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SOME FRAGMENTS OF THE SECRET HISTORY
OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY



Franz Hartmann, M.D. Photo courtesy of Hans Beetz and Frank Reitemeyer of Germany; retouched by Robert Hütwohl

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY OCCASIONAL PAPERS

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VOL. VIII

SOME FRAGMENTS OF THE SECRET HISTORY
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By

THE “CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL OF 1884”
[FRANZ HARTMANN, M.D.]

Compiled
with an Introduction, Biography
and Notes by Robert Hütwohl

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY
Fullerton, California

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Introduction

Robert Hütwohl

The following letter-essay by the German-born Theosophist, Franz Hartmann, M.D. (1838-1912), is transcribed from a photocopy of documents held at the Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden MS archives, August-Universität Göttingen (University of Göttingen), Germany.¹ It is handwritten in English by Hartmann, München (Munich), Jan. 21, 1886, consisting of two parts: I of 14 pages and II of 11 pages, addressed to the Theosophical Society in Germany (Germania). I have transcribed the original as it was written, but have not taken the liberty to add a bracketed [*sic*] or bracketed correction in every instance—only in the most needed cases. With the appearance of a few strike-overs, it appears Dr. Hartmann wrote in haste, adding numerous phrasal breaks with commas and semicolons where commas were meant, in addition to several minor omissions such as apostrophes and misspellings. Nevertheless, it is the historical content and meaning which is of

¹This document is filed at the Universität Göttingen (University Georgia Augusta at Göttingen), Germany, Manuscript Dept. as: Cod MS W. Hübbe-Schleiden 131/Beil. 1b. My thanks to Dr. Roling, Leiter der Handschriftenabteilung (Head of the manuscripts dept.) for permission to publish this essay of Hartmann's and to my dear friend Frank Reitemeyer of Berlin for making initial arrangements in obtaining the MS for me. As well, I extend thanks to the late John Cooper of Australia who first made me aware of this material in January of 1998. The Hübbe-Schleiden documents held at the archives have been compiled as an index of the Hübbe-Schleiden archives in: Norbert Klatt, *Der Nachlaß von Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden in der Niedersächsischen Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen. Verzeichnis der Materialien und Korrespondenten mit bio-bibliographischen Angaben.* [The inheritance of Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden in the archives of the State- and University library of Göttingen. A list of the materials and correspondence with bio-bibliographic statements.] Göttingen, Germany: Norbert Klatt Verlag, 423 pp., 1996. In 1993, Dr. Klatt published a similar book which contains quotes from selected materials from the same archives: Norbert Klatt, *Theosophie und Anthroposophie. Neue Aspekte zu ihrer Geschichte aus dem Nachlaß von Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden (1846-1916) mit einer Auswahl von 81 Briefen.* [Theosophy and Anthroposophy. New aspects as to its history from the inheritance of Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden (1846-1916) with a selection of 81 letters.] Göttingen, Norbert Klatt Verlag, 303 pp.] The reader should be aware the archives include documents by many early notable Theosophists.

singular importance in this essay.² On my copy, are several handwritten comments in the margin in Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden's handwriting. These marginal comments are not included in this transcription.

A similar handwritten document by Franz Hartmann exists. It is found as an eight-page set reflecting the contents of the present essay, catalogued in the Hübbe-Schleiden archives prior to the present letter-essay, but it is incomplete. It may have been an initial draft.

The contents of the entire following letter-essay revolve around the "shrine"³ affair at the Theosophical headquarters, Adyar, Madras, India and the resultant *The Report of the Committee appointed to investigate phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society*, commonly known as the Hodgson Report of 1885 (based on Richard Hodgson's three-month investigation at the Adyar Theosophical Society headquarters at Madras, India). This was published in The Society for Psychical Research's proceedings for December 1885 wherein it essentially sums up H. P. Blavatsky as an impostor. However, many readers may be aware of "J'ACCUSE An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885" by Vernon Harrison, which was published in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. 53, no. 803 (April 1986),⁴ copies of which may be obtained through Dr. James Santucci, editor of *Theosophical History*. This latter paper had the objective of showing "the case against Madame Blavatsky in the Hodgson Report is NOT ESTABLISHED."

In congruity with what has been said, the Theosophical historian should view Daniel Caldwell's excellent website (<http://sites.netscape.net/dhcbainfo/blavatsky-archives.htm>) which contains the text of the original "First Report of the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research, Appointed

² A more polished form of some comments from the current essay as well as other comments appeared in German by Hartmann under the title: *Wahrheit und Dichtung. Die "Theosophische Gesellschaft" und der Wunderschrank von Adyar*, privately published, ca. 1906. This was translated by me and published in 1997 as: *Truth & Fiction. The "Theosophical Society" and the Miracle-Cabinet of Adyar* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Spirit of the Sun Publications, 32 pp.).

³ The shrine was a cabinet in H.P.B.'s room at Adyar which was, as Hartmann described it, imbued with "magnetic fluid," which facilitated the transfer of letters (or astral-mail) by occult means. Hartmann also mentioned H.P.B. carried a smaller box with her, at times, during her travels.

⁴ Dr. Harrison has continued his research in this area and published a second report ("J' Accuse d'autant plus") on his findings in addition to the initial report above in the book *H. P. Blavatsky and the SPR: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1997). Dr. Harrison has concluded that "the Hodgson Report is not the model of impartial investigation so often claimed for it over the past century. It is flawed and untrustworthy."

to Investigate the Evidence for Marvellous Phenomena offered by Certain Members of the Theosophical Society.” (Reprinted from the rare 1884 first edition consisting of 130 pp. With a new foreword by Leslie Price.) In addition, there are 42 appendices which “consist of accounts of a number of phenomena alleged to have occurred in connection with the Theosophical Society, and of some others” which will further aid the researcher’s investigation of matters concerning the Hodgson Report.

Brief Summary of “Some Fragments of The Secret History of The Theosophical Society”

Hartmann states he later had time to think over the matters concerning the “Hodgson/shrine affair” and was able to come to different conclusions than those expressed in the Hodgson Report, having considered the original report as “a premature expression of my opinion.” Hartmann was trained in the epistemological scientific method as a medical doctor, but also had a strong mystical bent. This helped him to observe and reach conclusions both from a scientific as well as a Theosophical viewpoint. Hartmann places some blame on Col. H. S. Olcott for initially inviting the Society for Psychical Research to investigate the shrine process, an experiment never originally intended to be purveyed under a magnifying glass of scientific scrutiny. He draws careful analogies to the fact that we are constantly bathed in a world of illusion. Comparing our world of deceptions to the current scientific world of men of authority who refuse to give up their own influential impostures, he saw many in the Theosophical community giving permission to allow themselves to be deceived. But he also assures us the Hodgson Report is premised upon the fact that the root of psychical phenomena is purely epistemological and has no basis as stemming from another, even if illusory, world of being.

Hartmann also does not readily implicate Mr. Hodgson for his investigation. He felt that Theosophists should give thanks to both Hodgson and H.P.B. for performing a duty-bound service of opening their eyes and at least questioning what it is they saw as illusions or phenomenal “exposures” from the psychic world. But this was part of the Theosophical training H.P.B. had administered in order for the pupil to develop discrimination or *viveka* and eventually wisdom or *jñāna*. Questioning the motives of both H.P.B. and Hodgson, both were decreed as guiltless in their own way, although he writes more on the activities of H. P. Blavatsky than on Hodgson. Hartmann mentions in non-occult language the process of transferring letters by occult means from a Mahâtma to a *celâ*. There is a discussion of the instances of occult phenomena both within and without Blavatsky’s presence and attempts to explain in common language the processes involved.

Hartmann also gives the results of the Hodgson investigation and describes at length H. P. Blavatsky’s demeanor at the time, based on his own observations.

Dr. Hartmann mentions the crucial point that since the “theosophical society” was not founded on the basis of phenomena but rather on the “Universal Brotherhood of Man,” it should, therefore, not be judged or found guilty of “genuinely” produced phenomena.

A Short Biography of Franz Hartmann, M.D.

An addition to my following short biography of Franz Hartmann is Boris de Zirkoff’s excellent summary based on other sources in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. VIII, pp. 439-57.⁵ However, I need to stress to the historians reading this *Theosophical History Occasional Paper* that the search for and conveyance of outer facts about Franz Hartmann’s life must necessarily fall short of doing him justice. His mystical and occult life can only be superficially revealed, as is indeed the case with H. P. Blavatsky (and I am in no way equating him to her), for as Hartmann said:

It is with the writing of the life-story of a mystic a doubtful matter; which for the occultist, strictly speaking, only his inner life has real value, whereas the outer life is for him a mere passing tragic comedy, its description may otherwise serve as amusement, but only in a slight degree can it serve as instruction if the mental threads which form the motives of outward acts as the bases of the deepest sensations and thoughts are uncovered. However, this is frankly impossible, for not every considerate human being is ready to relinquish to the public that which in him is the supreme and moves through his innermost being; for he would only be understood by a few people, whereas with the multitude he would be “crucified and burned.”⁶

⁵ My statements are taken, in part, from my unpublished translation from the German of Franz Hartmann’s “Erinnerungen an H. P. Blavatsky” [Recollections of H. P. Blavatsky] as found in his serial magazine *Neue Lotusblüten*, and from his “Denkwürdige Erinnerungen, aus dem Leben des Verfassers der ‘Lotusblüten,’ mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Geschichte der theosophischen Bewegung.” [Notable recollections, from the life of the author of the “Lotusblüten,” with special regard to the history of the Theosophical movement.] This series of articles appeared in Hartmann’s first serial journal: *Lotusblüten*. Another source of information is based on Richard Slusser’s and my research while at the Georgetown, Colorado county archives vault and at the Norlin Library at the University of Colorado in Boulder based on records of a U.S.A. medical certification, land deeds, mine holdings, levies, census records, newspaper articles and paid newspaper ads, which will be published in my forthcoming *Franz Hartmann Bibliography*. Additionally, Richard Slusser published the text from Franz Hartmann’s “Autobiography of Dr. Franz Hartmann,” (which first appeared in *The Occult Review* VII/1 (Jan. 1918): 7-35) in his journal *High Country Theosophist* XI/10 (Oct. 1996): 1-7, XI/11 (Nov. 1996): 6-15, 24-7.

⁶ Franz Hartmann, “Denkwürdige Erinnerungen, aus dem Leben des Verfassers der ‘Lotusblüten,’ mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Geschichte der theosophischen Bewegung,” *Lotusblüten* X/60 (1897): 604.

