the sanctuary, lying upon the couch where I had played with the strange phantom-child who first taught me pleasure. I lay upon it outstretched as I had lain on my own couch in sleep. As when it had been used in the ceremonial before, so now it was covered with roses—large, rich, voluptuous, crimson and blood-red roses; thousands lay upon and about the couch, and their strong perfume overpowered my faint senses. I was clothed strangely in a thin white linen robe, whereon were embroideries, such as until now I had never seen, hieroglyphs worked in thick, dark, red silk. At my side was a stream of red blood, which flowed from the couch into a beautiful vessel that stood upon the ground amid a heap of roses. I looked at this a while in idle curiosity, until on a sudden the knowledge came to me that this was my life's blood flowing away.

I raised my eyes, and saw that I was surrounded by the Ten. Their gaze was all fixed on me, their countenances were implacable. I knew then what that terrible will was with which I had done battle. It was their united resolution. Was it possible that I alone

could struggle against this band? I knew not, yet I was not cast down. By one great effort I raised myself on the couch. I was already weak from want of blood, but they could no longer keep me silent. I rose to my feet, and stood upon the couch, and looked past them to the crowd of priests beyond, and further still to the throng of people, who waited close-packed at the entrance of the great corridor, to see the promised miracle.

I stood one instant, and thought I had power to speak, but I fell back helpless in my weakness. Yet a deep, profound, vivid happiness filled my soul, and suddenly I heard a murmur which rose and grew stronger.

“It is the young priest that taught at the gate! He is good, he shall not die! Let us save him!”

The people had seen my face and knew me. A great rush was made in the sudden enthusiasm, and the crowd of priests was pressed towards the couch, so that the Ten were unable to remain around it. And as the wave of struggle came up towards the holy of holies, many of the priests rushed into the vacant space between the couch and the door. And as they passed by in the confusion and surprise, I saw that the vessel which held my life was overturned and the red blood was spilled at the door of the sanctuary. The door opened; Agmahd stood within it; he looked majestic in his impenetrable calm. He gazed upon the surging crowd before him. At his cold gaze the priests grew calmer and gathered strength to withstand a little longer the onrush of the crowd. The Ten drew together again and with difficulty reached my couch and again formed a barrier about it.

But they were too late. Already some of the people

had reached my side. I smiled dimly into their kindly rough faces. Tears fell upon my face and penetrated my heart; and then suddenly one caught my hand and clasped and kissed it, and wetted it with hot tears. Surely that touch thrilled my blood as did none other! Then I heard a voice cry: "It is my son—it is my son that is dead. He is killed. Who will give me back my son?"

It was my mother who knelt at my side. I strained my fading sight and saw her. She was worn and weary, yet her face was good. And as I looked I saw behind her, overshadowing her, the Lady of the Lotus, standing there in the midst of the people! And a gentle smile was on her mouth.

My mother rose, and I saw a strange dignity in her face.

"They have killed his body," she said, "but they have not killed his soul. That is strong, for I saw it in his eyes as this moment they closed in death."





CHAPTER X.

AND on my dim ears fell the sound of a great sigh that came from the heart of the people. And then I knew that my body did not die in vain.

But my soul lived. It was not only strong, it was indestructible. It had worked out its time of misery in that pale form; it had escaped from the imprisonment which so long had held it fast. But only to re-awaken in another, a strong, a beautiful and pure temple.

As the great surging crowd, driven to fury by the resistance of the priests, pressed on menacingly, some victims to its rage fell around me. Close to my lifeless form lay Agmahd, trampled to death by the enraged people, and at my very side against the couch on which I lay, Malen died, his breath pressed out from his beautiful form. As I hovered there in the strange consciousness of soul, I perceived these tainted spirits, dark with the lust and ambition which the Queen of Desire had kindled within them, forced into that circle of necessity from which there is no escape. Agmahd's soul fled with a fierce rush, like the dark passage of a bird of the night, and Malen, that young priest, who

had led me to the city, followed him swiftly. He, who obedient to the rules of his order had preserved the purity of the body, was black within with ungratified and ceaseless desire, but his body lay a broken flower, fair as a lily when first it opens its bloom on the surface of the clear water.

I felt that my Queen Mother held me fast in her tender grasp, that I might not escape from the scene of horror.

“Return to your work,” she said; “it is yet unfinished. This is the new robe that you will wear, which will be your covering while you teach my people. This body is sinless, unstained and beautiful, although the soul that inhabited it is lost. But thou art my own. To come to me is to live through eternity in truth and knowledge. This is thy new garment.”

I found that I was yet strong, not only in the spirit, but in physical life. New vigor came to me, my weariness was forgotten. I rose from the place, where but a minute since I had lain prostrate and lifeless. I rose, and standing hidden under the ægis of my Queen, looked in horror at the scene around me.

“Go, Malen, go in safety,” she said. “Thou art to live in the hearts of the people, thou wilt be to them an image and symbol of the glory. Thou wilt be again a martyr to my cause, one who will forever be remembered with love by the dusky children of Chemi. Yet, though thou diest in my service, thou shalt teach for ages to come among the ruins of this temple; and though thou diest for me a hundred deaths, yet shalt thou live to teach my truths from the adytum of the new fane that shall arise in the distance of time.”

I hurried away, and passed unnoticed through the

surging, furious crowd. The statues in the avenue were thrown down; the temple gates were broken and destroyed.

My soul was sad and yearned for peace. I looked with longing eyes to the quiet country where my peasant mother dwelled; but she believed her son was dead. She would not know me in this new shape. I turned towards the city, now deserted by the maddened people.

A wild shout from a thousand throats tore the air. I paused, and looking back, saw that the unchecked vengeance of a generation betrayed by its teachers, had indeed fallen upon the glorious old temple. Already it was desecrated, and its sinful inmates sacrificed. Soon it would be a ruin.

I wandered through the empty streets of the city, and knew that here where I had drunk of pleasure, I must taste the joy of the worker. Here my voice must be heard unceasingly. The truth, long driven from the degraded temple, must find its home in the heart of the people, in the streets of the city. Long time must pass before my sin should fall from me, and leave me stainless, pure, prepared for the perfect life towards which I labor.

Since then, I live, change form, and live again; yet know myself through the long ages as they pass.

Egypt is dead, but her spirit lives, and the knowledge that was hers is still cherished in those souls who have remained true to the grand and mysterious past. They know that out of the profound blindness and inarticulateness of an age of unbelief shall arise the first signs of the splendor of the future. That which is to come is grander, more majestically mysterious than the past.

For as the whole life of humanity rises upward, by slow and imperceptible progress, its teachers drink their life from purer founts, and take their message from the soul of existence. The cry has sounded through the world. The truths are uttered in words. Waken, dark souls of the earth, who live with eyes upon the ground, raise those dim eyes and let perception enter. Life has in it more than the imagination of man can conceive. Seize boldly upon its mystery, and demand, in the obscure places of your own soul, light with which to illumine those dim recesses of individuality to which you have been blinded through a thousand existences.

Though a land of dusky forms, Egypt stands as a white flower among other races of the earth, and the hieroglyph readers of the old hieratic writings, the professors, and the thinkers of the day will be unable to stain the petals of that grand lily blossom of our planet. They do not see the stem of the lily, and the sunlight shining down through the petals. They can see nothing of the real blossom, neither can they disfigure it by modern gardening, because it is out of their reach. It grows above the stature of man, and its bulb drinks deep from the river of life.

It flowers in a world of growth to which man can only attain in his absolute moments of inspiration when he is indeed more than man. Therefore, though its lofty stem lifts itself from our world, it is not to be beheld or adequately described, save by one who is in truth so much above the stature of man that he can look down into the face of the flower, wherever it blossoms, whether in the East or the dark West. He will there read the secrets of the controlling forces of the physical plane, and will see, written within it, the

science of mystic strength. He will learn how to expound spiritual truths, and to enter into the life of his highest self, and he can learn also how to hold within him the glory of that higher self, and yet to retain life upon this planet so long as it shall last, if need be; to retain life in the vigor of manhood, till his entire work is completed, and he has taught the three truths to all who look for light.



EPITOME OF THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS
AND
ESOTRIC THEOSOPHY

HINTS ON ESOTERIC THEOSOPHY.

No. 1.

Is Theosophy a Delusion ?
Do the Brothers exist ?

No. 1.—(LETTER FROM G— Y—, LATE F. T. S.
TO H— X—, F. T. S.)

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE duly received your long and interesting letter of the ———, and have read *it*, as well as its enclosures (Fragments of Occult Truth, the Rules of the Ladies' Theosophical Society, and the address therein contained ; and Colonel Olcott's letter of the 30th of September, 1881*) with the greatest possible care. I have also re-read Mr. Sinnett's "Occult World," and have given due consideration to all the many little circumstances related by you ; yet I am compelled to say that, knowing now, apparently, all that any of you know, I am far from convinced that the Theosophical Society has any real or reliable foundation.

* *Vide*, p. 76.

Now please understand me at once. I am not one of the vulgar scoffers. I do not doubt that Madame Blavatsky is a lady by birth. I have seen the original letters from men like Prince Dondoukoff Korsakoff (as high an official in the Russian administration as Lord Ripon is in the British), and I know that she is well born and highly connected. I know, too, all about Colonel Olcott. I have read all the letters about him, including the late President of the United States' autograph recommendation of him to all United States Ministers and Consuls. So far as their antecedents are concerned I am perfectly satisfied.

I know also that they never have made, and are never *likely* to make, any money out of this business: and that, on the contrary, they have both spent a good deal of money, out of their own private means, to enable the work of the Society to proceed.

I see no reason to question the genuineness of the phenomena recorded in Mr. Sinnett's work. They are similar in class to many of which I have had personal cognizance. As you know, without ever becoming a convert to their *theories*, I have, for the last twenty years, whenever I have had the opportunity, worked, both in Europe and America, in concert with spiritualists and some of their best mediums.

I know all about mesmerism, so far as it is known to the West; about Reichenbach's researches, some of which I have verified; and I have read many books treating of, or rather hinting at different phases of, Occultism.

There was nothing, therefore, *a priori*, revolting to my common sense, (as they are revolting to that of many men who have never read upon or personally investigated these questions), in the pretensions always set up by the founders, of the Theosophical Society, in every *inner* circle of this, of being the instruments of an august Brotherhood of Adepts. I by no means *believed* that any such Brotherhood existed. I was familiar with the popular traditional history of the Rosicrucians, the Illuminati, etc. I had often pored and pondered over Zanoni, and I was therefore at no loss to conceive sources from which fictitious ideas of such a Brotherhood might arise ; *but*, on the other hand, I was too well aware of the very limited character of our knowledge of matters psychical, to think of pretending to gauge the possibilities of the universe. I did not *believe* in this Brotherhood, but I felt it *might* nevertheless be a fact, of which I was quite ready to be convinced.

I have nothing to say against the morality preached by the founders generally, or set forth in the few words attached to the rules of the Ladies' Theosophical Society :—nothing can be better or purer. If I had a remark to make here, it would only be that, if this be Theosophy, it is also the universal theoretical code—Christianity without Christ, as many would call it.

Nor have I anything to say against the avowed objects of the Theosophical Society.

The first, or Universal Brotherhood, is an Utopian idea that has gilded the dreams of philanthropic philosophers in all ages. It is as old as mankind, and for

all that I can discover that the Theosophical Society has ever done, or is ever likely to do, still quite as unattainable in practice as it ever has been. This Universal Brotherhood was equally a cardinal doctrine of the founder of Christianity, with what results, in practice, the history of that religion throughout the world only too sadly shows us. It was surely not necessary to start a new Society to put forward *that* doctrine!

As for the second object, the study of ancient languages, literature and religion, a good deal of that has been going on throughout the world during the last twenty-five years without the help of the Theosophical Society, which has not only done nothing worthy the name, as yet, towards fostering or furthering such studies, but manifestly does not contain in it even the germs of any organization which could ever render such furtherance possible. As for the papers that have appeared on such subjects in the THEOSOPHIST, they are almost, without a single exception, *réchauffés* of what has been better said elsewhere long ago, or else, where in any degree original, crude, unenlightened and almost beneath the criticism of any real scholar.

It is only in its third object that the Society strikes out any at all novel line, and this object alone could justify its existence. Certainly the world required no new Society to preach the old doctrine of loving one's neighbors as one's self, or to encourage a study of ancient literature or religion. So far as these objects are concerned, there is nothing in the Society to justify its foundation. It has no *raison d'être*; but its third object, the investigation of the hidden mysteries of nature

and the psychical powers latent in man, is, although not absolutely a *new* idea, one that has been greatly neglected and overlooked, meriting, if there really be anything in it, a special Society to re-enunciate it and urge its prosecution.

Naturally, then, despite disclaimers on the founders' parts, this has always been held by all thinking men to be the *real* object of the Society, since, if this were not so, the Society would be meaningless.

It was looking to this object that I joined the Society ; I had no objection to the other objects. I was in sympathy with them, but I should have chosen more effectual channels for furthering *these* objects had they stood alone, and, but for the third object, should never have joined the Society.

Now I was for more than two years a Theosophist. I diligently read the Magazine of the Society. I have conversed with, and questioned something like one hundred Theosophists, of all races, creeds and nationalities. I have inquired and sought diligently, and I cannot discover that either I or *any* other Theosophist has learnt one iota concerning "the hidden mysteries of nature or the psychical powers latent in man," in consequence, or as a result, direct or indirect, of our connection with the Society.

Therefore, I look upon the Society as a delusion. If I alone were left out in the cold I might attribute it to my own shortcomings ; but it is not so. Dozens of men, cleverer than Madame Blavatsky, as beneficent,

pure and self-devoted as Colonel Olcott, are in the same predicament ; the whole Society is left out in the cold. There is plenty of talk, but nothing is done ; it is *vox, et præterea nihil*.

But you specially draw my attention to the Fragments of Occult Truth, and say that, if we can get a series of papers like this, expounding gradually the whole Philosophy, we shall surely have learned much. Now, in the first place, there is nothing very new in this particular fragment, which has alone as yet been vouchsafed. It is a kind of sublimated Buddhism or Vedantism re-adjusted so as not to traverse directly anything that modern science has proved, or modern spiritualism has established ; and, in the second place, whether it is *worth* learning, much or little of it, depends upon *whether it is true*.

So far as I can learn there is no guarantee for its being anything but a pure speculation, similar to hundreds of others that I have met with in books, ancient and modern—a speculation, less reasonable than some, less probable than others, and less acceptable to my mind and heart than others again of these dreams which crowd the intellectual records of the world.

You say that “two of the adept Brothers personally revised this fragment ;” but my dear non-adept friend, how do you *know* this ? How do you know that the Brothers exist at all ? Have you ever seen or spoken to one of these ? Has any cultivated European that you know, except Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, any independent person on whose judgment and good faith you can implicitly rely, ever seen or spoken

to one of them? Answer me candidly and truly, and I know that you *must* answer in the negative.

That the Brothers might exist is, like all other improbable things, quite possible. That they *do* exist in connection with the Theosophical Society and Madame Blavatsky I wholly disbelieve. If this Society had been founded by such a Brotherhood it would have been far more wisely administered; its leaders would have led higher and more consistent lives; its organ would not have been so often disfigured by passages which must revolt every sensible mind, every kind heart; and, lastly, its real founders would have taken means of thoroughly demonstrating their existence to some few, at any rate, of their more prominent supporters.

Now, as you know, we personally pressed this point on two at least of the more prominent Theosophists, and two especially favored by communications (THROUGH Madame Blavatsky) from the Brothers. Could we get either to say simply: "Certainly the Brothers do exist?" On the contrary, the one said: "Well, I have no doubt they do. I have had no absolutely irrefragable proof, but I have been able to secure what seems to me a nearly perfect chain of circumstantial evidence to the fact of their existence." And when I questioned him, his evidence turned out to consist of—(1), the very different and distinct handwritings of two or three Brothers with whom he supposed himself to have corresponded; (2), numerous phenomena, which were quite within the range of what we know to have occurred elsewhere in connection with mediums; (3), certain pieces of information furnished,

which may have been lucky guesses, or, if not, are in no way beyond the sphere of clairvoyance as exhibited elsewhere ; and (4), the style and purport of the letters received, which, while some of them were good enough, were many of them below the level of what so clever a woman as Madame Blavatsky might be expected to write, and not one of them indicative, to my mind, of exceptionally high intellectual powers.

He had really no more evidence of the existence of the "Brethren" than the spiritualists have of the existence of the spirits of their departed friends. Facts there were, many of them, if accurately recorded, inexplicable by modern Western science, which in his case Madame Blavatsky chooses to set down to the Brothers, while the spiritualists' mediums credit similar marvels to "the dear departed."

But the other favored Theosophist, replying to my question, said he really did *not* know whether the Brothers *did* or *did not* exist. There were great difficulties either way ; but on the whole, as then advised, he thought the balance of evidence was in favor of their existence ; that he had repeatedly changed his mind, as fresh facts bearing on the question turned up, now pointing in one direction, now in the other ; and that, though he *hoped* in the long run to acquire a certainty one way or the other, he thought it very likely he should change his mind intermediately a good many times.

He quite admitted the vital character of the question. He said : "Of course, if the Brothers are a myth, the Society for me is moonshine ; they and their

supposed knowledge and beneficence are the only things that give it any reality for me. But my view is that, on the whole, it is more likely that they are realities than myths;—that is my present conclusion deliberately formed after perfectly impartially weighing all the evidence, *pro* and *con*, that I have as yet been able to acquire; and this being so, looking to the enormous importance of giving to mankind the *truth*, about this life and the next, in place of the speculations (and many of these clearly pernicious ones) that under various religious guises now mislead the world, I think it wise to labor and wait; and so, perchance, if the Brothers do exist, win from them these truths. If they do not exist, I shall be none the worse for having tried to do good.”

Now to a certain extent I sympathized with this view; but the unfortunate thing is, that, to me, the balance of the evidence seems rather the other way.

But you think you place me on the horns of a dilemma by saying, “either you must believe that the Brothers exist, or you must consider Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott impostors. But impostors *cui bono*? In respectable, in fact good positions in life, what had they to gain? Certainly not money; certainly not popularity; you must at least credit them with sufficient foresight to have foreseen that they must necessarily be greeted with a general chorus of ‘fools, knaves, rogues, impostors,’ and the like. Then *cui bono* the imposture?”

Now even if I accepted the dilemma (which I do not, for there is a third alternative which you have over-

looked), I should not feel in any way cornered. Admitting their good position, admitting Madame Blavatsky's indisputably good family connections and rank, I see nothing in this to bar the possibility of deception. The history of imposture shows that every rank, from prince to peasant, has had its impostors.

Then, again, about money—they were both comparatively poor. How can any one be sure that certainly they *had* no idea of making money? That they have *made* none I know as well as you; but I also know that 50,000 new members yearly means £50,000 a year, out of which the founders might have had noble pickings; and how is any one to be certain that knowing, as every person does who has ever read about India, that every rank of native society is honeycombed with a belief in jogis and adepts, they did not *expect* a grand success and a huge revenue? They have not got it; but how can you pretend to assert that this hope was not at least one of their motives? You say that so far from this they have excused four-fifths of those who have joined from the payment of the £1 entrance fee. But, my dear friend, do I suppose them to be fools? Do I fancy that in the face of the outcry that has been raised from time to time about the money matters of the society, they could now be so mad as to exhibit the least desire for money-making? Besides, it is an old-world proverb: "Angle with a minnow to catch a whale;" and it is good policy, as all fishermen know, to let the little fish go, putting on too large a bait for *their* mouths (and what poor Buddhist ryot in Ceylon *could* pay £1 to join a Society?) if you want to secure the large ones, and there are at least ten millions

of fish in India who would swallow the £1 without winking!

Then there is their Magazine, the THEOSOPHIST, their own private property, with which the Society has no financial concern, and which, if really well managed, might have proved a valuable property and yielded a large income. Agreed that it probably, even at the increased rate of subscription, only just pays its way, because the Editor entirely wants that special talent, tact and good taste essential to the success of such a periodical; but had she or Col. Olcott any conception of this fact when they started the THEOSOPHIST? Do they even now quite realize it?

Do I then assert that money-making *was* their object? Far from it. I do not even, on the whole, myself believe that it ever entered into their calculations. All I desire to show you is, that it is a quite tenable hypothesis, and your dilemma therefore worthless.

But you say: "Then what motives can have led them on?" I reply, many *may* have actuated them, but in such a case, most probably the love of notoriety—the desire to be known—to be *somebody* instead of *nobody*. Thousands of worse crimes than that of merely bolstering up a pseudo-philanthropical scheme by a little transcendental fiction have been committed from this same love of notoriety—hundreds of assassinations have been traced solely to this source. "They must have known how they would be abused?" Of course, they must, but "better to rule in hell than serve in heaven," and better, think many, to be the universal

target for all abuse than to drag out a prosy life unknown and unregarded. It is notorious that, even in the highest English political circles, the mass of men preferred seeing themselves grossly and hideously caricatured in *Vanity Fair*, to remaining unnoticed by that (so far as its pictures went) grossly libellous print.

And mind, while they doubtless expected much obloquy from the small English community, we must also credit them with sufficient sense to foresee that this very obloquy would serve to stimulate native enthusiasm, and we well know that it has not been all abuse or slander that they have met with; on the contrary, as a rule, they have been everywhere received by the higher as well as the lower classes of natives with respect and consideration, while in Ceylon their tours have been triumphal processions.

A clever, energetic woman of good birth, debarred by comparative poverty from otherwise making a figure in the world, and an American official, whose life had been, like that of all Americans of that class, always *en evidence*, and to whom the cacklings of newspapers were as the breath of life, are just the very people whom you would, *a priori*, think likely to be led into such an enterprise as this by a love of notoriety—of seeming or being something different from, and better than, all their neighbors.

But again you say: "I know them personally, and they are very good, kind-hearted people, quite incapable of any fraud." But, my friend, the heart of man is desperately deceitful and wicked altogether; and as *you* do not pretend to be an adept, you will pardon my doubt-

ing whether you or any man can certainly tell what any other person is or is not capable of. Nay, can you even be certain that there is anything of which you yourself are not capable under exceptional circumstances? I hold it little short of nonsense to build a controversial argument on your own conviction of somebody else's goodness, especially on the goodness of people of whom you necessarily know so little. It may satisfy yourself; it will satisfy no one else. What myriads of life-long so-called saints have been proved before life ended to have been in reality the vilest of sinners? What tens of myriads must have escaped detection, though watched throughout a score of years or more by hundreds of eyes and brains as keen or keener than yours?

And after all, though deception *is* deception, and fraud, fraud, I should not think that this particular deception would weigh *very* heavily on the minds of the perpetrators. They would say: "All the objects of the society are good; no doubt we should like to be revered as prophets; but then all we preach is the soundest, purest and most elevated morality; and if to make people listen to us, to gain a hearing, and so enable ourselves to lead them to better things, we do evolve a little fiction about the Brothers out of our own imaginations, what then? It surely is no such heinous sin; it is all with the best possible object, and we might do a great deal worse," and so they *might*!

And now having argued the point out in detail to show you that, even if accepted, your dilemma is worthless, let me tell you that, though dozens and hundreds of my acquaintance do on these and like grounds and

reasoning consider them impostors, and thus explain their imposture, I personally, though admitting the possibility of the fact, do not incline to believe that such is the case.

There is a third alternative—they may themselves be deceived ; and whether this be or be not the case with Madame Blavatsky, I am pretty certain in my own mind that it is so with Col. Olcott. But I suspect that it is so with *both*. I know you will say that here is my inveterate spiritualistic bias showing out, but I am no more a Spiritualist than I am an Adept. I have had indeed proof, superabundant, of the *phenomena* (not the doctrines, mind) of spiritualism, and so have thousands of others ; while neither I, nor any other living man that I can hear of, whose testimony appears to me of any real value, has succeeded in obtaining one fraction of real proof of the existence of the Brothers.

I have always suspected that Madame Blavatsky was a powerful medium. I know she is indignant at the idea, but it has always been my belief. That she is a clairvoyante, at times, is not disputed—nor that she possesses considerable magnetic and mesmeric powers.

But I have just seen a long letter of Madame Blavatsky's* sent by you to ———, who is as little a believer in the Brothers as myself, in which she fully sets forth her mediumship in youth, and especially how (as spiritualists would say under control) she used to write in a language imperfectly known to her in a perfectly distinct and characteristic handwriting entirely

* *Vide*, p. 86.

unlike her own, but recognized as that of another person whose spirit was supposed to be controlling her, though, as it later turned out, that person was not really dead, and she supposes herself now to have then acted under the influence of her own fifth principle. Now here at any rate is a clue to the different handwritings of the Brothers. No doubt she may think that, as she grew strong and well, she lost her mediumistic powers ; but my view is, that unconsciously to herself, she entered on a different phase of mediumship. She might then well see, converse with and believe in Brothers. No one who knows M. A. (Oxon) doubts that he continually sees and converses with some entity—his own spirit for all I know—that he calls Imperator. She may from time to time see many such. I have seen forms under circumstances which rendered deception impossible. Thousands on thousands have seen them at Eddy's farm. Well, too, might Damodar, and Padshah, and Olcott, and the others who are in magnetic harmony with her, occasionally see some of these. Because, though perhaps more often subjective, there is no earthly doubt, I mean to those who have calmly and patiently investigated the question, that such forms are often objective. So far there may be no deception on the part of any one but Madame Blavatsky—nay, it may well be that she herself *thoroughly* believes, though some of course will always suspect that she has some notion of the truth, the more so that she so vehemently scouts the idea of being a medium.

Yet in her highly excitable temperament, restlessness of mind, loose and inaccurate habit of speech, in all her conduct and ways, she is more like a good medium

than a "*chela*" of the kind of beings the Adepts are represented to us as being. Wherever she goes, her irascible temper, her want of charity to all who oppose or doubt her, her dogmatic and imperious spirit and vehemence of speech are noticed, at any rate in Upper India ; and though at the same time her apparent kindness of heart, love of justice, hatred of injustice and oppression, and sincere desires for the welfare of her fellow creatures are fully appreciated, Natives and Europeans alike, say, as regards the former set of characteristics, "she is very unlike what any adept or jogi we have ever heard of was supposed to be."

So now, on the whole, it seems to me that, unless or until the Brothers, if such really exist, (and I in no way contest the possibility of the fact) choose to afford some much more conclusive evidence of their existence than they have hitherto vouchsafed to this benighted world, we are bound to hold the true dilemma to be, whether the founders of the Theosophical Society are conscious and culpable or unconscious and innocent impostors. Does this seem a harsh judgment? Assuredly there is not a shade of unkindness or harshness in my mind towards the founders. Of Madame Blavatsky I know less, or at least feel less certain ; but what I saw of Col. Olcott certainly impressed me most favorably. But I put it to any unprejudiced person whether under the conditions any other conclusions are possible ?

If they are erroneous, then let the blame rest, not with me, but with the Brothers, who put forward a Society involving a claim on their behalf of an almost

supernatural character, and then, shrinking into their Himalayan hermitages, leave their poor faithful servants to bear the brunt of that distrust and condemnation, by every honest and sensible man, which necessarily follows the enunciation of such a claim, without any subsequent attempt to substantiate it.

Now if you can answer me, do so. I am perfectly open to conviction, but I have thoroughly considered the question; and "as at present advised," as you cautiously remark, see no way out of the dilemma which I, in my turn, present to you.

Dec. 7th, 1881.

G— Y—

No. 2.—REPLY TO THE FOREGOING LETTER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your long letter of the 7th December.

Differing from you widely, as I do; believing the Theosophical Society to be a reality; and believing that the Brothers do exist, I am yet neither surprised at, nor repelled by the position you assume. It is simply the position that I myself until quite recently occupied,—the position at which any thoughtful inquirer, impartially seeking the truth, must almost inevitably first arrive.

Your letter is long, and necessarily raises a variety of collateral issues; but, before considering these I

shall endeavor to deal with what appear to be your main contentions, *viz.*, that the Theosophical Society is a delusion, and that there is not a shadow of evidence of the existence of the Brothers—all the phenomena that we have accepted as such, and all our supposed correspondence with them, being the results of Madame Blavatsky's mesmeric, clairvoyant and mediumistic powers.

Now, first, as to the Society's being a delusion. I cannot admit that even had its objects been confined to the two first enumerated by you, that it must necessarily have been, or even in practice has proved, altogether a delusion. That much less has been done than might and ought to have been done is quite my own view ; but that *something* has been achieved, even you will, on calm re-consideration, confess.

