

INTRODUCTION

BEATRICE HASTINGS AND THE “DEFENCE OF MADAME BLAVATSKY”

MICHAEL GOMES

In 1937 the publication in England of two slim volumes as part of an intended series on the *Defence of Madame Blavatsky* introduced a new writer to the field of Theosophical history. Because she felt that she would be unknown to Theosophists, Mrs. Beatrice Hastings prefaced her account with some background about herself by selecting three quotes from the London press. Critic Victor Neuburg, in the 1934 *Sunday Referee* is representative: “Mrs. Hastings, the famous critic, star turn of the *New Age* when that paper was by far the best-written in London.” This was probably as much as most Theosophists who took an interest in her campaign “to procure the public withdrawal of the Report of the Society for Psychical Research, 1885, that condemned Madame Blavatsky as an imposter,”¹ ever knew about this unusual and talented woman.

Privately she elaborated a little more. In a letter to A.E.S. Smythe, General Secretary of The Theosophical Society in Canada, Mrs. Hastings says of herself: “The undersigned joined the Blavatsky Lodge, London, in 1904, soon drifted out; was literary editor of the *New Age*, 1908-14, weekly contributor, 1908-16; found the *Mahatma Letters* in Switzerland, 1927, studied them ever since; in 1935, came across the S.P.R. Report, was startled by the gaps in it, began documentation and found that the facts on record favor H.P.B.”²

Beatrice Hastings was born Emily Alice Haigh on January 26, 1879, in South Hackney, London. Her mother had come there on a maternity visit from South Africa. In a chronology in Mrs. Hastings’ handwriting on the inside cover of her copy of *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*, she notes that her family returned to Port Elizabeth in “June or July” 1879. There she lived until 1883 when she came back to England with her mother. She stayed in English boarding schools until 1893, when at the age of fourteen she travelled back to the Cape, only to surface in London at the Blavatsky Lodge, T.S., in the early 1900s as a rather pretty young woman with short, waved hair, and a new name.

It must have been at one of those Blavatsky Lodge meetings that she met 33-year old Alfred Richard Orage in 1906. After he became editor the next year of the socialist-oriented *New Age*, advertised as a “Weekly Review of Politics, Literature, and Art,” Mrs. Hastings’ first piece appeared as a review of one of Orage’s own books in the Nov. 30, 1907, issue. Her last piece, signed as “Alice Morning,” was in March, 1920. In the period in between she contributed over 200 articles, stories, reviews, poems, criticism, and letters to the editor, under a series of pseudonyms such as “Beatrice Tina,” “Alice Morning,” “Robert à Field,” and others.

Philip Mairet, in a study on Orage and his journal’s contribution to English literature, writes of Beatrice Hastings: “She was the one woman who held her place for years among the regular writers of the paper

and she did it by sheer force of character and volume of production....She became much more than a contributor. For a long period she was a strong--perhaps often a determining--influence in conducting the literary side of the paper; for she worked in the closest collaboration with the editor."³ Mrs. Hastings claimed to have introduced writers like Ezra Pound to the public, and his name figures with other well-known *New Age* contributors — G.B. Shaw, G.K. Chesterton, Arnold Bennett and Katherine Mansfield.

Because of a deteriorating personal relationship with Orage, Mrs. Hastings left for Paris in April, 1914, to begin a series of letters on life in the French capital. The series ran at first weekly and then intermittently for the next four years. She was 35 when she arrived in Paris, and she began a new career as "l'heroine de plusieurs romans," with her name associated with the painters Modigliani and Picasso, and the 18-year old writer Raymond Radiguet, who left her for Jean Cocteau. Pierre Sichel, Modigliani's most exhaustive biographer, believes that Hastings, who soon became popular among the artists of Montparnasse as "la poetesse anglaise," met Modigliani during the summer of 1914, some four months after her arrival.⁴ A number of portraits exist of Mrs. Hastings as a model for the artist from 1915. One of these is owned by the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The 1920s marked her growing ill-health which stimulated an interest in psychical research. She was operated for a tumor in 1921, and in 1924 was in the Clinique Petit at Dieppe, suffering from appendicitis. A photograph by Man Ray from Paris, 1921, shows her still vivacious and defiant, but another from Dieppe taken three years later, and marked by her "very ill," pictures a wan face partially covered by a dark hat. Apparently her interest in psychical research dates from the time of this illness when she discovered in 1924 that she had developed the faculty for automatic writing. In 1925 she travelled to London to have her case tested by Harry Price, Director of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research. A long account of her experiences is preserved in a 124-page typescript titled "The Picnic of the Babes in the Wood," in the Harry Price Library at the University of London.

After she returned from the continent in 1931, she settled first in London and later in Worthing, Sussex. Soon involved in a series of new projects, she published a journal for two years, and wrote a booklet of reminiscences on *The Old "New Age," Orage, and Others*. Early in July 1936, she received a letter from A. Trevor Barker, the editor of *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, which was to lead her to a new field of research.

The London publishers, Williams and Norgate, had just issued a book by two brothers, Harold and William Loftus Hare, raising the question of *Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?* Trevor Barker informed her, "It is some 300 pages, purporting to be a detailed, scholarly and critical survey of the whole of the *Mahatma Letters*, and their conclusion of course, is that H.P.B. alone wrote those letters."⁵ He suggested that she write a reply. Her immediate response after receiving the copy he sent her was that "this book amounts to a fraud on the public. At least a third of it is taken without acknowledgment from former writers." She set off to tabulate the "errors, plagiarisms, misquotes, misjuxtapositions," found therein. By August 10 she had put together a ten-page "first list" of 221 items that needed correction, almost each page of the Hare book yielding some error.

Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters? is an odd book made up of summations of the views held by the two Indian Mahatmas connected with the founding of the Theosophical Movement, their styles of writing, and personality of these men whom the Hare brothers claimed to be imaginary. It is a relic from an age when one could boast how little one had read on a subject as a criterion for observation. In his preface, H. E. Hare tells the reader that aside from the *Mahatma Letters*, he had perused A.P. Sinnett's two books based on the letters, *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, and the edition of *The Early Teachings of*

the Masters. For background, he had also taken note of a series on the “Early History of the Theosophical Society” that *The Theosophist* began publishing in monthly instalments in 1925.

William Loftus Hare had published compilations on religion and mysticism of the east and west, and had been a member of the Theosophical Society in England for twenty years, a member of the National Council of the Society in England, and Vice-President of the London Federation. Described by Annie Besant as a “well-known stirrer-upper of petty quarrels,” he had circulated criticisms against the English General Secretary, Major Graham Pole. In the 1923 English Section election, he offered himself instead. When he received only one vote, he published an exposure of C.W. Leadbeater’s clairvoyant techniques in the 1923 London *Occult Review*.