The noted Bavarian-born mystic, Theosophist, medical doctor and pharmacologist, Franz Hartmann was born (at Donauwörth, which is on the Donau (Danube River), Nov. 22, 1838) to Elise von Stack and Karl Hartmann, M.D. with a strong sense of purpose. Although the material world had its purpose for his training, it held no veritable attraction for him. Growing up at Kempten (in southeastern Germany or Bavaria) as the “black sheep” in his family, he spent his youth revering deep in the forests, allowing his imagination to run free, bringing along books which took him on far off journeys into the profound, mysterious, and mystical. It was in the world of Paracelsian spiritual alchemy (not the lower material selfish kind) or realm of metaphysics where he first glimpsed the true domain of solving the riddle of life’s existence, above and beyond the pious deceit of most outer religions’ dogmas. Without this consideration, Hartmann remains as an unsolvable enigma.

Interestingly, it was under the influence of chloroform in the dentist’s chair that he experienced one his earliest conscious departures from the physical body via the astral, where he non-physically stood up and his consciousness-subtle-form moved freely about the room, observing its objects, listening to the conversations and even trying without success to pick up an instrument on a small table beside the dental chair. In the course of his life he had many similar experiences following this one, as well as developing the ability to hear astral sounds and sense the presence of apparitions. What ensued were numerous examples throughout his life in which he experienced conditions which became a fertile basis for the pursuit of an arcane relationship to the physical sphere. Although he knew the realm of science had its limitations and illusions it still provided a rudimentary framework for deeper discussion and investigation into the metaphysical spheres. As well, he was able to attract around himself and relate to those who were willing to reveal metaphysical experiences they had witnessed, events which were conveyed in his writings.

The doctor wrote clearly and powerfully on all sorts of metaphysical topics. The investigation of transcendental knowledge and the dissemination of truth became his purpose. Besides the writings of ancient India he also placed great importance on the mystical literature of Germany. He considered the old German mystics (such as Jacob Böhme (1575-1624) and Master Eckhart (Karl von Eckartshausen (1752-1803))) to be clear and simple writers, striving towards truth with great conviction. This obviously influenced him, since I can attest the prodigiousness of his writings on various mystical and occult subjects and high ethics. Hartmann’s writings are imbued with the idea that the human being is divine in nature, an essence to be unfolded or developed into actuality through one’s own effort. He was clear in expounding this idea as to its practical application in the outer world. Unlike the orthodox Christian church, which views the human as essentially sinful, whenever Hartmann mentioned Christian ideas he did so from the standpoint of highest tolerance and respect for the individual, which are surely Theosophical traits. He openly taught the path towards Self-knowledge and soul-development as a pure way of life, whereas the earlier mystics veiled the truth using symbolism in order to avoid persecution. However, his concept of divinity

was more along the lines of the higher views of Shankarâcharya and the enigmatical teachings in the *Bhagavad-gîtâ*. His deeply religious view was the opposite of former dogmatic Christian writers, as he wanted to return dignity to the individual. But with this realization he also emphasized its outer dissemination through the wise practice of non-dogmatic and unprejudiced service instead of the selfish aggrandizement of one's spiritual wealth. Hartmann's writings also variously mention Theophrastus Paracelsus of Hohenheim (1493-1541), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), founders (along with Thomas Bromley) of the Philadelphian Society: Dr. John Pordage (1608-1698) and Jane Leade (1623-1704), Angelus Silesius (Johannes Scheffler, 1624-1677), Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Motte-Guyon (1648-1717), Johann Goethe (1749-1832), and a host of Asian thought-systems.

As with Jacob Böhme, the mediaeval spiritual-philosopher, described by H. P. Blavatsky as a pure mystic who attained such a state via efforts of an ethically pure life, so too with Franz Hartmann, who “. . . rebelled against the dead letter of scholasticism and dogmatism, and . . . viewed . . . Divinity not as a personal being, but as an eternal unit, the Universal Substance undefined by any human qualification, the *unfathomable*; as incomprehensible to human understanding as the ‘absolute nothing.’”⁷ Hartmann's interpretation of God would be anthropomorphic to theists and to those who could not interpret the depth of his expression. It resolves down to the question of the relative (immanence) and absolute (transcendental) expression of divine Law in nature. Both the relative truth and the absolute truth have a part to play in human relations and he knew this. This is a reflection of the teachings in both earliest Hinduism (Upanishads) and Mahâyâna Buddhism (such as in the *Kâlacakra*- and *Hevajra-tantra*) of the human Microcosm containing all the energies, powers and potentialities of the Macrocosm, which is identical to that taught in the earliest Smaragdine Tablet of Hermes. Hartmann could be seen more as a pantheist because he viewed the world or nature as an expression of the immanence of transcendent divinity as operative and pervasive Law, but he still held on to the concept of the Absolute Universal Unit as Primordial Law. Even though he believed in the expression of *mâyâ* or illusion he still considered it temporarily useful; otherwise, he would have had to live his life in total despair and despondency and relegate his service to humanity in some other way. His dilemma was he had all sorts of people around him and was constantly having to address differing views. He never attempted to turn anyone away—everyone had a view he respected and he tried to meet them on their own ground.

Through his journals, other writings and lectures, he led a courageous battle against ignorance by delivering a broad delivery of Theosophical concepts such as the seven principles, eradication of capital punishment, and the possible wellspring of the universal unit of the One Life within multifarious human units. Certainly Hartmann had the apparent motive of purifying the Christian tenor within the Germanic culture but his admiration of Asian writings is most apparent.

⁷ H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings* 1881-1882, vol. III, 34.

In view of his strong scientific training, it served as a benefit to him while he investigated occult phenomena by applying parallels from the scientific method to metaphysical knowledge. Because of his exposure to the European scientific ways of thought, he was better equipped to make choices, having developed the necessary faculties of physical observation. Because he did not consider occult phenomena as supernatural but only as a *magia naturalis* or natural continuation of the denser material realm (or actually the reverse), he was able to attempt pursuit of the nonphysical. Interspersed with his medical practice, he diligently researched occult phenomena involving mediumship and spiritualism and was a keen observer of the powers of the four elements throughout his life. This became an almost daily occupation and seemed to be a natural inclination. He wrote with keen interest on the phenomena of both the human elementaries and elementals⁸—forces as exhibited through dreams, apparitions and vampirism because of their wide application and relevance throughout human activity. He experienced an appreciable amount of phenomena such as being lifted into the air against the ceiling, witnessing fresh water-dripping seaweed flung across the floor, fetched by some invisible essence from the ocean some 2000 miles away; automatic writing in various strange hands; and ghosts which were both seen and heard as well as photographed. He traveled extensively throughout the U.S. (for 18 years) observing mediumship (having invited a Mrs. Miller of Denver, Colorado to come experiment with him while in Georgetown, Colorado⁹), riding the wave of the spiritualism movement which was developing in America.

During one experience he was able (through the mediumship of Mrs. Miller) to escort the well-known but deceased medium Katie Wentworth (she died in Galveston, Texas of mediumistic exhaustion), arm in arm to a sofa where they sat down and Katie immediately embraced Dr. Hartmann. Hartmann had the distinct sensation he was actually embracing the astral body of Mrs. Miller. Out of disgust he let go, whereupon the astral form transformed into an unrecognizable misty figure and then dissipated. Upon walking back to where Mrs. Miller was, he saw the form of Katie Wentworth standing next to Mrs. Miller and saw it dissolve back into the medium's body,

⁸ The *elementals* are the blind forces of nature responsible for manifesting physical, emotional and lower mental phenomena. As a case in point, these agencies may act as intermediaries during human mediumship—causing deception to the ill-educated observer. *Elementaries*, on the other hand, are of two main types: disembodied souls and earth-bound human phantoms which linger close to the physical realm. These are the *pisâchas* and *mohinîs* described in the Sanskrit. However, it is the phantom elementaries which implore the elementals to act through the human medium's invisible substances such as the emotional or desire-matter during mediumship.

⁹ Some of his mediumistic experiences with her as well as a considerable amount of material on occult phenomena are described in his "Aus meinem Leben," [From my life], the translation of which will appear in my *Franz Hartmann Bibliography*.

whereupon the latter awakened. Based upon these and many other similar experiences he was able to perceive the essential difference between the spirits of the psychic world and the divine powers of the Spirit-nature and how easily one may be deceived by elementals when void of knowledge and experience. It appears some of these reports came from suicides or earthbound human elementaries. He later considered mediumship a dangerous practice which could result in emaciation and insanity, such as with the case of Mrs. Wentworth. However, he wisely stated:

Every realm of nature, both the transcendental as well as the sensual, is worth exploring in order to learn to know the natural laws which govern that domain; but one must first be developed or proficient in this kind of research and towards that end obligingly take into consideration any previous knowledge one may have gained.¹⁰

Those spiritualistic observations and encounters chiseled his discrimination towards unfolding the spiritual petals within, for he saw how these “spirits” or essences reflected the pleasurable characteristics of human emotions, sometimes seeming to amuse and bathe “themselves” through deception (where the elemental was the intermediary instrument furthered by the human imagination), even though Hartmann found some “spirits” to maintain a high degree of intelligence with reports of which he was able to later confirm. However in one early automatic writing communication, among most of the worthless proclamations, he was given a certain decree:

Do not search any longer for outer proofs. Within your hard skull there is a hidden power through which you can have concourse with the angels face-to-face. Your calling is not through table raps in search of replies to foolish questions, but through an investigation into the mysteries of nature.¹¹

Franz’ medical sense of the physical world was more than just a practical way of earning a living, although he knew he could find work wherever he traveled or dwelled. His medical accomplishments and activities were varied. After treating cholera patients in St. Louis, Missouri (where he received his American M.D. degree) he lived in New Orleans (during which his observations of spiritualism first became serious) and Texas, where he worked as a country doctor and briefly was married (although his wife Ernestine succumbed to a type of severe nerve fever and died seven months later). Following a stay in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where he worked at a spa, he left on March 5, 1878 after the entire city, including his house, burned to the ground. Hartmann moved to the mountainous (8,500 ft.) but quiet sanctuary of Georgetown, Colorado which reminded him

¹⁰ Franz Hartmann, “Aus meinem Leben,” *Neue Lotusblüten* I/1-2 (Jan.-Feb. 1908): 46.

¹¹ “Denkwürdige Erinnerungen,” *Lotusblüten* X/61: 731.

of the Alps near his German homeland. There he was considered the first oculist in Colorado to perform an artificial cornea transplant (my guess)¹² or restoration for a woman almost blind in one eye, relieving her of all pain and restoring full vision. Working with Carl Kellner¹³ he researched and developed the method of Ligno-sulfite inhalation therapy for curing lung tuberculosis. Franz worked variously for sanitariums, often serving as its chief physician, especially at the sanitarium near Salzburg, Austria and as Physician Supervisor of Kellner's sanitarium "Lahmann" in Hallein, Austria. Recognizing materialism as an error, he allowed his intuitive power to draw him ever closer towards investigating the knowledge of truth and consider most deeply the question of the purpose of human existence, for he knew a material life could never answer this.