It is true that the idea of Universal Brotherhood is as old as mankind ; but it does not necessarily follow that mankind nowhere required a reminder of this divine idea, or that a Society, specially instituted to promote its practical realization, must be *de trop*. As a matter of fact there is no country probably on the face of the earth in which a resuscitation of that old idea was, and is, more imperatively demanded than in India.

Look round and confess, not only that no brotherhood and no sympathy exist, but that, broadly speaking, mutual distrust and dislike separate all classes of the community from one another—Europeans from natives, officials from non-officials, covenanted from uncovenanted, Hindoës from Mahomedans, orthodox

from unorthodox. Surely in no country in the world would a platform upon which all the myriad classes, castes, sects and races, which combine to constitute the empire, could meet on a footing of brotherly love,—surely nowhere I say would such a platform be a greater and more universal blessing than here.

But you add that the idea is wholly Utopian !

That the standard aimed at is unattainable in its theoretic perfection in the present state of society I freely admit ; but that a great and important advance towards it may be secured seems to me not only possible, but, looking to the results already obtained, highly probable. For only consider—an empire of 250 millions of people is not to be impressed perceptibly in a day or even a decade. The Society is but a thing of a day—a seed as yet barely germinating ; and yet see how many thousands of Mahomedans, Hindoos, Buddhists, Parsees, Christians, officials and non-officials, governors and governed, have already been brought together by the instrumentality of the Society—have already learnt to know more of and think better of each other? Take a concrete example. You and I belong to totally different grades of society, different races, different religions—have we not become true friends? Do we not now mutually trust each other? And could this possibly have happened but for the Society ?

In my turn I say that, if you reply to me, as I know well *you* cannot help doing, frankly and candidly, you *must* reply in the negative—*ex uno disce omnes*. You

and I both in our limited circles know many instances in which, although true Brotherhood, such as subsists between us, has not yet been set up, at any rate much of mutual asperity and distrust has been banished or toned down.

One has only to look at the extraordinary success that has attended the efforts made in Ceylon to rouse the long-supine Buddhists to a sense of the importance of purifying their own morals, and educating their children under *Buddhistic* auspices to see what practical good the Society can do.

Or, again, can you point to anything in Indian History parallel to one feat accomplished by the Society? In the year 1880 a mixed delegation of *Hindus* and *Parsees* were deputed by the Bombay Branch to assist the founders in organizing *Buddhist* branches in Ceylon. In 1881 the *Buddhists* reciprocated by sending over delegates to Tinnevely to assist in organizing a *Hindu* Branch, and these *Buddhists* were, together with Col. Olcott, received with rapturous welcome *inside* a most sacred *Hindu* Temple, in the enclosure of which they planted a cocoanut tree in commemoration of their visit.

No! even if the encouragement of mutual appreciation, forbearance and good will amidst the innumerable, heretofore more or less antagonistic, classes of India were the sole object of the Theosophical Society, you could not truly designate it as a delusion, or deny that, even during its brief and checkered existence, it has already effected something towards this object, and afforded fair promise of really important results in its maturity.

As for the second object, the study of ancient languages, science and religion, I agree that it has as yet *apparently* done little to promote this. But do you really expect that in three or four short years studies of this nature can bear fruit worthy of the name? All things must grow, and, in this case, even a beginning takes a long time. Yet even in this matter your strictures are too sweeping. Many of the articles and papers that have appeared are most interesting and by no means merit your slashing criticisms, while as for the Society's containing no germs of an organization for furthering such studies, the mere fact that already some of the most learned Pundits, Sanscritists and Pali Scholars of India are enrolled amongst its members, seems a sufficient answer to your strictures.

Then you touch upon the third object of the Society, "the investigation of the hidden mysteries of nature, and of the psychical powers latent in man," and it is most especially because you and a hundred other Theosophists you know have, during two or three years' adherence to the Society, made no iota of progress in such investigations that you denounce the whole affair as a delusion.

Now you must clearly understand that exoteric and esoteric Theosophy are two widely different things. The first two objects belong to the former; the third to the latter. In exoteric Theosophy any kindly-natured, even though worldly-minded man, living an outwardly respectable life and wishing well to his fellows, may join and do some good. No special preparation is required, no sacrifices are demanded; he

may do some good by helping to break down the pernicious barriers of race, caste and creed, thus assisting the eradication of the prejudices and mutual dislikes inseparable from such barriers; he may better *himself* by learning to take a broader and less selfish view of human affairs; he may gradually imbibe some ideas of things higher and better than those in the struggle, to obtain which his time is mainly spent; and, possibly, as time goes on, discover in himself a growing preparedness for esoteric Theosophy. But it is but little after all that he gives, and it is but little therefore that he can justly expect to receive.

But with esoteric Theosophy it is widely different. Into the innermost circle, we are led to believe, none can enter without most strict and long-continued preparation, without very real and weighty sacrifices, without a complete change of life, mind and heart. There is much indeed to be gained, but it has to be fully earned.

A man feels that his state of health is unsatisfactory, and he calls in a physician. This expert tells him that, if he wants to get well he must eat little, and that only of plain food; that he must give up all liquors, rise early, take regular and moderate exercise, go to bed early, live chastely, work his brain only moderately, and avoid all causes for excitement, bodily and mental. To some few of these precepts, not opposed to his previous habits of life, the patient, it may be, gives heed; the rest he briefly dismisses with the remark that all this kind of nonsense is quite incompatible with his career. Forgetting all this, when later he find himself

no better, he angrily assures his friends that now for two years he has been under his doctor's care, without growing one bit healthier, and he thereupon denounces his medical attendant as an impostor.

I confess that to me the case of this man seems precisely that of yourself and the multitude of discontented Theosophists, who do me the honor of pouring their bitter complaints into my sympathetic ears. Certainly it was my own case until quite recently. I may not yet be attending as fully as I should to the physician's orders, but I no longer accuse him of being an impostor, no longer endeavor to lay upon *him* the burthen of *my own* shortcomings.

Will you, and others discontented like yourself, ask yourselves, and answer a few simple questions *in foro conscientiæ*.

(1.) Am I a total abstainer from all spirituous liquors?

Be it understood that this question stands first, not because there is any special sin, or any sin at all, in the moderate use of such liquors. It is simply because as a physiological fact, the development in the human frame of those psychological (?) powers, by the aid of which alone such investigations, as object No. 3 refers to, can be carried on, is, in 99 cases out of 100 (there are of course rare and exceptional organizations in which this is not true) impossible, so long as any alcohol exists in the system; and long, long after all chemical or other physical tests would utterly fail to

detect any traces of this, psychical tests prove that it has not yet been perfectly eliminated.

“ But is this true ? ” My dear friend, if you want to teach yourself, do so ; if you want to cure yourself, why, call in a physician. If you want to learn how a thing is to be done, accept what those who say they know how to do it tell you, and try it for yourself, and see if it be so. In every science there are some fundamental principles that the beginner has to accept at starting and work with as facts, until he has sufficiently mastered the whole subject to form a correct opinion as to their validity. When he has reached that stage, if he then doubts them, he can throw over the whole superstructure on which they rest. But while he is a learner, let him accept, provisionally, those conditions that people, apparently experts, assure him are essential to the success of the experiment he desires to perform.

I do not KNOW of my own knowledge that all this is true, but I accept this and the other rules provisionally, determined to work on, and see whether a careful adherence to them will, as I am assured, bring my experiment to a successful issue. Even if it does not, I have the consolation of feeling that this attempted adherence cannot possibly have done me anything but good.

(2.) Do I live a perfectly pure and chaste life ?

This again is asked, not because there is, *per se*, any sin in sexual intercourse, which is merely the exercise of a natural physical function. Indeed there is, under

normal conditions, no sin at all in sexual relations between husband and wife, and the only *sin* there is in irregular relations of this nature, where no breach of solemn obligations is involved, lies in the misery and general disturbance of the moral equilibrium that, in the existing state of society, they so invariably, sooner or later, entail on one or other of the parties, or, what is worse still, on innocent third persons.

But why this is asked, why absolute chastity is insisted on, is simply, partly because the very nerve substance, destroyed in sexual intercourse, forms part of the matrix in which the powers you seek for have to be developed; and partly because the mental and nervous disturbance caused by all breaches of chastity (however little this may be appreciated by the persons concerned) is incompatible with the serenity essential to this development. It may be added that not only actual chastity, but the absolute exclusion from the mind of all impure thought, is requisite, since such thoughts, in proportion to their intensity and to the time they are allowed to dominate the mind, are similarly antagonistic to the development of psychical powers.

The two rules, to which the first two questions refer, may be said to refer mainly to physical obstacles to progress; * the remainder deal with mental and

* When I wrote this letter I was myself so little advanced that I did not know that there was a third rule having reference to physical preparations, no less important than the two referred to in the text. This rule requires entire abstinence from all fish, flesh, fowl, and eggs—in fact from all animal food, except milk and its preparations,

moral preparations no less essential, we are taught, to this same progress.

(3.) Am I perfectly truthful, just and honest, in all my words and deeds ?

(4.) Is my mind perfectly and permanently in a state of serenity, *i. e.*, have I banished from it all passion, pride, hate, malice, envy, anger, greed and craving for worldly advantages ? Is my heart, in fact, at peace with itself and all the world ?

(5.) Have I learned to subordinate self to others, my own pleasure to the good of my fellows ? Is my heart filled with loving kindness towards all living beings ; and do I watch for opportunities of doing secret kindness to all within my reach ?

(6.) Do I thoroughly realize the empty and transitory character of all earthly things, and, while zealously discharging all duties falling to my lot during my brief halt in this world, can I truly say that all

butter, cream, ghi, cheese, etc. A vegetable diet, supplemented only by these latter, and milk, is essential to any considerable development of the psychical senses in the great majority of mankind. I myself, though brought up in Europe as a flesh-eater, have, since I wrote this letter, given up entirely all animal food, and have reduced the *quantity* of liquids and solids I had been accustomed to consume by fully half, and that without the smallest inconvenience,—nay, so far as I can judge, with a distinct benefit to my health. At present my daily food consists of from 12 to 14 ozs. of bread, rice, butter, vegetables, fruit, and sugar, and from 16 to 20 ozs. of water, milk and tea. But as time goes on these quantities will be found capable of great reduction, and such reduction will distinctly aid the development of the supersensuous faculties, provided that this repression of the physical elements is accompanied by the expansion of the mental and moral parts of our nature.—H. X.—June, 1882.

my desires centre on the unseen and imperishable, and on the attainment of that higher knowledge which leads to these ?

If you cannot, as a whole, answer these questions truly in the affirmative, then you must not wonder that you have made no progress. When I say "on the whole" I do not mean that there shall never be any isolated hasty thought, word or deed at variance with the rules, implied by these last four questions, but only that you shall have deliberately and earnestly adopted these as your standards, and shall on the whole have consistently acted up to them. *Perfect* conformity with these rules is not in man until he has made considerable progress in things spiritual. Occasional slips there will necessarily be ; all that is requisite is that the spirit of these rules should pervade the mind and guide the conduct. The first two rules are absolute.

This then is the prescription that is given us by our physicians ; and, until we have fairly tried it, we have no right to denounce them as impostors. Nay, until we do so, and having done so fail to obtain the results promised, it is we who are pretending to seek what we will not undergo the labor necessary to find, who are really the shams and not the Society.

And here as I am on the subject, I may be permitted a slight digression, which, though not affecting directly your argument will throw some light upon the questions above alluded to.

It must not be supposed that every one able and willing to adhere to all these rules (and other subsid-

itary and less important ones,* which for the present need not be enumerated) will necessarily thereafter become an Adept. Perfect adeptship requires, in addition to all other things, a certain physical and mental organization, which is rare, but which, like other similar peculiarities, is generally hereditary.

But what we are taught is, that all who do adhere to these rules will certainly attain to a spiritual insight unknown to the mass of mankind, will certainly succeed in developing some psychical powers and attain a position in which it is possible for them to prosecute at least some preliminary investigations into the hidden mysteries of nature and the latent psychical powers of man.

In all ages, and in all creeds, there have been true saints, whose lives have been in accord with these rules, and who have been credited by their contemporaries with miraculous powers. The present age of materialistic disbelief asserts that these are all fables, but what we are taught,—*viz.*, that, while there have been innumerable impostors, innumerable frauds, there have also been innumerable true saints, Christian, Buddhist, Mahomedan and Hindoo, who have acquired powers that we, in our ignorance, call miraculous,—seems to me, I confess, the more rational explanation. But in the case of most of such saints, they acquire these powers unwittingly—as a necessary consequence of naturally suitable organizations, further developed by the purity and spirituality of their lives and thoughts,

* One of these omitted rules is, however, of great importance, *vide* page 160. H. X.—*June*, 1882.

—and having no one to teach them the *science* that explains, the really natural, though to the carnal man miraculous, occurrences which resulted from their more or less accidental and unintelligent exercise of the powers with which they became endowed, they did comparatively little with them.

In their own hearts they believed that it was their particular deity who was directly interposing to aid or glorify them ; they never realized that it was their own inner diviner self,—from which their pure lives had half unwound the material bands which hopelessly swathe it in most men,—struggling feebly, in its unaccustomed liberty, (like a life-long fettered prisoner suddenly released,) to assert itself.

To them it was the proof of the truth of that particular creed that filled their hearts, not a necessary sequence under immutable natural laws of their physical organization, the lives they lived, and the state of mind they had acquired.

But, again, it is not absolutely true that without a rigid adherence to these rules, no development of psychical powers can occur. There are exceptional cases in which a special type of organization carried to a high pitch renders the development of some powers or faculties almost independent of the lives led. True, such persons fall far short of what they might have become had their lives been purer and better ; but still, despite shortcomings, they are so constituted by nature as to be what are called natural mystics.

Broadly, however, for the mass of mankind, there is but one lawful road to the acquisition of the hidden knowledge, and that is by living the life.

No doubt there is another school, who share to some extent this occult knowledge, and attain to it by ways more or less evil, and use it more or less unscrupulously. These are known as the "Brothers of the Shadow," "Sorcerers," or practitioners of "Black Magic." From this class have always developed the "Wizards," "Witches," "Obeah-women," "Lycanthropes," dealers in evil potions and the like, and such, unfortunately, have existed in most countries at one time or another.

But this is admittedly a digression. I have shown that, as regards its first two avowed objects, the Society can certainly *not*, justly, be designated a delusion; while, as regards the third object, I venture to think you will admit that, if the conditions necessary for its prosecution are as stated by the real originators of the Society, *you* are hardly yet in a position to form any opinion as to whether it is, or is not, a delusion.

I now turn to your second main head of complaint, *viz.*, that there is not a shadow of evidence of the existence of the Brothers; all the phenomena accepted as such, and all our supposed correspondence with them, being due to Madame Blavatsky's mesmeric, clairvoyant and mediumistic faculties.

Now, if this latter hypothesis was tenable, or again if for "a shadow of evidence" you substituted "any absolutely conclusive proof," I should be compelled to

abandon the argument. But according to my view the hypothesis is not tenable. We both have some experience of phenomena, and are both versed in the literature of spiritualism ; and I ask you whether the whole history of spiritualism furnishes any parallel cases. Take the sounding of the astral bell, which dozens of us have heard in-doors and out of doors, morning, noon and night, close to us and far away up in the air—when large parties were gathered together, and when we have been alone in the room in which Madame Blavatsky was, and on at least two occasions in rooms more or less distant from her—caused by the exercise of her own powers, according to her statement at times when we were waiting to hear it, and caused by the Brothers, according to her account, to attract her attention, at times when we were not in the least expecting it, and when she was in earnest conversation with us, herself speaking, on one occasion at any rate, when the bell rung out.

The sound, by the way, is quite *sui generis*. You can most nearly imitate it by striking the finger wetted on the edge of a finger-glass half full of water, and drawing it for a second along the edge.

They tell us that this is one of their modes of drawing each other's attention when they desire to communicate from a distance, and though they will not tell us exactly how to perform this or any other phenomenon, they do explain *generally* the principles on which it depends.

And here once for all let me give the reasons which

they put forward to explain their refusal to teach us how to do any single one of the marvellous things that they have done for us. They say that one and all depend in great measure upon their knowledge of manipulating the "astral light," or if you like it, "Ether;"—that intangible, to us invisible, fluid which permeates all matter, all space—the entire universe in fact—and which is the vehicle of all force and the connecting link, to employ a popular form of speech, between matter and spirit. There is scarcely any limit to what men, possessed of the requisite physical as well as mental organization can effect once they possess the knowledge of how to use and direct this fluid, of which transmitting agency electricity, light, heat and other forces are but manifestations. By a mere exercise of will, the force that holds together the ultimate atoms of any dead matter is neutralized, and the object passes into the unseen universe. By another effort these atoms are propelled along a current in any direction, to any desired place, and there the neutralizing force withdrawn, the atoms recrystallize (if I may use an incorrect term, in order to convey some conception of what takes place) in their most recent form of union, and the object repasses into the visible universe.

You have often been at the Tower of London, I dare say, and have there seen the British Crown Jewels, in their massive plate glass cabinets (if I may so express myself) in their strongly barred room, strongly guarded. But if I possessed the powers Adepts are said to do, I could, sitting in my room here in India, cause all those jewels to disappear from London, and

recrystallize on my table. I could, in fact, if wicked enough, rob the whole of mankind without any chance of detection. Or, again, take a case said to have occurred many years ago in Germany, in which a Brother, who has corresponded with us, is said to have taken part. He was at this time a student, and though in course of preparation was not then himself an Adept, but was, like all regular *chelas*, under the special charge of an Adept. A young friend of his was accused of forgery, and tried for the same. Our Brother, then a student as above explained, was called as a witness to prove his friend's handwriting; the case was perfectly clear and a conviction certain. Through his mentor, our Brother learnt that his accused friend did not really deserve the punishment that would necessarily fall on him, and which would have ruined not only him, but other innocent persons dependent on him. He had really committed a forgery, but not knowingly or meaningly, though it was impossible to show this. So when the alleged forged document was handed to the witness he merely said: "I see nothing written here," and returned the deed blank. His mentor had caused the entire writing to disappear. It was supposed that a wrong paper had been by mistake handed to the witness; search was made high and low, but the deed never appeared, and the accused was perforce acquitted.

Now, mind I am far from asserting that all this is true. I merely tell the tale as 'twas told to me. I only mention it to explain the position that the Brothers (supposing they exist, as I am inclined to think they do) take up. They say, "if we teach you

how to work one of these phenomena, we have put one end of the clue into your hands, and some of you thus started are quite sharp enough to work your way with this into the innermost recesses of the labyrinth, without further help from us and perhaps in despite of us. For we are bound by such laws that we could not exercise the powers we possess hostilely towards you or any other human being. "Now," they say, "it is not enough that you should lead the required lives. This may enable us to deal directly with you and help you; it may lead to your acquisition in an accidental and rule-of-thumb way of certain powers according to your innate natural capacities, which, if your spirit recharged for evil, would assuredly soon pass from you; but before we will induct you into the rationale, the science of these, to you magical, though in reality purely natural operations, we require absolute security that you will never misuse these powers—(nay for you might unknowingly, and with the best intentions, as a fact *misuse* them) that you will never use them except in rigid accordance with those wise laws that the experience of five thousand years has shown to be the only infallible safeguard against their misuse. So until you become our scholars, (*chelas*) submitting yourselves absolutely to our guidance, we will teach you no secrets; nay, of the great secret we will teach you nothing until by your own free will you have so placed your minds (to use a popular term) under our control, that we possess absolute security against any misuse of powers, of which we are the trustees, and for the misuse of which, by any one taught by us, we are morally responsible—a security such as the entire order as a body possesses against each of us."

Unfortunately for us, we are most of us true Westerns; we are willing enough to try and live the life, some of us unreservedly, some with certain reservations; but we, none of us, feel disposed to subordinate our wills entirely to those of any other people, Adepts or non-adepts. We conceive that we are responsible for our own acts, words, and thoughts, and that we have no right to put ourselves in a position in which we *might* possibly have to do what we thought wrong. They deny that this could ever happen, but the question has never been threshed out nor their answer explained. I may notice that communications are rather grudgingly made; that only one single Brother, so far as we know, is favorable to us; and that he is greatly hindered by higher authorities. The great bulk of the Brotherhood (although it contains some Westerns, and although one Englishman in past times attained almost to the highest rank) consider, we are told, that, in consequence of their rude physical organization, materialistic education, sceptical spirit, bigoted adherence to the religious notions in which they were educated of Heaven, Hell and a Personal God, inveterate attachment to the canons of physical research, independence of character and incapacity for taking anything *on* trust, want of faith in fact, Westerns, however clever and, for them, liberal-minded, are not worth wasting time on, and should not have been brought into the business.

Anyhow, except Col. Olcott, no European, now in India, that I know of, has consented to become one of their regular *chelas*, nor do I know any that are likely to become this. The rest of us only hope to be able

hereafter to deal directly face to face with some of them, and so obtain really conclusive proof—in other words, absolute certainty—both of the existence of the Brothers and of the extent of their powers.

On this, of course, depends whether we accept the philosophy we are gradually picking up from them, and of which Fragments of Occult Truth are specimens, as absolute truth, or whether we continue to regard them as speculations—possible, but unestablished truths.

But, though Col. Olcott is a scholar, he can perform no phenomenon,—except very rapidly developing clair-audient and clairvoyant powers—and is yet, as far as I can see, nearly as far from the great secret as any of us; and why this is so is explained in his letter,* to which I would recall your attention, as it is in many respects well worthy of careful perusal. Madame Blavatsky, we are told, stands on a different footing. In the first place, she has the requisite organization. She is not only a *chela*, but *has been* regularly educated according to their system, and has passed through several of the stages which precede the lowest grade of adeptship. *She* possesses powers, and can communicate at will with the Brothers, be she or they where they may; but having passed through those stages, that guarantee for entire submission to the will of the Brotherhood above referred to has been taken from her, some of the consequences of which are, we are informed, to be traced in that hastiness of temper and

* Printed below, p. 224.

occasional inaccuracy of speech on which you have so severely commented, and of which more hereafter.

This, again, is a terrible digression; but you, who fancy you know all that any of us have heard, have really as yet learnt so little of what is familiar to all of us in the inner exoteric circle, that to put you at all in a position to judge fairly on the subject, I am compelled to deviate here and there from my direct argument.

To return: My contention is that the astral bell phenomenon has no parallel, taking all the varied circumstances, places and conditions under which it has been produced in the entire history of spiritualism.

Take, again, the constant addition of postscripts and marginal notes in the well-known characteristic hand-writings of Brothers who have communicated with us, to letters in transit, through the post; many, no doubt under circumstances that admit the hypothesis that Madame Blavatsky might, by some, though hardly conceivable, trick have somehow got hold of the letters and written on them under control, but some, when the letters can never have been near her, or in any sort of way within her reach or even ken—can you match this out of any well-authenticated spiritualistic record?

Or, again, take the case of one of us, without pre-meditation, sitting down to write a note to one of the Brothers, on a subject which had not been broached,

and of which Madame Blavatsky and the rest were entirely ignorant. The letter was completed and closed without any one going near the writer.

Thus closed, it was, as usual, handed to Madame Blavatsky for transmission. She took it, put it into her pocket, went into her own room, which opened out of the one in which the writer was, and returned within half a minute, saying it was gone. Ten minutes or so after this, during which she had never been out of the sight of the writer or his wife, and during the greater portion of which she had been lying on a couch in the same room in which the writer was, she suddenly said: "There's your letter," which accordingly appeared on the pillow (just where her head had rested) apparently untouched, except that on the outside the writer's name had been substituted for that of the Brother. The envelope was carefully examined, and there was no trace of its having been opened, yet on the blank half sheet was recorded in the Brother's well-known handwriting an answer to the question put. Now Madame Blavatsky had not been 30 seconds out of sight, not long enough simply to open the note, securely closed, much less to open it so as to exhibit no traces of opening, take the note out, write on it, re-fold it and re-close it.

I do not think that even to this incident you will find a parallel amongst mediumistic experiences.

I may add that in this and many other cases it was explained to us that the answers given were not written, but "precipitated." Just as they profess to be

able to cause any writing to disappear from any document, so they profess to be able to cause any writing they like to appear on any paper. They have, they say, to conceive what they want expressed, form the words in, to use a popular phrase, the mind's eye, and then project them on the astral light to the spot where they wish them to be impressed. I say here (as I am continually obliged to do) to use a popular phrase, because the English language contains no words to represent the ideas contained in their science philosophy, and, though we are slowly coining words, to stand for these, they are still as little known as are the Tibetan and Sanscrit terms they give us; and I am compelled, therefore, to use some known phrase that conveys some idea of what it is desired to express, or which, at any rate, awakens ideas having some relation or resemblance to that. But I am not going to recapitulate all the phenomena to which one or other of us have been witness, and several of us by nature highly sceptical; undoubtedly some of them are explicable on the theory that Madame Blavatsky is a medium, but some of them are, it appears to me, decidedly *not* so explicable.

You gain nothing by saying, "but perhaps she is a different kind of medium to any on record." With the tens of thousands of mediums in Europe and America,—not merely professional ones, but members of private families, whose full names even are only known in their own domestic circles,—in regard to the phenomena attending whom we have records, we know by this time pretty well what can and is, and what is not, brought about by the agency of the supposed spirits

who control mediums ; and when you find a distinct set of phenomena, such as have never occurred in connection with any of the innumerable mediums of spiritualists, occurring in connection with Madame Blavatsky to say "she is a different kind of medium to any on record," is to concede the point. For she is then not what spiritualists call a medium, or mean when they use the word, for few of the manifestations usually accompanying mediums occur in her presence, while in connection with her occur things unknown in connection with those persons, and the explanation to which you *seem* to incline (I say seem because you hover between conscious and unconscious fraud) falls to the ground.

Of course, in one sense of the word, but *not* that in which nowadays it is *universally* used, Madame Blavatsky would at once admit that she was a medium, *viz.*, a medium through which living men, of abnormally developed psychic powers (not spirits of dear departed ones, mind) communicate with us ordinary mortals.

But on a former occasion you objected, I remember, to this very statement, asking why they did not communicate direct? And you said that being living men, possessing an objective reality, you could not understand what they wanted any medium for, and why they did not come boldly out and, face to face with their brother men, preach their own doctrines and philosophy, and do their work themselves, and do it well and thoroughly, instead of working through instruments so infinitely inferior to themselves, and whom, according to what we were told, they admitted to fall in many

respects short of what they wished, albeit they declared them to be, on the whole, the best fitted for their purposes that they had been able to find.

A moment's reflection will show you that they could not come boldly out face to face with the ignorant and superstitious masses of mankind. Did they do so, preach their doctrines and exhibit their powers, then you will admit that, *especially* in this country, nine-tenths of the population would—protest as the Adepts might—treat these as gods, worship them, and add another, and most rampant one, to the gross superstitions that already cover the fair fields of human souls with a deadly jungle. Of all things they seek to avoid creating any delusions of this kind. To us they perpetually repeat—“We are not gods, we are men like yourselves, a little wiser perhaps in some things, but less acquainted with the ways of the world. By a course of training, involving suppression of the outward and physical, and, if you will, worldly sensations and desires, and a concentration of our entire energy on the inner self and things spiritual, we have mastered, some of us more, some less, the secrets of the working of those intangible invisible powers, of which the physical or manifested universe is the visible outcome—a scum as it were floating on the surface of (to the physical eye) an absolutely transparent and colorless, and therefore unrealizable ocean. We have succeeded in withdrawing our gaze from this glamour-shrouded scum, and in looking down into the clear depths, we have ascertained to a great extent the course and causes of the currents ever thrilling through that ocean, and ever agitating the scum that floats upon its surface. Nay, we have

learnt how to a small extent to guide and direct minor branches of these currents, and so produce effects in the visible world, incomprehensible by, and, unless actually witnessed, incredible to the untaught man.

“ But we are neither infallible nor omnipotent; we are not perhaps even wholly free from prejudices, from likes and dislikes, and other similar worldly follies.