As early as April, 1924, a short review by W.L. Hare of the *Mahatma Letters* had appeared in the *Occult Review*, where he remained non-committal about their status, only stating that “the system of the Letters does not correspond to any doctrine of Indian philosophy known to me. In reading the Letters I cannot tell whether the authors are Vedantists, Sankhyans, Hinayana or Mahayana Buddhists.”⁶

By the next year, he claimed to be involved in a “critical and scholarly” study of the letters, and had prevailed upon A.P. Sinnett’s executrix, Miss Maud Hoffman, to allow him an examination of the correspondence. In the early autumn of 1925, one evening was devoted to this. In the space of five hours, from 7 p.m. to almost midnight, the 140 were rapidly gone over, and the size and quality of the paper, and the colour of ink used on them, was noted as part of the Hares’ handwriting evidence.

The 32-year old editor of the *Letters*, A. Trevor Barker, who was present, and who handed each letter to Mr. Hare, described the experience as “one of the most unpleasant recollections of my life,” for he found Hare’s attitude of playing the detective offensive. “You can imagine the feelings of Mr. Sinnett’s Executrix and myself,” says Barker, when a few weeks later the London *Morning Post* began a four-part series on the Theosophical Society’s 50th anniversary as “A Shocking Jubilee.”⁷ The Oct. 31, 1925 issue, concluding “The Frauds of Theosophy,” asked and proceeded to answer the question of “Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?” ending with a somewhat out of place call to “all well-concerned citizens of the British Empire” to resist what the writer saw to be the “incalculable....social and political evil” inherent in Theosophy.

Far more interesting than anything contained in the Hares’ 1936 “first thorough examination of the communications alleged to have been received by the late A.P. Sinnett from the Tibetan Mahatmas,” was the Theosophical response to their book. *The Canadian Theosophist* carried an extended reply in August by Miss M.A. Thomas, a ULT member in London; and another in October, by Harold Cox, which was reprinted as a 63-page pamphlet by the H.P.B. Lending Library of Victoria, B.C. The Point Loma *Theosophical Forum* carried C.J. Ryan’s review with corrections in the October, 1936 issue; and even Dr. de Purucker, the Leader of the Society, got involved, answering a query about the book in the magazine’s “Question and Answer” section. Prof. Ernest Wood panned the book in the September *Theosophist*, saying that “the Sanskrit criticisms of the authors are practically *all and entirely wrong*.” while C. Jinarajadasa published the text and facsimile of a letter in the K.H. script which was received by Annie Besant in 1900.

Perhaps the most noteworthy reply was the extended series published in the Washington, D.C., *O.E. Library Critic*, from June-July, 1936 to August, 1937. In the space of 12 issues the editor, Dr. H.N. Stokes, demolished point by point the Hares’ “scholarly” facade and “arsenal of duds.” In the May-June, 1937 issue, nearing the end of his exhaustive analysis, he summed up their book as a “perfect Noah’s Ark

of misstatements and quibblings and false deductions from false premises.” And the series ended with the news of the appearance of the first volume of Mrs. Hastings’ *Defence of Madame Blavatsky*.

It was A. Trevor Barker who encouraged Mrs. Hastings to write the book. He had sent her a postcard on August 4, 1936, saying, “my suggestion is that you consider producing a comprehensive small pamphlet or brochure which would answer effectively and authoritatively the attacks of the Hares and the different reviews of their book.” By early September she sent him the first section of the intended pamphlet which dealt with the background of the *Mahatma Letters* and a note on one of the most difficult issues connected with the Letters, the so-called Kiddie incident. To complete the material, she told Barker, “I give a short section to the Hares, mainly a list of their errors for the benefit of students. Then I examine a couple or so of the ‘frauds’ for the same benefit and returning to the *Letters* conclude ... I think the first necessity is to show Theosophists that the case only looks hopeless because they themselves neglect the records. Also, I am trying to rope in the simple literary folk by drawing attention to the fine writing they are overlooking.”⁸

Barker passed Mrs. Hastings’ manuscript to his friend Iona Davey, who had helped him re-edit the second edition of the *Mahatma Letters*, and with the manual work involved with its companion volume, *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett*. Trevor Barker was happy to report that “she is enthusiastic and thinks it will exactly meet the necessities of the case.”⁹ Mrs. Davey held the position of Hon. Secretary of the Blavatsky Association, a group started in 1923 out of the interest generated by Mrs. Alice Cleather’s books and the Back to Blavatsky movement. The Association had done some good work publishing a Blavatsky Bibliography in 1933, and was responsible for the insertion of a fairer appraisal of Mme. Blavatsky in the 1929 *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Mrs. Hastings’ manuscript was sent to Rider and Company of London, the publishers of the *Mahatma Letters*, on Barker’s enthusiastic recommendation, but the first reader had given it an unfavourable report, and the company had asked for a guarantee. She decided the book could be printed privately and asked Barker to collect ten pounds sterling toward this, when he replied “that he would not help with any money unless he had the supervision.” This proved the final insult “to cap a long series of pinpricks” that led to the first of many rows between them, so she went on alone and issued it from The Hastings Press in Worthing late in April, 1937.¹⁰

Her 60-page Volume I of the *Defence of Madame Blavatsky*, dealing with the pros and cons of the Mahatma Letters was well received by the Theosophical press. Stokes, in the July, 1937 *O.E. Library Critic*, found Mrs. Hastings’ presentation “concise, pungent, and at times sarcastic.” “I thought I had sucked all the juice out of the Hare lemon, but I deceived myself ... In the space of 19 pages (pp. 37-55) Mrs. Hastings picks the Hares to bits; she pulls off the feathers, flays them, peels off the flesh, removes the viscera and finally pulverizes the skeleton. One regrets that she could not devote the entire volume to her irate fireworks.”

To raise support for the other volumes of the *Defence* series, Mrs. Hastings started a small review, *New Universe*, the first issue of which appeared in July, 1937. Ranging from 16 to 26 pages, the six numbers she edited till January, 1939, dealt with some of the knotty points raised by critics. In response, Miss Marjorie Debenham, of St. John’s Wood, sent 25 pounds towards the printing of Volume II. Mrs. Alice Cleather, an old pupil of H.P.B.’s, sent 5 pounds from Darjeeling, India. Mrs. H. Henderson sent 10 pounds and ordered 50 copies for the H.P.B. Lending Library of Victoria, British Columbia.

The second volume of the *Defence* was sent to the printer in August, but did not come out until October.

Dealing with Emma Coulomb's 1885 pamphlet confessing confederacy with H.P.B., this booklet is perhaps Mrs. Hastings most coherent and cohesive work. She handles changes which are at the very crux of the question of the legitimacy of H.P.B.'s phenomena. By placing twelve of the supposed letters attributed to H.P.B. against what is actually known of the outcome of the situations described, she shows that Madame Coulomb's account does not stand up to the facts. A third volume dealing with the so-called Shrine, the cabinet where phenomena occurred at Adyar, and a fourth on V.S. Solovyov's account, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, were announced.

In January, 1938, a public society, "The Friends of Madame Blavatsky," was formed to agitate for the defence of H.P.B. By March, there were members in 15 countries. The July, 1938, issue of *New Universe* contained the first list of over two hundred members, including some of the most prominent names connected with the case for Mme. Blavatsky. Among the F.M.B. members were: John Watkins, London; R.A.V. Morris, Hove, Sussex; B.P. Wadia, Bombay; Abbott Clark, H.T. Edge, Boris de Zirkoff, of Point Loma, California; Mrs. Alice Cleather and Basil Crump, in Darjeeling; Albert Smythe, and his son Connie, of Toronto; Christmas Humphreys and his wife; Dr. H.N. Stokes; and of course, Trevor Barker, Mrs. Iona Davey and her friend Miss Marjorie Debenham.