Hartmann was indeed a great but levelheaded¹⁴ admirer of H. P. Blavatsky (whom he called "the sphinx of the nineteenth century") after reading *Isis Unveiled*. Although it was Col. H. S. Olcott's urgent (in the name of the Master Morya) invitation by letter (with some appended concluding lines by H.P.B.) which prompted Hartmann to travel to India, his motive for traveling to India was to learn from Blavatsky (whom he recognized as a Mahatma within her personality) just what was Theosophy and to serve in whatever capacity he could. He vividly saw the posted letter with its foreign stamp affixed on the flap of the envelope in a dream on the very morning of receiving it. During his approximately 1½-year stay at Adyar, India (from Dec. 1883-Apr. 1, 1885), he had ample

¹² Apr. 3, 1879 in *The George-town Courier*. I mention cornea because the pupil is only the opening to the eye's retina. The paper states the operation was the "a remarkable surgical operation by which an artificial pupil was formed."

¹³ With Dr. Kellner (an early member of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.)) Hartmann authored *Über eine neue Heilmethode: Zur Heilung von Lungentuberkulose, Katarrh, Influenza und anderer Krankheiten der Atmungsorgane vermittelt der Einatmung gewisser Gase und Dämpfe. Nebst einem Anhang. Bezugnehmend auf verschiedene, noch wenig erforschte, aber im Altertum wohlbekannte Entstehungsursachen von Krankheitserscheinungen*. [Concerning a new healing method: Towards the curing of lung tuberculosis, catarrh, influenza and other diseases of the breathing organs where certain gases and streams mediate. With an appendix. The various, still little well-known origins of affliction symptoms, by the ancients, are explored.] Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich. n.d. but ca. 1897. It was Hartmann who inducted Kellner and his wife into Theosophy and introduced Dr. Kellner to some interesting Asian Indians.

¹⁴ I say level-headed because my assessment of Hartmann's writings has brought me to the conclusion that he has presented H. P. Blavatsky in a well-balanced way. This seems to hold true for his perception of the Masters of Wisdom, which is at times contrary to H. S. Olcott's and other early Theosophist's over-enthusiastic assertions. Some of this will come to light in my forthcoming partial translation of Hartmann's stay in India from his "Denkwürdige Erinnerungen," to be published on Daniel Caldwell's aforementioned website. As well, Hartmann considered the Masters such as K.H., Morya and D.K. as evolving humans.

time to study the twofold life of Blavatsky through his daily interaction with her. He considered her presentation of a spiritual world-view, the seven-principles which make up the human and the superstition-free concepts of karma and reincarnation as later taught in *The Secret Doctrine* as major contributions towards reversing the tide of the general materialistic world-view which pervaded most of the sciences taught in the universities, philosophies and religions of the day.

Ignited with this purpose, he dedicated the rest of his life towards investigating the conditions and requisites of a higher life through knowledge and service as found in the example of H. P. Blavatsky, as she was the one who opened his eyes with a magnitude of certainty. Hence, the expediency of his traveling to India to receive answers to his perplexing questions and comprehend the mysteries of the inner spiritual nature.

There is evidence Hartmann received communications from the Masters of Wisdom even when H. P. Blavatsky was not in proximity to him. A summary of these communications appears in my *Franz Hartmann Bibliography*, as there is no space to present it here.

Franz worked with a broad spectrum of noted German authors such as Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden (1846-1916), Carl Kiesewetter, Carl du Prel and Max Dessoir, who were contributors to Hübbe-Schleiden's *Sphinx* magazine.

On Sept. 3, 1897 he founded at Munich (which later moved to Leipzig) the "Internationale Theosophische Verbrüderung" or I.T.V. (International Theosophical Brotherhood) which had as its two primary purposes: (1) the practice of highest tolerance towards others, irrespective of race, nationality, creed, status or sex; (2) to study the ancient Indian and other religious-philosophical systems and sciences in an attempt to rise above dogmas and authority and reveal the presence of the divine nature within each and every human unit, using genuine reason and purity of heart and love for all beings. Because this organisation had its basis in the essential Unit of the universe, an unselfish nonsectarian application of this knowledge for the welfare of humanity was a practical aim. Hartmann believed that the realization of this supreme knowledge and love through the non-authoritative action of service is the purpose of human life. No doubt his perception of what happened at Adyar during his short stay there and H.P.B.'s flight from there must have influenced him in wanting to originate an organisation based on a true fraternal Theosophical movement through group cooperation. This was the way of the saints and geniuses of humankind and the founders of all great religions who were agents and members of the One Law. Towards these aims he consciously served (not as a medium or blind instrument) as a faithful envoy and colleague of the Masters of Wisdom (whose existence he was totally convinced of) up until his death.

During his final days he lived fairly reclusively at Algund near Meran—in the Dolomite Alps area of northern Italy—a direct beeline south of his German residence of Kempten. He was "in transit at Kempten" when he died on August 7, 1912 at a well-lived 74 years of age.

SOME FRAGMENTS OF THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

by

The “Chairman of the Board of Control of 1884”¹⁵

[Franz Hartmann, M.D.]

Motto Let there be Light.

“I have not come to overthrow the law, but to fulfill it.” — Bible

**“Let me perish, but save the society”
(Extract from a letter from H. P. Blavatsky)**

To the president of the Theos. Soc. “Germania.”

Copie.

Private and Confidential.

Truth and Fiction.

[I]

Having been requested to draw up a statement of my views in regard to Mr. Hodgson's “Report on Phenomena connected with Theosophy” and printed in the “Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research (December 1885), I wish to state that the phenomena referred [*sic*] to are in no-wise connected with Theosophy. They are only connected with Madame Blavatsky and some other persons accused of fraud, and with the so-called “theosophical society, [”] of which Madame Blavatsky is the founder. “Theosophy” means supreme wisdom and consists in a recognition of spiritual truths. It deals with the real and not with the phenomenal side of nature, and all phenomena, in whatever manner they may have been produced, belong to the realm of illusion. They

¹⁵ [*Compiler's note:* The Board of Control for the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, India, appointed by its president Colonel H.S. Olcott, consisted of Franz Hartmann, St. George Lane-Fox, W.T. Brown, R. Raghunath Row, G. Muttuswamy Chetty, P. Sreenivas Row and T. Subba Row.]

cannot embody spiritual truths, they can only serve as symbols of such truths and to bring them within reach of the understanding. Theosophy deals with the truths which these symbols or forms represent; science, being restricted in its investigations by the limitations of sensual perception, deals only with these deceptive forms. It seeks for the spirit in such forms, but the form cannot contain the spirit, and if it does not find what it had no right to expect, it believes that there is no spirit at all. Under such circumstances scientific investigators may believe themselves cheated; but they only cheat themselves, because they conceive false ideas and may find out afterwards that they have been wrong. I have no hesitation to express my opinion, that not only the phenomena produced by Madame Blavatsky, but all phenomena in nature are illusive and that the truth can only be understood by those who seek it there where it is, and not where they only imagine it to be. If we imagine that the sun rises in the East and sinks in the West, and find out afterwards that we have been mistaken, we have no right to complain that the sun cheated us; it was our senses that cheated us and prevented us of recognizing the fact that sunrise and sunset are only illusive phenomena, produced by the revolution of the Earth.

Certain extraordinary phenomena were produced by or through Madame Blavatsky. They were never given as test-phenomena or under test conditions, and Madame Blavatsky has therefore no right to expect, that any scientific person should believe them to be produced in any supernatural manner, nor by any superhuman agency. Moreover she never explained how these phenomena were made, but left it to the ingenuity of those who were curious about it, to find out for themselves how they were made; but Col. Olcott who evidently believed that they came from a superhuman source, called the attention of the scientific world to them and challenged them to find out their causes. Consequently Mr. Hodgson was sent to India to find out how these "phenomena" were produced. He did his duty there in a fair and impartial manner, and he found that these phenomena were produced by Madame Blavatsky and by some other persons connected with her. I have nothing to gainsay Mr. Hodgson. I have read his report and I consider it a fair statement of facts and conclusions drawn from them, such as any scientific gentleman who considers external phenomena to be of great importance, would draw. I have made the acquaintance of Mr. Hodgson at Adyar, and I have found him to be perfectly honest and sincere, and perhaps rather inclined to believe the so-called occult phenomena produced by some superhuman agency, than to dispute such an origin. Any attempt on the part of the followers of Madame Blavatsky to misrepresent the matter, to vilify Mr. Hodgson, to throw suspicion upon the honesty of his purpose or to impute evil motives to the gentlemen forming the Society for Psychological Research, will be not only entirely untheosophical, but will render such persons ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of everyone who loves the truth.

There seems to be a general desire on the part of the followers of Madame Blavatsky to represent many of these so-called occult letters as something more than what they really are, namely poetical fictions extended to the physical plane for the purpose of making spiritual truths palatable to the ignorant, and to

make use of the credulity and superstition of the wonder-loving, to teach them something useful and good. This is the policy that has been pursued by the great majority of religious and scientific teachers since the beginning of the world, and it is used as a means to an end by the priests and professors and especially by the doctors of medicine of our age; with the sole difference, that many of the priests and scientists make use of the credulity of the ignorant for the benefit of their own personal selves, while Madame Blavatsky did so for the benefit of humanity. To the former the term “swindlers” and “imposture” may be applied, while in the case of Madame Blavatsky the selfish motive which constitutes an imposture is entirely absent. If no such persons as have been represented by Col. Olcott as “Mahatmas” exist, then surely their handwriting could not be imitated or *forged*, and a document represented as being signed by a non-existing Adept, is as much a *prima facie* [L. “at first sight”] absurdity as if it were signed by “the great Fitzliputzli” or by the “Grand Muchamuch of the Cannibal Islands”, it only throws ridicule upon those who were simple-minded enough to accept an evident absurdity for a truth—but if the Mahatmas do really exist, it will have to be left to them to come forward and accuse H. P. Blavatsky of fraud.

Who would be ready to accuse the authors of “Münchhausen”,¹⁶ of “Gullivers Travels” or of Don Quichote to have been impostors, or as having imposed upon the credulity of the public? Are not the allegories of the creation of Adam and Eve and of Jonah in the belly of the whale represented as historical facts from many a pulpit in the country and are the priests therefore considered to be impostors? Are not the people in England today forced by law to submit to blood poisoning by vaccination and to take the risk of having their system tainted by scrophula [*sic*] and syphilis, because the scientists of England believe in a superstition?