“ Many of us certainly still love our country and our countrymen better than other countries and people of other nationalities. We are less liable to error than you in any important matter, because where we take the trouble to investigate, we can calculate with certainty *almost* every factor involved in the equation (and every event, great or little, remember, is one side of an equation), whereas to you half the factors, and those the most potent—we mean those pertaining to the unseen universe—are unknown, while even of those appreciable to your unvivified senses, the majority are still incalculable. But for all that, even with the utmost care, there are cases in which we may be at fault, and in the majority of matters, not of sufficient importance to justify the employment of the time necessary for the investigation, in which we form opinions in the ordinary method and on the data patent to all, we are only less liable to err than yourselves, because not liable to be influenced by worldly passions and desires.

“ We are not omnipotent—nay, we are as nothing before the mighty tide of cosmic powers. We can do things to you inexplicable, miraculous, but they are but as the moving of a single mote floating in a wandering

sunbeam. Our lives are spent in endeavoring to benefit mankind, but it is only to a limited extent that we can influence the tide of human affairs. As well might one weak human arm seek to stay the rushing waters of the mighty Ganges in flood as we feeble band of Adepts to stem the resistless stream of cosmic impulses. All we can do is, by some groin here, some few hurdles there, somewhat to alter the set of the current, and so avert, here and there, catastrophes that we see impending; or, again, by tiny canals, here and there, to lead off minute portions of the stream to fertilize tracts that, but for our efforts, would have remained deserts. You have asked how it is that, if this be so, the world knows nothing of us and our deeds? Like Nature, in harmony, with whose laws and inherent attributes all our operations are carried on, we work in silence and in secret. Like Nature unthanked and unknown, our work must ever be. All earthly rewards for our work—name, fame, ‘the applause of’ wondering ‘senates’—are to us, like the rest of this world’s toys, mere illusions, powerless even to *please* those who have once looked behind them into the eternal truths above which they float, ‘for,’ as your great apostle, himself an initiate, grandly said, ‘the things that are seen are transitory, but the things that are unseen are eternal.’ And well for us that it is so, since our records afford too many instances of men, well on the upward path we tread, who, their feet caught in these very snares, have fallen, irrevocably, as regards this life.”

I do not think that any one will dispute that, in the present state of mankind, and especially mankind in the East, in which, as they themselves admit, the Adepts as a body are most especially interested, any

public appearance and ministry of the Brothers would produce incalculable harm, would give birth to a new crop of baneful superstitions, would disorganize society, disturb the whole course of public affairs, and not improbably extinguish finally that small Brotherhood, in whose sole custody remains the secret knowledge of the universe.

I remember that in a former letter you characterized one of the Brothers' arguments on this head as "silly," and yet, if you think the matter over, you will see that it is not so. The mysteries of death and the possible world beyond the grave are the sole things that stir to its utmost depths every human heart. To the world all this is still shrouded in darkness; various religions assert this or that about these awful mysteries; but there is no tangible evidence of the truth of these so-called revelations, and they are everywhere fast losing their hold even on the minds of the masses, as they have long since lost all vital hold upon the bulk of educated minds.

Once let it be generally known and believed that there existed men who not only knew all about death, but were able to, and habitually did, watch the progress of the immortal portion of man after death, witnessed what befell it, and knew why and how in each case this occurred—once let this be known and thoroughly believed, and neither walls of adamant nor triple gates of brass, neither oceans nor the snowy ranges shooting up miles high into the intense inane, could keep these knowers from the overwhelming rush of human beings, mad,—for all violent spiritual upsurgings become a

sort of madness—mad, I say, with the intense resolve to learn and have proof of all they were taught. Under such conditions adeptship must cease to exist. The maintenance of their powers demands much of silence and solitude. The Adept, if he is to continue one, above all if he is to progress (and there is almost as great a difference between the higher and lower Adepts as there is between these latter and the uninitiated), must live a great deal in his own (to use the current phrase) soul. He cannot mix much with ordinary men. All human beings are surrounded by an atmosphere, an aura, the outcome, the astral pictures if you like, of their deeds, words and thoughts. Thought, we are told, is material, just as much as speech and deeds, though not equally appreciable to the physical senses. Carbonic acid gas is just as material when it floats an intangible and invisible vapor as when you touch and see it a frozen liquid. Around the vast bulk of mankind the circumambient aura is evil, full of all that is ever welling up from hearts which, as you truly say, quoting one of the greatest of the ancients, are desperately deceitful and wicked altogether. Now this *aura* acts insensibly on all who come within its influence, and where bad is as pernicious to the soul as is a fetid atmosphere to the body. As has been said in the Fragments, “evil communications corrupt good manners,” though a trite proverb, embodies, like many such, an eternal truth. Insensibly and slowly, but surely, the aura hanging round wicked and worldly people deadens the spiritual perceptions of those it acts upon, and no Adept could long remain in a mental atmosphere such as hangs over and interpenetrates every great capital or indiscriminate gathering of mankind, without losing

much of his powers, and forfeiting for long all chances of progress.

And here you have a partial answer to the further question, why—even admitting that the Brothers could not without serious risk come openly forward and do their own work amongst and preach their own doctrines to the masses of mankind,—they could not yet deal directly with a selected number of Theosophists, and thus pave the way for the gradual infusion of the truths about them amongst mankind, instead of leaving the whole of us to grope our way, now hoping, now doubting, now disbelieving, instead, in fact, of leaving us in the pitiable state of uncertainty in which most of us are ?

Col. Olcott's letter throws some light upon this also. The fact is, almost all, if not all of us, are still too deeply immersed in the fetid mud of worldly, if not actually wicked, cares and desires to be approached or directly dealt with by the Brothers without the greatest repugnance.

What to our physical senses are the odors that hang about sewers and slaughter-houses, that and worse to their spiritual senses are the aura that hang about us. That by the exercise of psychic powers they can repel the evil influences that surround us, and prevent any injury to themselves is true, no doubt; but the psychic like the physical powers of man are limited, and easily exhaustible. Why should they *waste* powers in dealing with those unfitted, and unwilling to fit themselves, for dealing with them without such waste? There are always in the world men who have fitted

themselves for this intercourse, and with these, they tell us, they *do* deal directly.

But another perhaps more important reason is the inevitable uselessness of any attempts on their part to deal directly with people not spiritually purified. Though one went to them from the dead they would not believe. If a Brother were to visit an ordinary man a dozen times, would he believe? If the Brother came in the flesh he would think him an impostor; if he came in his astral form, and the man's eyes were opened so as to see him, he would persuade himself it was a trick of his own fancy or of some one else's devising. No, the mass of mankind, even the mass of the more highly educated Theosophists, who have in no way purified their spiritual natures, possess that spiritual sense or insight which alone renders *conviction* possible, still only in a potential or dormant state.

There is an infinity of work that the Brothers can do, and *that*, they say, they *do* do. Why should they waste time and powers (they are only men, remember) over what from the nature of the conditions must be an all but, if not utterly, fruitless toil?

But now I must return to your assertion, that there is not a shadow of evidence of the existence of any such Brothers. Certainly I have no absolutely conclusive proof of this. I have never seen nor spoken to one, and till lately I myself quite doubted their existence; I know of only one cultivated European, excluding Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, *viz.*, Mr. —, who has seen and conversed with one of them, and though

to me, who know him and his mental capacity well, his statement carries great weight, as evidence to the outside public, it is *nil*, since he was admittedly at the time in a sort of trance. At the same time it is necessary to remark that the fact of this "vision" not having been an ordinary dream was verified by an actual removal and change of place of a material object. Nor can I point to any one on whose judgment and good faith I can "implicitly rely," who has seen and conversed with any one of the Brothers.

But is not this latter question of yours a somewhat idle one? On whose judgment can any man *implicitly* rely? Does any wise man *implicitly* rely on his *own* judgment? *A fortiori* does he *implicitly* rely on any one else's judgment?

The hypothesis of the existence of the Brothers rests partly on a long series of phenomena, several of which are outside all authenticated spiritualistic experiences; partly on communications supposed to have come from them, many received in altogether phenomenal manners, as for instance, inside letters, sent in some cases by persons knowing nothing either of Madame Blavatsky or Theosophy—letters that, as far as human intelligence is of any avail to decide the point, Madame Blavatsky could by no possibility have had access to, or even knowledge of, and sometimes dropped in front of the person they were addressed to under circumstances that seemed to preclude the possibility of their having been so dropped by any known physical agency; and partly on the statements of Col: Olcott, Padshah, Damodar, (to whom you alluded in your former letter) and others,

also natives, who have publicly testified to seeing one or other of the Brothers. I say publicly, because I believe from what I have heard—and this not solely from Madame Blavatsky, or people connected with her—that there are a large number of natives who have received absolute proof and possess an absolute certainty of the existence of the Brothers, under whom many of them are working, and in whose steps they are treading.

How from age to age has the Brotherhood been recruited? The Adepts are no more immortal than the rest of us. Their lives are prolonged far beyond the Psalmist's three-score and ten, but still with all their science, all their knowledge, their bodies, like all the other phantasma of this illusory life, wear out at last. Some few of the very highest, utterly self-disregarding beings, voluntarily ré-enter in new bodies this troublous life; the re-incarnation of the Dalai, Teshoo and two other Lamas, is not, we are told, a legend, but a sober truth; but be this as it may, the vast majority of Adepts, one life's work well done here, pass away forever from this world.

The Brotherhood is maintained by new recruits, and for ages the immense majority of these have been Easterns, and of these a very large proportion have been natives of India. No doubt there are Adepts everywhere, but India appears to have been the earliest traceable home of Occultism, and more of it lingers here than anywhere else.

True, the Brotherhood admittedly exists in greatly diminished numbers; a wave of materialism has rolled

over the entire globe, and India has no more escaped the curse than other countries, and for thousands that twenty centuries ago might have been found here, working towards adeptship, hundreds could scarcely now be found. Still such men *are* at work in every province, and all such, who have made any real progress, equally with the few who, under the new dispensation (as contrasted with the old Buddhistic and Brahminical systems, though all have one common root), have publicly avowed the fact, possess a certainty of the existence of the Brothers.

But you will urge that this is mere talk. You said most truly that every class of Native society was honey-combed with a belief in jogis and Adepts (who indeed are only scientific as opposed to rule-of-thumb jogis). Do you suppose that any such incredible belief could have permeated the minds of 200 millions of people and clung securely there for thousands of years, while empires rose and fell, languages were born and died, and all else, even religions, waxed and waned, if it had no substantial basis of fact.

But let us rather consider the evidence actually before us. I take Col. Olcott, and again refer you to his letter.* You reject his testimony, and tell me that it is absurd to build an argument on my conviction of somebody else's goodness. Now, in one sense, this is theoretically true, but practically it is a fallacy. All matters in the world are mainly dealt with on conceptions of other people's character; all business is carried

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on, on the basis on which you deem it absurd to build even an argument; all suits are decided; every mundane transaction rests upon this basis. Admittedly mistakes may be made, but broadly these conceptions, founded on our knowledge of human nature, prove correct. I claim no infallibility. I may, of course, be deceived. Col. Olcott (though you yourself admit having been impressed with his good faith) *may* after all be a double-distilled hypocrite, an arch deceiver; but taking all the circumstances of the case, this is a barely possible hypothesis—one quite as difficult, if all the circumstances be reviewed, to accept as that of the existence of the Brothers; and having had much intercourse with him, having jealously regarded his words and deeds, I have formed the conclusion that he is a thoroughly good, honest, sincere man; and this being so, I submit that the deliberate statement he makes is a very fair ground on which to build an argument for the existence of the Brothers. Mind, I never professed to call it conclusive proof, but it is fair ground for an argument; it is distinct and tangible evidence which cannot be disregarded, though each different person will attach more or less weight to it according to his knowledge of Col. Olcott and his conviction, derived from a personal study of him, of his honesty.

But turn to some of the natives. You specially in a former letter referred to Damodar, and you asked how it could be believed that the Brothers would waste time with a half-educated slip of a boy like him, and yet absolutely refuse to visit and convince men like _____ and _____, Europeans of the highest education and of marked abilities.

But do you know that this slip of a boy has deliberately given up high caste, family, friends and an ample fortune, all in pursuit of the truth? That he has for years lived that pure, unworldly, self-denying life which, we are told, is essential to direct intercourse with the Brothers? "Oh a monomaniac," you say, "of course, *he* sees anything and everything!"

But do you not see whither this leads you? Men who do not lead the life, do not obtain direct proof of the existence of the Brothers. A man does live the life and avers that he has obtained such proof, and you straightway call him a monomaniac, and refuse his testimony. How is it possible ever to give you evidence that will lead you, as we have been led, to believe in the existence of the Brothers as a strong probability, although unable to assert it as a fact? Really in this respect the position of many men seems to be analogous to that of the schoolboy, who says, "those who ask shan't have, and those who don't ask don't want"; quite a "heads I win, tails you lose" sort of position.

"But why is it chiefly, almost exclusively, among natives that the Brothers appear to work?" is a question often put. "Why do they not rather deal with the far more enlightened and better educated Europeans, and leave *them* to spread the matter amongst the natives." In the first place, though this goes for little with people so essentially just, I believe that the great bulk of the Adepts love the natives, and at best only tolerate Europeans, at any rate Western Europeans, for Magyars and such races are not included I gather

in their antagonism. In the second place—and this is the real hitch and the main source of their want of sympathy with us—we, Westerns, are infinitely less suited for the acquisition of this knowledge than are Easterns.

This is partly due to physical organization. You know perfectly that it was usually amongst delicate or sickly women that Reichenbach, whom you mention, discovered his best sensitives; it is always these who make the best clairvoyantes. All abnormal developments of psychical powers require a corresponding repression of the physical nature, which may be the result either of delicacy of organization or mental control. As a matter of fact the comparatively delicate or feeble organization of Easterns—the result partly of climate, partly of vegetarian diet—is more favorable to the development of psychical powers than the more robust, animal food-fed organizations of the Westerns. Moreover, as I have already mentioned, special capacity for psychical development is eminently hereditary; and adeptship having been known for at least 4,000 years in India, and having been in past ages widely spread here, while it has been absolutely unknown in the West, there are an infinitely greater number here, specially capable for such development than in Europe, or at least Western and Central Europe.

But mental organization and inclinations also play an important part in the question. Westerns, trained more or less in the positive school of physical research, which verifies everything by the application of direct external tests, are almost inherently incapacitated from

accepting and making progress in a system of metaphysical research which verifies everything by reference to internal intuition. On the other hand, this latter system accords as perfectly with the less energetic, more meditative mind of the Indian, as the physical method does with the more active mind of the Englishman; and it has always accordingly from the remotest periods been known and followed here.

From these and many kindred causes it follows, we are informed, that for every Western European capable and willing to prosecute with any success the study of occultism, at least a thousand Easterns, even better qualified, could be found; and it need, therefore, never surprise even those Europeans who believe in the Brothers, if, as time goes by, almost every person appearing to attain any successful results should prove to be a Native or Eurasian, for unquestionably the half blood, and long domiciliation of these latter in this country puts many of them nearly on the same level as regards these matters as the whole-blooded native.

To return: I think I may claim to have shown that the Theosophical Society cannot fairly, even now in its infancy, be called a delusion; that the phenomena that have occurred in connection with it are not explicable on the theory of Madame Blavatsky's mediumistic powers, many of them having been of a nature never previously observed in the case of any other medium; and, lastly, that, though there is no certainty to us of the existence of the Brothers, it cannot truly be asserted that there is no shadow of evidence of the fact, there being really a nexus of circumstantial evidence, not

half of which has been, or can be, referred to here, which will be more or less convincing to each mind, according to the spirit in which it is weighed and examined.

I say of which not one-half can here be referred to—I might say one-tenth, for the chain consists mainly of a thousand small occurrences, which, taken singly, might be rejected as coincidences, but which cumulatively distinctly amount to evidence. To explain my meaning I will notice one little incident which has occurred whilst I have been writing this letter and in connection with it, and which moreover you can verify, for Mr. B—— is a member of your own branch, is well known to you, and resides in the same station as yourself.

About a week ago I had occasion to write to him in reply to a letter of his, pointing out, as I have done above to you, the conditions that we were told were essential to obtaining direct communication with the Brothers; and that till those conditions were fulfilled no one had a right to complain of not being visited by these.

Three days ago, whilst pondering over the reply I should make to your letter—feeling, on the one hand, how strong my own belief was in the existence of the Brothers, and, on the other, how difficult it was to convey to you any adequate idea of the multitude of circumstances out of which that belief has grown up—I could not help thinking to myself: “Well, really, if the Brothers do exist and want people to believe in them, they would surely do well to give some few of us some such unmistakable evidence as should enable us

to say, not as now, that we believe they exist, but that we *know* it of our own personal knowledge;" and I wished with all my power that they would in some way give me some help out of the difficulty in which I felt that I was placed.

Now I need not remind you that Madame Blavatsky is some 1,500 miles away from me, and nearly as far from you and Mr. B. But I may say that my letter to him contained no allusion to my difficulties, and that no one here or elsewhere (unless the Brothers) knew anything of my perplexities. Yet, whilst to-day writing this letter, I received a letter from Mr. B., who, after thanking me for mine, says: "After perusal and thinking over its contents I felt a desire to take a pencil and write, in my usual manner, *willing* that I should obtain some communication from my inner self, and this, of which I send you a copy as therein desired, was what I got:—"

Communication with the mysterious Brotherhood.

"This, the most important feature in the Society of Theosophists, is a subject of deep interest to many, if not all, its fellows; and why? Because they all desire to prove to themselves that there is such a Brotherhood, and that they hope thereby to convince themselves of the reality of occultism. A most mistaken notion; is it possible for the mysteries of nature to hang upon so slight a thread, *viz.*, the existence of some Adepts? Did not nature possess those laws at its very creation? Or has it acquired them only from the time that the Adepts have formed a lodge of their own? True that the Brethren guide and direct you,

and lead you on the rugged path they have traversed with much self-sacrifice ; but it is only humane charity which induces them to do so, and because they desire to benefit those who are in darkness, and for no gain to themselves. It is only when they see a willing object that they take him in hand ; their rules are strict, that is no fault of theirs : nature teaches them these rules, and they are bound to adhere to them. They are not bound to communicate with every one, no more than any man may take or not to another. Nature may command them to visit you and give instruction and disclose some of its mysteries ; but can it be a fault if they do not repeat their visits ? The searcher of truth should not look out for these Adepts. Every flower and living thing on earth has a hidden secret. Man has one in himself ; let him search his own power and he will find an ample store of marvels which all the Adepts put together cannot produce, if he can only be so purified as to reach that perfected state that is absolutely necessary for such phenomena. Now, then, that I have defended the Brethren, I have to tell you that you must not hope to see them as you have hoped. Hope for success to see wonderful things, and that is all ; and perchance a Brother may be deputed to instruct you as others are instructed. Send this to Mr. X."

Now there is nothing remarkable in this *per se*, the only remarkable point is, that Mr. B., who has never sent me any paper before, of whom I know little, and who could not possibly have had any idea of my perplexities, should, on the precise day on which I was mentally abusing the Brothers for their, as I confess it often seems to me, strangely unbusiness-like and round-

about way of doing business, conceive himself impelled to write and to be directed to send me a copy of what is an answer to *much of* my mental address to the Brothers.

You will say, "Strange, certainly, but a mere coincidence,"—so be it; but when these little coincidences, trivial in themselves, are constantly recurring, I personally find much difficulty in avoiding the conclusion which they cumulatively point to, *viz.*, that they are the result of design, and not accident, and that there is an intelligent power behind them.

And now before closing I wish to notice some of what I may term the side issues raised in your letter.

You say that Theosophy appears to you to be merely Christianity without Christ.

Now if by Christianity we understand the religion set forth by most of the more important existing sects—Catholic and Protestant—there might be some grounds for your assertion; but if by Christianity we are to understand the religion actually preached by Christ, then I must differ from you, because *Theosophy* is the very religion preached by Jesus, Sakya Muni, and all great Eastern religious teachers of antiquity, the fundamental doctrines of which are, "a life beyond the grave," and "the inevitable reaction in the next life, upon what survives of man after death, of all the good or evil done by it in this life."

These were admittedly the cardinal doctrines preached

by Gautama Buddha, and these, as you may verify for yourself from the first three Gospels, were the cardinal doctrines preached by Jesus. You have only to read Matthew, v, 3-12, 43-48; vi & vii, xii, 50; xiii, 41-43; xix, 16-22; xxv, 31-46; and parallel passages, to see that, despite isolated texts, on which a different construction may be put, the real essence of Christ's Christianity was, "they that have done evil shall go into everlasting (or prolonged) punishment, and they that have done good into Life eternal (or of long duration)." Not those, he said, who called him Lord, Lord, *i.e.*, who professed belief in *him*, but those who *did* the will of His Father in heaven, *i.e.*, did good, were to reap this reward.

The doctrine of vicarious expiation of wrong-doing—of the atonement in fact—now supposed to be the corner-stone of Christianity, was evolved long after Christ's own time by a section of the then Church, so much so that it was quite unknown to some of the early fathers, and rejected by others, whom, in consequence, the existing Churches, which are the offspring of that section, have ever regarded as heterodox or heretic.

So you cannot call Theosophy either Buddhism without Buddha, or Christianity without Christ; it is Buddhism without the legends with which the Buddhist Churches have, as years rolled by, disfigured the fair fabric of their founder; it is Christianity without the doctrines with which Christian Churches have overloaded the simple purity of *their* founder's work; it is a fresh outburst from that primeval font of sacred truth

in which both Buddhism and Christianity, and a hundred other creeds, whose names even have long been forgotten, had their source. Such at least is the contention of the supposed Brothers

You seem to think that the value of the system of religious philosophy, in which we are being gradually indoctrinated, must depend wholly upon conclusive proof of the existence of the Brothers, and of the possession by them of powers which enable them to verify by actual knowledge the supposed facts embodied in that philosophy. In other words, you hold that without such conclusive proof, the system of philosophy supposed to emanate from them must necessarily be worthless. But this appears to me an altogether erroneous view. Without such proof, we cannot accept that philosophy as *certainly* true; but if we find it to constitute an all-embracing consistent whole, furnishing a rational credible explanation of all the puzzles of the universe,—such as the origin of evil, of which no other system has ever given any rational solution—if we find that while manifestly the source out of which ancient creeds arose from two to three thousand years ago, it yet harmonizes perfectly with, and elucidates every fact that modern science and modern spiritualism have established—we may well value it highly as the best hypothesis yet put forward, and accept it as more probably true, and therefore more deserving of careful study, than any other.

I do not assert that all this is true of this philosophy; I know as yet too little of it. I can only say, that so far as I have gone it seems to me to be so; but what I

desire to impress upon you is, that no uncertainty as to the Brothers *necessarily* renders the philosophy valueless, but that, on the contrary, it *may* prove to possess inherent claims on our reason, quite independent of the source from which it is or is supposed to be derived.

You say: "If this Society had been founded by such a Brotherhood, it would have been far more wisely administered; its leaders would have led higher and more consistent lives; its organ would not have been so often disfigured by passages which must revolt every sensible mind, every kind heart; and, lastly, its real founders would have taken means of thoroughly demonstrating their existence to some few at any rate of their more prominent supporters."

Now as regards the latter point, I need not again go over the ground already traversed. To the best of my belief none of the European supporters of the Society have yet led the lives declared to be essential to such conclusive demonstration, though several are now trying to do so, and this point therefore goes for nothing. But as regards the founders living higher and more consistent lives, I scarcely follow you. Could any mere man have led a purer, better life than Col. Olcott has done since he landed in India? I have been able to watch his life closely for weeks, I may say months; he has been, to quote your expression, "*en evidence*" day and night since his arrival with crowds ever round him, the majority eager to detect any frailty or misconduct. Yet after several years, what are the most serious shortcomings that he can be charged with? First, that he

has written three or four letters or paragraphs, in the regular Yankee—journalist (to our ideas)—bad-form style. Second, that he has spoken and written of certain Christian priests in an angry and unbecoming tone. That, abused and insulted in the grossest manner by these very priests, he should have partly lost his temper and have retaliated, even comparatively mildly, is to be regretted; it is contrary to the doctrines of Theosophy, as much as the language used by some of those whose insults he resented, was opposed to the teachings of Christ; but he is not merely, like the Adepts themselves, only a man, but he has as yet surmounted only one of the many steps by which the lowest platform of adeptship has to be reached, and can therefore any trivial shortcomings of this nature be either wondered at or constitute any real argument against the Brothers?

For, understand clearly, that the Brothers declare that they work with nature and by natural means. Nature does not instantaneously produce the gigantic pine or the mature oak. She sows many seeds, many do not germinate at all, some few germinate, and thence slowly the tree develops, through innumerable vicissitudes, and many a check, many a broken branch; and whilst many generations of leaves come and go, it gradually grows and matures. So with all their works; they use, as a rule, no phenomenal means; they work only with ordinary instruments. They, too, sow many seeds, and leave them to germinate or not, and for the rest mainly trust to natural causes for the developments they have in view, though, like the forester, they may here and there intervene in special cases to supplement the powers of nature or avert catastrophes that these appear to be bringing round. They never

for one moment pretend to have the time or means to supervise details.

It was desired by one, at any rate, amongst the Adepts, himself educated in the West, to afford some glimpses to that West, now fast sinking in a Dead Sea of materialism, of those spiritual truths of which the Brotherhood are the custodians.

It was difficult in the last degree to find any person fitted to become a missionary in the cause. Admitting unhesitatingly, as they always do, that Madame Blavatsky is by no means in all respects what they should have desired, they yet affirm that she was on the whole the fittest instrument available. Possessing in some degree, as an inheritance from an Adept ancestor, the special capacity requisite for great success in occult studies; having spent the greater part of her life in attempts to penetrate these secrets for which she ever felt an innate yearning; having been at last led to Tibet, and there having been thoroughly grounded in the science, and having risen several steps on the ladder; and above all despising utterly all worldly objects; and being heart and soul devoted to their service in absolute singleness of heart, the Adepts considered that, despite her excitable temperament, and other similar shortcomings (for which, as we know, she is perpetually being chided and rebuked), she was on the whole the best person they could get to set the work they had in view on foot.

America was chosen as the start point; because of all Western countries, America is the one in which, owing to the wide diffusion of spiritualistic experiences,

materialism was most easy to combat. Disapproving, owing to its dangers, as explained in Fragments of Occult Truth No. 1, any general practice of so-called spiritualistic investigations, the Brothers yet recognize that it serves to awaken a belief in the occurrence of "phenomena," and may thus serve as a ground-work on which their philosophy, which furnishes the true explanation of these, may be built up.

Later branches were established in Western European countries. That the results have been far from satisfactory is admitted—the explanation being that, with few exceptions, Western people are not willing, and many of them (surrounded and smothered by the antagonistic aura, emanating from the worldly-minded multitude in the midst of which they dwell), are utterly unable to lead the lives essential to any progress—and it was decided to transfer the real head-quarters of the Society to India, the people of which possessed greater natural capacities, as already explained, for the assimilation of its doctrines.

The Brothers are only men ; as we understand there have been great differences of opinion as to this whole matter. *Very* few cared to try to enlighten the West (which they look upon as too deeply immersed in scientific materialism to be worth wasting efforts on) for the sake of the West itself ; but some, who cared little for the West as such, thought that any action there might re-act favorably here, where the ruling classes are Westerns. All more or less approved the work amongst natives here, though many held that any permanent good effects were extremely doubtful, but only

one desired to associate Europeans in the work. As, however, he was the originator of the Society, his view to a certain extent prevailed. It was soon, however, found that, in the absence of European co-operation, suspicions were created in the minds of the rulers as to there being hidden political designs underlying the avowed objects of the Society; and, further, that the vast majority of the natives themselves were averse to taking part in what, so long as Europeans of education and position held aloof, must necessarily be looked upon with disfavor by their rulers.

Hence the Eclectic Branch, accepted with pleasure by one Brother, of more cosmopolitan views, as possibly opening a way to his cherished design of disseminating truth amongst the Western peoples, but by the majority, with distrust, if not positive dislike, as a possible, though doubtful, means of promoting this dissemination in the East.

Europeans must not forget, in considering the circumstances of the case, this serious difference of opinion that exists in regard to us in high places. We have only one Brother, so far as I can learn, really favorably and lovingly disposed towards us for our own sakes—really desiring to help us and smooth the path for us to higher things; and he is so tied down by his superiors that he can do but little, while as for the rest they only tolerate us, for the sake of the possible good that may be done through us.

Not gratifying, this certainly; but still one cannot help feeling that, if the good be done, all else signifies little.