The function of the Friends of Madame Blavatsky was outlined in a two-page leaflet, some twenty thousand of which were printed and rapidly circulated: "Everyone who believes an injustice has been done to Madame Blavatsky by the Report of the Society for Psychical Research is welcome among the Friends. No other belief but that is required of anyone, neither are we connected in any way with any other Society under the sun. The aim of the Friends of Madame Blavatsky is to bring pressure on the Society for Psychical Research to withdraw their Report that denounced her as an imposter."

A London headquarters, two rooms at 94 Ladbroke Grove, was opened in June, 1938, staffed by Mrs. Hastings herself on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On September 22, a successful evening lecture by Prince Melikoff on "Tiflis and the Caucasus in the time of Madame Blavatsky" was organized. But, as Mrs. Hastings notes, "all this was much too successful, and the devil had to get busy."¹¹ One female member, whom Mrs. Hastings describes as "free, stout, about 40 or 45 years of age," quarrelled with her, and then circulated letters to prominent Theosophists complaining of her management of the group. Another, who performed occasional secretarial work, wanted her to take more rooms at 94 Ladbroke Grove where he could live; when she declined, he pitched into her.

Her confrontation with Mrs. Davey, Miss Debenham and Barker, on the running of the F.M.B. developed into a wrangle which smashed the effort. On Tuesday, July 26, 1938, Miss Debenham, who had guaranteed the rent on the F.M.B. rooms at 94 Ladbroke Grove, made a special visit there. Mrs. Hastings notes of their meeting, "Came. She and Mrs. Davey had meetings over the phone and decided to tell me what to do — give up 94 and hand over funds to a Treasurer (someone more fitted than myself to spend the money!!!) Not said but what other conclusion?"¹² The matter was not pursued, but when the 59-year old Mrs. Hastings took an interest in British politics later that year, speaking at Trafalgar Square on the recent Munich crisis, and publishing a four-page journal, *The Democrat*, from the 94 Ladbroke Grove address, this encouraged Mrs. Davey and her friends to have the F.M.B. audited.

Another visit from Miss Debenham precipitated a long letter from Mrs. Hastings presenting her position. "The situation resolves itself into something like this: 1. None of you apparently can comprehend or believe that a person can do anything for nothing: that is, nothing of the vulgar sort, a reward in money or notoriety, or both. 2. You were all at first unwarily enchanted to find someone capable of lifting the stigma from you as followers of Theosophy. 3. You became subconsciously or even consciously annoyed

at its being done by an outsider.

“4. Nos. 1 and 3 *linked*. And No. 1 grew and dominated and gave you vulgar ground for attacks on me, but yet, you wanted me to go on and finish. This, fortified by your own superficial interpretation of reincarnation and karma in which I have stated I do not concur; for, seeing that I have not even *that* as a hope or a fear — what can be my motives in undertaking this defence of Madame Blavatsky? Nothing is left for you to think but that I *must* be aiming at money and notoriety or both. To the latter, reply is needless for me. I have almost always written anonymously and I have nothing to gain but something to risk by being identified, however erroneously, with the T.S.

“So — 5: You get together and decide to ‘put me on the stand.’ I am not going to retail what I have done. The public part of it is there for everyone to see. The private part you may reflect on if you choose by rereading my letters to you all — right from the beginning with my reply to Barker’s letter to me about the Hare book, which started me along the path where I have had shock after shock at the extraordinary, incredible selfishness, greed and cruelty of Theosophists.”¹³

The audited accounts of the Friends of Madame Blavatsky, as published in the May 15, 1939 issue of *The Canadian Theosophist*, showed that the group actually owed Mrs. Hastings some 20 pounds that she had put out of pocket. After this debacle her correspondence with the London Theosophists ends. But she was not given up on entirely. H.N. Stokes, editor of the *Critic*, wrote her on Oct. 17: “It is a long time since I have heard anything from you and as I do not know what your intentions are, it has been impossible for me to make any reference to your work in recent issues of the *Critic*. Perhaps you have given it up entirely to go into war activities for which I would not in the least blame you. At the same time I should like very much to know just how matters stand as I want to give you what support I can and do not want to be considered forgetful when I do not give information which I do not possess.” A.E.S. Smythe, Editor of *The Canadian Theosophist*, wrote her similarly on Oct. 21: “I am rather alarmed about not hearing from you, if you have not the energy or interest of a postcard to give us something to keep your name and cause before our readers.”

She replied to Stokes on November 9: “I am doing nothing. There is nothing to do. With hundreds of the first two vols. on my hands, a third is not a business proposition anyway. It would cost at least a hundred pounds to print (more; since the war, paper has gone up 50%, labour too gone up). Further, I shall never again work for nothing. People don’t appreciate it and of course that’s the old newspaper truth. I only carried on because I was wildly enthusiastic. Shock after shock has cured me of that.” A longer letter in a toned-down vein was sent to the Editor of *The Canadian Theosophist* two days later and was printed on the front page of the Dec. 15, 1939 issue. “At present, I am doing nothing but hold on and wait ... The first work for the F.M.B. is to get the books I have written distributed so that people can read them, then we can talk about more.”

A further letter of hers was published in the Oct. 15, 1940 issue, correcting some statements of P.G. Bowen on the work of the F.M.B. In 1943 the rough manuscript of her proposed volume III of the Defence series was sent to Smythe to print serially. “My only stipulation,” she told him, “is that nothing must be altered, omitted or added in the text of my book.”¹⁴ Mrs. Hastings’ “critical analysis of the book *A Modern Priestess of Isis* ran through eight monthly instalments in *The Canadian Theosophist*, from July 15, 1943 to Feb. 15, 1944, filling some 64 pages as “Solovyoff’s Fraud.”

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Vsevolod Sergeevich Solovyov's 1895 book, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, was probably the most damaging portrayal of Mme. Blavatsky to be published in English in the decade after her death. This Russian writer had met her briefly in Paris in 1884 on her European visit, and again in 1885 after her return to the continent. Solovyov (1849-1903), who specialized in historical novels on Russian themes, is now totally forgotten, obscured by his better known brother, the philosopher Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov (1853-1900).

A Modern Priestess of Isis (Sovremennaiia Zhritsa Izidy), Vsevolod Sergeevich's only work translated into English, initially appeared as eight articles in the 1892 *Russian Messenger* (Russki Vestnik), and was published in book form in St. Petersburg the next year. It was written, the author says, to counteract (and capitalize) on the interest generated by a long biographical sketch from H.P.B.'s sister, Vera Zhelihovsky, in the *Russian Review* (Russkoye Obozreniye) in 1891, which, translated, appeared in *Lucifer* Nov. 1894 to April 1895.