The moral sense of our present civilization looks with benignant smile upon the deceptive practices of our professors of science and religion for the benefit of their own pockets, but seems to be greatly offended, if it finds out, that that which it always believed to be an illusion, is really an illusion. I have to day had a conversation with a professional gentleman of high standing and a graduate of an European university, and who—after acknowledging the insufficiency of modern science—was honest enough to say: “If the people knew how little we actually know, nobody would put any confidence in our knowledge or come to us for advice.”

Madame Blavatsky does not pretend to be a scientist, but rather a philosopher and a writer of romance. If she has extended her poetical liberties into the physical plane, she may have acted very imprudent, but she cannot be said to be “the champion impostor of the age”—as she is called by Mr. Hodgson. As well may Shakespeare be considered an impostor, because Falstaff did not exist; Bulwer Lytton be denounced as a fraud, because his “Strange Story” seems to many incredible. Where do we find a novel in which all the characters exist as they are represented; where is the talented painter

¹⁶ [*Compiler*’ note: Münchhausen was a hero from a pseudo-autobiographical narrative who underwent unlikely adventures, written by the German Rudolph Raspe. In other words, when someone is called a Munchhausen, he is deemed as one who exclaims extravagant exaggerations.

who only imitates nature and does not attempt to realize her? Madame Blavatsky is a writer of novels, her literary productions are known all over Russia; if she were to present only naked facts without any adornment, she could be a commonplace schoolmaster, but not a creative genius.

The charges brought by Mr. Hodgson against Madame Blavatsky, are nothing new. They were known to all the members of the "Theosophical Society" at the anniversary meeting of 1884, and yet these charges were then summarily disposed of by these members, because they judged—not with their heads—but with their hearts, and they felt intuitively that—whatever the faults of H. P. Blavatsky may be—the ideas which were made popular by her writings were beautiful, they knew that spiritual truths represented by Madame Blavatsky were nevertheless true even if her emotional nature was out of order or if her physical system was affected with rheumatism or her legs troubled with gout.

I am neither ready to gainsay nor to endorse the charges brought by Mr. Hodgson against Madame Blavatsky. They do not interest me, because they refer only to the personality of Madame Blavatsky, and I am engaged in the study of the occult laws of man and of nature, not in the investigation of the physical or moral qualifications of H. P. Blavatsky, who being a person has necessarily personal virtues and personal faults. If a great scientific truth were discovered by a murderer, we might hang the murderer and keep his discovery, if a teacher of mathematics were found to be a rascal, the discovery of his rascality would not invalidate the mathematical [*sic*] truths he taught.

I look upon H. P. Blavatsky as an instrument through which great truths have been brought to light. Whether these truths have been revealed to H. P. Blavatsky by certain Adepts; whether she has "pilfered" them from some old and forgotten Manuscripts; or whether she has read them in the Astral-light, seems entirely immaterial as far as their value is concerned. Men can invent lies, but they cannot invent truths. The truths which Madame Blavatsky has discovered have existed before her and will exist after her, they have shaken mankind up from its comatose sleep in the icy embrace of a cold materialism which would soon have ended in spiritual death. These truths are eternal. The illusions which she may have used to assist in the promulgation of these truths are evanescent; they have as far as I am aware of it—done no serious harm to anybody; while on the other hand thousands have been led to their investigation and became better men and women, who—without having their curiosity excited [*sic*] by these illusions—would never have investigated these truths.

It would require a volume, to investigate properly the question how far the end justifies the means, but it may be said without hesitation that illusions have their uses, and that if illusions are harmless, they cannot be evil. This doctrine is carried out in practice every day. A physician who sees a patient in a very critical condition may find it necessary to encourage him by promises of a recovery the possibility of which he himself doubts. Illusions are created daily in the halls of learning, in places of worship and in public theatres for the purposes of instruction, edification and amusement and only the ignorant mistakes such illusions for realities and complain when they find out their own mistake. If anyone finds himself disappointed in expectations which *ab*

initio [L. “from the beginning”] were absurd and could not be gratified, he will have to blame only his own want of discrimination. If we reject the truths taught by Madame Blavatsky, because they appeared under a mask, we may as well call every ceremony—religious or otherwise—a swindle, because they do not contain the truth, they only represent it in a perceptible form. Those who look upon a church-edifice as a place in which God resides and distributes favours, may cry “fraud” when they discover their error; but those who look upon such a locality as a place where in company with congenial minds they may raise their thoughts and aspirations to the universal fountain of all being, will have no occasion to find themselves cheated.

It may be left to those who are especially curious to study the personal characteristics of Madame Blavatsky, to find out whether or not she has made any use of the craving of some of her followers for the wonderful and mysterious to lead them into a higher and better state of existence and to stimulate their enthusiasm for an essentially good cause. If she has done so, her tactics may perhaps be compared to inciting [*sic*] an advancing army by the sound of martial music and “cheating” them into a state of artificial patriotism.

The so-called “occult phenomena” are in no-way connected with Theosophy. The truth of the doctrine of the trinity of everything, of the sevenfold constitution of man, of the laws of Karma, of the process of reincarnation, of the state of the soul after death, etc. do not depend on the veracity of Madame Blavatsky or on the question, whether or not she has produced any illusions, any more than the truths of Keplers astronomical laws depends on the question whether or not Mr. Kepler was a thruthful [*sic*] man, or the question of the rotundity of the Earth can be decided by the question as to whether Galileo was a respectable person, or given to lying at a time when he was forced to retract his statements before the tribunal of the holy inquisition.

As long as the question, whether a doctrine can be accepted or not, is to be decided only by a belief in the veracity of the teacher, it is absolutely necessary that the honesty of the teacher should not be doubted, else his theory will be regarded with mistrust. If a scientist tells us of the result of an experiment which involves a great deal of labour, time and expense, we are not in a condition which enables us to repeat such an experiment and to verify his statement. We are in such cases forced to judge whether that which he tells us is possible or not, and if it seems reasonable we may accept his statement, that is to say—we may believe in his doctrine because we believe in his veracity. Modern science is to a great extent based upon a belief in the statement of certain persons, who assert that they have made certain statements and obtained certain results, and if other more credible persons would affirm that they have repeated the same experiments and obtained different results, then the statement of the latter would be believed and that of the former considered to be false. Modern science is therefore based to a great extent upon a belief in authority, and such a belief in authority is the very thing against which the members of the Theosophical Society have been constantly warned. Mere speculation without practical experience continually leads into error. Gautama Buddha taught

his followers to believe nothing that seemed unreasonable and to reject nothing as unreasonable without proper investigation. The personal investigation of spiritual truths requires no expensive apparatus, it only requires that the investigator should be free of prejudices, lead a pure life and become wise. The Bhagavat Gita says that knowledge cannot be obtained by mere speculation, but that speculation must be accompanied by practice; and the Mahatmas (or whatever name we may give to those intellectual powers that have been called by that name) have taught all along that real knowledge can only be acquired by the *Adept*, that means by one who does not merely speculate but practice[s], and whose science has become an art by continual practice. The object of the theosophical society is not to increase the multitude of do[xxxxxx]¹⁷ opinions already existing in the world, but to show the way how man may acquire the power of directly recognizing the truth without any foreign [foreign] assistance and independent of any belief in authority. If there are any persons in the theosophical society who have believed in theosophical truths only because they believed in the occult phenomena produced by Madame Blavatsky, then such persons have acted against the spirit of Theosophy, and if those phenomena are proved to have been illusions produced by Madame Blavatsky the believe [*sic*] of such persons will necessarily be shallow, because it rested upon mere opinion and not upon knowledge. True Theosophy rejects belief in fallible authorities. A so-called “theosophical society” presided over by a pope, who believes himself to be inspired by an infallible “Master” is an absurdity. Such a state of affairs would make an end to true progress, belief in authority would take the place of independent thought and free investigation, and the society would become a creed-bound sect. There was a time in the history of the so-called “theosophical society[”], when such a danger was threatening. At that time we could see the cumbrous form of our valiant president-founder, prostrating himself flat before the conjuring box called the “Shrine” and listen with open mouthed credulity to the vagaries of an ignorant Hindu-youngster, who believed his own fancies to be the divine inspirations of a Mahatma. At that time the presiding officers, flushed with success, began to believe in their own infallibility, dictatorial orders took the place of modesty, pomposity the place of truth, and it was perhaps the working of “providence” or of the “Maha Atma”, that the Coulomb scandal threw a little cold water upon the fiery fanaticism of our venerable president and prevented him from falling headlong into an abyss of superstition.

It is undoubtedly true that even Col. Olcott asserted that a belief in authority should be discontinued by the society; but theory and practice do not always go hand in hand, and there was a time at Adyar, when to impress a doubt about the veracity of the phenomena would have been an unpardonable offense in the eyes of the omnipotent “Chelas” and an insult to the High Priestess of Theosophy. The epidemic was catching, imbecile and contradictory orders from the “Mahatmas”, emanating from the brains of half grown boys who did not know their own minds, where [*sic*,

¹⁷ [*Compiler's note*: The writing is broken and smudged here, but the word appears to be: “dominant.”]

should be “were”] treated with respect and obedience by gullible men of education from Europe and America, and I was myself among the number of those who treated these “orders” with respect, simply because I did not wish to be unjust towards anyone, and I did not dare to form a decided opinion before I had thoroughly investigated the subject and seen my way clear. Even a very few cautiously expressed words in an article which I wrote to the “Bombay-Gazette” and which insinuated that H. P. Blavatsky may have some human weaknesses after all, sufficed to have myself denounced as a “traitor” to the cause of Theosophy and induced our honest president to write “confidential” and defamatory epistles to the far quarters of our globe.

I mention this simply to show to what absurdities a belief in authority may lead and the history of science shows innumerable errors, that were not less absurd than a belief in the “occult” phenomena of Madame Blavatsky, which—as I will show further on—have been true to a certain extent, even if illusions have played a prominent part. If self-styled “Theosophists” have believed in unreasonable things with credulity, they have acted very untheosophical and proved that they did not deserve their assumed name; students of modern science, on the other hand, are forced to accept the opinions of their authorities, no matter how unreasonable and erroneous such opinions may be. Modern students have little time to think, because there are too many things to learn. They need not think, because they have a professor to do their thinking, and all that is necessary to pass an examination and to succeed in life, is to acquire like a parrot the ability to repeat what another man said and to echo his opinion. Then ethically no member of the Theosophical Society is required to believe in any statement that may be made by the president-founder or by the secretary or by a supposed Mahatma, but everyone is expected to use his reason according to his capacity. If Madame Blavatsky or anyone else chose to produce any illusions, they did so at their own personal risks, and those who accepted them as divine revelations with blind credulity and without proper investigation did so at their own risk and in contravention to what they were taught. If they now find that they have been too credulous, they have had occasion to learn by experience that the warning was true. Many members of the T.S. brought into the society the ideas which had grown into their minds. By entering the T.S. they only put away their old superstitions to replace them by new ones. Before entering the society they may have expected salvation from some personal saviour; now they imagined that they had found one who could do the job better. Before entering the society they worshipped one fetish, and afterwards they worshiped another. If they now believe that no Mahatmas exist, it only shows that they never knew what a “Mahatma” is, and consequently believed in a nonentity; it would show that contrary to the rules of true Theosophy they accepted a creed through which they expected to be saved and that thereby they expected to obtain favours which they did not deserve, or that like other pious frauds they attempted by false pretenses to smuggle their imperfections into the kingdom of Heaven.