But to return: You must see that working, as the Brothers profess to do, refusing to meddle with details, planting only the seed, and then allowing it to germinate and the plant to grow, without their interference, save in very exceptional cases, and broadly speaking, in accordance with all natural circumscribing influences, your argument against their existence, founded on the errors which have been patent in the administration of the Society and the editing of its organ, and even on the shortcomings of the nominal founders, falls to the ground. The Brothers, having set the thing going through the best available, though by no means perfectly qualified, agents, leave it to develop naturally as best it may, refusing to descend *dei ex machina* to modify and neutralize natural causes and results, save and except when some *nodus*, truly *vindice dignus*, occurs.

You lay great stress upon the fact that two of our most prominent European Theosophists distinctly declined to assert that the Brothers did exist; but could you now, with the additional light thus thrown upon the position, reasonably expect any more definite assurances than they gave you? They have not lived the lives, though they may be trying to do so, and they therefore do *not* KNOW that the Brothers exist, any more than you or I do. They only believe that they do, as I do likewise; and what more then could any of us say than they said then and I have now said?

As to the communications supposed to be received from the Brothers, I cannot altogether agree with you. Some of them *do* seem to me beyond the capacity of

Madame Blavatsky, so far as I have been able to gauge this, though I quite admit that she is so clever a woman that in this I may be mistaken. Many of them, if carefully thought over and their hidden sense worked out, contain a great deal more than at first meets the eye. None of them are objectionable or in any way inconsistent with the general doctrines of the Brotherhood as taught us, and many of them were admittedly dashed off in an incomprehensibly short space of time.

As to exceptionally high intellectual powers, they would be the last to claim anything of the kind; and, looking to the fact that they are mostly sprung from races in which pure intellect has for ages been as little cultivated as physical science, I do not see how we could expect it.

Again, I repeat, they are not gods—only men, who, naturally gifted with peculiar organizations, but not by any means necessarily with high intellectual powers, have, by a life of repression and self-sacrifice, and under a special long-continued course of training, so developed and enfranchised certain psychic powers latent in all men, as to be able to penetrate and discover the mysteries of that real and eternal, though unseen, universe, on the surface of which floats the illusory, transitory, visible universe, which, to us ordinary mortals, is all in all. They *can* know anything they desire, just as you can learn any physical science you please; but they do only know what they investigate, just as you only know that science you study, and their efforts are chiefly directed towards the reverification for themselves of the solutions which their predecessors have recorded of the great problems

of the universe: What am I? Whence do I come? Whither do I go? What is the moving power of the universe? and the like. It is not anything that we call knowledge; it is not high intellectual powers, but the awakened and liberated condition of certain spiritual elements that enter into man's composition, that enables them to investigate and solve these problems, partly by actual observation and partly by direct intercourse with entities occupying far higher and less material platforms than this world. They are not polyglots; they cannot speak all languages; they may be able to understand anything ever written in any language, by laboriously forcing back their own thought into a junction with the thoughts out of which that writing originated; but, so far as we know, only one of them, who was partly educated in England, (there may be others of whom we know nothing) really *knows* English well.

They can dissect the mind of any individual man and search its most hidden recesses where the necessity arises for this laborious process; but of mankind *en masse*, of the ways, thoughts and springs of conduct of modern Society, European or Native, they seem to know little. Never mixing with the world, thoroughly despising it and all its shows, they are eminently unpractical people; and now that they are beginning to wish to come a little out of the darkness and solitude in which for ages they and their predecessors have been impenetrably veiled, and through chosen instruments diffuse some rays of the priceless knowledge of things spiritual they possess, they seem to know very little how to set about it and to be so fettered, partly by

rules and partly by the prejudices of the older and higher members of the fraternity, as to be unable, or unwilling, to act upon the advice of those of us who, mere pigmies to them in psychic science and its revelations, yet know far better than they do what this everyday world of ours is like, and how alone, constituted as society now is, it can be successfully operated on in the sense that they desire.

So far from the communications received, tending to disprove the existence of the Brothers, they are precisely what might have been expected from a body, such as they are alleged to be. They contain arguments which, from an outsider's point of view, and looked at in their worldly bearing, are certainly too feeble for a woman of Madame Blavatsky's ability and worldly experience to have soberly put forward, and yet which, if you by a mental effort work yourself round to the peculiar position which the Brothers describe themselves as occupying, you at once understand appear to them conclusive. Their letters are often what we should call ill-argued, because they know nothing of argument. On any or every point, they either accept what their fellows, who have investigated the point, tell them, or investigate it for themselves. They can make certain if they choose of anything and everything relating to those matters which are all in all to them, and there is, therefore, no room for practice in argument. They betray an ignorance of modern society, of what can and cannot be done in it, greater even than that of our unsophisticated founders; and they are as full of *non possumus* as any Papal utterance. But with all this they contain very remarkable passages,

touching on their science-philosophy, which open out to all of us quite new vistas of thought, and seem to throw light on what have been life-long puzzles ; and though we cannot affirm that these might not possibly have been written by Madame Blavatsky, still in two years' acquaintance, and many months of daily and hourly intercourse with her, we have seen nothing to justify our attributing to her the capacity requisite for their composition.

So that, independent of the phenomenal manner in which several of these communications have been received, they do, if rightly considered, contain internal evidence of being the productions of people such as the Brothers describe themselves to be.

You rejected the dilemma I offered you, and presented me in your turn with another ; but this latter I must similarly reject, having shown, as I think, that the phenomena are *not* really explicable on any theory of Madame Blavatsky's mediumistic powers, using the word in its accepted sense.

I therefore return to my original position, and submit that either the Brothers exist, or Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, to say nothing of Padshah, Damadar, Moorad Ali Beg, etc., etc., etc., are impostors, and I repeat my question, "if imposture, *cui bono* ?"

You contend (though you admit that you do not believe such to be the case) that the hope of making money *may* have been amongst their objects for the imposture. Now it is always possible to suppose "low motives unto

noble deeds ;” but whether any rational man will accept such suppositions will depend upon whether they at all harmonize with the other circumstances of the case. In the present instance, this money-making theory is utterly opposed to all the facts known to us. Whatever shortcomings may be charged against the founders, no one can pretend that, from first to last, they have ever shown the smallest regard for money or anything money can purchase. Had money-making entered in the smallest degree into even their original programme, it would have been impossible for them to avoid allowing this desire to peep out at some time or other.

I need scarcely notice your remark that their Magazine, *The Theosophist*, might, if well managed, “have proved a valuable property and yielded a large income.” You cannot seriously suppose that they gave up everything, she in Russia and both in America, for a Magazine speculation in India! Subsequent to the close of the American war, Col. Olcott, we understand, enjoyed a large professional income, and certainly his social and public standing in America were such as to promise him any reward there, within an ordinary citizen’s grasp, that he could desire. Madame Blavatsky, too, could earn infinitely more by literary work by writing for other journals than she ever could hope to do by writing, as she does almost exclusively, for her own. Moreover she voluntarily relinquished a considerable patrimony some years ago to relatives to devote herself unfettered to occult pursuits. It was never poverty, or even “comparative poverty,” that “debarred *her* from making a figure in the world;” for, born in a

noble family, and moving always, till she voluntarily turned aside from worldly objects, in the very best society, she has always had, and still retains, numbers of friends amongst the highest ranks in her own country.

For a practical man your arguments in these matters are certainly the feeblest I ever read. Fancy a man saying : "How can anyone possibly be sure that the moon is not made of green cheese," and having said this, concluding that he had gone some way towards establishing the possibility of such being the fact; but such precisely has been your line of argument.

But further on you yourself reject the money-making theory, and say that in such a case the love of notoriety would probably prove to be the real inducement. But have you considered that if that *had* been their motive power they would scarcely have left New York, where their doings and sayings, and their Society and its aims and objects, were canvassed by every journal, and where, owing to the wide diffusion of, and prevalent belief in, spiritualistic notions, far more interest was felt in the matter than could possibly have been expected in any other quarter of the globe? Admitting that they have in some places received, and might fairly have expected to receive everywhere, a kindly welcome from the natives of the country, they must equally have known that nowhere in India could they expect to be so much objects of attention as they already were in America. And, again, who that has lived with them, or in close intercourse with them, can have failed to notice the lives they lead of perpetual never-ceasing labor and toil, and that toil not in directions that

would be most likely to enhance their own names and fame, or increase that notoriety you fondly deem their probable object, but in the silent struggle to make all within their influence happier and better.

None of *us* can certainly read the hearts of our fellows; but if we may, as in practice the whole of mankind does, draw any conclusions as to the secret workings of the hearts of others, from all they say and do, and from all they abstain from saying and doing, we may certainly conclude that it was no love of notoriety, of being, as you phrase it, *somebody*, that led Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott to our shores, or that has since sustained them in their persevering labors, in the face of a bigoted opposition and a malignity of calumny almost without parallel in India.

You lay particular stress on a letter of Madame Blavatsky's (*page 237*) narrating one of her early psychical experiences, and you seem to conclude from this that Madame Blavatsky admits having been a medium in youth. But if you will re-read this more carefully you will see that the whole tenor of her letter is to show the folly of the idea of obtaining proofs of spirit identity by the abnormal communications supposed by spiritualists to come from spirits of deceased persons.

Moreover, do you not perceive that, if Madame Blavatsky were an impostor—and I think I have shown that if the Brothers do not exist and the whole matter is not in the main true, (the phenomena that have occurred not being explicable on any mediumistic theory) *she must* be an impostor—the very last thing she would have done (knowing how constantly and

generally she has been suspected and accused of writing the communications supposed to have come from the Brothers), would have been to volunteer an account of an experience, involving the capacity on her part to write in handwritings utterly distinct from her own normal one?

No one will pretend that she is a fool; no one who knows her can deny her cleverness or rapidity of seizing every phase of a chain of circumstances, every aspect of any idea or fact. Had she really been an impostor, were she really the writer of these communications, it is as certain as anything in this world of delusions can be, that she would never have acknowledged, much less herself have volunteered, this early experience of hers.

Of course you avoided this really strong argument by the hypothesis that she was not an impostor, only an unconscious and deceived medium; but I have already shown, I think, that this hypothesis is absolutely irreconcilable with the known facts, and I must, therefore, claim this letter as a confirmation, rather than the reverse, of the existence of the Brothers.

Finally—and this seems your strong point, and from the energy with which you put it, you would really seem yourself to have come in for some little plain speaking on her part,—you insist on defects in poor Madame Blavatsky's part, as a conclusive proof of her not being the missionary of any such people as you conceive the Brothers to be. You say: "Wherever she goes, her irascible temper, her want of charity to all who oppose or doubt her, her dogmatic and imperious

spirit and vehemence of speech are noticed;" and though you admit "her kindness of heart, love of justice, hatred of injustice and oppression, and sincere desires for the welfare of her fellow creatures," you hold the existence of those defects which you attribute to her to be conclusive evidence that she cannot be the emissary of such people as the Brothers.

Now, in the first place, for the twentieth time, the Brothers themselves are only men, not gods, not angels, and some of them not even what I should consider altogether saints. One at any rate, with whom we have communicated (the very one so beloved by Col. Olcott, and of whom he speaks so enthusiastically), is apparently quite as dogmatic and imperious and far less polite than his poor *chela* Madame Blavatsky ever has been or could be. He can seldom avoid some fling at the stupidity of us, "*Pelings*," as they designate all Europeans, as compared with natives, when some abstruse metaphysical idea has to be seized. They are purified men, free from earthly sins, cares and desires, but to each clings some shadow of what the man was out of which they developed, and in this case the raw material was a haughty Rajpoot, intolerant of all opposition, and thoroughly hating and despising Europeans. He does not now really hate or despise any one; he wishes all men well; he would not hurt a fly, but still some flavor of the old man clings about him.

Another is as gentle as a lamb, and quite saint-like in all his expressions. Another, a far higher one, is as grim and hard as any Calvin.

They are men, greatly purified from earthly taints,

and standing high above us—ordinary mortals,—in virtue of their enfranchised psychic elements ; but they are still men, and consequently none of them absolutely exempt from some one of the minor weaknesses inherent in human nature.

If the Brothers be so—and this is what they tell us of themselves—is it reasonable to deny their existence because some of their employés exhibit similar or even far more serious weaknesses ?

But, again, admitting a substratum of truth, I contend that there is a serious exaggeration in your strictures on poor Madame Blavatsky. At times, like most other women, she is irritable and fractious, but it soon passes, and I have never discovered a trace of any malicious or revengeful spirit in her. When suddenly some new and outrageous calumny bursts on her, she at times gets very angry, and shows a great disposition either to abuse her assailants roundly or to sit down and write the reverse of a meek reply. But if she does either, she is always sorry for it afterwards ; and very often, when she is in a better mood, she takes no notice of attacks that would anger even saints.

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

true philosopher would pass it over with a smile ; but she has not one grain of this philosophic temperament ; the very organization which renders her (in some other respects so ill qualified) so specially capable of success in occult pursuits, is utterly incompatible with a calm philosophic serenity. That later, as the result of the influence which the Brothers exert over her, she may attain this, is possible ; but she is still too far down to have altogether conquered this inherent weakness. Had she done so, she would not be amongst us now.

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

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

There are three grievous stumbling blocks to those even who are disposed to believe in Madame Blavatsky and the Brothers, which, although not directly alluded to by you, may properly be noticed.

The one is the manner in which, to some, the society or its founders, appear to have continually changed front.

One man says ; “ I came out to India with Madame Blavatsky and joined the Society at its inception at Bombay, and all I can say is, I never heard a hint of the Brothers.” Another says : “ When three years ago I took much interest in the Society and saw a great deal of the founders, it was all Hindoo Yoginism, the Vedas and the Vedantas. Never a word was breathed about Buddhism, which is now represented as the purest and least corrupted offspring of the Primeval Truth.” Another says : “ When I knew them there was no hint of their being mere puppets, moved helplessly by hidden wire-pullers,” and so on.

But this is not a real difficulty, because this is exactly in accordance with what the Brothers describe as their invariable course of action. They never burst on the world with a grand surprise. No Minerva, armed cap-à-pie, issues from their brains ; they never lay their hands on the table, but slowly play card by card as the game proceeds. They let every scheme grow slowly, develop by degrees, nay, as in the tree, one branch spreads out in this direction and later another in another, and, acted upon by surrounding influences, even the trunk gets now a crook this way, now a bend that, and yet, on the whole, the broad result is upward progress ; so do they allow their designs to expand, irregularly, often, as it would seem for a while, in a wrong direction, and yet with the ultimate result of perfect maturity. The Society, as we now view it and understand it, is a wholly different thing to what any of us could have conceived a few years ago ; and probably a few years hence it will again look very different. And here one point must be noticed : just as the

Brothers must not be held responsible for the blundering in details, due to the so-called founders' imperfections, so neither must the founders be abused for letting people conceive erroneous ideas of what the ultimate aims and scope of the Society are; they can only divulge what they are allowed to tell, they must conceal or evade every thing that so far their leaders and masters do not deem it expedient to be revealed. As was distinctly said in answer to some outside comments on Col. Olcott's supposed want of mental capacity to grasp certain metaphysical problems: "He had either to appear a fool, or to speak on what he was forbidden to speak about;" and as time has rolled on, the very person who made the comments that elicited this reply has come to acknowledge that this does look as if it were in fact the real explanation of a good many things that have from time to time shaken our faith.

Moreover, it has to be noted that the Society has never changed front in the sense of departing from one definite plan. The "higher knowledge" which the founders preach may be attained under any esoteric religion, no matter what its external symbols, rites or creed, provided only that the universal esoteric method be followed. So to Hindus they show an upward path through the Vedic philosophical methods, and to the Buddhist they trace it through the Pitikas. Quite recently the President demonstrated to an enthusiastic audience of Parsees that Zarathustra had known and followed that same path to the end, and were the plain teachings of the New Testament less encrusted with mediæval dogmas, and Christian sects less intolerant, he might well show to Christians that this knowledge was

shared by the founder of *their* religion, and that even Paul (almost more the founder of English Christianity than Jesus himself) was an initiate and a Theosophic in the most rigid application of the name.

The founders, true to the old Theosophic maxim, desire to be all things to all men; they have no wish to draw any man from the faith of his fathers; they only desire to show each that, if he will only seek it, deep in the penetralia of his own creed, lies the higher knowledge, the saving truth; and if in dealing now with one race or nationality, now with another, they seem to lean, now more to this, now more to that religious philosophical system, this is only in strict consonance with the key-note of the Society—impartial eclecticism.

As to what is said of the founders being mere puppets, etc., this scarcely deserves notice. They have enlisted in an army mobilized to battle against priestcraft, bigotry and falsehood, and, like all good soldiers, they obey their officers. If it comes to that, every soldier, every general of a division even, is a mere puppet, moved helplessly by a wire puller, (quite hid for the most part *to the enemy*,) to wit, the General Commanding in Chief.

The second is the, to us, lamentable, but incontestible fact that Madame Blavatsky's converse is by no means confined to "yea, yea, and nay, nay;" but is, especially when she is in one of her less spiritual and more worldly moods, only too fluent and too often replete with contradictions, inaccuracies and at times apparently distinct mis-statements. Nothing has staggered all of us more. "How," we have felt and said,

“ is such looseness and inaccuracy of speech reconcilable with her being the instrument of such a Brotherhood? I confess that for long the warmest of her friends saw no solution of this riddle, which is one that so immediately suggests itself to all who become intimate with her, that even Col. Olcott, summarizing the general feeling, once said : “ Her best friends believe in her despite of herself ! ”

But gradually we have come to learn that this great defect in her, considered as a leader of such a movement, is the result of two tendencies inherent in her present mental organization, which, though always to some extent kept in check and at times entirely subdued by the training she has undergone, and by those who guide and direct her, are yet ineradicable (at any rate until she has progressed higher on the ladder), and always liable to burst forth when the conditions around her are unfavorable.

Of course, even her own particular spiritual pastor has much to do besides looking after her ; he or others of the Brothers set her in the right groove and tell her generally what to do, and on particular or important occasions, personally strengthen her ; and they scold and rebuke her (making no secret of their full knowledge of all her shortcomings and stumblings, in their letters to us) for all her deviations from the path ; but as a rule she is, within certain limits, left to her own devices, and then it is that these inherent tendencies are allowed to come into play.

These tendencies are, first, inaccuracy. Most women are inaccurate, but she is perhaps more than normally

so, instead of, as one might have expected, less so. The fact is, Madame Blavatsky is, alas! no longer what she once was; she has lived a life of considerable hardships; she has undergone a course of training and study that few, if any, minds go through unscarred; her health has been failing for years; she suffers morbidly from the vulgar slander with which she has been assailed on all sides; her memory is undoubtedly impaired, and not unfrequently I believe she quite *unconsciously*, in the course of conversation, makes incorrect, if not absolutely false, statements.

But the second tendency, a sort of humorous combativeness, leads her at times, especially when she is in high spirits and entirely free from higher influences, to propound absolute fictions of malice prepense. She has only to discover that those talking to her are chaffing her, suspecting her of fraud or disbelieving some true statement of hers, to at once assume the attitude of the sailor lad, who on discovering that his granny considered him a liar in the matter of flying fishes, at once reeled off to her Pharaoh's chariot wheels and similar marvels. This habit is, in her position, much to be regretted, the more so that even those who know her best can never be sure at such times whether she is in fun or in earnest, whether she is telling a truth or simply bamboozling an adversary; but it exists and has led to more "occasion to the enemy to blaspheme" than perhaps any other of the earthly frailties, that still slightly disfigure a life, otherwise *most* beautiful for its purity and utter unselfishness.

It is only just to remark that, when seriously discussing matters with those really interested in the work, or

again when specially strengthened for such discussions with any one, or when immediately under the influence of her directors, no trace of these frailties are apparent, and no inconsistencies or contradictions occur in her statements.

But there has been, at any rate to those in the inner circle, a greater source of difficulty and doubt than even this last, and that has consisted in the fact of the Brothers themselves having, at times, apparently formed very erroneous conceptions of the state of mind of some of those with whom they were dealing. How, it was naturally asked, can this be reconcilable with their pretensions? The explanation seems to lie in the fact already referred to, *viz.*, that all psychic investigations involve the expenditure of psychic force; and that this being quickly exhaustible even in Adepts, just as the physical force is in an ordinary man, the Brothers do not, in the majority of cases, go to the labor of diving into a man's mind, but either themselves judge of it from his doings and sayings, much as an ordinary man would do, or accept the views on this point of some mind completely in their hands, or under their control, (from which they can take what they want as from a cupboard), which has had opportunities of forming a presumably correct opinion. This is the explanation at which we, at any rate, have arrived; and, as in other matters which for a time have equally disquieted us, we shall probably learn, in course of time, that while it is partly correct, it needs some additions and modifications to make it perfectly accurate.

If after all you reply, as you once formerly did, "you don't seem to be quite certain of the existence of the

Brothers yourself," I can only admit that this is the case.* All I can say is that, having most carefully considered all the facts of the case, and knowing more about it than any one except some half dozen persons (who I may add share my conclusions), I am decidedly of the opinion that the existence of a Lodge of persons, such as the Brothers describe themselves to be, is a hypothesis (monstrous as it must seem to all outsiders) less difficult to accept, and more in harmony with the whole body of facts of which we have cognizance, than any other that any one has suggested, or that we, after constant arguments amongst ourselves and with outsiders during the last twelve months, have been able to construct.

Yours sincerely,
H. X.

January 2nd, 1882.

P.S.—Since this was written my friend, Mr. ——— has forwarded to me the enclosed letter and certificate, which constitute, *quantum valeat*, another piece of evidence in favor of the existence of the brothers:—

(LETTER.)

BOMBAY,
December 28th, 1881.

MY DEAR ———

I am glad to be able to send you the testimony of still another witness who has seen my *Chohan*, and under most favorable circumstances.

* This was all I could say when this letter was written ; now I can say that I am quite certain of the existence of the Brothers, and so may every human being become, who will live the life and exercise the psychical faculties with which he has been endowed by nature.—
H. X. —June, 1882.

This seems to be almost as near a test case as one could expect to have. I never saw the Brother looking more splendid than he did to-night in the bright moonlight.

Mr. R. is a Brahman of the highest caste (his brother or cousin is, I believe, chief priest to the Maharajah of Travancore), and he is intensely interested in Occultism.

Yours, &c.,

H. S. OLCOTT.

(CERTIFICATE.)

BOMBAY,

December 28th, 9 p.m., 1881.

The undersigned, returning a few moments since from a carriage ride with Madame Blavatsky, saw, as the carriage approached the house, a man upon the balcony over the *porte-cochère*, leaning against the balustrade, and with the moonlight shining full upon him. He was dressed in white, and wore a white *Fehta* on his head. His beard was black, and his long black hair hung to his breast. Olcott and Damodar at once recognized him as the "Illustrious."* He raised his hand and dropped a letter to us. Olcott jumped from the carriage and recovered it. It was written in Tibetan characters, and signed with his familiar cypher. It was a message to Ramaswamier, in reply to a letter (in a closed envelope) which he had written to the

* A name by which Col. O.'s *Chohan* is known amongst us.—
H. X.

Brother a short time before we went out for the ride. M. Coulomb, who was reading inside the house, and a short distance from the balcony, neither saw nor heard any one pass through the apartment, and no one else was in the bungalow, except Madame Coulomb, who was asleep in her bedroom.

Upon descending from the carriage our whole party immediately went upstairs, but the Brother had disappeared.

H. S. OLCOTT.

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR.

The undersigned further certifies to Mr. ——— that from the time when he gave the note to Madame Blavatsky until the Brother dropped the answer from the balcony, she was not out of his sight.

S. RAMASWAMIER, F.T.S., B.A.,

District Registrar of Assurances, Tinnevelly.

P.S.—Babula* was below in the *porte-cochère*, waiting to open the carriage door, at the time when the Brother dropped the letter from above. The coachman also saw him distinctly.

S. RAMASWAMIER.

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR.

H. S. OLCOTT.

Now in itself and standing alone this might go for little, but as one of a string of similar attestations,

* Madame Blavatsky's servant.—H. X.

which have been previously published, it is certainly evidence. You cannot suppose that all these men of high caste and good position, with nothing to gain and everything to lose, by such avowals, are impostors; nor is it easy to see how in such a case a man can be deceived. From the time Mr. Ramaswamier gave his letter to Madame Blavatsky to the time he received his answer she was never out of his sight. Therefore *she* could not have written the letter, and there is no other person about the place who can write Tibetan.

I don't say this is conclusive. I merely say that it is by a multitude of occurrences of this and similar natures that (although ourselves never having seen one) we of the Eclectic society have been led to consider that the existence of the Brothers is more probable than the reverse.

H. X.

[Long after the above letter was written, in fact after I had had it set up in type, I received the subjoined, which, now that I am publishing so much about the matter, may as well be published along with the foregoing.

This is another piece of evidence, inconclusive by itself, because not carrying to outsiders the conviction that it may not possibly have been the result of a trick, but still adding, as it were, another link to the chain.

Mr. Ross Scott is by no means a credulous person, and he went down to Bombay intent on satisfying himself whether there was, or was not, any imposture in the matter, so that when he declares himself satisfied

that, in this instance, all trickery and imposture were impossible, we may conclude that he did his utmost to make perfectly sure of this.

My correspondent, to whom I have shown this, still declares himself as unconvinced as he was by my letter.

He argues that all these appearances occur only at the head-quarters, where the founders have had months and years in which to make any arrangements they please ; and he adds that, if he himself even saw a supposed Brother under similar circumstances at the head-quarters, he should not be one whit more convinced than he is now.

The fact seems to be that many people hold the existence of the Brothers to be so inherently incredible that scarcely any amount of testimony would suffice to induce them to admit and believe its possibility.

I am not of this number. While, no doubt, unable to assert the fact from my own knowledge, I am still decidedly of opinion that the evidence on record is amply sufficient to establish a strong probability of the fact of the Brothers' existence, and I accept it accordingly provisionally, pending such further developments as time may bring forth.]

H. X.

The undersigned severally certify that, in each other's presence, they recently saw at the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society, a Brother of the First

Section, known to them under a name which they are not at liberty to communicate to the public. The circumstances were of a nature to exclude all idea of trickery or collusion, and were as follows:—

We were sitting together in the moonlight about 9 o'clock upon the balcony which projects from the front of the bungalow. Mr. Scott was sitting facing the house, so as to look through the intervening verandah and the library, and into the room at the further side. This latter apartment was brilliantly lighted.

The library was in partial darkness, thus rendering objects in the farther room more distinct. Mr. Scott suddenly saw the figure of a man step into the space, opposite the door of the library; he was clad in the white dress of a Rajput, and wore a white turban. Mr. Scott at once recognized him from his resemblance to a portrait in Col. Olcott's possession. Our attention was then drawn to him, and we all saw him most distinctly. He walked towards a table, and afterwards turning his face towards us, walked back out of our sight. We hurried forward to get a closer view, in the hope that he might also speak; but when we reached the room, he was gone. We cannot say by what means he departed, but that he did not pass out by the door which leads into the compound we can positively affirm; for that door was full in our view, and he did not go out by it. At the side of the room towards which he walked there was no exit, the only door and the two windows in that direction having been boarded and closed up. Upon the table, at the spot where he had been standing, lay a letter addressed to one of our number. The handwriting was identical with that of

sundry notes and letters previously received from him in divers ways—such as dropping down from the ceiling, etc.: the signature was the same as that of the other letters received, and as that upon the portrait above described. His long hair was black and hung down upon his breast; his features and complexion were those of a Rajput.

ROSS SCOTT, B. C. S.

MINNIE J. B. SCOTT.

H. S. OLCOTT.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

M. MOORAD ALI BEG.

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR.

BHAVANI SHANKAR GANESH MULLAPOORKAR.

No. 8.—(LETTER FROM COL. OLCOTT TO
MR. H—— X——)

COLOMBO, CEYLON,

30th September, 1881.

DEAR MR. X.,

The enclosed card, to the SPIRITUALIST, I had written and put under cover to —— as early as the 27th instant—post dating so as to correspond with the P. and O. mail day—and meant it to go straight to London by this post. But on the night of that day I was awakened from sleep by my *Chohan* (or *Guru*, the Brother whose immediate pupil I am) and ordered to

send it *via* Simla, so that you might read it. He said that it would serve a useful purpose in helping to settle your mind about the objective reality of the Brothers, as you had confidence in my veracity, and, next to seeing them yourself, would as soon take my word as any other man's to the fact. I have to ask the favor, therefore, of your sending the letter on by the next succeeding post, re-addressed to ——.