As "abridged and translated on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research" by Walter Leaf, the edition put out by Longmans, Green and Company, London, in 1895, is a complex document. Chapters I to XXV are a rambling account of Solovyov's European encounter with Madame Blavatsky, replete with their conversations from a decade before, and culminating in her long letter to him titled "My Confession." Chapter XXVI to XXIX attempt to recount the origin of the Theosophical Society based on H.P.B.'s letters from New York to the Russian editor, A.N. Aksakov. An abstract of Mme. Zhelihovsky's reply, "H.P. Blavatsky and a Modern Priest of Truth," forms a 35-page Appendix A; this is followed with Solovyov's rejoinder in 31 pages as Appendix B. As if this is not enough, a further assault is made in an Appendix C by William Emmette Coleman, one of H.P.B.'s most virulent critics, claiming plagiarism as the "Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings."

Solovyov, who was in Paris in the spring of 1884 gathering material at the Bibliotheque Nationale for a novel, heard of H.P.B.'s arrival in the Paris press which was full of the sparkling receptions held for her by the Duchesse de Pomar in the Faubourg St. Germain. At the time, she was known to him only for her Russian writings, the popular series, *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, under her pen-name of "RaddaBai". He gained an introduction, and according to his letters in Mme. Zhelihovsky's appendix, pestered Mme. Blavatsky to be put on the path of occultism. He was rewarded by an astral visitation by Mahatma M., which he later credited to a case of bad nerves, and after which, H.P.B. says, "having had a good look at him Master would have nothing more to do with him."¹⁵

Although he later claimed that he was playing the role of the docile inquirer, Solovyov's name appears in a number of letters to the press testifying to the validity of Theosophical phenomena. The publication of Richard Hodgson's damning report of H.P.B. in the December 1885 *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, and the attendant ridicule it brought to the adherents of Theosophy, must have caused him to reconsider his position, for his attitude toward her radically changed.

"Solovyov has turned against me like a mad dog," H.P.B. informed the President of the London Lodge, A.P. Sinnett, early in February, 1886.¹⁶ Her aunt, Mme. de Fadeyev, had found out that his "wife" who had accompanied him was actually "his unmarried sister-in-law, his other wife's sister, that he seduced when she was only thirteen"¹⁷ and had written to Vera that this "wife" was "no fit company for her daughters." Vera showed this letter to Solovyov who in turn responded with one threatening H.P.B. with the news that General Blavatsky, her first husband, "whom you (H.P.B.) have prematurely buried," was still alive, making her a bigamist.

H.P.B.'s reply, headed "My Confession", is the highpoint of his narrative. While Vera Zhelihovsky has charged him with manipulating certain passages in this letter it can be regarded on the whole, even in translation, as a representation of Mme. Blavatsky's feelings. Her statement begins with an allegory, a fragment of which she quotes in a letter to Sinnett on Feb. 7, 1886: "Did you ever picture to yourself an innocent, harmless boar, who asked only to be left quietly to live in his forest, who had never hurt a man, and against whom a pack of hounds is let loose to turn out of that wood and tear him to pieces?"¹⁸ One by one the wild animals who were his friends join his attackers, and when the boar sees his beloved forest on fire and beyond saving, he turns on the pack, and then "woe to the latter."

"I will snatch the weapon from my enemies' hands and write a book which will resound through all Europe and Asia," she replied to Solovyov. "In this book I shall simply say: In 1848, I, hating my husband, N.V. Blavatsky (it may have been wrong, but still such was the nature *God* gave me), left him, abandoned him — *a virgin* (I shall produce documents and a letter proving this; and he himself is not such a swine as to deny it). I loved one man deeply, but I loved occult science still more, believing in magic, enchantments, etc.... I will even take to lies, to the greatest of lies, which for that reason is the most likely of all to be believed. I will say and publish it in the *Times* and in all the papers, that the 'Master' and Mahatma 'K. H.' are only the product of my own imagination: that I invented them ... And to this I have been brought by YOU. You have been the last straw which has broken the camel's back under its intolerably heavy burden."¹⁹

Not much of a confession by any standard, but Solovyov manipulated fragments he translated into French for members of the Paris branch, making it seem much more damaging. Although he had the audacity to write her back, "If you compare yourself to a wild boar, and want to bite, very well, the traps are laid,"²⁰ he did nothing, but waited until she was dead and truly powerless, and then he struck. His explanation that he was only correcting the false impression given by Mme. Zhelihovsky's 1891 review of her sister's life, is flawed, for she had also issued a far more important sketch, "The Truth About Mme. Blavatsky", for the St. Petersburg journal *Rebus*, in 1883, which was issued as a pamphlet around the time of his initial break with the Theosophists.

Since much of his narrative and Mme. Blavatsky's admissions are reported in the form of their conversation, we have only Solovyov's word for much of what he gives, but when he attempts to reconstruct the events that led to the founding of the Theosophical Society based on some early letters of H.P.B.'s to Alexander Aksakov, his blunders can be checked. An example of his slanting evidence is shown on page 253 of the book where, after quoting a long letter from H.P.B. dated May 24, 1875, he gives as his own brief summation her motive for starting the Society: "Here, you see, is my trouble, tomorrow there will be nothing to eat. Something quite out of the way must be invented." Worked into his text these words, contrary to the events, leave the impression of being H.P.B.'s, and have been quoted with the complacency of subsequent biographers as if they were.

Mrs. Hastings' treatment of Solovyov's story remains, like her volume on Mme. Coulomb's pamphlet, the only study devoted solely to refuting the author's charges. Her handling is ingenious, and by sifting through the charges and countercharges that circulate in the pages of *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, she reconstructs what actually occurred — the "plain tale" verified by documents, dates and chronology, from Solovyov's "perverted tale" which belongs to fiction. Her *Defence* volume on Solovyov was initially advertised to follow one that dealt with the "Shrine" at Adyar and Hodgson's 1885 report on it, but she had come to believe that the demolition of Solovyov's account should take precedence. Unlike Hodgson's Report, for which the Society for Psychical Research had repeatedly disclaimed responsibility, this book carried a prefatory note by the Founder-President, Henry Sidgwick, who was

“authorized by the Council of the Society for Psychical Research to state formally on their behalf that the present translation of Mr. Solovyov’s *A Modern Priestess of Isis* has been made and published with their approval.”²¹ Mr. Solovyov’s “entertaining narrative” would make “an Important supplement” to the S.P.R. Committee’s 1885 Report.

This crucial work was the last of her many writings that Beatrice Hastings saw through the press. The Dec. 15, 1943 number of *The Canadian Theosophist* carried a black-bordered notice on page 312 that she passed away peacefully on Oct. 30. She had suffered from ill-health for some time: a copy of Raphael’s *Ephemeris* in which she made marginal notes has next to the date of 8 Nov. 1941, “getting ill.”

The Jan. 15, 1944 issue of the *C.T.* contained an expanded notice of Mrs. Hastings’ death. According to the inquest, quoted from the *Worthing Gazette* of Oct. 31, 1943, “the coroner returned a verdict of suicide while the deceased was mentally unhinged.” Medical evidence was that the deceased must have suffered “considerable pain” for a long period of time, from the condition of the internal organs.