If any such persons have existed in the society, Mr. Hodgson and (s.v.¹⁸) Madame Blavatsky have done a great service to them, for which they ought to receive the thanks of all true Theosophists; because they destroyed their errors, which as they grew in their proportions, may have made them fit subjects for an insane asylum. But upon those who are able to see that pearls are not less valuable if they are found in a bog and that truths are truths no matter in what form they may be represented, the revelations caused by the attempts at revenge of a vindictive woman, and the confusion created by the misconceptions *and* exaggerations of a bombastic fanatic, have had no other but an exhilarating effect, giving testimony again to the old truth, that men will spurn the truth from their doors and beg to be deceived, and complain when they find out that they had their wish. *Mundus vult decipi* [L. “the world wishes to be deceived”]. If no one deceives them, they will deceive themselves, and if they find out the deception, they will cry for a victim to sacrifice at the altar of their vanity, because they prefer to lay the blame upon the shoulders of others to putting it at their own doors. People often accuse others, where they ought to accuse themselves. For many centuries it was believed by the vulgar that the Earth stood still and that the sun was travelling around it, and the “lie” was allowed to continue without being contradicted by the initiates of the mysteries, who knew the real facts and who would have been stoned to death as impostors, if they had contradicted the popular theory. When Galileo had the courage to declare the truth, and the scientific men of his age were gradually forced to accept it on account of its own strength, which was greater than that of the prevailing scientific opinions; could the people blame the sun for having deceived them, or was it not rather the ignorance of the uninitiated that was to blame for their misconception? Are there not almost daily new opinions formed that give the death blow to old accepted theories, and are those who stuck to the old theories, because they did not know better, to be considered impostures? How can we expect to arrive [*sic*] at absolute truth, as long as we live in the realm of illusions and are forced to trust to deception sensual perception, the only basis upon which our system of modern science is built. Are we not surrounded by shows and illusions? Is not the phenomenal appearance of everything very different from the reality? Is not man himself a mask that hides his true character?

I feel myself not yet fully capable of giving a final verdict as to how far the so-called “occult” phenomena may have been produced by her ordinary or by her occult powers; but even if all of them should be proved to have been performed by slight of hand tricks, they can hardly be called impostures, because in judging an act, the motive should be taken into consideration. No one has as yet accused Madame Blavatsky of having imposed on the credulity of her followers from motives of selfishness or pecuniary gain; while on the other hand a great many persons belonging to the learned professions gain the patronage of the public and make a luxurious living only on account

¹⁸ [Compiler’s note: Latin, *Sanctitas Vestra* for “Your Holiness.”]

of their pretensions to a knowledge of things of which they actually know little or nothing, and on account of the inability of the public to estimate their value correctly. Such people are considered respectable as long as they are able to keep up their deceptive appearance. I am willing to admit that Madame Blavatsky has produced illusions to assist the progress of a good cause, but I do not believe that these illusions have done any serious harm to anybody. But even if she were the “champion imposter of the age”, the truths which she has uncovered, will live; just as a Lotus flower grown in a swamp will be beautiful, even if the water in which it is found is contaminated by filth.

I am also willing to admit that Madame Blavatsky has suffered other people to harbour illusions of their own creation, which those persons would have been very unwilling to see destroyed. Many times she may have been charged with deception, where the people only deceived themselves. I have heard persons asking questions and answering those questions themselves, and they afterwards accused Madame Blavatsky for having told them a falsehood; while in fact she was only a quiet listener and too polite to contradict statements that were made to her in a dogmatic manner.

Theosophy is the recognition of the truth. If by the revelations made by Madame Coulomb and by the investigations of Mr. Hodgson any new truths have come to light, then those persons have done great theosophical work. If they have accomplished nothing else but to throw a new light upon the character of a woman whose peculiarities have been known to many, they have accomplished very little. If they have destroyed the super-credulity of the president of the so-called “theosophical society” and of the worshippers of Madame Blavatsky, they have done well; if they have only destroyed a form under which truths could be made accessible to the ignorant, they have acted like persons who destroy a fable, because that which is told in it is not literally true. If the so-called “theosophical society” is overthrown by these exposures, it well deserves to perish; because its fall will show, that it was resting not upon a recognition of the truth, but upon a delusive believe [*sic*] in personal authority and assumed infallibility. In that case it was not a “theosophical society” but a society of credulous people assuming a name that in no-wise described their character. But if there are any *Theosophists* in the so-called “theosophical society” then these revelations will benefit them by showing to them what is false in their society and what ought to be rejected.

In my opinion the illusions created by Madame Blavatsky have done no serious harm. That which has done harm and which has also given rise to those illusions and almost made them a necessity, is the fanaticism, the credulity and the love of exaggeration of another person who misunderstood the truths which he was supposed to know, and who consequently misrepresented them and created misconceptions, which led to absurd desires that clamoured for gratification. In addition to that came the vanity of the benighted “Chela”¹⁹ who (as I believe) actually imagined himself to be the mouth-piece of an invisible power.

¹⁹ [*Compiler's note*: In all probability this was Dâmodar Mâvalankar.]

Imagine an inexperienced and uneducated youngster, seeing himself revered as a god by an American Colonel. Think of a boy who did not know the rudiments of science ^{*[20]} receiving numerous letters from educated gentlemen of England, America, Germany or France, asking for his intercession with [the²¹] Mahatmas in their behalf; seeing Asiatics and Europeans standing awe-stricken in his presence and listening with the utmost credulity to the nonsense he may have been pleased to utter.

I charge nobody at Adyar with conscious intentional and malicious fraud. I have met with a great deal of imbecility and incapacity among the governing lights, but I excuse their so-called imposture on account of their ignorance. The more I studied Dâmodar's character, the more convinced did I become of the fact that he actually believed in what he said, that he acted to a certain extent in good faith, mistaking his own usually morbid fancies for direct inspirations, his inclinations for "orders" from the Mahatmas, and thought he could do as he pleased, because he could not please to do anything but what was the wish of the Mahatmas, whom he imagined to be the guardians of the door of his mind. If he wrote a letter signed K.H. he consequently imagined himself inspired to do so, and he was willing to "imitate" the handwriting of the supposed K.H. to save the Mahatma the trouble to "precipitate" it himself and to save his power. But he thought it necessary to write in the handwriting of the supposed K.H. because a letter in his own handwriting would not have had the necessary weight of authority with his stupid admirers.

If we look at the "occult phenomena" produced at Adyar as having been slight of hand tricks made by a lot of intentional swindlers, we may well blush to think that educated European and American men and women have "given up the world" to become their dupes and bowed in reference [*sic*] before puppets and dolls, set up by these youngsters for shows; and I well understand the feeling that prompted one of our prominent members to say—after sending his "diploma" back to the president-founder: "I am not sorry for having made a fool of myself, because I have gained experience; but now I feel as if I had risen out of a quagmire and as if the dirt had dropped off from my eyes." If we dwell on the credulity of the followers of Col. Olcott, H. P. Blavatsky and Dâmodar K. Mavalankar, we may well imagine them as²² two latter as looking with supreme contempt upon the "domestic imbeciles" by which they were surrounded and who were headed by a "familiar muff" who became everyday more and more swelled up with mock-authority, in proportion as he was fed with deception.

²⁰ When Mr. Dâmodar was asked how occult letters were "precipitated", he answered that it meant that they were made in great "precipitation" or *haste*.

²¹ [*Compiler's note*: ink has faded here.]

²² [*Compiler's note*: Ink is thickened here but it could be: "well imagine these two latter . . ."]

But such a view is in my opinion as far removed from the truth as the belief in the “Chelaship” and consequent infallibility of Col. Olcott or Dâmodar K. Mavalankar. Everyone who knows Madame Blavatsky loves her on account of her kindness of heart and it is impossible that a wicked and malicious person could keep up under the most trying circumstances the amiability and affability of a saint; for although her impulsive nature makes her at times subject to violent outbursts of temper, she is at all times ready to forgive her enemies and to sacrifice herself for her friends. Nobody can listen to Col. Olcott without becoming convinced of his sincerity and of the fact that—like the boy Washington—he is incapable of telling a lie—unless he should believe in it himself. He has been very well characterized by a well known writer as a grown child with a beard, and his manners are sincere, childlike and bland. No one can live together for a year with Dâmodar K. Mavalankar, without arriving at the conclusion that he either knows nothing or is unwilling to tell that which he knows. He is—so to say—silent for the benefit of the cause.

I cannot blame Madame Blavatsky for her having created illusions for the benefit of her cause. She is a woman who lives for the accomplishment of a grand idea, floating in the upper regions and looking upon the world as being a world of illusions. She may make use of the illusions of others in the same sense as a painter will put his painting in an elegant frame and hang it into a favourable light to increase its effect. If those who looked upon her paintings could only see the frame, they deceived themselves. Madame Blavatsky is the heroine of a great drama in which the enduring element is not wanting. But certain actions that may look graceful in a human being may appear very absurd if imitated by an ape. If truths are promulgated by means of an illusion, there will be something to gain; but if mere rubbish is dealt out with by slight of hand methods, and swallowed as divine revelations by the executive office of the society, then the matter turns from the sublime into the ridiculous.

Madame Blavatsky may have looked upon her followers as being children who want to be amused while they are instructed, and who would not accept the truth, if it were not presented to them in a palatable form and adorned with fiction, but many of her followers only swallowed the fiction and rejected the truth, like people who read a novel only for the purpose of seeing how it ends and pay no attention to the philosophy contained therein. But when during the absence of H. P. Blavatsky a mental pigmy crept into the dictatorial chair and attempted to play a double game of cards, the result ended in failure. Mr. Dâmodar believing in his inspirations and having the unbounded confidence of the public on his side, attempted to intrigue against the Coulobms as well as against the “Board of Control” and failed. His “Mahatma Letters” contained no truths; were inconsistent with facts, and would not have been believed, if it had not been necessary for the existence of the society not to suspect them without any sufficient and incontrovertible cause, because at that time everyone was looked upon as a traitor and as a disturber of the peace, who would not put implicit confidence into the revelations of Dâmodar, no matter how irrational they may have been.