I can well understand the difficulty of your position—far better, I think, than H. P. B., who, womanlike, hates to reason. I have only to go back to the point where I was in 1874, when I first met her, to feel what you require to satisfy you. And so going back, I know that, as I would never have taken anybody's evidence to so astounding a claim as the existence of the Brothers, but required personal experience before I would head the new movement, so must you, a person far more cautious and able than myself, feel now.

I got that proof in due time; but for months I was being gradually led out of my spiritualistic Fool's Paradise, and forced to abandon my delusions one by one. My mind was not prepared to give up ideas that had been the growth of 22 years' experiences, with mediums and circles. I had a hundred questions to ask and difficulties to be solved. It was not until a full year had passed by that I had dug out of the bed-rock of common sense, the Rosetta stone that showed me how to read the riddle of direct intercourse with the Brothers. Until then I had been provoked and exasperated by the—as I thought—selfish and cruel indifference of H. P. B. to my yearnings after the truth, and the failure of the Brothers to come and in-

struct me. But now it was all made clear. I had got just as much as I deserved, for I *had been ignorantly looking for extraneous help to achieve that which no man ever did achieve except by his own self-development.*

So as the sweetness of common life had all gone out from me, as I was neither hungry for fame nor money, nor love, and as the gaining of this knowledge and the doing good to my fellow-men appeared the highest of all aims to which I could devote my remaining years of life, I adopted those habits and encouraged those thoughts that were conducive to the attainment of my ends.

After that I had all the proofs I needed, alike of the existence of the Brothers, their wisdom, their psychical powers, and their unselfish devotion to humanity. For six years have I been blessed with this experience, and I am telling you the exact truth in saying that all this time I have known perfect happiness. It has seemed to you "the saddest thing of all" to see me giving up the world and everything that makes the happiness of those living in the world; and yet after all these years not only not made an adept, but hardly having achieved one step towards adeptship. These were your words to me and others last year; but if you will only reflect for one moment what it is to transform a worldly man, such as I was in 1874—a man of clubs, drinking parties, mistresses, a man absorbed in all sorts of worldly public and private undertakings and speculations—into that purest, wisest, noblest and most spiritual of human beings—a BROTHER, you will cease to wonder, or rather you will wonder, how I could ever have

struggled out of the swamp at all, and how I could have ever succeeded in gaining the firm straight road.

No one knows, until he really tries it, how awful a task it is to subdue *all* his evil passions and animal instincts, and develop his higher nature. Talk of conquering intemperance or a habit of opium-eating—this self-conquest is a far harder task.

I have seen, been taught by, been allowed to visit, and have received visits from the Brothers; but there have been periods when, relapsing into a lower moral state (interiorly) as the result of most unfavorable external conditions, I have for long neither seen them nor received a line from them. From time to time one or another Brother who had been on friendly terms with me (I am acquainted with about a dozen in all) has become disgusted with me and left me to others, who kindly took their places. Most of all, I regret, a certain Magyar philosopher, who had begun to give me a course of instruction in occult dynamics, but was repelled by an outbreak of my old earthly nature.

But I shall win him back and the others also, for I have so determined; and *whatever a man really WILLS, that he has*. No power in the universe, but one, can prevent our seeing whomsoever we will, or knowing whatsoever we desire, and that power is—SELF!

Throughout my studies I have tried to obtain my proofs in a valid form. I have known mesmerism for a quarter of a century or more, and make every allowance for self-deception and external mental impres-

sions. What I have seen and experienced is, therefore, very satisfactory to myself, though mainly valueless to others.

Let me give you one instance:—

One evening, at New York, after bidding H. P. B. good night, I sat in my bedroom, finishing a cigar and thinking. Suddenly there stood my *Chohan* beside me. The door had made no noise in opening, if it *had* been opened, but at any rate there he was. He sat down and conversed with me in subdued tones for some time, and as he seemed in an excellent humor towards me, I asked him a favor. I said I wanted some tangible proof that he had actually been there, and that I had not been seeing a mere illusion or *maya* conjured up by H. P. B. He laughed, unwound the embroidered Indian cotton *feh*ta he wore on his head, flung it to me, and—was gone. That cloth I still possess, and it bears in one corner the initials (—*) of my *Chohan* in thread-work.

This at least was no hallucination, and so of several other instances I might relate.

This same Brother once visited me in the flesh at Bombay, coming in full daylight, and on horseback. He had me called by a servant into the front room of H. P. B's bungalow (she being at the time in the other bungalow talking with those who were there). He came to scold me roundly for something I had done in

* A peculiar monogram, which cannot be reproduced in type—Tibetan I believe—which this Brother always uses.—H. X.

T. S. matters, and as H. P. B. was also to blame, he *telegraphed* to her to come, that is to say he turned his face and extended his finger in the direction of the place she was in. She came over at once with a rush, and seeing him, dropped on her knees and paid him reverence. My voice and his had been heard by those in the other bungalow, but only H. P. B. and I, and the servant *saw* him.

Another time, two, if not three, persons, sitting in the verandah of my bungalow in the Girgaum compound, saw a Hindoo gentleman ride in, dismount under H. P. B.'s portico, and enter her study. They called me, and I went and watched the horse until the visitor came out, remounted and rode off. That also was a Brother, in flesh and bones; but what proof is there of it to offer even to a friend like yourself? There are many Hindus and many horses.

You will find in an old number of the *N. Y. World* a long account of a reporter's experiences at our headquarters in 47th Street. Among the marvels witnessed by the eight or ten persons present was the apparition of a Brother who passed by the window and returned. The room was on the second story of the house, and there was no balcony to walk on.

But this, it may be said, was all an illusion; that is the trouble of the whole matter; everything of the kind seen by one person is a delusion, if not a lie, to those who did *not* see it. Each must see for himself, and can alone convince himself.

Feeling this, while obeying my *Chohan*, as I try to do in little as well as great things, and sending you these writings, I do so in the hope, though by no means in the certainty, that your present reliance on my veracity will survive their perusal.

I have never, I should mention, kept a diary of my experiences with the Brothers or even of the phenomena I witnessed in connection with them. There were two reasons for this—first, I have been taught to maintain the closest secrecy in regard to all I saw and heard, except when specially authorized to speak about any particular thing; second, never expecting to be allowed to publish my experiences, I have felt that the less I put on paper the safer.

You may possibly glean, if not from personal observation, at any rate from the printed record of my American services of one kind or another, that I am not the sort of man to give up everything, come out as I did, and keep working on as I have done, without having obtained a superabundance of good proofs of the truth of the cause in which I am embarked. And you may possibly say to yourself: "Why should not I, who am more capable of doing good to this cause than a dozen Olcotts, be also favored with proofs?" The answer you must seek from another quarter; but if my experience is worth anything, I should say that that answer would be in substance that, however great a man may be at this side of the Himalayas, he begins his relationship with the Brothers on exactly the same terms as the humblest *Chela* who ever tried to scale their Parnassus. he must "win his way."

If you only knew how often, within my time even, a deaf ear has been turned to the importunities, both of influential outsiders professing readiness to do everything in the way of personal exertion and liberal gifts, and of our own fellows who pretended to be ready to sacrifice the world if the Brothers would only come to them and teach them, you would perhaps be less surprised at their failure to visit you.

Events have always proved their wisdom, and so it will be in your case, I fancy; for, if you do see them, as I hope and trust you may, it will be because you have earned the right to *command* their presence.

The phenomena they have done have all had a purpose, and good has eventually come even from those which brought down upon us for the moment the greatest contumely. As for my mistakes of judgment and H. P. B.'s occasional tomfooleries, that is a different affair, and the debits are charged to our respective accounts.

My teachers have always told me that the danger of giving the world complete assurance of their existence is so great, by reason of the low spiritual tone of society, and the ruthless selfishness with which it would seek to drag them from their seclusion, that it is better to tell only so much as will excite the curiosity and stimulate the zeal of the worthy minority of metaphysical students. If they can keep just enough oil in the lamp to feed the flame it is all that is required.

I do not know whether or not there is any signifi-

cance* in the fact of my *Chohan's* visiting me on the night of the 27th, but you may. He made me rise, sit at my table and write from his dictation † for an hour or more. There was an expression of anxiety mingled with sternness on his noble face, as there always is when the matter concerns H. P. B., to whom for many years he has been at once a father and a devoted guardian. How I do hope you may see him! You would confess, I am sure that he was the finest possible type of *man*.

I have also personally known —— since 1875. He is of quite a different, a gentler, type, yet the bosom friend of the other. They live near each other with a small Buddhist Temple about midway between their houses.

In New York, I had ——'s portrait; my *Chohan's*; that of another Brother, a Southern Indian Prince; and a colored sketch on China silk of the landscape near ——'s and my *Chohan's* residences, with a glimpse of the latter's house and of part of the little temple.

* There was this significance that, on the afternoon of the 27th, I at Simla had been disputing with Madame Blavatsky, then living in my house, as to whether the Brothers were not a myth, and she a self-deluded person, and in the course of the conversation I had remarked that I had never heard Colonel Olcott *say* that he had seen or conversed with a Brother. That Colonel Olcott, then in Ceylon, should have selected that very night to sit down and write to me a communication professedly from a Brother, rebuking me for my incredulity, and should further have added this letter above printed testifying to his own constant direct intercourse with the Brothers, is to say the least a curious coincidence.—H. X.

† The communication thus dictated and transmitted as an enclosure of this letter, is not printed, as it is of a purely private character. But I am bound to say that, to my mind, it embodied a complete misconception as to some points of the position discussed.—H. X.

But the portraits of —— and the Prince disappeared from the frames one night just before I left for India.

I had still another picture, that remarkable portrait of a Yogi about which so much was said in the papers.*

* The following are Extracts from some of the papers, referring to this remarkable picture.—H.X.

CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK, ss.

William Q. Judge, being duly sworn, says that he is an attorney and counsellor-at-law, practising at the Bar of the State of New York ; that he was present at the house of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, at No. 302 West 47th Street, New York City, on one occasion in the month of December, 1877, when a discussion was being held upon the subject of Eastern Magic, especially upon the power of an adept to produce phenomena by an exercise of the will, equalling or surpassing those of mediumship. To illustrate the subject, as she had often done in deponent's presence previously by other experiments, Madame Blavatsky, without preparation, and in full light, and in the presence and sight of deponent, Col. Olcott, and Dr. L.M. Marquette, tore a sheet of common writing paper in two, and asked us the subject we would have represented. Deponent named the portrait of a certain very holy man in India. Thereupon laying the paper upon the table Madame Blavatsky placed the palm of her hand upon it, and after rubbing the paper a few times (occupying less than a minute) with a circular motion, lifted her hand and gave deponent the paper for inspection. Upon the previously white surface there was a most remarkable and striking picture of an Indian Fakir, representing him as if in contemplation. Deponent has frequently seen it since, and it is now in possession of Colonel Olcott. Deponent positively avers that the blank paper first taken was the paper on which the picture appeared, and that no substitution of another paper was made or was possible.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 20th day of March, 1878.

SAMUEL V. SPEYER, *Notary Public, New York County.*

STATE OF NEW YORK, }
CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK. } ss.

I, Henry A. Gumbleton, clerk of the City and County of New York and also clerk of the Supreme Court for the said City and County,

It too disappeared in New York, but one evening tumbled down through the air before our very eyes, as H. P. B., Damodar and I were conversing in my

being a Court of Record do hereby certify that Samuel V. Speyer, before whom the annexed deposition was taken, was at the time of taking the same a Notary Public of New York, dwelling in said City and County, duly appointed and sworn and authorized to administer oaths to be used in any Court in said State, and for general purposes ; and that his signature thereto is genuine, as I verily believe.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand, and affixed the seal of the said Court and County the 20th day of March, 1878.

HENRY A. GUMBLETON, *Clerk.*

The undersigned, a practising physician, residing at No. 224 Spring Street, in the City of New York, having read the foregoing affidavit of Mr. Judge, certifies that it is a correct statement of the facts. The portrait was produced, as described, in full light and without there being any opportunity for fraud. Moreover, the undersigned wishes to say, that other examples of Madame Blavatsky's power to instantly render objective the images in her mind, have been given in the presence of many witnesses, including the undersigned ; and that having intimately known that lady since 1873, when she was living with her brother at Paris, the undersigned can and does unreservedly testify that her moral character is above censure, and that her phenomena have been invariably produced in defiance of the conditions of mediumship, with which the undersigned is very familiar.

L. M. MARQUETTE, M. D

So much for the circumstances attending the production of the portrait ; now let us see what are its artistic merits. The witnesses are well qualified, Mr. O'Donovan being one of the best known of American sculptors, and, as alleged, an experienced art critic, and Mr. LeClear occupying a place second to none as a portrait painter :—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPIRITUALIST."

SIR,—For the benefit of those among your readers who may be able to gather the significancy of it, I beg to offer some testimony concerning a remarkable performance claimed by Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky to have been done by herself without the aid of such physical

office at Bombay with (if I remember aright) the Dewan Sankariah of Cochin.

You and I will never see Jesus in the flesh, but if you should ever meet —— or one or two others means as are employed by persons usually for such an end. The production referred to is a small portrait in black and white of a Hindu Fakir, which was produced by Madame Blavatsky, as it is claimed, by a simple exercise of will power. As to the means by which this work was produced, however, I have nothing at all to do, and wish simply to say as an artist, and give also the testimony of Mr. Thomas LeClear, one of the most eminent of our portrait painters, whose experience as such has extended over fifty years—that the work is of a kind that could not have been done by any living artist known to either of us. It has all the essential qualities which distinguish the portraits by Titian, Masaccio, and Raphael, namely, individuality of the profoundest kind, and consequently, breadth and unity of as perfect a quality as I can conceive. I may safely assert that there is no artist who has given intelligent attention to portraiture, who would not concur with Mr. LeClear and myself in the opinion which we have formed of this remarkable work ; and if it was done as it is claimed to have been done, I am at utter loss to account for it. I may add that this drawing or whatever it may be termed, has at first sight the appearance of having been done by washes of Indian ink, but that upon closer inspection, both Mr. LeClear and myself have been unable to liken it to any process of drawing known to us ; the black tints seem to be an integral part of the paper upon which it is done. I have seen numbers of drawings claimed to have been done by spirit influences, in which the vehicle employed was perfectly obvious, and none of them were of more than mediocre artistic merit ; not one of them, certainly, could be compared at all with this most remarkable performance of which I write.

WM. R. O'DONOVAN.

STUDIO BUILDING, 51 WEST 10TH STREET,
NEW YORK.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

DEAR SIR.— My experience has not made me at all familiar with Magic, but I have seen much of what is termed spiritualistic phenom-

whom I might mention, I think you will say that they are near enough our ideal "to satisfy one's longing for the tree of humanity to put forth such a flower."

I am ordered to say that you may use this letter as your judgment may dictate, after noting carefully its contents. With sincere regards and best wishes.

Yours,
H. S. OLCOTT.

ena. Among the latter so-called spirit drawings, which were thought by the mediums and their friends very fine, but the best of which I found wanting in every element of art.

I do not wish to be censorious, but an experience of fifty years in portrait painting has perhaps made me exacting, when it is a question of paintings alleged to come from a supernatural source. This much by way of preface to the subject of my present note.

I have seen in your possession a portrait in black and white of an Indian religious ascetic, which is entirely unique. It would require an artist of very extraordinary power to reach the degree of ability which is expressed in this work. There is a oneness of treatment difficult to attain, with a pronounced individuality, combined with great breadth. As a whole it is an *individual*. It has the appearance of having been done on the moment—a result inseparable from great art. I cannot discover with what material it is laid on the paper. I first thought it chalk, then pencil, then Indian ink; but a minute inspection leaves me quite unable to decide. Certainly it is neither of the above.

If, as you tell me, it was done instantaneously by Madame Blavatsky, then all I can say is, she must possess artistic powers not to be accounted for on any hypothesis except that of magic. The tint seems not to be laid on the surface of the common writing paper upon which the portrait is made, but to be combined, as it were, with the fibres themselves. No human being, however much genius he might have, could produce the work, except with much time and painstaking labor; and, if my observation goes for anything, no medium has ever produced anything worthy of being mentioned beside it.

THOS. LECLEAR,

STUDIO BUILDING, 31 WEST 10TH STREET,
NEW YORK,

No. 4.—(EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MME. BLAVATSKY.)

“ Mr. ——— lays great stress upon his own so-called mediumship, and so might I have done whilst I was similarly affected. He says that the fact of different handwritings being produced through *his own* automatic writing, is a proof of disembodied spirits. Surely very poor logic that. Then there is that venerable party who died 100 years ago, who always writes in the same handwriting, and always gives the same name !

For over six years, from the time I was eight or nine years old until I grew up to the age of fifteen, I had an old spirit (Mrs. T—— L—— she called herself), who came every night to write through me, in the presence of my father, aunts, and many other people, residents of Tiflis and Saratoff. She gave a detailed account of her life, stated where she was born (at Revel, Baltic Provinces), how she married, and gave the history of all her children, including a long and thrilling romance about her eldest daughter, Z——, and the suicide of her son F——, who also came at times and indulged in long rhapsodies about his sufferings as a suicide.

The old lady mentioned that she saw God and the Virgin Mary, and a host of angels, two of which bodiless creatures she introduced to our family, to the great joy of the latter, and who promised (all this through

my handwritings) that they would watch over me, &c., &c., *tout comme il faut*.

She even described her own death, and gave the name and address of the Lutheran pastor who administered to her the last sacrament.

She gave a detailed account of a petition she had presented to the Emperor Nicholas, and wrote it out *verbatim* in her own handwriting through my child's hand.

Well, this lasted, as I said, nearly six years—my writings—in her clear old-fashioned, peculiar handwriting and grammar, in German (a language I had never learnt to write and could not even speak well) and in Russian—accumulating in these six years to a heap of MSS that would have filled ten volumes.

In those days this was not called spiritualism, but *possession*. But as our family priest was interested in the phenomena, he usually came and sat during our evening seance with holy water near him, and a *gou-pillon* (how do you call it in English?) and so we were all safe.

Meanwhile one of my uncles had gone to Revel, and had there ascertained that there had really been such an old lady, the rich Mrs. T——— L———, who, in consequence of her son's dissolute life, had been ruined and had gone away to some relations in Norway, where she had died. My uncle also heard that her son was said to have committed suicide at a small village on the Norway coast (all correct as given by "the Spirit").

In short all that could be verified, every detail and circumstance, was verified, and found to be in accordance with my, or rather "the Spirit's," account; her age, number and name of children, chronological details, in fact everything stated.

When my uncle returned to St. Petersburg he desired to ascertain, as the last and crucial test, whether a petition, such as I had written, had ever been sent to the Emperor. Owing to his friendship with influential people in the *Ministere de l'Interieur*, he obtained access to the Archives, and there, as he had the correct date and year of the petition, and even the number under which it had been filed, he soon found it, and comparing it with my version sent up to him by my aunt, he found the two to be *fac-similes*, even to a remark in pencil written by the late Emperor on the margin, which I had reproduced as exactly as any engraver or photographer could have done.

Well, was it the genuine spirit of Mrs. L—— who had guided my medium hand? Was it really the spirit of her son F—— who had produced through me in *his* handwriting all those posthumous lamentations and wailings and gushing expressions of repentance?

Of course, any spiritualist would feel certain of the fact. What better identification, or proof of spirit identity; what better demonstration of the survival of man after death, and of his power to revisit earth and communicate with the living, could be hoped for or even conceived?

But it was nothing of the kind, and this experience

of my own, which hundreds of persons in Russia can affirm—all my own relations to begin with—constitutes, as you will see, a most perfect answer to the spiritualists.

About one year after my uncle's visit to St. Petersburg, and when the excitement following this perfect verification had barely subsided, D——, an officer who had served in my father's regiment, came to Tiflis. He had known me as a child of hardly five years old, had played constantly with me, had shown me his family portraits, had allowed me to ransack his drawers, scatter his letters, &c., and, amongst other things, had often shown me a miniature upon ivory of an old lady in cap and white curls and green shawl, saying it was his old aunty, and teasing me, when I said she was old and ugly, by declaring that one day I should be just as old and ugly.

To go through the whole story would be tedious ; to make matters short, let me say at once that D—— was Mrs. L——'s nephew—her sister's son.

Well, he came to see us often (I was 14 then), and one day asked for us children to be allowed to visit him in the camp. We went with our governess, and when there I saw upon his writing-table the old miniature of his aunt, *my spirit!* I had quite forgotten that I had ever seen it in my childhood. I only recognized her as the spirit who for nearly six years had almost nightly visited me and written through me, and I almost fainted. "It is, it is the spirit," I screamed ; "it is Mrs. T—— L——" "Of course, it is, my old aunt ; but you don't mean to say that you have remembered all about

your old plaything all these years?" said D——, who knew nothing about my spirit-writing. "I mean to say I see and have seen your dead aunt, if she is your aunt, every night for years; she comes to write through me." "Dead?" he laughed, "but she is *not* dead, I have only just received a letter from her, from Norway," and he then proceeded to give full details as to where she was living and all about her.

That same day D—— was let into the secret by my aunts, and told of all that had transpired through my mediumship. Never was a man more astounded than was D——, and never were people more taken aback than were my venerable aunts, spiritualists, *sans le savoir*.

It then came out that not only was his aunt not dead, but that her son F——, the repentant suicide, *l'esprit souffrant*, had only attempted suicide, had been cured of his wound, and was at the time, (and may be to this day), employed in a counting-house in Berlin.

Well then, who or what was "the intelligence" writing through my hand, giving such accurate details, dictating correctly every word of her petition, &c., and yet romancing so readily about *her* death, *his* sufferings after death, &c., &c.? Clearly despite the full proofs of identity, *not* the spirits of the worthy Mrs. T—— L——, or her scapegrace son F——, since both these were still in the land of the living. "The evil one," said my pious aunts; "the Devil, of course," bluntly said the Priest. Elementaries, some would suppose, but according to what ——* has told me, it was

* One of the Brothers..

all the work of my own mind. I was a delicate child. I had hereditary tendencies to extra-normal exercise of mental faculties, though of course, perfectly unconscious then of anything of the kind. Whilst I was playing with the miniature, the old lady's letters and other things, my fifth principle (call it animal soul, physical intelligence, mind or what you will,) was reading and seeing all about them in the astral light, just as does the mind of a clairvoyant when in sleep; what it so saw and read was faithfully recorded in my dormant memory, although, a mere babe as I was, I had no consciousness of this.

Years after, some chance circumstance, some trifling association of ideas, again put my mind in connection with these long forgotten, or rather I should say never hitherto consciously recognized pictures, and it began one day to reproduce them. Little by little the mind, following these pictures into the astral light, was dragged as it were into the current of Mrs. L——'s personal and individual associations and emanations, and then the mediumistic impulse given, there was nothing to arrest it, and I became a medium, not for the transmission of messages from the dead, not for the amusement of elementaries, but for the objective reproduction of what my own mind read and saw in the astral light.

It will be remembered that I was weak and sickly, and that I inherited capacities for such abnormal exercise of mind—capacities which subsequent training might develop, but which at that age would have been of no avail, had not feebleness of physique, a looseness of attachment, if I may so phrase it, between the mat-

ter and spirit, of which we are all composed, abnormally, for the time, developed them. As it was, as I grew up, and gained health and strength, my mind became as closely prisoned in my physical frame as that of any other person, and all these phenomena ceased.

How, while so accurate as to so many points, my mind should have led me into killing both mother and son, and producing such orthodox lamentations by the latter over his wicked act of self-destruction, may be more difficult to explain.

But from the first all around me were impressed with the belief that the spirit possessing me must be that of a dead person, and from this probably my mind took the impression. Who the Lutheran Pastor was who had performed the last sad rite, I never knew—probably some name I had heard, or seen in some book, in connection with some deathbed scene, picked out of memory by the mind to fill a gap, in what it knew.

Of the son's attempt at suicide I must have heard in some of the mentally read letters, or have come across it or mention of it in the astral light, and must have concluded that death had followed, and since, young though I was, I knew well how sinful suicide was deemed, it is not difficult to understand how the mind worked out the apparently inevitable corollary. Of course, in a devout house like ours, God, the Virgin Mary, and Angels were sure to play a part, as these had been ground into my mind from my cradle.

Of all this perception and deception, however, I was utterly unconscious. The fifth principle worked as it

listed ; my sixth principle or spiritual soul or consciousness was still dormant, and therefore for me the seventh principle at that time may be said not to have existed.

But I am straying from my purpose, which simply was to show that the most perfect proofs of spirit identity, I mean apparent proofs, are utterly fallacious, and that spiritualists, who base their theories on these supposed proofs, are truly building their house upon the sand.

MEMO. BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

In some of the foregoing letters, one aspect of the discussion, which has for long been going on between believers and disbelievers in the genuineness of our mission, is, I think, fairly enough set forth.

I could, indeed, have wished that the sceptical side of the argument had been somewhat more strongly urged ; but our defenders are more logical than our assailants, and I have as yet seen no attack as reasonable or comprehensive as that with which this pamphlet opens.

Of course, I have seen plenty of forcible (though ludicrous) attacks by persons who disbelieve altogether even in the phenomena of spiritualism ; but such persons belong to one of two classes ; they are either per-

sons who have never investigated the subject, and are consequently incapable of forming any useful opinion on it, or they are persons not possessing the requisite intellectual capacity for forming a correct independent opinion on any but the simplest questions. It is too late in the day now to argue with either of these classes. We are sorry for them, but it is no part of our present programme to attempt to convince these. There is a mass of literature published in Europe and America in the language of every civilized nation, (to say nothing of the admirable "Psychic Notes" now issuing in Calcutta,) more than sufficient to satisfy any intelligent human being, who will only take the trouble to examine it, of the reality of the phenomena of spiritualism, and to these sources of knowledge, to this remedy for their present deplorable ignorance, we must content ourselves with directing *such* persons.

But there is another class, far too well able to weigh evidence, and far too intelligent to disbelieve the phenomena of spiritualism ; and it is in hopes of helping to lead some of *these* to higher truths that we have decided on publishing, as they stand, and all imperfect as they are, the foregoing papers.

This class believes in spiritualism in some of its many aspects, but disbelieves in occultism—disbelieves in the mission of the founders of the Theosophical Society ; and when these latter simply and honestly state that the many phenomena and phenomenal occurrences that have taken place in connection with them and their work are due to the intervention of enlightened living men and not of disembodied spirits, they

calmly set these founders down as, to use the least offensive phrase, "fabricators of fiction."

No doubt, considering all we have given up, all we have done, and how we have lived, it is hard to be slandered, as we two have been for the last seven years ; even by the ignorant mass of total disbelievers ; but it is still harder to find ourselves distrusted and continuously suspected or accused of fraud or falsehood by the more intelligent section of the community that *has* mastered and assimilated the facts of spiritualism.

It is hard, I say ; but still I can see that it was all in the contract ; no one could take up such a work as ours and escape suspicion and calumny, and so we are bound cheerfully to make the best of it.

Fortunately to me this is not difficult. If I am honest and true, and do my work well, increase by ever so little the sum of human knowledge and happiness, and decrease by ever so little the total of human ignorance and misery, it matters little what, under one or other misapprehension, the good folks around are pleased to say and think of me. I would fain have their help, their good words and kindly thoughts ; the esteem of those around us is sweet to all, but I *must* do the work appointed to me, I *must* tell the truths I am commissioned to spread ; and if by so doing I needs must lose those kindly words and thoughts, even let them go. This life is but a short stage in the long journey, and we shall soon have done with it.

Unfortunately, my valued friend and colleague, Madame Blavatsky, is less happily constituted and

suffers acutely from all this calumny; and I almost regret that she should have ever entered the arena with me to combat ignorance, prejudice and bigotry. But no suffering in the cause of truth is ever vain or ever goes unrewarded, and she will assuredly find her recompense elsewhere.

I am very much obliged to Mr. X. for his elaborate defence of Theosophy. He has answered fairly well most of his opponent's contentions, but there is one referred to on page 222, *viz.*, the inconclusiveness of appearances at our head-quarters, in regard to which I may perhaps usefully add a few words.