Miss Doris Lilian Green, who occasionally acted in a secretarial capacity for Mrs. Hastings, and who became the executrix of her estate, wrote me, correcting part of Smythe’s obituary, that “her passing was peaceful even if she hastened the end herself — *not* in the kitchen but in the room she used as a bed-sitting room. She took a pillow of eiderdown and seated herself comfortably on the floor and turned on the gas-fire tap. A Mrs. Nolan, who was attending her then, found her ... I don’t think she had cancer — tho’ she believed she had, and certainly did suffer acutely from the gastro-enteritis, or whatever it was.”²² One of her last tasks was to indicate that her library of books, pamphlets and typed papers that she had built up during her *Defence of Madame Blavatsky* campaign be sent to A. E.S. Smythe, and this was done after the War.

Beatrice Hastings brought a new impetus to the field of Theosophical research, and in the decades following her death, her insistence on thorough documentation proved a marked influence on other writers. K.F. Vania issued his 1951 study, *Madame H.P. Blavatsky, Her Occult Phenomena and the Society for Psychical Research*, as a fulfilment of her intention to deal with Hodgson’s 1885 Report. Mr. Vania referred to her as “my worthy and illustrious predecessor” in his preface, acknowledging that “her work has always been a fount of inspiration to the present writer.” A selection of her annotated books, pamphlets and unpublished notes on the Shrine Room at Adyar, was loaned for some years to Walter Carrithers, the author of *Obituary: “The Hodgson Report”* on Madame Blavatsky, 1963. He believes that “her work was probably as much inspiration as rationalization.”

Her work provides a sharp demarcation with the studies of the Blavatsky case that had preceded hers — William Kingsland’s 1927 analysis of the Hodgson Report, which he undertook for the Blavatsky Association; and Annie Besant’s 1907 summation of the testimony of the Theosophists in this case. While they approached the subject with “great reluctance and distaste,” as admitted by Kingsland, Mrs. Hastings entered on her work with a certain gusto. She tracked down as much of the original literature as possible, including old pamphlets and reports. Some came from the London bookseller, John Watkins: other volumes were loaned from William Kingsland’s library. She even made a special visit to R.A.V. Morris of Hove, Sussex, whom Barker had told her had “every magazine and book he can lay his hands on.” What she could not get, she had typed copies made.

She follows a line of action indicated by H.P.B. herself in a letter to Sinnett, where she says, “Show systematically the unheard of persecutions, conspiracies, even the mistakes made, and that will be our justification.”²³ As Mrs. Hastings informed one of her F.M.B. members, “We have to prove first, not that

the phenomena were occult, but that they *could not have been done in the fraudulent manner alleged*; and the Masters can at best only be taken for granted, as it were, as I take them myself in my writings, not insisting — until HPB herself is cleared, for she is their witness. The same applies to the other witnesses, Olcott, Damodar and others: we must clear them first. And we CAN!”²⁴

Mrs. Hastings must have hit the quiet London community of Theosophists, especially around A. Trevor Barker and the Hon. Iona Davey, like a meteorite. Described to me as a set of “crusty old Tories” by someone who knew this group, Mrs. Hastings’ bohemian attitude, her constant smoking Du Maurier’s red label cigarettes, and her other idiosyncrasies, would have inevitably proved a friction. There was also the physical and psychic pressures of the War, and the deteriorating condition of A. Trevor Barker. Mrs. Elsie Benjamin, secretary to Dr. de Purucker, leader of the Point Loma Theosophical Society, who came to England in 1937 and met Barker, the President of their English Section, wrote me that “all during that time Trevor was a very ill man, and his illness particularly taking the form of deep depression and excessive fatigue, which would be bound to colour his correspondence and outlook.”²⁵

In the end, Beatrice Hastings’ association with Theosophists proved fatal, for recent biographies, whether they be on members of the Paris art scene during the First War, or of London’s “literary underworld” as Virginia Woolf called them, use this connection to detract from her contribution. After admitting her influence on the artist Modigliani, his biographer, Pierre Sichel, dismisses her as having “ended with a crew of bogus amateur Theosophists who hung on her words.”²⁶ She was enough of a woman of the literary world to know this would happen but she continued on her Defence campaign. Early in her correspondence with A. Trevor Barker she wrote him, “I do this work because I wish to leave the record behind me... It will bring me neither kudos nor, probably money ... The literary world will think me a fool to spend my time on H.P.B. and several lukewarm enemies will become real ones ... As for Theosophists...after reading the stupid articles on the Hare book, I very much doubt whether the writers would indeed welcome an outsider who puts them all to shame from the only tribune that matters a damn in this case, the documentary.”²⁷

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1. Prospectus for The Friends of Madame Blavatsky, London, 1938.
 2. Hastings to Smythe, Dec. 5, 1936, Worthing, England. Archives of The Theosophical Society in Canada.
 3. P. Mairet, A. R. *Orage* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1936), p. 47.
 4. P. Sichel, *Modigliani* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1967), p. 264.
 5. Barker to Hastings, 6 July 1936, London. Hastings Collection, H.P.B. Lending Library, Vernon, British Columbia.
 6. W.L. Hare, *Occult Review*, London (April, 1924), p. 424.
 7. Barker to A.E.S. Smythe, June 22, 1937, published partially in *The Canadian Theosophist* (August 15, 1937), pp. 172-3.
 8. Hastings to Barker, Sept. 6, 1936, Worthing. Hastings Collection.
 9. Barker to Hastings, Sept. 29, 1936, London. Hastings Collection.
 10. Hastings to Iona Davey, Dec. 14, 1936, Worthing. Hastings Collection.
 11. Hastings, in *The Canadian Theosophist* (May 15, 1939), p. 87. “The Same Old Story.”

12. Note by Mrs. Hastings on the back of M. Debenham's postal card of July 25, 1938, announcing her visit the next day. Hastings Collection.
13. Hastings to Marjorie Debenham, Jan. 6, 1939, Worthing. Hastings Collection.
14. Hastings to A.E.S. Smythe, April 29, 1943, Worthing. Archives of The Theosophical Society in Canada.
15. H.P.B. to A.P. Sinnett (late Feb./early Mar., 1886, Wurzburg), Letter LXXIX, in *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett (LBS)*, p. 192.
16. H.P.B. to Sinnett, (early February, 1886), Letter LXXII, *LBS*, p. 175.
17. H.P.B. to Sinnett (Mar. 3, 1886), Letter LXXX, *LBS*, p. 192.
18. H.P.B. to Sinnett (Feb. 7, 1886), Letter LXXVI, *LBS*, p. 179.
19. H.P.B. to V.S. Solovyov (dated by Mrs. Hastings as "about Feb. 13, '86, or earlier, probably 8 or 9"), *A Modern Priestess of Isis (MPI)* London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1895; reprinted, New York; Arno Press, 1976, pp. 176-81.
A note on spelling: the translator of his book, and Mrs. Hastings, follow the old spelling, Solovyoff; I prefer an -iov ending as it gives the reader a better guide to pronunciation, but Cambridge University Press uses the more traditional Solovyov for the entry on his brother in *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, 2, 1985. I have decided to use the -yov ending. If the reader tries to follow up material on him there would probably be more under this spelling.
20. V.S. Solovyov to Blavatsky (Hastings' date: "about Feb. 13, '86"), *MPI*, p. 317.
21. Henry Sidgwick, *MPI*, p. iii.
22. Doris Lilian Green to myself, Sept. 1971. Mrs. Hastings' collection of books and pamphlets left to Smythe went to the H.P.B. Lending Library in British Columbia shortly before his death in 1947.
23. H.P.B. to Sinnett (after 13 April, 1886), Letter LX, *LBS*, p. 147.
24. Hastings to C.W.F. Bellgrove of Melbourne, Australia, March 30, 1938, Worthing. Hastings Collection.
25. Elsie Benjamin (nee Savage) to myself, 7 April, 1971, Worthing, England.
26. P. Sichel, Modigliani, p. 305.
27. Hastings to Barker, Nov. 17, 1936, Worthing. Hastings Collection.