At the time when Dâmodar rushed like a maniac out of my room, and came back with a letter,²³ “handed to him by a Chela”, beginning with the words: “As long as one has not developed a perfect sense of justice etc”—I strongly suspected him to have been the author of that letter, and I hinted at my suspicion in my “Report of Observations”²⁴; but an open declaration of my suspicions would have been equivalent to a rupture in the society, which at the time of the threatening trouble was not to be desired, moreover as a mere suspicion would not have been accepted as a proof against the all-powerful vice-regent of K.H., who imagined himself to have *carte blanche* [L. “blank paper” or full discretionary powers granted] from his Master and who laboured under the idea that he was at least half a Mahatma himself. A person who enjoys a dish does not like to have it spoiled; theosophist[s] *in ovo* [L. “undeveloped”] do not like to see their soup-bubbles destroyed, a person who destroys the illusions of others, even if they are noxious, is looked upon like a boy that climbs into an orchard and steals unripe fruit, which will give him the colic.

Well, the bubble has bursted at last and some more bubbles may burst. The gas has been let out by Mr. Hodgson and its odor is not very agreeable, but the theosophical society of the future ought to rejoice that its atmosphere has been purified to a certain extent. There is no need of dissolving the society because its impure elements have been expurged. We need not dissolution, but we need reform. If the theosophical society rests on illusions, then the society will fall if the

²³[Compiler’s note: Hartmann received several Mahatma letters, this one of which is mentioned in my unpublished *Bibliography of Franz Hartmann, M.D. with Annotations; With addendas: His Stay in Georgetown, Colorado U.S.A. and a translation from his “Aus Meinem Leben” [From My Life]. Compiled with translations from the German, French, and Spanish: Letter to Dr. Franz Hartmann in Master K.H.’s handwriting, Mar. 22, 1884. “So long as one has not developed a perfect sense of justice . . . so that she may co-operate with you. K.H.” Full letter first photographically reproduced in the German journal *Theosophie* III/6 (Sept. 1912): between pp. 184 and 185; first fully photographic reproduction in English in: William Loftus Hare and Harold Edward Hare, *Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1936); last one-third of letter photographically reproduced in *Unter den Adepten und Rosenkreuzern*. Berlin: Verlag Richard Schikowski, 1963, 176 pp.; a small part of the specimen of handwriting from this letter appears in “Aus meinem Leben” (an Addenda to my *Hartmann Bibliography*); *Neue Lotusblüten* I/3-4 (Mar.-Apr. 1908): 128; full text in English: *Report of Observations Made During a Nine Months Stay at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar (Madras), India*, 1884, p. 33; circumstances related in “Occult Phenomena,” *The Theosophist* V/7 (Jul. 1884, suppl.): 99-100; transcribed and compiled by C. Jinarajadasa, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series (Adyar, Madras, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1925, 1973, 1977). Letter no. 73, p. 131-32; Appendix to *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings. Volume VIII*, pp. 446-47.]*

²⁴[Compiler’s note: *Report of Observations Made During a Nine Months Stay at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar (Madras), India* (Madras, India: The Scottish Press, Graves, Cookson and Co., 1884), 60 pp.; Reprinted: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: by Edmonton Theosophical Society, 1995, 60 pp.]

illusions fall. If it cannot exist without humbug, then it must die when the humbug is removed. If it rests upon the truth, it will never die, because truth is immortal and will live, even if all its followers desert it. There is at present a crying need for a society, whether it be called “theosophical” or not, which will give the deathblow to materialism, whose mephitic breath poisons the moral atmosphere of the Earth, and establish the religion of Universal Brotherhood. The so-called “theosophical society” of which Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky are the founders has originally been built upon excellent principles, and its constitution leaves very little to be desired. If its practice could be made to agree with its theory the result would be undoubtedly great. I have no doubt that the intentions of Col. Olcott are on the whole good, however mistaken he may be in his ideas and however great may be the extravagancies into which he has been led by his blind fanaticism. It is also undoubtedly true that he would have had better success if he had been in possession of better material to work with, but it is his own personality that has prevented better material to come to his aid. A true theosophist will refuse to assist him to “carry on the business” with one eye directed to heaven and with another to profit. A scientific person will be repulsed by his want of discrimination, his lack of education and his credulity. He is an excellent exhorter and his enthusiasm would make him a fit companion of General Booth.

Col. Olcott has great organisational talent. He prides himself on his circumspection and sagacity, and is said to have displayed some ingenuity while in the insurance business at New-York or Washington and as a detective in the service of the U.S. America. And yet I never saw a man, who is less a judge of character or more carried away by his own fancies. He is ever ready to put the utmost confidence in any stranger who seems to agree with his views. He will boast about the accomplishments of such persons and advertise them as the coming saviours of the world, although they may be entirely incapable of doing anything useful. But woe to such lauded persons if they should afterwards disagree with his views, or those of H. P. Blavatsky. The epithets of liars, traitors and villains will be too good to be applied to them by the founders and their theosophical (!) followers. Woe to one, if this paper should (as it probably will) meet their eyes. There will perhaps be left nothing be [*sic*] left [*sic*] of my reputation, that may be handled with a stick. The way has already be[en] prepared for such an emergency by “confidential” letters, of which I might give extracts.

But it is not my intention at present to uncover any more sores. This is not a personal quarrel between myself and Col. Olcott, but a question of putting the T.S. upon a better basis by removing all things that will impede its program. There is not, as some people may imagine, a feeling of animosity between Col. Olcott and myself. I have always attempted to assist him in everything that was *reasonable*. If he has done unreasonable things he did them—not maliciously—but out of a mistaken *policy*. Let us therefore throw the cloak of charity over his weaknesses. His enthusiasm [*sic*] has done much good, his exaggeration[s] have done some harm. If the account is compared, a balance may be left in his favour. Whether or not he can be considered any longer

as the head of a society of which he has posed so long as the principal dupe—if not as a wilful *[sic]* imposter—is not for me alone to decide. The theosophical society needs at present for its guidance a man, who is not only energetic and courageous like Col. Olcott, but who is intelligent and able to discriminate, but the latter quality seems to be entirely absent in Col. Olcott. The T.S. needs a man who is a prophet and a seer; but our Colonel is neither the one nor the other, in spite of his “goodness of heart” which subjects him to the misfortune of being continually led by the nose. If it is worth the while to say anything about his “miraculous cures”, I can only say that the attempts which were made in my presence seemed to be failures; but I have heard him and some others say, that on certain occasions he was very successful. He also writes to me, that he still receives “occult letters” but as the well known “Chela” has left Adyar for Thibet—(!) and as those who are left there, seem to be not “developed” enough to “receive” them, there is still another mystery to explain.

Madame *H. P. Blavatsky* is the genius of the society. Whether she is its good or its evil genius remains to be decided. It seems however certain that without her efforts the theosophical society would never have come into existence, and it is moreover an undisputed fact that this society has accomplished a great deal of good. Whatever Madame Blavatsky's personal weaknesses may be, there can be no doubt that she is of an amiable and generous nature, acting on the impulse of the moment, without taking the consequences into considerations *[sic]* whether or not these consequences may be disastrous to her. In a letter dated “Paris” she writes to me: “Let me perish, but save the society”. I see no reason why she should perish if the truth is told. She as well as the society may continue to exist without any extravagant belief in her superhuman powers; but if her admirers will continue the policy of misrepresenting her by making absurd assertions whose impossibilities are self-evident, neither she, nor the society will be able to attract any longer the attention of anyone, but the most superstitious and ignorant fanatics.

Exaggeration is the enemy of truth. If true facts are represented in an exaggerated, and therefore false light, they may attract a great deal of attention, but when the exaggeration is discovered, the whole will be rejected without discrimination, the true as well as the false. The oratorical *[sic]* efforts of Col. Olcott, in which he represented the Eastern Adepts first as Fakirs, then as Yogees, then as Mahatmas, then as “Chelas”, resembled *[sic]* so many displays at fireworks which attract a crowd, that stares at them with wonder, but which leave no lasting effect, because the illusion vanishes as the smoke of the powder is clearing away. If we are told by Col. Olcott that the “Mahatmas” can write occult letters, and if he produces such letters, dealing with the most trivial affairs, we may be astonished. If we afterwards see, that the information given in such letters is false and inconsistent with facts, and if we see that these great Mahatmas, who will “waste their powers” to mend broken saucers and present the Colonel with vases bought by Madame Coulomb in the bazaar, are asleep, when the vital interests of humanity or of their own society are concerned, we are led to the conclusion, that there are no Adepts at all, or that they are unable to write.



**Photo courtesy of Hans Beetz and Frank Reitemeyer of Germany;
retouched by Robert Hütwohl**

Still, the existence of Adepts is to me—in spite of all the revelations made in regard to the occult phenomena occurring at Adyar, or a fact of which I have no doubt; the existence of occult laws or occult phenomena will not be disputed by anybody who has seriously investigated Spiritualism, “direct writing” has often been produced in my presence; history tells us of instances where such writing was produced; the Bible speaks of a certain handwriting appearing upon the wall; occult letters appeared before Madame Blavatsky was born and Paracelsus tells us how they are produced by the Elementals by means of the astral corpses of the dead.

II

It has been proposed by the followers of Madame Blavatsky, that a new batch of “evidence” in regard to the occurrence of “occult phenomena” that have taken place in her presence, should be collected, and presented before the public, to show that Mr. Hodgson was mistaken in the conclusions at which he arrived by his careful examination. Such a course would seem to me not only injudicious and inexpedient, but directly injurious to the true interests of the “theosophical society”; because however much “evidence” we may collect, the gentlemen of the Society for Psychical Research would be entitled to say: that having proved all the phenomena that were presented to them, to be *spurious*, they could not be expected to waste their time with a new edition of *rubbish*, which the followers of Madame Blavatsky might collect or invent much faster than they could dispose of it. Moreover an effort to throw dust into the eyes of the public and to try to prove an impossibility, will in the end be a failure, even if those who attempt it are honest and convinced of the truth of what they imagine to be true.

I did not come to Adyar as a full-fledged occultist, but as a student who wanted to learn something new, and I took that which I saw in good faith. My “Report of Observations” was originally only written for the purpose of private circulation among my spiritualistic friends in America, it was rather a premature expression of my opinion than a dogmatical work, and if I have since then had sufficient reason to change my views, I see no reason why I should be unwilling to acknowledge this fact.