I do not understand our sceptic to mean, that at our head-quarters we have mechanical appliances or magic lanterns, by aid of which we perform phenomena. This would be too absurd, because these have occurred, not only in all parts of our present two bungalows, and in the open air all round, but at the Khandalla station of the Ghats, where we were only stopping for a day; at Simla, Benares, Ceylon, &c., where we were living in other people's houses—to say nothing of Europe and America; and we certainly could not drag our machinery and apparatus about with us. I suppose him rather, being a spiritualist, to mean that, residing long at the head-quarters, we have impregnated the place with the subtle fluid that favors phenomena, and that he should look upon any phenomenal appearances there as merely mediumistic displays. Now, though no medium, so far as I know, has ever, by any length of residence at any place, succeeded in producing phenomena of the same kind, still his idea is not so very far from the truth.

Phenomena do occur far more readily at our headquarters than anywhere else, and it is because the place has been impregnated, though not by us, with a subtle fluid.

A man who saw one of the Brothers at the headquarters, but failed to see one elsewhere, might as well deny their existence, as deny the telephone after getting a message in the office, because he failed to obtain one at a place to which no wires were laid down.

The Brothers mainly appear where we are, simply because *there* they have the necessary conditions. Our houses, wherever we make a headquarters, are certainly prepared, not with machinery, but with a special magnetism. The first thing the Brothers do when we take up a new residence is to prepare it thus, and we never take a new house without their approval; they examine all we think of taking, and pick out the one most favorable. Sometimes they send every one of us out of the house if they desire to specially magnetize the place.

It is absurd to suppose they can do everything they please, at any time, just where they like. If they *could*, then they would be able to work *miracles*. But there neither are, never were, and never will be, any real miracles, although what they do may *seem* miraculous to those less cognizant of natural laws than are the adepts. No, they are just as much tied by natural laws as any one else; they are conditioned by all the forces of the universe, and it is only when certain conditions exist spontaneously, or have been brought about

by them, that they can perform phenomena, and very often existing conditions are such that they cannot possibly replace them on the spur of the moment by favorable ones.

If anyone then is offended at these phenomena taking place, chiefly at head-quarters, let him bear in mind that my simile of the telephone is really a very fair one.

As to the phenomena that have recently occurred there, I may, perhaps, out of a mass of evidence that I could collect if necessary, append in continuation of those already given by our defender, a few written statements that are available at the moment.

H. S. OLCOTT.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON'BLE J. SMITH,
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,
N. S. W., PROFESSOR IN SYDNEY UNIVER-
SITY, PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY,
N. S. W., &c., &c.***

DEAR COLONEL OLCOTT,—While the following facts are fresh in my memory I place them on record for your use.

On the evening of 31st January, when the daily batch of letters were being opened, one was found to contain some red writing different from the body of the letter. Col. Olcott then took two unopened letters and asked

* The Hon'ble Professor Smith, on his way home from Australia, was stopping for a few days at our head-quarters.—H. S. O.

Madame Blavatsky if she could perceive similar writing in them. Putting them to her forehead she said one contained the word "carelessly" and the other something about Col. Olcott and a branch at Cawnpore. I then examined these letters and found the envelopes sound. I opened them and saw the words mentioned. One letter was from Meerut, one from Cawnpore, and one from Hyderabad. Next day at tiffin Col. Olcott remarked that if I were to get any letters while here there might be some of the same writing in them. I replied 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 cannot give the exact words] 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 at some points till we reached the door of my bed-room. She then desired me to enter alone and look round the room to see if there was anything unusual, and to close the other doors. I did so, and was satisfied the room was in its usual condition. She then desired us to sit down, and in doing so took my hands in both of 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 a sheet of note paper headed with a Government stamp of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and the following words written with red pencil, *in exactly the same handwriting as that in the letters of the previous evening*: "No CHANCE of writing to you inside your letters, but I can write *direct*."

Work for us in Australia, and we will not prove ungrateful, but will prove to you our actual existence, and thank you." A fair review of the circumstances excludes, in my opinion, any theory of fraud.

BOMBAY, 2nd February, 1882.

(Sd.) J. SMITH.

STATEMENT OF A CANARESE BRAHMIN.

Many sceptics having rashly and ignorantly denied the existence of the so-called "Himalayan Brothers," I am provoked by a sense of duty to declare solemnly that such assertions are false. For, I have seen the Brothers not once, but numerous times in and near the head-quarters in bright moonlight. I have heard them talk to our respected Madame Blavatsky, and seen them delivering important messages in connection with the work of the Theosophical Society, whose progress they have condescended to watch. They are not disembodied spirits, as the Spiritualists would force us to believe, but living men. I was, on seeing them, neither hallucinated nor entranced; for there are other deserving fellows of our Society who had the honor to see them with me, and who could verify my statements. And this, once for all, is the answer that I, as a *Theosophist* and *Hindu Brahmin*, give to disbelievers, viz., that these Brothers are not mere fictions of our respectable Madame Blavatsky's imagination, but real personages, whose existence to us is not a matter of mere belief, but of actual knowledge.

BHAVANISHANKAR GANESH MULLAPOORCAR, F. T. S.

JOINT STATEMENT OF A REIGNING INDIAN PRINCE AND OTHER REPUTABLE WITNESSES.

At a little before 6 P. M., on the evening of the 10th instant, the following phenomenon occurred in our presence. Colonel Olcott was showing some of us the exact spot upon which, on the evening of the 29th January, a Brother had stood, with the moonlight shining upon his face, and returned his salute. It was in the garden of the upper terrace at the Theosophical Head-Quarters, and at a distance from the porch of 17 paces—as has since been ascertained by measurement. We were facing the bungalow. Madame Blavatsky sat in her chair in the porch ; near her sat Mr. Bharucha, and Mr. Bhavani Rau stood leaning against the left hand pillar. Mr. Damodar was crossing from the porch to where we stood, Madame Blavatsky having asked him to go to us. Just at the moment when he had reached our group, Madame Blavatsky called to him again, and all of us, except Rawal Shree Hari Singhjee, looked at him, thinking that some phenomenon might happen near his person. At that instant a white packet, tied with a bit of green thread, fell from the air upon the garden path. The spot was, as measured, ten paces from Madame Blavatsky's chair and seven from our group. Hari Singhjee and the two gentlemen in the porch—Messrs. Bharucha and Bhavani Rau—saw it descending through the air vertically. Others heard the noise when it struck the ground. The Thakore Sahib picked it up. It was addressed to him. Inside was a note merely asking him to hand over to Colonel

Olcott for mailing an enclosed sealed letter addressed to Mr. Sinnett, of Allahabad. The handwriting and cypher signature were those of the Brother who is known as Col. Olcott's *Guru*. Whatever foolish theory any sceptic may hitherto have propounded about the various letters which from time to time have dropped from the air to various persons *in the verandahs and rooms* of the head-quarters buildings, is by the latest phenomenon completely refuted. For, in this instance, the letter fell vertically from the open air in a garden, while it was light enough for us to see the slightest attempt at trickery, and where—the flower garden being on a high terrace—there was no hiding place for confederates. Madame Blavatsky did not stir from her chair while the note was falling, and Col. Olcott's back was turned, so that he did not see the phenomenon at all.

BOMBAY, 12th February, 1882.

I saw the letter falling *vertically*.

RAWAL SHREE HARI SINGHJI RUPSINGJI of Sehore,
Cousin to H. H. The Thakore of Bhownugger.

I also saw the letter falling perpendicularly through the air. It fell, or rather struck, the ground with a noise. I was sitting near Madame Blavatsky at that time.

DORABJI HORMUSJI BHARUCHA.

While I stood leaning against the left hand pillar

near Madame Blavatsky, I saw the letter falling perpendicularly through the air.

BHAVANISHANKAR GANESH MULLAPOORCAR.

I was present on the occasion, but was engaged in another direction when the letter in question fell, although I can certify to the correctness of the other circumstances.

K. M. SHROFF.

I saw the packet falling, when picked up by one of the group after being told to search for it. The packet was opened, and the contents therein read inside the house by Thakore Sahib with the help of a lamp, as it was then growing dark.

KRISHNA SHASTRI GODBOLE.

I opened the letter and found the one inside as described.

**DAJI RAJ THAKORE SAHIB OF WUDHWAN.
DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR.**

STATEMENT OF MR. KAVASJI MERVANJI SHROFF, A PARSİ GENTLEMAN, AND OTHERS.

On Tuesday, the 7th February, 1882, at about 6 P. M., I was at the head-quarters, Breach Candy, of the Theosophical Society. The party consisted of Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, His Highness the Rajah of Wudhwan, his Minister Mr. Ganpatrow N. Land,

Rawal Shree Hari Singhjee of Sehore, Mr. Dorabjee, H. Bharucha, a fourth-year medical student, and the Secretary Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar, and myself.

We sat in the open porch of the upper bungalow, looking out upon the ocean. The conversation related to the sad ignorance of the Aryan philosophies which prevailed among the people of India. Various remarks were exchanged, and Madame Blavatsky was speaking with some feeling about the past treatment the Founders of the Society had suffered at the hands of many who ought to have been warm friends. Suddenly she stopped, looked fixedly out into the compound, rose to her feet and then reseated herself. She said one of the Brothers was there listening, but we could see no one except ourselves. Presently, to the great surprise and astonishment of those present, a note, darting across the open space around, came in a slanting direction and dropped on the table that stood by the Dewan Saheb. It was addressed to "all whom it may concern," and its contents referred to the subject of our conversation. Then she informed me that she had received a letter from a gentleman of Lahore. She wished me to read that letter. A search was made for that letter which could not be found in her papers. She then assured us that she still felt something more would occur. She then wished us to go to the guest-chamber inside the bungalow, but before the whole party entered, she asked the Rajah and myself to first go into the room with a lamp—it was now dusk—and to examine the place thoroughly. We did so, and were satisfied that no one from outside could possibly have any communication. The wooden ceiling of the room was perfectly intact.

The windows and doors were closely fastened. After our careful examination was over, and we had satisfied ourselves that everything was right, she directed the whole party to enter the room, and the only remaining open door was also shut. The party stood around a table on which I had placed the lamp. She then asked us to form a ring, each held the hand of one standing by him, so not one of the party had his hands free. We stood still in that posture for perhaps a minute, when, to our great amazement, there dropped a letter addressed in my care to the active members of the Theosophical Society. The envelope contained the missing Lahore letter above referred to, and a separate note of a full page written in a red crayon in a large bold hand, and also quoting expressions that had just fallen from us in the porch outside. The letter descended from above us fluttering in the air and dropped at the foot of one of our party. We all agreed that even if it had been desired there could by no possibility have been any trick of hand in this case.

K. M. SHROFF.

We certify to the correctness of the above statement.

DAJI RAJ THAKORE SAHIB OF WUDHWAN,
 RAWAL SHREE HARI SINGHJI RUPSINGJI,
 of Sehore,
Cousin to H. H. The Thakore of Bhownugger,
 GUNPUTROW N. LAND,
Karbhari of Wudhwan.
 DORABJI HORMUSJI BHARUCHA,
Student, Grant Medical College.
 DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR.

**STATEMENT OF MARTANDRAO BABAJI NAG-
NATH, A BRAHMIN.**

As a member of the Parent Theosophical Society, I have had constant occasions to visit its head-quarters at Breach Candy, Bombay. My connection with the Founders of the Society has been close, and my opportunity good for studying Theosophy. I am therefore inclined, for my satisfaction and for the information of students of Nature, to record here my experiences of certain phenomena, which came under my observation on several occasions in the presence of Brother Theosophists and strangers. I have also had the rare privilege to see the so-called and generally unseen Brothers of the 1st section of the Theosophical Society

On one night in the year 1879, I, in company with Brother Theosophists and some strangers, was enjoying conversation with the Founders of the Society. At about midnight, when we were leaving the premises and were in the open compound, Madame Blavatsky on a sudden held me back with one of her hands on my shoulder, near a tree in the compound, and to our great surprise, a sound of sweet music was heard coming from the tree.

In the month of September, 1880, when Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott were about to leave for Simla, we found one evening the Naib Dewan of Cochin States, Mr. Shunkeraya, talking with them at their head-quarters in Girgaum. In the course of conversation he happened to ask for a card bearing Madame's

name and address. Madame then gave him a visiting card which she had with her, but the Karbhari asked for one more, upon which Madame said "there it is coming," and so a card came down from above, fluttering through the air like a bit of down, and fell to the ground. Neither Madame nor any one else had stirred from their place.

In the month of April, 1881, on one dark night, while talking in company with other Theosophists with Madame Blavatsky about 10 P. M. in the open verandah of the upper bungalow, a man, six feet in height, clad in a white robe, with a white *roomal* or *phetta* on the head, made his appearance on a sudden, walking towards us through the garden adjacent to the bungalow from a point—a precipice—where there is no path for any one to tread. Madame then rose up and told us to go inside the bungalow. So we went in, but we heard Madame and he talking for a minute with each other in an Eastern language unknown to us. Immediately after, we again went out into the verandah, as we were called, but the Brother had disappeared.

On the next occasion, when we were chatting in the above verandah as usual, another Brother clothed in a white dress, was suddenly seen as if standing on a branch of a tree. We saw him then descending as though through the air, and standing on a corner edge of a thin wall. Madame then rose up from her seat and stood looking at him for about two minutes, and as if it seemed—talking inaudibly with him. Immediately after, in our presence, the figure of the man disappeared, but was afterwards seen again walking in the air

through space, then right through the tree, and again disappearing.

Similarly, in a strong moonlight on another night, I in company with three Brother Theosophists, was conversing with Madame Blavatsky. Madame Coulomb was also present. About eight or ten yards distant from the open verandah in which we were sitting, we saw a Brother known to us as Koot Hoomi Lal Sing. He was wearing a white loose gown or robe, with long wavy hair and a beard; and was gradually forming, as it were, in front of a shrub or number of shrubs some twenty or thirty yards away from us, until he stood to a full height. Madame Coulomb was asked in our presence by Madame Blavatsky: "Is this good Brother a devil?" as she used to think and say so when seeing the Brothers, and was afraid. She then answered: "No; this one is a man." He then showed his full figure for about two or three minutes, then gradually disappeared, melting away into the shrub. On the same night again, at about 11 P. M., we, about seven or eight in number, were hearing a letter read to us, addressed to the *London Spiritualist* about our having seen Brothers, which one of our number had drafted, and which we were ready to sign. At this instant Mr. and Madame Coulomb called out and said: "Here is again our Brother." This Brother (Koot Hoomi Lal Sing again) was sometimes standing and walking in the garden here and there, at other times floating in the air. He soon passed into and was heard in Madame Blavatsky's room talking with her. On this account after we had signed the letter to the *London Spiritualist*, we added a postscript that we had

just seen him again while signing the letter. Koot Hoomi was in his *Mayavi rupa** on that evening.

On another night a Brother came in his own physical body, walking through the lower garden (attached to Colonel Olcott's bungalow) and stood quiet. Madame Blavatsky then went down the wooden staircase leading into the garden. He shook hands with her and gave her a packet. After a short time the Brother *disappeared on the spot*, and Madame coming up the stairs opened the packet and found in it a letter from Allahabad. We saw the envelope was quite blank, *i. e.*, unaddressed, but it bore a triangular stamp of Allahabad Post Office of December the 3rd, 1881, and also a circular postal stamp of the Bombay Post Office of *the same date, viz.*, 3rd December. The two cities are 860 miles apart.

I have seen letters, or rather envelopes containing letters, coming or falling from the air in different places, without anybody's contact, in presence of both Theosophists and strangers. Their contents related to subjects that had been the topics of our conversation at the moment.

Now I aver in good faith I saw the Brothers of the 1st section and phenomena in such places and times, and under such circumstances, that there could be no possibility of anybody's playing a trick.

MARTANDRAO BABAJI NAGNATH.

BOMBAY,

14th February, 1882.

* A Sanskrit word for what is called by Western people the "double," "Doppelganger," "Corps fluidique, or perisprit," etc. It means a form well-created, or desire-created.—H. S. O.

STATEMENT OF BAL NILAJI PITALE, A
BRAHMIN.

I have much pleasure in giving my humble testimony to certain phenomena produced by Madame Blavatsky, and which have come under my observation since I became a Theosophist. Although not a daily visitor to their place of residence, yet I often go to her and Colonel Olcott, as I always find their conversation most agreeable and instructive. One night, when they lived at Girgaum, I went to them; there were half a dozen visitors besides myself sitting in the verandah in the rear of her bungalow. Suddenly I heard twice jingling sounds of music—similar to those given out by a music-box. I was the first to remark them. One or two of the company said they heard them also. Just when the company was breaking up Madame Blavatsky came out of the verandah into the open air and stood still, and while steadily gazing towards the sky, we heard music similar to the tunes of a music-box. She then approached a tree, and laying her hand upon it, we heard music as if within the tree. A second time I observed a different phenomenon. It was also at Girgaum, and at night, in Colonel Olcott's room. On this occasion the Naib Dewan of Cochin was present. A very interesting conversation was going on about the material advancement of the people, spiritual science, etc. During the conversation the Dewan asked for Madame Blavatsky's card. She said that she had only one by her then, but he asked for another—one brought to him in a phenomenal way. In the meantime something fluttered on the wall about two feet from the ceiling—which was about fifteen feet high—

and an oblong piece of paper was seen to drop on Colonel Olcott's table. It turned out to be a fac-simile of the card given to the Dewan. The third time I saw a phenomenon was at the Crow's Nest Bungalow at Breach Candy. One of the members of the Society had brought with him a medium. He is one of the graduates in medicine of the local University. He has been lately practising mesmerism, and wished to show Madame Blavatsky how far he had advanced in his studies. While the experiments were going on Madame Blavatsky asked the operator to ask his subject, who was in a partially clairvoyant condition, when she would receive a letter from Ceylon that she expected. The answer given was that she would not receive it when expected. She then asked the company, numbering about 17 persons, to stand up and form a circle, clasping each other's hands. This was done immediately. But lo! in the twinkling of an eye a piece of paper fluttered in the air, visible about three feet from the ceiling, and then slantingly dropped on the floor. The paper turned out to be a letter from Ceylon enclosed in an envelope addressed to her in red ink. The reason why the persons were asked to form themselves into a circle and clasp each other's hands was that nobody should afterwards insinuate that it was thrown by any one composing the group. The impression that is left on my mind after beholding these phenomena is that they were *bona fide* scientific experiments. To honest inquirers it is plain that an unknown force exists, a subjective one, which is not universally known.

BAL NILAJI PITALE.

BOMBAY,
14th February, 1882.

POSTSCRIPT TO SECOND EDITION.

Since the first edition of this Pamphlet was published, a considerable number of that class of our opponents whom my friend G. Y. fairly represents, have come round to concede the probability of the existence of the Brothers, and some, indeed, have become as firmly convinced of this as any of ourselves. They still maintain that there have been many acts and omissions on the parts of both the nominal and real founders of the Society, quite inexplicable to *them*, and furnishing reasonable grounds for the doubt and disbelief of the outside public, but they themselves no longer disbelieve.

It is not, however, anything in this pamphlet which has effected this revolution in their opinions, but a series of occurrences, of which, seeing the effect they have had on many minds, it seems to me desirable to include a narrative in this second edition. To me personally there is nothing in this particular matter at all *more* convincing than many other phenomena recorded in "The Occult World" or already alluded to in this pamphlet; but to many minds it would seem that this has brought conviction, where everything else has failed to do so.

Everybody at all interested in these questions is aware that during this last cold season, Mr. W. Eglinton, a highly developed medium, visited Calcutta. Mr. Eglinton, as every one will testify who had anything to do with him, is in every sense of the word a gentleman—rather sensitive and touchy no doubt, and rather too much impressed perhaps with a sense of the im-

portance of his gift, but in all essentials as good a young fellow, I believe, as is to be met with.

Naturally, in Calcutta, Mr. Eglinton, heard from Col. and Mrs. Gordon, with whom he was staying during a portion of his visit, and from other sources, a great deal about Madame Blavatsky* and the BROTHERS. Against these latter he altogether set his face; he himself wrote to me distinctly that he did not believe in them, and that in his opinion Madame Blavatsky was simply a medium, and that the phenomena that had occurred in connection with her were solely due to the agency of spirits.

It was suggested to the Brothers that they should get hold of and bring their influence to bear on the spirits or entities who worked with Eglinton, convince these of their (the Brothers') existence and powers, and through them open his (Eglinton's) eyes to the truth. We were told that this would be done.

I will now quote Mrs. Gordon's published narrative of what occurred. After explaining how she and her husband had come to know of, and believe in, the Brothers, she says that, as regards these:

“Mr. Eglinton was a sceptic, and took the same attitude towards this question as does the outside world towards Spiritualism; because *he* did not know them, therefore the ‘Brothers’ could not exist. I

*Of course he had also heard *something* of her before he came to India. Indeed, though he had never seen her, and *she* never, I think, communicated with *him*, he had, previous to coming to India, once written to her asking her advice as to coming.—H. X.

gave up arguing on the subject, seeing its uselessness. About a fortnight before Mr. E. left, and before he had decided on going, I received a letter from Madame Blavatsky telling me some of the reasons why Mr. E. had not yet been made acquainted with the existence of our 'Brothers'; but at the same time saying that his 'guides,' as they are called, had now been made to know the fact. I questioned Mr. Eglinton, but found he knew nothing, and a letter he wrote about this time to one of our 'fellows' proved him still a sceptic. Two or three evenings later we had a séance to ourselves, when, to my amusement, one of his 'guides' spoke about the 'Illustrious'—a pseudonym given by us to a certain 'Brother,' but quite unknown to Mr. Eglinton.

“ Mr. E. was entranced while I was conversing in the direct voice with his 'guides,' and learning from them that some phenomena would be done by their agency, with the help of Madame Blavatsky after Mr. Eglinton's departure. They said the 'Brothers' had consented to this.

“ When Mr. Eglinton returned to his normal state, we told him what we had heard, and I afterwards gave him Madame Blavatsky's letter to read. He was not at all elated at having a belief in the 'Brothers' forced on him, their alleged superiority to *mediums* being rather a sore point between us! However, he had no alternative but to accept them, as a communication was given him by his chief 'guide' in direct writing to the same effect.

“ Mr. Eglinton, about this time, in consequence of

bad news from England, suddenly resolved to go home for two or three months, and I suggested to him to try while at sea, and send me a letter through Madame Blavatsky, as his 'guides' had told me they were prepared to work in connection with her. He seemed very doubtful whether it could be done, as he had never met Madame Blavatsky, and in all cases of such phenomena hitherto, both of the actors had been mutually acquainted and in sympathy with each other. In this instance the situation was the reverse, as Madame Blavatsky has shown a distrust of all mediums excepting only one or two who were well known to her. Mr. Eglinton, on the other hand, was inclined to believe that Madame Blavatsky was only a medium who *pretended* to be something higher. There seemed to me just a possibility of reconciliation and mutual appreciation, when the eve of Mr. Eglinton's departure came. His baggage was already on board, and the steamer down the river, when a telegram came from Madame Blavatsky to me saying, that if he would stay a week longer she had orders to come down and meet him. This was impossible. The next morning, Wednesday, the 15th of March (he having gone on board the evening before) a telegram came for him which I opened, saying the 'Illustrious' wished him while the President of the T. S. was at Howrah, to send letters in his handwriting from on board ship, and that he would be helped. I advised him, in case he should consent, to get some fellow passenger to endorse the letter before sending it off to me. He wrote from Fisherman's Point on Wednesday at 4 o'clock, saying: 'Personally I am very doubtful whether these letters can be managed, but I will do what I can in the matter. I shall

send you a letter from Suez if you don't receive one in the meantime by K. H.*¹

“Colonel Olcott, the President of the Society, came from Berhampore on Sunday the 19th. He having left Bombay, February 17th, had heard nothing up till then of all this. We received letters from Madame Blavatsky, dated Bombay the 19th, telling us that something was going to be done, and expressing the earnest hope that she would not be required to assist as she had had enough abuse about phenomena. Before this letter was brought by the post peon, Colonel Olcott had told me that he had had an intimation in the night from his *Chohan* (teacher) that K. H. had been to the *Vega* and had seen Eglinton. This was at about eight o'clock on Thursday morning the 23d. A few hours later a telegram, dated at Bombay 22d day, 21 hour 9 minutes, that is to say 9 minutes past 9 P. M., on Wednesday evening, came to me from Madame Blavatsky, to this effect: ‘K. H. just gone to *Vega*.’ This telegram came as a ‘delayed’ message, and was *posted* to me from Calcutta, which accounts for its not reaching me until midday on Thursday. It corroborated, as will be seen, the message of the previous night to Colonel Olcott. We then felt hopeful of getting the letter by occult means from Mr. Eglinton. A telegram later on Thursday asked us to fix a time for a sitting, so we named 9 o'clock Madras time, on Friday 24th. At this hour we three—Colonel Olcott, Colonel Gordon, and myself,—sat in the room which had been occupied by Mr. Eglinton. We had a good light, and sat with our chairs placed to form a triangle, of which

* Koot Hoomi, one of the “Brothers,”—A. G.

the apex was to the north. In a few minutes Colonel Olcott saw outside the open window the two 'Brothers' whose names are best known to us, and told us so ; he saw them pass to another window, the glass doors of which were closed. He saw one of them point his hand towards the air over my head, and I felt something at the same moment fall straight down from above on to my shoulder, and saw it fall at my feet in the direction *towards* the two gentlemen. I knew it would be the letter, but for the moment I was so anxious to see the 'Brothers' that I did not pick up what had fallen. Colonel Gordon and Colonel Olcott both saw and heard the letter fall. Colonel Olcott had turned his head from the window for a moment to see what the 'Brother' was pointing at, and so noticed the letter falling from a point about two feet from the ceiling. When he looked again the two 'Brothers' had vanished.

"There is no verandah outside, and the window is several feet from the ground.

"I now turned and picked up what had fallen on me, and found a letter in Mr. Eglinton's handwriting, dated on the *Vega* the 24th ; a message from Madame Blavatsky, dated at Bombay the 24th, written on the backs of three of her visiting cards ; also a larger card such as Mr. Eglinton had a packet of, and used at his *séances*. On this latter card was the, to us, well-known handwriting of K. H., and a few words in the handwriting of the other 'Brother,' who was with him outside our windows, and who is Colonel Olcott's Chief. All these cards and the letter were threaded together with a piece of blue sewing-silk. We opened

the letter carefully by slitting up one side, as we saw that some one had made on the flap in pencil three Latin crosses, and so we kept them intact for identification. The letter is as follows:—

‘SS. ‘VEGA.’

Friday, 24th March, 1882.

‘MY DEAR MRS. GORDON,

‘At last your hour of triumph has come! After the many battles we have had at the breakfast table regarding K. H.’s existence, and my stubborn scepticism as to the wonderful powers possessed by the ‘Brothers,’ I have been forced to a *complete belief* in their being living distinct persons, and just in proportion to my scepticism will be my *firm unalterable* opinion respecting them. I am not allowed to tell you all I know, but K. H. *appeared* to me in person two days ago, and what he told me dumfounded me. Perhaps Madame Blavatsky will have already communicated the fact of K. H.’s appearance to you. The ‘Illustrious’ is uncertain whether this can be taken to Madame, or not, but he will try, notwithstanding the many difficulties in the way. If he does not, I shall post it when I arrive at port. I shall read this to Mrs. B— and ask her to mark the envelope; but, *whatever happens*, you are requested by K. H. to keep this letter a profound secret until you hear from him through Madame. A storm of opposition is certain to be raised, and she has had so much to bear that it is hard she should have more.’

“Then follow some remarks about his health and the trouble which is taking him home, and the letter ends.

“ In her note on the three visiting-cards Madame Blavatsky says :—‘ Head-quarters, March 24th. These cards and contents to certify to my doubters that the attached letter addressed to Mrs. Gordon by Mr. Eglinton was just brought to me, from the *Vega*, with another letter from himself to me which I keep. K. H. tells me he saw Mr. Eglinton and had a talk with him, long and convincing enough to make him a believer in the ‘ Brothers ’ as actual living beings, for the rest of his natural life. Mr. Eglinton writes to me : ‘ The letter which I enclose is going to be taken to Mrs. G. through your influence. You will receive it wherever you are, and will forward it to her in ordinary course. You will learn with satisfaction of my complete conversion to a belief in the ‘ Brothers ’ and I have no doubt K. H. has already told you how he appeared to me two nights ago, ‘ etc., etc. ’ K. H. *told me all*. He does not, however, want me to forward the letter in ‘ ordinary course, ’ as it would defeat the object, but commands me to write this and send it off without delay, so that it would reach you all at Howrah to-night, the 24th. I do so * * * * H. P. Blavatsky.’