SOLOVYOFF'S FRAUD

*Being a critical analysis of the book "A Modern Priestess of Isis"
translated from the Russian of Vsevolod S. Solovyoff by Walter Leaf.*

By BEATRICE HASTINGS

NOTE

Perhaps the most difficult task for a critic would be to analyze a semi-auto-biographical book by a man who had been born sane and become a lunatic; and next, a book by a man who deliberately did what the lunatic would do unconsciously, namely, juggle with a mixture of truth and falsehood. At first sight, the thing reads true, being connected with real persons places and circumstances; one may feel that there are gaps, but only close examination by the light of some related evidence will reveal the gaps and, also, the flimsy stuff used to hide them. The new evidence is usually some suppressed document, and then dates come into play and presently the whole thing falls to pieces. The position of a person accused by one of these juggling scoundrels must be hopeless unless the person happens to possess, or to come into possession of, vital documents and can pull the charge up on dates. Time and freedom to search are the necessary factors — and our "expeditious" legal justice must have expedited many an innocent under the gallows who might have cleared himself if given the time. Circumstantial evidence should condemn no-one.

In the case of Madame Blavatsky, accused by Solovyoff, the documents proving Solovyoff a liar and so debased that he was willing to accuse himself falsely of feigning sympathy during nearly two years in order to trap and destroy morally a friend — the documents were in existence and were preserved, to be produced and to clarify the Plain Tale. He thought himself safe when he wrote his book. Madame Jelihovsky, the sister of H.P.B., had burned all, as she fancied, of H.P.B.'s Russian correspondence. But Madame Blavatsky had sent to Colonel Olcott part of her correspondence with Solovyoff, and Olcott produced these letters when Mme. J. entered into a fight with Solovyoff for her sister's memory. The letters are conclusive in substance, tone and date.

They show Solovyoff as an ambitious aspirant to occult knowledge and powers, ready to believe himself fitted to lead the Society along with H.P.B., if only she would trust him, despising all the other Theosophists; and a lively chapter might be written on his jealousy of Olcott, Sinnett, Hartmann and anyone who seemed to enjoy Madame Blavatsky's confidence. His fury at being rejected is at the bottom of his book, a personal disappointment exasperated by the fear that men like Richet and Myers might be smiling at his defeat since they knew that he had actually sent in his resignation to the S.P.R. and championed Blavatsky. Richet and Myers, however, had themselves something to cover up in this respect, especially Myers, and they received back with open arms their companion in misadventure, accepting from him what was their own excuse for visiting Madame Blavatsky, namely, scientific duty to research even when one suspects imposture. I say "excuse", for they ran away with such a scurry as to measure very perfectly their primitive interest, even enthusiasm. Professor Richet visited Madame Blavatsky four times in the spring, 1884, and so late as Oct. 8th, 1885, and after the S. P. R. had published Hodgson's first report in July, he was still open to conviction. Such an attitude is, of course,

commendable; where Richet failed was in accepting finally what was nothing but a police report in place of a scientific investigation. The neurotic Solovyoff came in as a handy *paratonnerre* for these men of wide reputation and no doubt their coddling flattery sent him far along the road where he ends for posterity as a criminal liar and traitor, even to himself.

It soon becomes clear to the critic that there are really two books in this book: one, Solovyoff's first true impressions, and the other, falsehoods worked in later to condemn Madame Blavatsky. I should judge that he wrote the book originally some time during his frequentation of her and meant it to be — *Ye Historie and Magnification of Saint Solovyoff, Mystic and Occultist*. The magnification having failed to come off, he turned the book into a denunciation of Madame Blavatsky and himself into a scientific researcher and a saviour of Christian Russia from the "miasmatic exhalations" of Theosophy.

I cannot here undertake to reproduce all the data I have gathered to refute the misstatements and lies in Solovyoff's book; my margins are marked from cover to cover and a volume twice this size would scarcely suffice to deal with the matter in detail. I propose, therefore, to take the chapters in order and make from them two books, one "The Plain Tale" and the second, "The Plain Tale as Perverted by Solovyoff." I will examine them at length or briefly according to their importance. In a prefatory note to the book, Professor Henry Sidgwick of the S.P.R. writes: "When the contents of Mr. Solovyoff's book became known to the Council, it seemed clear that certain portions of it — especially the accounts of the events at Wurzburg described in chaps. xviii-xx . . . constituted an important supplement to the statement of the results of an inquiry into 'Theosophical phenomena' carried out by a Committee of the Society in 1884. Our original idea was to publish a translation of these portions in the supplement to our *Proceedings*: but on further consideration it seemed to us clearly desirable, if possible that the greater part of Mr. Solovyoff's entertaining narrative should be made accessible to English readers."

We all, all who believe that justice is more than a word, are indebted to the S.P.R. for making the book accessible, although one might be excused from sharing the frivolous glee of Sidgwick the medium-hunter at adding yet another victim to his list. It happens that the chapters noted by the learned Professor are just those that suit me entirely and I shall spend some space on them, offering in advance to the present members of the S.P.R. my — condolences.

THE PLAIN TALE

As told by Solovyoff himself, by letters and documents, all being printed in his book, "A Modern Priestess of Isis," translated by Walter Leaf on behalf of The Society for Psychical Research and published by Longmans, 1895.

CHAPTER I.

"In May 1884, I was living in Paris, and planning some works, belletristic or otherwise, which should touch on certain little-known subjects; on the rare, but in my opinion real, manifestations of the imperfectly investigated spiritual powers of man. I was occupied, among other things, with mystic and so-called 'occultist' literature.

"As I was going through my notes from the Bibliotheque Nationale, there came into my mind the very interesting narratives of Radda Bai, in other words of Madame Blavatsky, published in the *Russky Vyestnik* under the title of *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, which had been read with so much interest in Russia. The subject of my studies was closely connected with the essential motive of these narratives.

“Should I not make up my mind in earnest?” I thought. ‘Should I not start for India, to see our wonderful country woman, Madame Blavatsky, and convince myself in person as to how far the marvels of which she speaks are in accordance with fact?’

“Just at this time a friend showed me a copy of the *Matin*, and there, among the news of the day, was an announcement that the famous foundress of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, was in Europe; that a day or two before she had arrived in Paris from Nice; that she had settled in Rue Notre Dame des Champs, and would there receive anyone who was interested in the theosophical movement that she had set on foot.” (p. 10.)