During the heat of the battle between the “Christian College Magazine” and the “theosophical society” at Adyar, I had little time for reflection, because I was busy day and night, defending the situation as well as I could. After Col. Olcott returned and relieved me of the responsibilities which I had accepted, I rubbed the dust out of my eyes and began to see clear. I found that not everything was exactly what it at first appeared to be, and I stated to Mr. Hodgson in a letter, which has not been printed in his Report, that “I had (at that time) not seen any phenomena, where any actual fraud had been proved; neither did I know of a single phenomenon, which could not be explained

away by those who had not witnessed it themselves.”

I have since then investigated this matter from a different standpoint and with different means, and to find that the doctrines of Occultism, instead of having been overthrown by the exposures made by Mr. Hodgson, have on the contrary grown through them into sublime proportions in my understanding. I find now, that of the so-called “Theosophists” attempt to prove the existence of such “Mahatmas” *as they imagine them to be*, they overthrow their own fundamental doctrine, namely the *Unity of Universal Humanity* on the spiritual plane, and the impersonality of the sixth principle after death.

It has been often asserted in the writings on Occultism and printed in Mr. Sinnetts [*sic*] book on “Esoteric Buddhism” that the sixth principle is an impersonal and universal power, that it is not drawn down into man, but that man must rise up to it, and in my forthcoming book on “Magic”, shortly to be published, by Mr. Redway in London, I have attempted to describe the practical process by which this is done. It has furthermore often been asserted that the “Mahatmas” are persons who have united their fifth principle with the universal sixth. Why then—if the sixth principle is impersonal—will people, interested in the defense of this truth insist on disproving their own theory by attempting to prove the existence of personal sixth principles, flitting about in the air as invisible entities, able to make themselves visible and write “occult letters” full of eggregious [*sic*] nonsense? If they combat the spiritualists theory and say that *spirit* is universal, why will they hunt for *spirits* and attempt to prove their existence?

But it will be objected, that if this is true, then all the visions of Mahatmas etc. have only been subjective illusions; and this is true in the same sense as everything that is perceived either by the physical or by the astral senses of man is an illusion, created either by a power existing within him or by a power coming in contact with his mind from without. No man can perceive anything which does not exist in his own sphere of perception, and the sphere of his perception is the sphere of his mind. If something exists beyond my sphere of perception, it will have first to come within my own mind, and if it is invisible, it will have to take from myself the materials to “materialize” and to become visible and objective. In other words: man can see nothing but his own thoughts and the question to be decided by his reason is, whether he formed there thoughts himself, or whether they were created by some external cause taking form in his mind. Let the gentlemen of the Society of Psychical Research study the exact conditions under which subjective phenomena may become objective, and they will be on the way to solve the questions that agitate their minds. Why should they be surprised at finding anything to be false, that is *ab initio* [L. “from the beginning”] impossible and not true.

If anything comes to us in a personal or tangible form, it cannot be the “Maha-Atma”, the great ocean of spirit that surrounds us on all sides, and in which those who are able to swim may dive if they are not afraid of its sharks. If anything visible appears to us, it cannot be the eternal and reality, but it must belong to the realm of the illusions. Such illusions may be created by our

own will, by employing the power of our active imagination, or they may be created by the power of elementals living in the sphere of our mind and acting upon our positive imagination, and perhaps set into motion by the power of an Adept.

You cannot see me, even if I stand before you, unless my image forms a part of your mind. If I am absent, you can by the power of your recollection and memory collect those elements which form my image in your mind, and see me as you have seen me before; but if you have never seen me before you cannot imagine me, unless I should by some occult power (thought-transference for instance) impress my image upon your mind and cause it to come to your consciousness.

If an [*sic*] common²⁵ letter is to come into existence on the objective plane, its contents must exist in the mind of him through whose mediumship it comes into objective existence. The same is the case with “occult” letters, and nothing can be communicated in such a letter, which has not first been impressed upon the mind of the person through whose mediumship it is produced. The fact that thought-transference is a possibility has been proved by the gentlemen of the Society for Psychical Research; the production of occult writing (produced through the Elementals) is a fact that has been proved in thousands of instances through the mediumship of Henry Slade and many other mediums of repute.

If—as has reputedly been asserted—the sixth principle (the Maha Atma) does not go around and cut capers and write occult letters for the amusement and the mystification of the public, then—if occult phenomena are true—they must be produced by something lower than the sixth principle, by something that lives in the realm of Maja,²⁶ and this conclusion brings us again before the vexed question of the Elementals, or the living forces of the human soul, a question which is too extensive to be discussed in this short essay.

But if—as is natural—nothing can come out of a brain, which does not exist in it, and if no occult letter could have proceeded from H. P. Blavatsky or from Dâmodar or from anyone else, whose contents had not already existed in their respective minds, whether originated their [there] by their own imagination, or called into existence there by the thought-transference of an Adept, then it will be clear that as regards the genuineness of the *contents* of an occult letter, it could make little difference whether such a letter was written by their own hands, or taken from their mind and “precipitated” by an Elemental, and it will now be seen why I said that H. P. Blavatsky and Dâmodar may have acted in good faith, even if they knew that the external form under which these “phenomena” appeared, were delusive; but these external forms can hardly be looked upon as frauds in the case of H. P. Blavatsky; because

²⁵ [*Compiler's note*: Hartmann first wrote “occult,” then replaced it with the word “common.” Hence the “an.” before it.

²⁶ [*Compiler's note*: The Sanskrit word *mâyâ* (illusion)]

she never represented them as tests and never produced them for money. She may have looked upon them as harmless illusions, serving a good purpose. Dâmodar imitated her out of vanity and Col. Olcotts [*sic*] credulity did the rest: Madame Blavatsky may have looked upon her followers as being people who were attracted to her cause by a love for the mysterious and wonderful, and whose love for the mysterious had to be fed to keep them true to the cause. She presented to them a kernel of truth, surrounded by a palatable pulp of illusions. Many people swallowed the pulp and threw the kernel away; but those who have kept the kernels and planted them into their hearts, have had nothing to complain. Her policy in this respect has been the same in principle as that followed out by the churches, who present wood images to the faithful and leave them to look upon them as they please, until their understanding grows and they become able to distinguish the kernel from the truth.

From a scientific standpoint her “experiments” are perfectly worthless; but she never exhibited them for the purpose of scientific examination. She never asked for or invited such an examination, and it was only on Col. Olcotts [*sic*] urgent request, that such an examination took place, which ended in a failure.

If we therefore consider the actions of Madame Blavatsky apart from the performance of slight [sleight]-of-hand tricks for innocent purposes, we can accuse her of no other offense, than of not having been able to properly discriminate between her own thought-creations and those impressed upon her mind from her “Master.” But this is an offense which everybody commits everyday. Men and women do not think what they please, they do not as a rule form their own thoughts, but they think what *comes into their minds*, and are not always able to reject the unwelcome thoughts that come into their minds. He who can completely control his own thoughts is an Adept, and he who can hold on to a thought,—as the Soc. For Psych. Res. knows, able to express it upon the mind of another.

Whether or not such a thought-transference from a long distance—even from Tibet—may take place, is for the gentlemen of the Soc. For Psych. Res. to decide. For me it is an undisputed fact. I have seen the “astral bodies” of persons living thousands of miles away, and I have letters in my possession from very respectable persons who had never seen me and who live far away, saying that they had seen me in my astral form and afterwards recognized who it was by being shown my photograph; although I myself have no recollection of having made such visits during my sleep. I have seen the astral forms of Dâmodar and others in certain dresses of which I did not know that they possessed them; for instance I saw Dâmodar in the yellow gown of a Buddhist priest, and found out long afterwards that he had such a gown. Consequently there is no reason why not certain Adepts, with whom Madame Blavatsky may be acquainted, may exist, who can under certain circumstances impress her mind at a distance.

Whether or not any such Adepts as Madame Blavatsky describes them, exist, is a matter that will never be decided by the public. I might speak of my own subjective experiences, but they would

be called “hallucinations”—whatever that word may mean, because no illusion is real. I might bring the testimony of some of my german [*sic*] friends, who are practical occultists, but know nothing of the existence of the Theosophical Society, and who nevertheless have been visited by the astral forms of two Indian Adepts long before I arrived in Germany, and who recognized the form of one being shown his portrait. But then my veracity of their truthfulness or intelligence might be doubted, they would be very unwilling to come before the public, and even if they were to do so and testify to what they have seen; their testimony would carry no weight with those who have seen nothing; because real knowledge can be gained by experience alone.

But why should there not be any Adepts, or men able to impress thoughts at a distance and why should H. P. Blavatsky not be “en rapport” with such men, even if their powers have been grossly exaggerated? The universal ocean of mind is everywhere, and every thought of man produces a ripple in it, which according to its intensity may be extended to the most distant shores; and that such a thought-wave can be directed by the will, is not doubted by those who are acquainted with the literature of Mysticism and Spiritualism. It is not at all impossible that H.P.B. may have met with such men in her travels, and even if it should be proved that she had never been in Tibet in her physical form, it would only prove that her tales have been exaggerated like any other novel; but it would not invalidate the possibility of her communication with Thibetan [*sic*] Adepts; because a communication of thought is independent of the locality of the physical body, and the astral form may travel while the physical form is asleep.

Granted, that all this is true, the question arises, whether or not all the occult phenomena have been performed by slight [sleight] of hand tricks. After the “exposures” made by Mr. Hodgson it seems to me useless to assert that there might have been some “real” occult letters produced through her. Those who have had more experience than myself may judge about this matter; but all who know Madame Blavatsky will probably agree with me, that she is a woman of great impressibility and great mediumistic powers (be it of Adepts or of anything else) and that—if occult letters are at all a possibility—they may have appeared through her mediumship as well as through that of anyone else.

I have no hesitation to affirm, that Madame Blavatsky has not only some extraordinary mediumistic powers; but that she is moreover—in contradistinction to the common spiritualistic medium[—]able to produce some occult phenomena at will. I might cite some instances where I witnessed her powers; but to do so seems to me useless, because they may be explained away by those who have not witnessed them, by the usual theories of coincidence, fraud, etc[.], however impossible and improbable such theories may be. I have heard bell-sounds around my head, when H. P. Blavatsky was in another room and on some occasions I heard them distinctly, while others who were with me heard them not; on other occasions others said that they heard those bells, while I could not hear them, and on other occasions again all present heard them. I have seen H. P. Blavatsky producing raps without contact apparently at will and on the request of those that were present. I have often received from her answers to my thoughts, and sometimes in a very curious

manner. I will give one instance as an example: I was one day talking with Madame Blavatsky, and during the conversation she played with a pencil and made scratches on a piece of paper in an apparently careless manner. As the conversation stopped I thought of a lady friend of mine, who had died years ago in Galveston Texas, and of certain circumstances connected with her, without having mentioned anything about this matter to H. P. Blavatsky. Suddenly she handed me the piece of paper on which she had been scratching, and to my surprise I found a fair picture of that lady, representing her under the very circumstances of which I had then thought.