“ The handwriting on these cards and signature are perfectly well known to us. That on the larger card (from Mr. Eglinton’s packet) attached was easily recognized as coming from Koot Hoomi. Colonel Gordon and I know his writing as well as our own ; it is so distinctly different from any other I have ever seen that among thousands I could select it. He says : ‘ William Eglinton thought the manifestation could only be produced through H. P. B. as a ‘ medium, ’ and that the power would become exhausted at Bombay.’

We decided otherwise. Let this be a proof to all that the spirit of *living man* has as much potentiality in it, (and often more,) as a disembodied *soul*. He was anxious to test her, he often doubted; two nights ago he had the required proof and will doubt no more. But he is a good young man, bright, honest, and true as gold when once convinced.* * *

“ This card was taken from his stock to day. Let it be an additional proof of his wonderful mediumship.* * ”
K. H.

“ This is written in blue ink, and across it is written in red ink a few words from the other ‘ Brother ’ (Colonel Olcott’s Chohan or Chief.) ”

Mrs. Gordon thus sums up the more salient features of the phenomenon :—

“ (1) Mr. Eglinton was personally unknown to Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, the former having not even written to him once, the latter once only—in acknowledgment of a letter of introduction from a London friend. Mr. E.’s views and theirs respecting mediumistic phenomena were in conflict. Collusion, therefore, was out of the question. (2) Mr. E.’s personal ‘ Spirit-guide,’ using the direct voice while the medium was entranced, told me that he had now become acquainted with the ‘ Brothers,’ and would try to do a phenomenon after Mr. Eglinton’s departure by steamer from Calcutta. (3) A corroborative intimation came to me from the ‘ Brothers ’ through Madame Blavatsky, by telegram after Mr. E. had left Howrah, and while his vessel was in the stream.

(4) At 8 A.M., on the 23d, Colonel Olcott informed us that during the night his 'Guru' had told him that K. H. had visited the *Vega*; a telegram received later in the day from Bombay corroborates this statement. (5) By appointment we sit in Mr. Eglinton's late bed-chamber at a designated hour. Colonel O. sees the doubles or astral forms of two Brothers whom he names; one extends his arm towards me and at the same instant a packet of papers falls vertically upon my shoulder: (it falls not from, but *towards* Colonel Olcott and Colonel Gordon, therefore it was not thrown by either of them). (6) A good light was burning and we could see each other's movements. (7) In the packet were a letter from Mr. E., dated the same day, on the *Vega*, and announcing that he should read the letter to a certain lady on board, and ask her to mark the envelope; also a note from Madame Blavatsky, dated at Bombay the 24th, certifying to the reception of the letter from Mr. E.; and (on one of Mr. E.'s own blank cards) messages from the two Brothers whom Colonel Olcott saw outside our windows. All these points the sceptic must dispose of: to account for any one or two will not suffice. Though every other item were brushed away, the phenomenal delivery of the papers would stand as a marvellous example of the power enjoyed by our mystical chiefs over the forces of Nature."

A few days later she published the following certificate which reached her by post on the 28th March:—

"At 8 P.M. (Bombay Time), on Friday, the 24th March, 1882, we were spending our time with Madame Blavatsky in the room as the wind was blowing power-

fully outside. Madame told us that she felt that something would occur. The whole party consisting of seven persons then adjourned on the terrace, and within a few minutes after our being there, we saw a letter drop as if from under the roof above. Some of us saw the letter coming slanting from one direction and drop quite opposite to where it came from. The letter on being opened was found to contain a closed envelope to the address of Mrs. Gordon, Howrah; on the reverse side were three crosses ††† in pencil. The envelope was of bluish color and thin. The open letter written in red pencil contained certain instructions to Madame Blavatsky, and accordingly she put the envelope, together with three visiting cards, and strung them all with a blue thread of silk and put the packet as directed on a book-case, and within five minutes after it was put there it evaporated to our no small surprise.

K. M. SHROFF,

Vice-President, Bombay T. S.

GWALA K. DEB, F.T.S.

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR, F.T.S.

MARTANDREW B. NAGNATH, F.T.S.

DORAB H. BHARUCHA, F.T.S.

BHAVANI SHANKAR, F.T.S.”

“The packet was taken away from the book-case at 21 minutes past 8 P.M. (9, Madras time). A letter from Mr. Eglinton to myself was also received by me. In it he confesses to a firm belief in the Brothers. Speaks of K. H. having visited him two nights ago (the 22d) on the *Vega*, etc.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.”

It was, therefore, established, so far as human testimony can establish anything, that on the 22d of March, some hours after the *Vega* had left Ceylon, one of the Brothers appeared to Eglinton, theretofore a disbeliever in their existence, and fully convinced him that he, at any rate—I mean that particular Brother—was a living man. Further, that two days later, on the 24th, when the *Vega* was five hundred miles or more away from India out at sea, letters written by Eglinton were, by occult means, transmitted instantaneously, or nearly so, from the *Vega* to Bombay, and thence, with the addition of other letters or notes, again instantaneously, or nearly so, to Howrah.

But it happened that on board the *Vega* was Mr. J. E. O'Connor, a theosophist, and to him, amongst others, Mr. Eglinton mentioned the visit of Koot Hoomi, as also his intention of sending, by occult means, letters to Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Gordon. Hearing this Mr. O'Connor said that he too would write, and asked if his letter could also be taken. Mr. Eglinton agreed to put this letter with his own (he did not know whether it would be taken or not) and let it take its chance. Later he told Mr. O'Connor that his letter had gone with the others, and as a fact it duly reached Madame Blavatsky, but for some reason, not known to me, nearly one hour after the others came.

This was a private letter, and though Madame mentioned having received another letter, she did not know whether the writer would wish his name brought before the public, and hence no reference to this letter was allowed to appear in the published accounts.

Mr. O'Connor, seeing no notice of his letter in the published accounts of the phenomenon, and receiving naturally no answer, (as if Madame Blavatsky had the time to answer every theosophist who sees fit to write to her) chose to conclude that his letter had not reached its destination, and thought proper to write letters to India, one of which formed the basis of the subjoined article in the *Englishman* of the 27th of May :—

“ It may be in the recollection of our readers that last cold season Mr. Eglinton, a spiritualistic medium of considerable repute, visited Calcutta; that séances, chiefly of a private character, were held; that phenomena of a more or less remarkable type were reported as having occurred; and that accounts, more or less detailed, of what took place were published in *Psychic Notes*—a journal specially devoted to spiritualism and to the recording of the chief events of Mr. Eglinton's visit. Besides, there were several letters from various parties giving detailed accounts of remarkable occurrences which fell within their own experiences. One of these communications appeared in this journal on the 7th April; and it is to this communication which we wish chiefly to refer. At the outset we wish distinctly to state that the present aspect of spiritualistic phenomena is such that it places itself, in our estimation, outside the province of public discussion; and we desire as markedly to affirm that we have no desire to initiate discussion on these topics, nor do we now purpose doing more than stating, as shortly as possible, several facts which, in view of the letter of 7th April that appeared in our columns, we feel justified in publishing. In the minds of most believers in spiritualism

the belief assumes the sacred aspect of a deep religious conviction. We have no wish to wound the feelings of any such, nor can we enter, as we have said, on any discussion which is likely to follow from the statements we may now make. In order to put our readers in possession of the whole facts, it is necessary to recall shortly the substance of the letter above referred to. Mr. Eglinton went on board the *Vega* on the 14th March. On the 15th a telegram came from Madame Blavatsky to Calcutta saying the 'Illustrious' wished Mr. Eglinton to send a letter when on board to the President of the Theosophical Society at Howrah, and that he would be helped. The same day Mr. Eglinton wrote from Fisherman's Point agreeing, but expressing doubt as to its success. On the 19th Madame Blavatsky wrote to Mrs. Gordon from Bombay, saying something was going to be done ; but before this letter was brought by the post-peon, Colonel Olcott, who had come from Berhampore on the 19th, having left Bombay on the 17th February, intimated that his *Chohan* (teacher) had told him that Koot Hoomi had been to the *Vega* and seen Mr. Eglinton. This was at eight o'clock on Thursday morning, the 23d April. A few hours later there came a telegram from Madame Blavatsky at Bombay, saying that K. H. had gone to the *Vega*, the date of the telegram being Wednesday evening, the 22d, nine minutes past nine. On Friday, the 24th, Colonel Olcott, Colonel Gordon, and Mrs. Gordon sat in what had been Mr. Eglinton's room whilst in Calcutta, two 'Brothers' were seen, and a letter from Mr. Eglinton was mysteriously thrown on the floor, dated the *Vega* the 24th, a card of Mr. Eglinton's with the writing of K. H. and the other Brother,

and a message from Madame Blavatsky, all threaded together with blue sewing silk. Mr. Eglinton's letter stated that K. H. had appeared to him in the *Vega* two days before, that the letter he was sending had been shown to Mrs. B., a fellow passenger, and that she had marked it. Madame Blavatsky's note stated that Mr. Eglinton's letter had been sent to her from the *Vega* with another letter for herself which she keeps, and that she transmitted them to Mrs. Gordon by command of K. H.

“ In the course of the deductions drawn from these alleged phenomena, Mrs. Gordon states that ‘Mr. Eglinton was personally unknown to Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, the former not even having written to him once, the latter once only,’ and that Mr. Eglinton's views and theirs respecting mediumistic phenomena were in conflict. From a passenger on board the *Vega* we learn that on the evening of the 22d March the vessel left Colombo, that is the night on which Madame Blavatsky telegraphs from Bombay K. H.'s visit to the *Vega*. On the 24th Mr. Eglinton told the passenger that he had seen Koot Hoomi that night, and that some remarkable statements had been made to him by K. H., of whose existence he was now firmly convinced. He said he was going to write to Mrs. Gordon, and tell her what had happened, and hoped that K. H. would take the letter. The letter, already written, he showed the passenger, who says it was the one which was published on the 7th April in our columns. The letter was also shown to Mrs. B., and she marked the envelope with a certain mark. Our informant is himself an initiated theosophist, and naturally felt a good deal interested. He suggested

that he might take the same opportunity to send a letter to Madame Blavatsky, with whom he was acquainted. Mr. Eglinton agreed, the letter was written, and put with Mr. Eglinton's. The next day, on the 25th, the *Vega* passenger was told that the letters had gone, that is, had disappeared. On reaching Gravesend on the 22nd April letters were delivered on board, and he was surprised to find that Mrs. B. had heard from her husband in Calcutta that Mr. Eglinton's letter had been received there. He also heard, but is unable to state positively whether it is the case or not, that her mark on the letter delivered in Calcutta was *not* the same as that which she had made on board. The passenger heard nothing of *his* letter, and has heard nothing since. It is not referred to in Madame Blavatsky's account, nor in Mrs. Gordon's statement, and the question is what became of it. Mr. Eglinton received it, and the writer was told it had been taken away with Mr. Eglinton's, and yet it disappears, while Mr. Eglinton's letter is duly conveyed. Under these circumstances, the writer of the letter on board the *Vega* is entitled to claim, that without being unreasonably sceptical he should have further proof of the alleged phenomenon. Most people of ordinary intelligence, possessing anything of a critical or judicial faculty, will, no doubt, agree with this. No imputation of bad faith is meant to apply to anyone, but under the circumstances, dates, telegrams, messages, etc., to most minds the alleged aerial conveyance of letters is no proof. Had the undelivered letter been received, the writer, no doubt, would have been convinced, and apart from that, if there had been evidence to show that the marked letter Mrs. B. received from on board

the *Vega* is the identical letter marked by that lady herself, there would have been some satisfactory evidence of remarkable phenomena. But as a matter of fact, the marks on the envelope, which appeared in Calcutta, on the 25th of March, were three separate Latin crosses in a horizontal line. Mr. Eglinton on board the *Vega* marked the envelope of the letter he showed Mrs. B. with one cross; she crossed that cross obliquely twice, making an asterisk of it. There is another point which deserves notice. Mrs. Gordon's statement is that Mr. Eglinton was personally unknown to either Madame Blavatsky or Colonel Olcott, the former not having even written to him once. This statement is directly opposed to Mr. Eglinton's affirmation to the *Vega* passenger. Mr. Eglinton, though he has never met Madame Blavatsky, has had a very extensive correspondence with her, and stated to him that her letters were very long ones. Of Mr. Eglinton himself, the impression left by him on those with whom he comes in contact is that he is honest and straightforward. Of the other actors in this affair we desire to express no opinion other than that they are, no doubt, actuated by the highest motives in their search for truth as it presents itself to them. We venture to pronounce no opinion on the case. We have placed the facts, so far as they are known to us, before our readers, and we leave them to form their own judgment on the whole matter.

This elicited the following letter, which appeared in the *Englishman* of the 5th June :—

“SIR,—Every one interested in the subject, connected with which a recent transfer of letters from

the *Vega* to Bombay and Calcutta is an important fact, will recognize with much pleasure the anxiety to state the case fairly which distinguishes your article published on the 27th. But some of the facts are stated in a way which fails to convey to the reader, who now hears of them for the first time, an accurate impression as to the course of events. First of all, you interweave with the narrative concerning the letter that was conveyed several references to another letter which was not conveyed. Now the fact that I received a copy of the *Times* by the post from London is not invalidated by the fact that I do not receive a copy of the *Daily News*. The two letters have nothing to do with one another, and it does not follow that because certain occult adepts chose to make provision for the conveyance, by occult means, of a letter from Mr. Eglinton, a medium whose faculties they could perhaps make use of to facilitate the transaction, that they should also be willing to make the necessary effort simply to gratify the curiosity of another person. You also refer to the inference drawn by ourselves, as to who made the marks on the envelope. All Mr. Eglinton said in his letter was: 'I shall read this letter to Mrs. B. and ask her to mark the envelope.' In the account published I wrote: 'We opened the letter carefully by slitting up the side as we saw that some one had made on the flap of the envelope, in pencil, three Latin crosses.' With the singular incapacity to understand the important element of test conditions which distinguishes nearly all mediums and persons long familiarized with occult phenomena, Mr. Eglinton unfortunately opened the envelope which had been first marked, he having enclosed another letter

and made it too heavy. He then used a new envelope, and being unable to find at the moment the lady who marked the former envelope, he, in the presence of three witnesses, made the crosses, differing, as you say, from those made before. But, tiresome as this mistake on his part is, it leaves the substantial elements of the wonderful feat accomplished altogether untouched. The letter was read, before being sent, to several of the passengers on board the *Vega*, and that would alone establish its identity except on the hypothesis of fraudulent collusion between Mr. Eglinton and the founders of the Theosophical Society in India. Now remember that the letter, before being brought to Calcutta, was taken to Bombay, where it was suddenly dropped down out of the air in the presence of seven people whose testimony to this occurrence has been published. In the presence of these people, cards were now written on, and attached to the original letter, and then the whole collection of documents was dropped down a few moments afterwards in the presence of Colonel Gordon and myself in Howrah. The identification of these cards is complete. They were prepared under the eyes of the witnesses at Bombay, and as they certify 'tied with a blue thread of silk, and the packet put as directed on a book-case, and within five minutes after it was put there it evaporated to our no small surprise.' The transmission of the cards from Bombay to Calcutta, if itself established, irrefragably establishes the transmission of the letter also; and, if it can be shown that a letter can be taken this distance by occult means, the difficulty of believing that it was conveyed from the *Vega* to Bombay is considerably diminished. Finally, the Indian public must please to

remember that the object with which phenomena of this kind are performed is not so much to break down incredulity, as to awaken the attention of people with patient, inquiring and unprejudiced minds, who may thus be led from one step to another until, by a circuitous path, which is none the less continuous, they are conducted into regions to which the miscellaneous and unthinking crowd is neither expected nor invited to penetrate. The published account of the *Vega* phenomena will, perhaps, induce some persons who have not hitherto been attracted to the subject to examine the records of the numerous and no less astonishing phenomena which have attended the operations of the Theosophical Society in India during the last two years. In that case its *secondary* object—for its *first* had reference to the spiritualistic world only—will be fully realized. The *Vega* passenger whom you refer to may have misunderstood Mr. Eglinton's remarks about his correspondence with Madame Blavatsky. I believe she has never written to Mr. Eglinton, and I know both from her and himself that she has not done so for the last year. It would make this letter too long to go into further details on this subject.

A. GORDON."

SIMLA, *May 30th*, 1882.

And the following letter which appeared in the *Englishman* of the 13th June:—

"SIR,—My attention has just been directed to an article in your issue of the 27th ultimo, and to a letter of Mrs. Gordon's in your issue of the 5th instant, both referring to the letters transmitted from the *Vega* by occult agencies.

“Mrs. Gordon was apparently not aware, as I am,* that Mr. ——’s letter duly reached Madame Blavatsky on the same day as Mr. Eglinton’s letters. It was a private letter, and hence no reference was made to it in the published accounts of the transmission of the other *letters, cards, etc.*

“As Mr. —— is a Theosophist, I think that before inspiring, as I know he did, that article of yours of the 27th ultimo, he might at least have written or telegraphed to Bombay to learn whether his letter had or had not been received.

“As it is, Madame Blavatsky’s delicacy in saying nothing (outside our inner circle) about a private letter which she did not know whether the writer would or would not wish her to use, has been, very foolishly, made a ground for attempting to throw doubt upon a perfectly distinct phenomenon.

“ALLAN HUME.”

SIMLA, 7th June, 1882.

Viewed as a whole I think it must be admitted that this phenomenon is a very satisfactory one, and that it distinctly tends to establish the existence of the Brothers. Of course, I personally *now* KNOW that they *do* exist.

H. X.

July, 1882.

*This letter of Mr. ——’s is, I may mention, in my possession, together with a letter of Madame Blavatsky’s of the 28th of March, enclosing it and explaining why she wished the matter kept secret.—*A. Hume.*

[This footnote, (Mr. Hume, to whom I am indebted for a copy of his letter, informs me,) was not, for some reason, printed in the *Englishman*.—H. X.]

The last sheets of this Second Edition were passing through the Press when the following well authenticated statement was handed to me :—

STATEMENT OF THOLUVORE VELAYUDHAM MUDELIAR, SECOND TAMIL PANDIT OF THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, MADRAS.

To the Author of "HINTS ON ESOTERIC THEOSOPHY."

"SIR,—I beg to inform you that I was a *Chela* of the late 'Arulprakasa Vallalare,' otherwise known as Chithumbaram Ramalinga Pillay Avergal, the celebrated Yogi of Southern India. Having come to know that the English community, as well as some Hindus, entertained doubts as to the existence of the *Mahatmas* (adepts), and, as to the fact of the Theosophical Society having been formed under their special orders; and having heard, moreover, of your recent work, in which much pains are taken to present the evidence about these Mahatmas *pro* and *con*—I wish to make public certain facts in connection with my late revered Guru. My belief is, that they ought effectually to remove all such doubts, and prove that Theosophy is no empty delusion, nor the Society in question founded on an insecure basis.

"Let me premise with a brief description of the personality of, and the doctrines taught by, the above mentioned ascetic, Ramalingam Pillay.

"He was born at Maruthur, Chittambaram Taluq, South Arcot, Madras Presidency. He came to live at

Madras at an early period of his career, and dwelt there for a long time. At the age of nine, without any reading, Ramalingam is certified by eye-witnesses to have been able to recite the contents of the works of Agustia and other Munis equally respected by Dravidians and Aryans. In 1849, I became his disciple, and though no one ever knew where he had been initiated, some years after he gathered a number of disciples around him. He was a great Alchemist. He had a strange faculty about him, witnessed very often, of changing a carnivorous person into a vegetarian; a mere glance from him seemed enough to destroy the desire for animal food. He had also the wonderful faculty of reading other men's minds. In the year 1855, he left Madras for Chidambaram, and thence proceeded to Vadulur and Karingooli, where he remained a number of years. Many a time, during his stay there, he used to leave his followers, disappearing, to go no one knew whither, and remaining absent for more or less prolonged periods of time. In personal appearance, Ramalingam was a moderately tall, spare man—so spare, indeed, as to virtually appear a skeleton—yet withal a strong man, erect in stature, and walking very rapidly; with a face of a clear brown complexion, a straight, thin nose, very large fiery eyes, and with a look of constant sorrow on his face. Toward the end he *let his hair grow long*; and, what is rather unusual with Yogis, he wore shoes. His garments consisted but of two pieces of white cloth. His habits were excessively abstemious. He was known to hardly ever take any rest. A strict vegetarian, he ate but once in two or three days, and was then satisfied with a few mouthfuls of rice. But when fasting for a pe-

riod of two or three months at a time, he literally ate nothing, living merely on warm water with a little sugar dissolved in it.

“As he preached against caste, he was not very popular; but still people of all castes gathered in large numbers around him. They came not so much for his teachings, as in the hope of *witnessing* and learning phenomena, or ‘miracles,’ with the power of producing which he was generally credited; though he himself discredited the idea of anything supernatural, asserting constantly that his was a religion based on pure science. Among many other things he preached that:—

“(1.) Though the Hindu people listened not to him, nor gave ear to his counsels, yet the esoteric meaning of the Vedas and other sacred books of the East would be revealed by the custodians of the secret—the Mahatmas—to foreigners, who would receive it with joy.

“(2.) That the fatal influence of the Kalipurusha Cycle, which now rules the world, will be neutralized in about ten years.

“(3.) That the use of animal food would be gradually relinquished.

“(4.) That the distinction between races and castes would eventually cease, and the principles of Universal Brotherhood be eventually accepted, and a Universal Brotherhood be established in India.

“(5.) That what men call “God” is, in fact, the principle of Universal Love—which produces and sustains perfect Harmony and Equilibrium throughout all nature.

“(6.) That men, once they have ascertained the divine power latent in them, would acquire such wonderful powers as to be able to change the ordinary operations of the law of gravity, &c., &c.

“In the year 1867, he founded a Society, under the name of ‘Sumarasa Veda Sanmarga Sungham,’ which means a society based on the principle of Universal Brotherhood, and for the propagation of the true Vedic doctrine. I need hardly remark that these principles are identically those of the Theosophical Society. Our Society was in existence but for five or six years, during which time a very large number of poor and infirm persons were fed at the expense of its members.

“When he had attained his 54th year (1873), he began to prepare his disciples for his departure from the world. He announced his intention of going into Samadhi. During the first half of 1873 he preached most forcibly his views upon Human Brotherhood; but during the last quarter of the year he gave up lecturing entirely and maintained an almost unbroken silence. He resumed speech in the last days of January, 1874, and reiterated his prophecies—hereinafter narrated. On the 30th of that month, at Metucupam, we saw our master for the last time. Selecting a small building, he entered its solitary room after taking an affectionate farewell of his *Chelas*, stretched himself on the carpet, and then, by his orders, the door was locked and the only opening walled up. But when, a year later, the place was opened and examined, there was nothing to be seen but a vacant room. He left with us a promise to re-appear some day, but would

give us no intimation as to the time, place or circumstances. Until then, however, he said that he would be working not in India alone, but also in Europe and America and all other countries, to influence the minds of the right men to assist in preparing for the regeneration of the world.

“Such, in short, is the history of this great man. The facts I have referred to above are within the knowledge of thousands of people. His whole occupation was the preaching of the sublime moral doctrines contained in the Hindu Shastras, and the instilling into the masses of the principles of Universal Brotherhood, benevolence and charity. But to his great disappointment he found among his large congregations but few who could appreciate his lofty ethics. During the latter part of his visible earthly career, he often expressed his bitter sorrow for this sad state of things, and repeatedly exclaimed—

“ ‘ You are not fit to become members of this Society of Universal Brotherhood. *The real members of that Brotherhood are living far away, towards the north of India.* You do not listen to me. You do not follow the principles of my teachings. You seem to be determined not to be convinced by me. **YET THE TIME IS NOT FAR OFF WHEN PERSONS FROM RUSSIA, AMERICA (these two countries were always named), and other foreign lands, WILL COME TO INDIA AND PREACH TO YOU THIS SAME DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.** Then only will you know and appreciate the grand truths that I am now vainly trying to make you accept. You will soon find that **THE BROTHERS WHO LIVE IN THE FAR NORTH** will work a great many

wonders in India, and thus confer incalculable benefits upon this our country.'

“ This prophecy has, in my opinion, just been literally fulfilled. The fact that the Mahatmas in the North exist, is no new idea to us, Hindus; and the strange fact that the advent of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott from Russia and America was foretold several years before they came to India, is an incontrovertible proof that my Guru was in communication with those Mahatmas under whose directions the Theosophical Society was subsequently founded.”

THOLUVORE VELAYUDHAM MUDELIAR, F.T.S.

Witnesses :

MUNJACUPPUM SINGARAVELU MUDELIAR,

President of the Krishna Theo. Socy.

COMBACONAM ARAVAMUDU AYANGAR,

Fellow of the Nellore Theosophical Society.

“ The official position of Vellayu Pandit as one of the Pandits of the Presidency College is an ample guarantee of his respectability and trustworthiness.”

G. MUTTUSWAMY CHETTY,

Judge of the Small Cause Court, Madras,

Vice-President of the Madras Theo. Socy.

On this Madame H. P. Blavatsky remarks: “ This is one of those cases of previous foretelling of a coming event, which is least of all open to suspicion of bad faith. The honorable character of the witness, the wide

publicity of his Guru's announcements, and the impossibility that he could have got from public rumor, or the journals of the day, any intimation that the Theosophical Society would be formed and would operate in India—all these conspire to support the inference that Ramalingam Yogi was verily in the counsels of those who ordered us to found the Society. In March, 1873, we were directed to proceed from Russia to Paris. In June we were told to proceed to the United States, where we arrived July 6th. This was the very time when Ramalingam was most forcibly prefiguring the events which should happen. In October, 1874, we received an intimation to go to Chittenden, Vermont, where, at the famous homestead of the Eddy family, Colonel Olcott was engaged in making his investigations—now so celebrated in the annals of Spiritualism,—of the so-called “materialization of spirits.” November, 1875, the Theosophical Society was founded, and it was not until 1878 that the correspondence begun with friends in India, which resulted in the transfer of the Society's Head-Quarters to Bombay in February, 1879.”

These facts speak for themselves.—H. X.

EPITOME OF THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS.

THEOSOPHY, the Wisdom-Religion, has existed from immemorial time. It offers us a theory of nature and of life which is founded upon knowledge acquired by the Sages of the past, more especially those of the East; and its higher students claim that this knowledge is not imagined or inferred, but that it is a knowledge of facts seen and known by those who are willing to comply with the conditions requisite for seeing and knowing.

Theosophy, meaning knowledge of or about God,* and the term "God" being universally accepted as including the whole of both the known and the unknown, it follows that "Theosophy" must imply wisdom respecting the absolute; and, since the absolute is without beginning and eternal, this wisdom must have existed always. Hence Theosophy is sometimes called the Wisdom-Religion, because from immemorial time it has had knowledge of all the laws governing the spiritual, the moral, and the material.

The theory of nature and of life which it offers is not one that was at first speculatively laid down and then proved by adjusting facts or conclusions to fit it; but

* Not in the sense of a personal anthropomorphic God, but in that of divine "godly" wisdom.

is an explanation of existence, cosmic and individual, derived from knowledge reached by those who have acquired the power to see behind the curtain that hides the operations of nature from the ordinary mind. Such Beings are called Sages, using the term in its highest sense. Of late they have been called Mahatmas and Adepts. In ancient times they were known as the Rishees and Maharishis, the last being a word that means Great Rishees.

It is not claimed that these exalted beings, or Sages, have existed only in the East. They are known to have lived in all parts of the globe, in obedience to the cyclic laws referred to below. But as far as concerns the present development of the human race on this planet, they now are to be found in the East, although the fact may be that some of them had, in remote times, retreated from even the American shores.

There being of necessity various grades among the students of this wisdom-religion, it stands to reason that those belonging to the lower degrees are able to give out only so much of the knowledge as is the appanage of the grade they have reached, and depend, to some extent, for further information upon students who are higher yet. It is these higher students for whom the claim is asserted that their knowledge is not mere inference, but that it concerns realities seen and known by them. While some of them are connected with the Theosophical Society, they are yet above it. The power to see and absolutely know such laws is surrounded by natural inherent regulations which must be complied with as conditions precedent; and it is, therefore, not possible to respond to the demand of the worldly man for an immediate statement of this wisdom,

insomuch as he could not comprehend it until those conditions are fulfilled. As this knowledge deals with laws and states of matter, and of consciousness undreamed of by the "practical" western world, it can only be grasped, piece by piece, as the student pushes forward the demolition of his preconceived notions, that are due either to inadequate or to erroneous theories. It is claimed by these higher students that, in the occident especially, a false method of reasoning has for many centuries prevailed, resulting in a universal habit of mind which causes men to look upon many effects as causes, and to regard that which is real as the unreal, putting meanwhile the unreal in the place of the real. As a minor example, the phenomena of mesmerism and clairvoyance, have, until lately, been denied by western science, yet there have always been numerous persons who know for themselves, by incontrovertible introspective evidence, the truth of these phenomena, and, in some instances, understand their cause and rationale.