“I immediately wrote to St. Petersburg to Mr. P., who, I knew, was in correspondence with Madame Blavatsky. I begged him to acquaint her at once with the fact that a certain resident in Paris would like to make her acquaintance, but would not do so until he had first received her consent.

“A few days after, much sooner than I could have expected, I received an answer from St. Petersburg, informing me that H. P. Blavatsky expected me and would receive me whenever I liked.

“It was not without some emotion that I went to the Rue Notre Dame des Champs, selecting an hour that I thought would be the most suitable, not too early and not very late. During the time while I was awaiting my reply from St. Petersburg, I had quite electrified myself with the idea of the interesting acquaintance that I was about to make.

“Though I had not in my possession the *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan* I remembered it from beginning to end, and felt all the fascination of this skilful narrative, that combines realism with the most wonderful mystery . .

“The coachman stopped at the number I had told him . . In answer to my inquiry the concierge showed me the way . . A figure in an Oriental turban admitted me To my question, whether Madame Blavatsky would receive me, the figure replied with an ‘Entrez, monsieur’, and vanished with my card . . .

“The door opened, and she was before me; a rather tall woman, though she produced the impression of being short, on account of her unusual stoutness. Her great head seemed all the greater from her thick and very bright hair, touched with a scarcely perceptible grey, and very slightly frizzed, by nature, and not by art, as I subsequently convinced myself.

“At the first moment, her plain old earthy-coloured face struck me as repulsive; but she fixed on me the gaze of her great . . eyes, and in these wonderful eyes, with their hidden power, all the rest was forgotten.

“I remarked however that she was very strangely dressed in a sort of black sacque ..

“She received me so simply, affectionately and kindly, it was so pleasant to me to hear her Russian talk that . .

“At the end of a quarter of an hour, I was talking to, Helena Petrovna as though she were an old friend, and all her homely coarse appearance actually began to please me. And her eyes gazed at me so graciously, and at the same time pierced me so attentively.

“I explained to her that it was not mere idle curiosity that had brought me to her; that I was busied with mystic and occult literature, and had come for an answer to many questions of the greatest seriousness and importance to myself.

“‘Whatever it was that brought you to me’, she said. ‘I am exceedingly glad to make your acquaintance — you see I am a Russian — and if you come on serious matters besides, you may be sure that I shall be entirely at your service. Where I can, I will help you with delight.’

“As she spoke, she laughed a good-humoured kindly laugh.

“‘You will have to begin at the A B C, Helena Petrovna. All I know about yourself and your society is what you have yourself published in the *Russky Vvestnik*.’

“‘Well, my little father,’ she went on, since that day, “much water has flowed down”. At that time, our society was scarcely hatched from its egg; but now!’

“Then she began eagerly to tell me of the successes of the theosophical movement in America and India, and, in the immediate past, in Europe as well.

“‘Are you here for long?’ I asked.

“‘I do not know myself yet; the master sent me.’

“‘What master?’

“‘My master, the teacher, my Guru; you may call him Gulab Lal Singh, from the *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*.’

“I remembered this Gulab Lal Singh in every detail; the mysterious being . . . a being who had attained the highest degree of human knowledge and produced the most marvellous phenomena

“Helena Petrovna spoke of this master of hers with entire simplicity, as though of a most ordinary phenomenon

“‘Helena Petrovna’, I said, ‘listen to me, and if you have the power of gazing into a man and seeing him as he really is, you may convince yourself how far my words are serious. I come to you in all honesty, without any mental reservations, with a great spiritual problem; I come to you to obtain the fulfilment of what you promise, of the allurements you hold out in your *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*. If you can answer this my spiritual question seriously, promise me to do so; if you cannot, or will not, it shall be all the same, we will remain friends, as fellow-countrymen and brothers of the pen’ . . .

“She did not answer me at once, but gazed into my eyes enigmatically and long with her bright magnetic gaze, and then solemnly said, ‘I can’, and stretched me out her hand . . .

“‘Now my good fellow-countryman . . . Listen.’

“She made a sort of flourish with her hand, raised it upwards, and suddenly I heard, distinctly, quite distinctly, somewhere above our heads, near the ceiling, a very melodious sound like a little silver bell or an Eolian harp.

“‘What is the meaning of this?’ I asked.

“‘This means only that my master is here, although you and I cannot see him. He tells me . . . that I am to do for you whatever I can.’ . . .

“She looked me straight in the eyes, and caressed me with her glance and her kindly smile. ‘So there, sir.’

“Involuntarily I liked her more and more. I was attracted to her by a feeling of instantaneous sympathy . . .

“‘Do you speak English?’ she asked me.

“‘Unfortunately, no. I once took lessons in the language, but now I have almost forgotten it.’

“‘What a pity! Well, we must get on without it somehow, and you can set about learning it.’

“‘Yes, certainly.’ . . .

“‘Stay, I will introduce you at once to Mohini, a young Brahmin who has come here with me,’ said Helena Petrovna. ‘He is a *chela*, a disciple of another Mahatma . . . an ascetic sage like my master, but much more communicative’.

“‘Mohini,’ she cried; and in a moment, the door of the next room opened, and gave admission to a rather strange young man. From his appearance he seemed to be not more than twenty-five to twenty-seven years of age. His figure, that was narrow-shouldered and not tall, was clad in a cashmere cassock; his thick blue-black wavy hair fell to his shoulders. The upper part of his bronze face was strikingly handsome—a wise forehead, not very high, straighteyebrows, not too thick, and most magnificent [*sic*] velvety eyes with a deep and velvety expression . . .

“Madame Blavatsky raised her hand, and Mohini bowed himself to the earth . . . as though to receive her blessing. She laid her hand upon his head, he raised himself and bowed to me with the greatest courtesy” . . . (p. 11 et seq.)

[Madame Blavatsky explains that CHELAS never shake hands. Solovyoff leaves Mohini standing “looking now at me and now at Helena Petrovna”. . . Presumably, Mohini retired, for a lengthy conversation goes on in Russian, Madame Blavatsky explaining to Solovyoff the aims and ideals of the Theosophical Society. “First of all you must know that the aim of our universal brotherhood is perfectly devoid of any political character, and that the society in no way interferes with the religious or other convictions of its members. Our problems are purely scientific, we bring back from darkness and oblivion the mighty and ancient doctrines of the East”.]

“ . . . and from her words it appeared to be a really beneficent and intensely interesting institution. The

inexhaustible treasure of ancient doctrines, hitherto jealously guarded in the mysterious sanctuaries of India by the sage Raj-Yogis, and completely unknown to the civilized world, was now, thanks to her communications with the Mahatmas and their confidence in her, being revealed to Europeans. The world was to be renovated by the true knowledge of the forces of nature". . .

"I had remained too long already, and so took my leave.

"Now you will come again? When?"

"When you command me.'

"Then I command you to come back every day if you like. Make the most of me while I am here, you will never be in my way; if I want to work, I will tell you so, I shall not stand upon ceremony. Come and see me tomorrow.'

"Tomorrow is impossible, but I will come the day after, with your permission.'

"Come rather earlier', she called out to me, when I was already in the lobby and Babula was opening the door on to the staircase.