On the evening after my arrival at Adyar, H. P. Blavatsky said she saw a name in fiery letters around my head and mentioned it. It proved to be that of my deceased wife, and was a very unusual one, and H.P.B. could not have known it. Moreover I have received the same test though through other persons (public and private mediums) in America:

One evening I saw direct writing produced in the presence of H. P. Blavatsky, in the same manner in which I had seen it produced through Charles Forester (the spiritual medium) in America, and moreover the writing resembled that which is known through the “occult letters” coming from Mahatma M.

One day I gave to Madame Blavatsky an envelope containing a letter from a lady living in California, and she held it to her forehead, and then gave me, not only an exact description of that lady, but also of the appearance of her peculiar dress, and I afterwards remembered that she often wore such a dress.

On several occasions Madame Blavatsky told me the substance of conversations which I had held with persons at places where there could be no officious listener, to report it to her.

Such and similar examples may be produced by myself and by others that have witnessed them almost *ad infinitum*; but their recital carries no *scientific* proof whatever; because no account of any occult phenomenon whatever could be given—for which a sceptic may not invent some supposed explanation. Such phenomena have only scientific value, if they are produced under scientifically arranged test-conditions, and Madame Blavatsky never submitted herself to such tests. If some of her “phenomena” are now proved to have been produced by sleight-of-hand; it only goes to show that we made the mistake of searching for a confirmation of spiritual truths in the realm of illusion.

And now what is the result of this investigation?

In the first place we see a highly gifted and poetical woman, a professional writer of romance full of a grand idea of leading mankind up to a higher conception of spiritual truths foolishly extending poetical liberties upon the physical plane and *producing illusions* for the purpose of attracting the attention of those who were to be instructed, and to whom it was left to distinguish between the principle and the form. The same policy is followed out in every theatre and in every church, and very foolish would be the person, who would complain because in a representation of Shakespeares play Desdemona was not actually killed by Othello, or who would send for a chemist

to see whether the blood of Christ would be found by microscopical examination in the sacramental wine.

In the second place we see a number of people investigating a field in which they had no practical experience, accepting such fictions as truths, exaggerating the importance of such fictions in their own minds and consequently misrepresenting them to others. We see an enthusiastic president-founder calling for a scientific examination of poetical fiction and having the result of his labour destroyed because the fiction is proved to be a fiction after all.

But there is no light without shadow and no shadow without any light. Absolute truth is incomprehensible by mortal man, it requires to come into contact with the realm of illusion to bring it to the understanding of man; there is no fiction which does not contain a certain amount of truth; there is no fiction from which not some moral may be drawn. The experience through which the “theosophical society” has passed has only emphasized the truth of what has been continually asserted and upon which that society has been founded: namely that the truth cannot be found by mere speculation, but by speculation accompanied by practice, and that experience can only carry conviction to him who has made the experience himself. Those who have not recognized that truth, but whose faith was based upon a belief in the fictions of Madame Blavatsky, will desert the cause, those whose faith is based upon their own experience will remain true to the cause, if not to the T.S. as it is constituted at present. They may form another society and call it by some other name; the form is of no great consequence, provided the principle is true. They may be led by other and superior minds, and if so, they can only be congratulated [*sic*] for the change.

Every clear seeing person will perceive that it is not the truths of Occultism and Mysticism that have passed through the test in the crucible produced by the Soc. For Psych. Research, but that merely Olcottism and Blavatskyism has been on trial. The truths which those two persons have proclaimed have existed before them and will exist after them, and if their exaggerations have been exposed and denounced, our cause can only have gained thereby, provided that we do not fall from one error into another, from credulity into scepticism, or (as the German expression is) “throw out the child with the bath.”

The investigation made by Mr. Hodgson has not destroyed the occult side of nature; it has merely shown that Col. Olcott, H. P. Blavatsky and others were not ideally perfect persons. But it never was said that they were such. Col. Olcott is aware of his weaknesses, H. P. Blavatsky has often called herself “a foolish woman”; I have hinted as far as was prudent, in my “Report of Observations” and in the preceding [*sic*] pages of this paper I have criticised them without any consideration as to how they may accept it; but Col. Olcott—in spite of his credulity and want of discrimination—has sure and excellent qualities, especially calculated to propagate a cause and if his enthusiasm were led into the proper channel, he might accomplish a great amount of permanent good. Madame Blavatsky is a woman of superior talents and extraordinary gifts; I have no doubt that she has extraordinary

sources of knowledge at her command and she cannot easily be replaced by another person of equal talents and gifts. It is for those who wish to study music to decide, whether they are ready to throw away the best fiddles they have, because they are not as perfect as they may wish them to be.

The result of the investigation made by Mr. Hodgson may prevent for a while the spreading of theosophical truths, because mankind has grown into a belief in authority and will not accept the truth unless it is certified and attested to by somebody in whose authority they believe. To such persons the decision of the Soc. For Psych. Res. will be of vital interest, but to those whose knowledge is based upon practical experience the investigation of Mr. Hodgson assumes merely the character of a psychological study of the character of H. P. Blavatsky. Having been intimately acquainted with her for a long time, I may perhaps be permitted to add a few points that may help to solve this psychological riddle. I shall attempt to explain some of her characteristics in her three different aspects, on the physical, mental and spiritual plane.

In her *physical* aspect Madame Blavatsky is a woman of robust nature, but often troubled with congestion of the kidneys and with gout; partly on account of some inherited tendency, partly from an account of her want of exercise, being almost continually occupied with writing, and preferring [*sic*] the smoke of tobacco to the use of fresh air. In her *emotional* nature she is a person that acts a great deal on the impulse of the moment, and if she desires anything she is not likely to count the cost. This circumstance keeps her continually “in hot water” in regard to the minor affairs of life. She seems to be very “impractical”, pays little attention to formalities; but is nevertheless kind, affable and amiable and polite. She seems to have great will-power and yet little control over her mind. In her *higher* aspect she is a woman of great intellect and what is more—of genius, as every reader of her writings will acknowledge. She is very impressible and very intuitive and at her moments of inspiration able to grasp the highest ideas. The “Mahatmas” do not need to bring ideas to her; the ideas are there, far ready for everyone who is able to grasp them, and she is able to grasp at the highest and has a contempt for that which is low. But she may use the low to promote the high and to render it service, and this circumstance has caused her to fall into the snare prepared by her own want of proper discrimination.

I do not know, whether or not anyone in Germany will give much weight to the fact that she acted in the interest of the Russian government, and I will therefore simply say that I do not consider such an idea as worthy of the least credence. In my presence—she never seemed to look at politics from any other standpoint than from that of universal humanity, and whenever I heard her talk of Indian politics, she always spoke in favour of the British rule as being preferable to any other.

But why has Madame Blavatsky not been more scrupulous in the solution of her means for the advancement of the cause which she advocated? Why does she often act according to her impulses without considering the consequences to which her actions may lead? Why are there such contrasts in her nature? The answer seems to me plain. A bland paper without shadows or lights

produces no effect; a person without energy is important on the side of good as on the side of evil, but it is proverbially known that men of great genius are often eccentric, because in their actions they are liable to fall into extremes. If one pole of a magnet is increased in strength, the other pole will likewise gain in power. Shall we condemn the good that has been produced by men of great genius, because they had idiosyncrasies of their own? Is poetry a lie, because some poet may have occasionally become intoxicated by something more material than divine inspiration? The bible (?) says: Try all and keep that which is good. Let us select from Madame Blavatskys teachings that which we recognize as good, with her personal characteristics we have nothing to do.

“Science” means a knowledge of the phenomenal aspects of nature, “philosophy” means a speculation about the unknown, reasoning from that which is known, “Theosophy” means a recognition of everything that is good, true and beautiful, it means the attainment of spiritual truths by practical experience. For the accomplishment of this object the “theosophical society” has been established, not for the purpose of working miracles. If it had been a miracle working society and there miracles had been proved to be tricks, then the society would not deserve to exist; but if this society has—as has been repeatedly asserted—theoretically nothing to do with phenomany [phenomenally] occult or non-occult, genuine or spurious, but only with the eternal reality of the Universal Brotherhood of Man, then its existence cannot be made to depend on the “genuineness” of any phenomena by whomsoever they may have been produced. The only never-changing reality is the consciousness of the *I Am*; everything else belongs to the changeable realm of illusion. Everyone knows that *he is*, because existence is a fact common to all being. Everything else is relative and subject to conditions and changeable as the conditions under which it exists, change. This consciousness of the *I am* is the same in every person, it is one universal consciousness which finds its relative expression on the various individual existences, and this is the great fact upon which the dogma of the Universal Brotherhood of Man rests. This is the only dogma that has ever been promulgated authoratively [*sic*] by the Theosophical Society, and the only truth whose recognition has been made a *conditio sine qua non* [L. “essential condition”] to become a member of that society. All other questions are left open for the investigation of the members, and they are welcome to accept the results at which they may arrive and to communicate their opinions to others, and there others are free to accept or to reject such opinions.

All that the members of the Theosophical Society are supposed to desire, is the truth. If Mr. Hodgson or anyone else has done anything to promote the knowledge of the truth, he has done theosophical work and deserves the thanks of the theosophical society; but if his investigations have explained no occult laws and thrown no light upon undiscovered facts, if they have simply shown the imprudence and incapacity of certain persons connected with the society; if they have simply destroyed the instrument[s] which are of the teachers unlawfully used for the purpose of attracting attention, then—however well he may have done his duty to his employers—the service which he has rendered to humanity is very little indeed.

Let those who crave for illusions mourn and weep, for their phenomena have been proved to be nothing else but—phenomena and illusions, produced in the majority of cases by their own senses; but let those who care only for the reality rejoice that a fast growing element of superstition and fanaticism has been removed from their midst. Let them rally again around the banner of truth, for the defense of the rights of humanity,—not with child's play, mocking authority, bombast and “presidential orders”—but on the spiritual plane, where none can enter except those who are in the possession of the “password”, that is to say, those who are above the realm of mere opinion and have learned to know the truth.

If they will continue their researches in an independent spirit, uninfluenced by the clamours of the ignorant, they will find that *truth is stranger than fiction* and they will realize the meaning of the motto of the “theosophical society” of the future, which must be: “*There is no religion higher, than the recognition of the truth.*”

Yours very respectfully

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