The following are some of the fundamental propositions of Theosophy:—

The spirit in man is the only real and permanent part of his being; the rest of his nature being variously compounded. And since decay is incident to all composite things, everything in man but his spirit is impermanent.

Further, the universe being one thing and not diverse, and everything within it being connected with the whole and with every other thing therein, of which upon the upper plane (below referred to) there is a perfect knowledge, no act or thought occurs without each portion of the great whole perceiving and noting

it. Hence all are inseparably bound together by the tie of Brotherhood.

This first fundamental proposition of Theosophy postulates that the universe is not an aggregation of diverse unities but that it is one whole. This whole is what is denominated "Deity" by Western Philosophers, and "Para-Brahm" by the Hindu Vedantins. It may be called the Unmanifested, containing within itself the potency of every form of manifestation, together with the laws governing those manifestations. Further, it is taught that there is no creation of worlds in the theological sense; but that their appearance is due strictly to evolution. When the time comes for the Unmanifested to manifest as an objective Universe, which it does periodically, it emanates a Power or "The First Cause," so called because it itself is the rootless root of that Cause, and called in the East the "Causeless Cause." The First Cause, we may call Brahmâ, or Ormazd, or Osiris, or by any name we please. The projection into time of the influence or so-called "breath of Brahmâ" causes all the worlds and the beings upon them to gradually appear. They remain in manifestation just as long as that influence continues to proceed forth in evolution. After long æons the outbreathing, evolutionary influence slackens, and the universe begins to go into obscurity, or pralaya, until, the "breath" being fully indrawn, no objects remain, because nothing *is* but Brahma. Care must be taken by the student to make a distinction between Brahma (the impersonal Parabrahma) and Brahmâ the manifested Logos. A discussion of the means used by this power in acting would be out of place in this Epitome, but of those means Theosophy also treats.

This breathing forth is known as a Manvantara, or the Manifestation of the world between two Manus (from Manu, and Antara “between,”) and the completion of the inspiration brings with it Pralaya, or destruction. It is from these truths that the erroneous doctrines of “creation” and the “last judgment” have sprung. Such Manvantaras and Pralayas have eternally occurred, and will continue to take place periodically, and forever.

For the purpose of a manvantara two so-called eternal principles are postulated, that is, Purusha and Prakriti (or spirit and matter), because both are ever present and conjoined in each manifestation. Those terms are used here because no equivalent for them exists in English. Purusha is called “spirit,” and Prakriti “matter,” but this Purusha is not the unmanifested, nor is Prakriti matter as known to science; the Aryan Sages therefore declare that there is a higher spirit still, called Purushottama. The reason for this is that at the night of Brahma, or the so-called indrawing of his breath, both Purusha and Prakriti are absorbed in the Unmanifested; a conception which is the same as the idea underlying the Biblical expression—“remaining in the bosom of the Father.”

This brings us to the doctrine of Universal Evolution as expounded by the Sages of the Wisdom-Religion.

The Spirit, or Purusha, they say, proceeds from Brahma through the various forms of matter evolved at the same time, beginning in the world of the spiritual from the highest and in the material world from the lowest form. This lowest form is one unknown as yet to modern science. Thus, therefore, the mineral, vegetable, and animal forms each imprison a spark of

the Divine, a portion of the indivisible Purusha. These sparks struggle to "return to the Father," or, in other words, to secure self-consciousness, and at last come into the highest form, on Earth, that of man, where alone self-consciousness is possible to them. The period, calculated in human time, during which this evolution goes on, embraces millions of ages. Each spark of divinity has, therefore, millions of ages in which to accomplish its mission—that of obtaining complete self-consciousness while in the form of man. But by this is not meant that the mere act of coming into human forms of itself confers self-consciousness upon this divine spark. That great work may be accomplished during the Manvantara in which a Divine spark reaches the human form, or it may not; all depends upon the individual's own will and efforts. Each particular spirit thus goes through the Manwantara, or enters into manifestation, for its own enrichment and for that of the Whole. Mahatmas and Rishees are thus gradually evolved during a Manwantara, and become, after its expiration, planetary spirits, who guide the evolutions of other future planets. The planetary spirits of our globe are those who in previous Manwantaras—or days of Brahma—made the efforts, and became, in the course of that long period, Mahatmas.

Each Manwantara is for the same end and purpose, so that the Mahatmas who have now attained those heights, or those who may become such in the succeeding years of the present Manwantara, will probably be the planetary spirits of the next Manwantara for this or other planets. This system is thus seen to be based upon the identity of Spiritual Being, and, under the name of "Universal Brotherhood," constitutes the

basic idea of the Theosophical Society, whose object is the realization of that Brotherhood among men.

The Sages say that this Purusha is the basis of all manifested objects. Without it nothing could exist or cohere. It interpenetrates everything everywhere. It is the reality of which, or upon which, those things called real by us are mere images. As Purusha reaches to and embraces all beings, they are all connected together; and in or on the plane where that Purusha is, there is a perfect consciousness of every act, thought, object, and circumstance, whether supposed to occur there, or on this plane, or on any other. For below the spirit and above the intellect is a plane of consciousness in which experiences are noted, commonly called man's "spiritual nature;" this is frequently said to be as susceptible of culture as his body or his intellect.

This upper plane is the real register of all sensations and experiences, although there are other registering planes. It is sometimes called the "subconscious mind." Theosophy, however, holds that it is a misuse of terms to say that the spiritual nature can be cultivated. The real object to be kept in view is to so open up or make porous the lower nature that the spiritual nature may shine through it and become the guide and ruler. It is only "cultivated" in the sense of having a vehicle prepared for its use, into which it may descend. In other words, it is held that the real man, who is the higher self—being the spark of the Divine before alluded to—overshadows the visible being, which has the possibility of becoming united to that spark. Thus it is said that the higher Spirit is not in the man, but above him. It is always peaceful, un-

concerned, blissful, and full of absolute knowledge. It continually partakes of the Divine state, being continually that state itself, "conjoined with the Gods, it feeds upon Ambrosia." The object of a student is to let the light of that spirit shine through the lower coverings.

This "spiritual culture" is only attainable as the grosser interests, passions, and demands of the flesh are subordinated to the interests, aspirations, and needs of the higher nature; and this is a matter of both system and established law.

This spirit can only become the ruler when the firm intellectual acknowledgment or admission is first made that IT alone is. And, as stated above, it being not only the person concerned but also the whole, all selfishness must be eliminated from the lower nature before its divine state can be reached. So long as the smallest personal or selfish desire—even for spiritual attainment for our own sake—remains, so long is the end desired put off. Hence the above term "demands of the flesh" really covers also demands that are not of the flesh, and its proper rendering would be "desires of the personal nature, including those of the individual soul."

When systematically trained in accordance with the aforesaid system and law, men attain to clear insight into the immaterial, spiritual world, and their interior faculties apprehend truth as immediately and readily as physical faculties grasp the things of sense, or mental faculties those of reason. Or, in the words used by some of them, "They are able to look directly upon ideas"; and hence their testimony to such truth is as trustworthy as is that of scientists or philosophers to truth in their respective fields.

In the course of this spiritual training such men acquire perception of, and control over, various forces in Nature unknown to other men, and thus are able to perform works usually called "miraculous," though really but the result of larger knowledge of natural law. What these powers are may be found in Patanjali's "Yoga Philosophy."

Their testimony as to super-sensuous truth, verified by their possession of such powers, challenges candid examination from every religious mind.

Turning now to the system expounded by these sages we find, in the first place, an account of cosmogony, the past and future of this earth and other planets, the evolution of life through elemental, mineral, vegetable, animal, and human forms, as they are called.

The succession of waves of manifestation or evolution is endless. The grand period, including within it all the minor evolutions, consists of 311,040,000,000,000 human years. The process of evolution under one single influence—or *Manu*—comprises 71 great Yugas or 306,720,000 human years; and the lesser Yugas, with which man is concerned, are four in number, with 4,320,000 human years. These are the *Satya-yug* (or age of truth), the *Tretya-yug*, the *Dvapara-yug*, and our present *Kali-yug* (or age of darkness), which began five thousands of years back. The word "darkness" here refers to spiritual and not material darkness. In this age, however, all causes bring about their effects much more rapidly than in any other age, a fact due to the intensified momentum of "evil," as the course of its cycle is about rounding towards that of a new cycle of truth. Thus a sincere lover of the race can accomplish more in three incarnations during *Kali-Yuga*,

than he could in a much greater number in any other age. The darkness of this age is not absolute, but is greater than that of other ages ; its main tendency being towards materiality, while having some mitigation in occasional ethical or scientific advance conducive to the well-being of the race, by the removal of immediate causes of crime or disease.

Our earth is one of a chain of seven planets, it alone being on the visible plane, while the six others are on different planes, and therefore invisible. [The other planets of our solar system belong each to a chain of seven.] And the life-wave passes from the higher to the lower in the chain until it reaches our earth, and then ascends and passes to the three others on the opposite arc, and thus seven times. The evolution of forms is co-incident with this progress, the tide of life bearing with it the mineral and vegetable forms, until each globe in turn is ready to receive the human life wave. Of these globes our earth is the fourth.

Humanity passes from globe to globe in a series of Rounds, first circling about each globe, and re-incarnating upon it a fixed number of times. Concerning the human evolution on the concealed planets or globes little is permitted to be said. We have to concern ourselves with our Earth alone. The latter, when the wave of humanity has reached it for the last time (in this, our Fourth Round), began to evolute man, subdividing him into races. Each of these races when it has, through evolution, reached the period known as "the moment of choice" and decided its future destiny as an individual race, begins to disappear. The races are separated, moreover, from each other by catastrophes of nature, such as the subsidence of continents

and great natural convulsions. Coincidentally with the development of races the development of specialized senses takes place; thus our fifth race has so far developed five senses.

The sages further tell us that the affairs of this world and its people are subject to cyclic laws, and during any one cycle the rate or quality of progress appertaining to a different cycle is not possible. These cyclic laws operate in each age. As the ages grow darker the same laws prevail, only the cycles are shorter; that is, they are the same length in the absolute sense, but go over the given limit in a shorter period of time. These laws impose restrictions on the progress of the race. In a cycle where all is descending, the adepts must wait until the right time comes before they can aid the race to ascend. They cannot, and must not, interfere with Karmic law. Therefore they begin to work actively again in the spiritual sense, when the cycle is known by them to be approaching its turning point.

At the same time these cycles have no hard lines or points of departure or inception, inasmuch as one may be ending or drawing to a close for some time after another has already begun. They thus overlap and shade into one another, as day does into night; and it is only when the one has completely ended and the other has really begun by bringing out its blossoms, that we can say we are in a new cycle. It may be illustrated by comparing two adjacent cycles to two interlaced circles, where the circumference of one touches the centre of the other, so that the moment where one ended and the other began would be at the point where the circumferences intersected each other. Or by imagining a man as representing, in the act of

walking, the progress of the cycles; his rate of advancement can only be obtained by taking the distance covered by his paces, the points at the middle of each pace, between the feet, being the beginning of cycles and their ending.

The cyclic progress is assisted, or the deterioration further permitted, in this way; at a time when the cycle is ascending, developed and progressed Beings, known in Sanscrit by the term *Gnanis*, descend to this earth from other spheres where the cycle is going down, in order that they may also help the spiritual progress of this globe. In like manner they leave this sphere when our cycle approaches darkness. These *Gnanis* must not, however, be confounded with the *Mahatmas* and *Adepts* mentioned above. The right aim of true theosophists should therefore be so to live that their influence may be conducive for the dispelling of darkness to the end that such *Gnanis* may turn again towards this sphere.

Theosophy also teaches the existence of a universally diffused and highly ethereal medium, which has been called the "Astral Light" and "Akasa." It is the repository of all past, present, and future events, and in it are recorded the effects of spiritual causes, and of all acts and thoughts from the direction of either spirit or matter. It may be called the Book of the Recording Angel.

Akasa, however, is a misnomer when it is confused with Ether or the Astral light of the *Kabalists*. *Akasa* is the noumenon of the phenomenal Ether or Astral light proper, for *Akasa* is infinite, impartite, intangible, its only production being Sound.*

* *Akasa* in the mysticism of the esoteric philosophy is properly

And this Astral light is material and not spirit. It is, in fact, the lower principle of that cosmic body of which Akasa is the highest. It has the power of retaining all images. This includes a statement that each thought as well as word and act makes an image there. These images may be said to have two lives. 1st. Their own as an image. 2d. The impress left by them in the matrix of the Astral light. In the upper realm of this light there is no such thing as space or time in the human sense. All future events are the thoughts and acts of men; these are producers in advance of the picture of the event which is to occur. Ordinary men continually, recklessly, and wickedly, are making these events sure to come to pass, but the Sages, Mahatmas, and the Adepts of the good law, make only such pictures as are in accordance with Divine law, because they control the production of their thought. In the Astral light are all the differentiated sounds as well. The elementals are energetic centres in it. The shades of departed human beings and animals are also there. Hence, any seer or entranced person can see in it all that anyone had done or said, as well as that which had happened to any one with whom he is connected. Hence, also, the identity of deceased persons—who are supposed to report specially out of this plane—is not to be concluded from the giving of forgotten or unknown words, facts or ideas. Out of this plane of matter can be taken the pictures of all who have ever lived, and then reflected on a suitable magneto-electrical surface, so as to seem

speaking the female “Holy Ghost”; “Sound” or speech being the logos, the manifested verbum of the unmanifested Mother. See Sankhyasara Preface, p. 33, *et seq.*

like the apparition of the deceased, producing all the sensations of weight, hardness, and extension.

Through the means of the Astral Light and the help of Elementals, the various material elements may be drawn down and precipitated from the atmosphere upon either a plane surface or in the form of a solid object; this precipitation may be made permanent, or it may be of such a light cohesive power as to soon fade away. But the help of the elementals can only be obtained by a strong will added to a complete knowledge of the laws which govern the being of the elementals. It is useless to give further details on this point; first, because the untrained student cannot understand; and second, the complete explanation is not permitted, were it even possible in this space.

The world of the elementals is an important factor in our world and in the course of the student. Each thought as it is evolved by us coalesces instantly with an Elemental, and is then beyond our power.

It can easily be seen that this process is going on every instant. Therefore each thought exists as an entity. Its length of life depends on two things: (a) The original force of the person's will and thought; (b) The power of the Elemental which coalesced with it, the latter being determined by the class to which the elemental belongs. This is the case with good and bad thoughts alike, and as the will beneath the generality of wicked thoughts is usually powerful, we can see that the result is very important, because the elemental has no conscience and obtains its constitution and direction from the thought it may from time to time carry.

Each human being has his own elementals that par-

take of his nature and his thoughts. If you fix your thoughts upon a person in anger, or in critical, uncharitable judgment, you attract to yourself a number of those elementals that belong to, generate, and are generated by this particular fault or failing, and they precipitate themselves upon you. Hence, through the injustice of your merely human condemnation, which cannot know the source and causes of the action of another, you at once become a sharer of his fault or failing by your own act, and the spirit expelled returns "with seven devils worse than himself." This is the origin of the popular saying that "curses, like chickens, come home to roost," and has its root in the laws governing magnetic affinity.

In the Kali-Yuga we are hypnotized by the effect of the immense body of images in the Astral Light, compounded of all the deeds, thoughts, and actions of our ancestors, whose lives tended in a material direction. These images influence the inner man—who is conscious of them—by suggestion. In a brighter age the influence of such images would be towards Truth. The effect of the Astral Light, as thus moulded and painted by us, will remain so long as we continue to place those images there, and it thus becomes our judge and our executioner. Every universal law thus contains within itself the means for its own accomplishment and the punishment for its violation, and requires no further authority to postulate it or to carry out its decrees.

The Astral Light by its inherent action both evolves and destroys forms. It is the universal register. Its chief office is that of a vehicle for the operation of the laws of Karma, or the progress of the principle of life, and it is thus in a deep spiritual sense a medium or

“mediator” between man and his Deity—his higher spirit.

Theosophy also tells of the origin, history, development, and destiny of mankind.

Upon the subject of Man it teaches:—

1. That each spirit is a manifestation of the One Spirit, and thus a part of all. It passes through a series of experiences in incarnation, and is destined to ultimate reunion with the Divine.

2. That this incarnation is not single but repeated, each individuality becoming re-embodied during numerous existences in successive races and planets of our chain, and accumulating the experiences of each incarnation towards its perfection.

3. That between adjacent incarnations, after grosser elements are first purged away, comes a period of comparative rest and refreshment, called Devachan, the soul being therein prepared for its next advent into material life ; that there is a state called Avitchi where annihilation is completed ; and hell also, which is this earth-life.

The constitution of man is subdivided in a septenary manner, the three main divisions being those of body, soul and spirit. These divisions and their relative development govern his subjective condition after death. The real classification cannot be understood, and must for a time remain esoteric, because for its understanding certain senses not usually developed are required.

In Mr. Sennett's *Esoteric Buddhism* the septenary division is given as follows :

1. The Body *Rupa.*
2. Vitality *Prana or Jiva.*

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 3. Astral Body | <i>Linga Sharira.</i> |
| 4. Animal Soul | <i>Kama Rupa.</i> |
| 5. Human Soul | <i>Manas.</i> |
| 6. Spiritual Soul | <i>Buddhi.</i> |
| 7. Spirit | <i>Atma.</i> |

While as a working scheme, this is correct, it was error to call these different parts by the name "principles." The better way is to call each one, except Spirit "a vehicle," and then we will have six vehicles for Atma to work through.

If the present sevenfold division, as given by him and other writers, is adhered to strictly and without any conditional statement, it will give rise to controversy or error. For instance, Spirit is not a seventh principle. It is the synthesis of the whole, and is equally present in the other six. The present various divisions can only be used as a general working hypothesis, to be developed and corrected as students advance and themselves develop from within.

The state of spiritual but comparative rest known as Devachan is not an eternal one, and so is not the same as the eternal heaven of Christianity: we return from it to earth-life when "the reward is complete." Nor does "hell" correspond to the state known to theosophical writers as Avitchi. Avitchi is the same as the "second death," as it is in fact annihilation that only comes to the "black Magician" or spiritually wicked, as will be seen further on.

The nature of each incarnation depends upon the balance as struck of the merit and demerit of the previous life or lives—upon the way in which the man has lived and thought; and this law is inflexible and wholly just.

“Karma”—a term signifying two things, the law of ethical causation (Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap); and the balance or excess of merit or demerit in any individual, determines also the main experiences of joy and sorrow in each incarnation, so that what we call “luck” is in reality “desert”—desert acquired in past existence.

Karma is not all exhausted in a single life, nor is a person necessarily in this life experiencing the effect of all his previous Karma; for some may be held back by various causes. The principal cause is the failure of the Ego to acquire a body which will furnish the instrument or apparatus in and by which the meditation or thoughts of previous lives can have their effect and be ripened. Hence it is held that there is a mysterious power in the man's thoughts during a life sure to bring about its results in either an immediately succeeding life or in one many lives distant; that is, in whatever life the Ego obtains a body capable of being the focus, apparatus, or instrument for the ripening of past Karma. There is also a swaying or diverging power in Karma in its effect upon the soul, for a certain course of life—or thought—will influence the soul in that direction for sometimes three lives, before the beneficial, or bad, effect of any other sort of Karma must be felt. Nor does it follow that every minute portion of Karma must be felt in the same detail as when produced, for several sorts of Karma may come to a head together at one point in the life, and, by their combined effect, produce a result which, while, as a whole, accurately representing all the elements in it, still is a different Karma from each single component part. This may be known as the nullification of the

postulated effect of the classes of Karma involved.

The process of evolution up to re-union with the Divine is and includes successive elevations from rank to rank of power and usefulness. The most exalted beings still in the flesh are known as Sages, Rishies, Brothers, Masters. Their great function being the preservation at all times, and when cyclic laws permit, the extension, of spiritual knowledge and influence.

When union with the Divine is effected, all the events and experiences of each incarnation are known.

As to the process of spiritual development, Theosophy teaches:—

1. That the essence of the process lies in the securing of supremacy, to the highest, the spiritual, element of man's nature.

2. That this is attained along four lines, among others,—

(a) The entire eradication of selfishness in all forms, and the cultivation of *broad generous* sympathy in, and effort for the good of others.

(b) The absolute cultivation of the inner, spiritual man by meditation, by reaching to and communion with the Divine, and by exercise of the kind described by Patanjali, *i.e.*, incessant striving to an ideal end.

(c) The control of fleshly appetites and desires, all lower, material interests being deliberately subordinated to the behests of the spirit.

(d) The careful performance of every duty belonging to one's station in life, without desire for reward, leaving results to Divine law.

3. That while the above is incumbent on and prac-

licable by all religiously disposed men, a yet higher plane of spiritual attainment is conditioned upon a specific course of training, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, by which the internal faculties are first aroused and then developed.

4. That an extension of this process is reached in Adeptship, Mahatmaship, or the states of Rishies, Sages, and Dyhan Chohans, which are all exalted stages, attained by laborious self-discipline and hardship, protracted through possibly many incarnations, and with many degrees of initiation and preferment, beyond which are yet other stages ever approaching the Divine.

As to the rationale of spiritual development it asserts:—

1. That the process takes place entirely within the individual himself, the motive, the effort, and the result proceeding from his own inner nature, along the lines of self-evolution.

2. That, however personal and interior, this process is not unaided, being possible, in fact, only through close communion with the supreme source of all strength and that that source is the “atma” or higher self of the individual.

As to the degree of advancement in incarnations it holds:

1. That even a mere intellectual acquaintance with Theosophic truth has great value in fitting the individual for a step upwards in his next earth-life, as it gives an impulse in that direction.

2. That still more is gained by a career of duty, piety, and beneficence.

3. That a still greater advance is attained by the at-

tentive and devoted use of the means to spiritual culture heretofore stated.

4. That every race and individual of it reaches in evolution a period known as "the moment of choice," when they decide for themselves their future destiny by a deliberate and conscious choice between eternal life and death, and that this right of choice is the peculiar appanage of the free soul. It cannot be exercised until the man has realized the soul within him, and until that soul has attained some measure of self-consciousness in the body. The moment of choice is not a fixed period of time; it is made up of all moments. It cannot come unless all the previous lives have led up to it. For the race as a whole it has not yet come. Any individual can hasten the advent of this period for himself under the previously stated law of the ripening of Karma. Should he then fail to choose right he is not wholly condemned, for the economy of nature provides that he shall again and again have the opportunity of choice when the moment arrives for the whole race. After this period the race, having blossomed, tends towards its dissolution. A few individuals of it will have outstripped its progress and attained Adeptship or Mahatmaship. The main body, who have chosen aright, but who have not attained salvation, pass into the subjective condition, there to await the influx of the human life wave into the next globe, which they are the first souls to people; but the deliberate choosers of evil, whose lives are passed in great spiritual wickedness (for evil done for the sheer love of evil *per se*), sever the connection with the Divine Spirit, or the monad, which forever abandons the human Ego. Such Egos pass into the

misery of the eighth sphere, as far as we understand, there to remain until the separation between what they had thus cultivated and the personal Ishwar or divine spark is complete. But this tenet has never been explained to us by the Masters, who have always refused to answer and to explain it conclusively. At the next Manwantara that Divine Spark will probably begin again the long evolutionary journey, being cast into the stream of life at the source and passing upward again through all the lower forms.

So long as the connection with the Divine Monad is not severed, this annihilation of personality cannot take place. Something of that personality will always remain attached to the immortal Ego. Even after such severance the human being may live on, a man among men—a soulless being. This disappointment, so to call it, of the Divine Spark by depriving it of its chosen vehicle constitutes the “sin against the Holy Ghost,” which its very nature forbade it to pardon, because it cannot continue an association with vehicles which have become degraded and vitiated in the absolute sense, so that they no longer respond to cyclic or evolutionary impulses, but, weighted by their own nature, sink to the lowest depths of matter. The connection, once wholly broken, cannot in the nature of Being be resumed. But innumerable opportunities for return offer themselves throughout the dissolving process, which lasts thousands of year.

There is also a fate that comes to even adepts of the Good Law which is somewhat similar to a loss of “heaven” after the enjoyment for incalculable periods of time. When the adept has reached a certain very high point in his evolution he may, by a mere wish,

become what the Hindus call, a "Deva"—or lesser god. If he does this, then, although he will enjoy the bliss and power of that state for a vast length of time, he will not at the next Pralaya partake of the conscious life "in the bosom of the Father," but has to pass down into matter at the next new "creation," performing certain functions that could not be now made clear, and has to come up again through the elemental world; but this fate is not like that of the Black Magician who falls into Avitchi. And again between the two he can choose the middle state and become a Nirmanakaya—one who gives up the Bliss of Nirvana and remains in conscious existence outside of his body after its death: in order to help Humanity. This is the greatest sacrifice he can make for mankind. By advancement from one degree of interest and comparative attainment to another as above stated, the student hastens the advent of the moment of choice, after which his rate of progress is greatly intensified.

It may be added that Theosophy is the only system of religion and philosophy which gives satisfactory explanation of such problems as these:—

1. The object, use, and inhabitation of other planets than this earth, which planets serve to complete and to prolong the evolutionary course, and to fill the required measure of the universal experience of souls.

2. The geological cataclysms of earth; the frequent absence of intermediate types in its fauna; the occurrence of architectural and other relics of races now lost, and as to which ordinary science has nothing but vain conjecture; the nature of extinct civilizations and the causes of their extinction; the persistence of sav-

agery and the unequal development of existing civilization; the differences, physical and internal, between the various races of men; the line of future development.

3. The contrasts and unisons of the world's faiths, and the common foundation underlying them all.

4. The existence of evil, of suffering, and of sorrow,—a hopeless puzzle to the mere philanthropist or theologian.

5. The inequalities in social condition and privilege; the sharp contrasts between wealth and poverty, intelligence and stupidity, culture and ignorance, virtue and vileness; the appearance of men of genius in families destitute of it, as well as other facts in conflict with the law of heredity, the frequent cases of unfitness of environment around individuals, so sore as to embitter disposition, hamper aspiration, and paralyze endeavor; the violent antithesis between character and condition; the occurrence of accident, misfortune, and untimely death;—all of them problems solvable only by either the conventional theory of Divine caprice or the Theosophic doctrines of Karma and Re-incarnation.

6. The possession by individuals of psychic powers—clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc., as well as the phenomena of psychometry and of thought-transference and the like.

7. The true nature of genuine phenomena in spiritualism, and the proper antidote to superstition and to exaggerated expectation.

8. The failure of conventional religions to greatly extend their areas, reform abuses, re-organize society, expand the idea of brotherhood, abate discontent, diminish crime, and elevate humanity; and an apparent

inadequacy to realize in individual lives the ideal they professedly uphold.

The above is a sketch of the main features of Theosophy, the Wisdom-Religion. Its details are to be found in the rapidly-growing literature upon the subject.

There are three stages of interest, developed by the study of Theosophy :

1. That of intellectual inquiry,—to be met by works in Public Libraries, etc.

2. That of desire for personal culture,—to be met partly by the books prepared for that specific end, partly by the periodical Magazines expounding Theosophy.

3. That of personal identification with the Theosophical Society, an association formed in 1875 with three aims,—to be the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood ; to promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences ; to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man. Adhesion to the first only is a pre-requisite to membership, the others being optional. The Society represents no particular creed, is entirely unsectarian, and includes professors of all faiths, only exacting from each member that toleration of the beliefs of others which he desires them to exhibit towards his own.

[The address of the General Secretary of the American Section of the Theosophical Society is P. O. Box 2650, New York, N. Y. He will furnish further information.]

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This, when completed, lifts man to the level of a new and higher order of life represented in the Christ. A life of spiritual supremacy, illumination and mastery. A life above contagion and disease as above temptation and sin, "perfect even as the Father in Heaven is perfect."

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