"I went home with a somewhat confused impression . . .

"How came it that this old ill-favoured woman had such a power of attraction? . . . I felt one thing: that I was drawn to her, that I was interested in her, and that I should look forward with impatience to the hour when I should see her again . . . Madame Blavatsky appeared as the one fresh and living interest in this lonely life." (P. 18 et seq.)

CHAPTER III.

(Chapter II belonging to the PervertedTale.)

"In two days I did in fact go to see Helena Petrovna, and at her request, a good deal earlier, that is to say between eleven and twelve . . .

"Welcome, welcome,' — she rose a little to meet me and held out her hand; 'please take a chair and come and sit here a little nearer. I am amusing myself with a little patience, it is my favourite occupation.'

[Note: This is the one and only instance I have found of Madame playing patience in the morning. Actually, at this period, she was busy with the French translation of "Isis Unveiled", a colossal task, and unlikely to be playing patience. However, let the account pass as not, at least, reflecting on her integrity. B.H.]

"I felt as though from this Indian miracle-worker, in this Rue Notre Dame des Champs, there came a fragrant atmosphere of an old-fashioned Russian country-house. This American Buddhist, who had been away from Russia . . . among unknown people, was an incarnation of the type of the old-time Russian country-lady of moderate means, grown stout . . . Her every movement, her every gesture and word were full of the true "Russian spirit" . . . I quite expected the door to open and some such housekeeper as Matrena Spiridonovna to come in for her mistress's orders. The door did open; but in came . . . Babula.

“He gave Helena Petrovna a letter in silence. She asked me to excuse her, opened it and glanced through it, and I could see by her face that she was pleased. She even forgot her patience, and carelessly mixed up the cards. She began to talk about her “universal brotherhood” and captivated me by her account of the interesting materials accessible to members of the “society” who wished to acquaint themselves with the most ancient literary monuments of the East, hitherto unseen by European eyes . . . She exclaimed, “My God, what wonderful, what amazing subjects for a novelist or a poet! It is an inexhaustible spring! If I were to show you ever so little of this treasure, your eyes would start out of your head, you would clutch at it.”

“And is it impossible thus to clutch at it?” I asked.

“For you, it is impossible; you are a European, and the Hindus, even the most advanced, the wisest, cannot make up their minds to trust the Europeans.”

“In that case, what becomes of the ‘universal brotherhood’?”

“The brotherhood is founded precisely in order to do away with this want of confidence; the members of the Theosophical Society cannot mistrust one another; they are all brothers, to whatever religion and race they belong. Of course, all will be opened to you, all our materials, if you become a theosophist’.

[Note: Again, highly unlikely; there are many records of Madame Blavatsky’s method of trying the sincerity of applicants by putting difficulties in their way, but I only know of another instance where she is said to have “fished” for a member, and the member being Madame Coulomb, the testimony is not conspicuously favourable to confirmation of Solovyoff’s assertions.]

“Whether I shall ever become a theosophist I do not know; for in order to make up my mind to it, it is essential that I should learn myself in my own person, just what it is that you mean by this wide and lofty name; but as your society is nothing secret, and as it is neither religious in any sectarian sense, nor political, but purely scientific and literary, I do not see why I should not become a member, when you have explained its constitution.’

“. . . She took up a printed copy of the Rules of the Theosophical Society lying on the table; and I went through it with her from the first word to the last. From these rules, I could not but assure myself that the society actually enjoined on its members not to interfere with the consciences of others, to respect the beliefs of their brethren, and not to touch on religion or politics. Every member was bound to strive for his own spiritual perfection, and all had to help one another, both spiritually, and as far as possible, materially. As for the scientific work of the society, there stood in the foreground the study of the Aryan and Oriental literatures, and the remains of ancient knowledge and belief, and also the investigation of the little-known laws of nature and the spiritual powers of man.

“Finding that there was nothing whatever in these rules which could be considered in any way prejudicial, I repeated that I was ready to join the society.” (pp. 23-27)

CHAPTER IV.

“The secretary of the Paris Theosophical Society was Madame Emilie de Morsier, a niece of the

well-known Swiss philosopher and theologian, Ernest Naville . . . At our first meetings we somehow felt a mutual antipathy; but subsequently, after Madame Blavatsky's departure, we drew together . . .

“Madame de Morsier had received from Madame a friendly missive and some dried rose petals—the “occult” gift and, so to speak, the benediction of Mahatma Koot Hoomi When Madame Blavatsky came to Paris . . . Madame de Morsier . . . became the most active and eager member of the Theosophical Society.

CHAPTER V.

“When I arrived two days later at the Rue Notre Dame des Champs, Helena Petrovna came to meet me and exclaimed: ‘Olcott has come. You shall see him at once.’

“And I saw the colonel, Madame Blavatsky's trusty companion and fellow-labourer, the president of the Theosophical Society. His appearance produced on me at once a very favourable impression. He was a man of fully fifty years of age, of medium height, robust and broad, but not fat; from his energy and vivacity of movement, he looked anything but an old man, and showed every sign of strength and sound health. His face was handsome and pleasant and suited his bald head, and was framed in a full and perfectly silvered beard. He wore spectacles . . .

“From the first, he showed me the greatest friendliness and attention. He spoke French very tolerably, and when Helena Petrovna went away to write letters, he took me into his room . . . and began to talk about phenomena and Mahatmas.” (pp. 36-38)

[This may be so; but Solovyoff describes Olcott as talking without reserve to him, a complete stranger, and we have to note that Olcott never admitted having seen his Master, even to A. P. Sinnett, until after more than a year's close friendship.

Olcott's presence supplies a possible date. Solovyoff's narrative is hopelessly confused and almost dateless anywhere. Olcott came to Paris on May 18th for two days, then he returned to London and came back again on June 1st. Solovyoff represents him as being there continuously! The following paragraph, introducing Madame Blavatsky's relatives is also misleading:]

“I was sitting busy with some urgent work, when a note from Madame Blavatsky came to tell me that two of her relatives had arrived and wished to make my acquaintance Helena Petrovna was in such a bright happy mood that it was delightful . . . to see her . . . she plunged into the unforgotten and always loved atmosphere of her family and domestic reminiscences.

While we were alone together, she talked to me only about her dear guests, one of whom I shall call Miss X, the other Madame Y. Helena Petrovna was particularly attached to the elder of the two ladies, Miss X, . . . who was then president of the N. N. branch (T. S. Nijni Novgorod).

“Here you have the very best proof, a living proof,” said Helena Petrovna, “that there is nothing whatever in the work of the Theosophical Society that can hurt the conscience of a Christian. X is a most fiery and severe Christian, prejudices and all, and she is our honorary member and president at N.N.’ . . .

“With Madame Y, a middle-aged widow, Helena Petrovna . . . was on much less friendly terms; treating her rather patronizingly, *de haut en bas* . . . Still Madame Blavatsky was greatly pleased at her arrival . . . Her frankness of manner put us on an easy footing, and at the time I liked her . . . It is a matter of course that it was extremely interesting to me, out of more than mere curiosity, to make out the attitude of these two near relatives of Madame Blavatsky with respect to her work, the society, the Mahatmas and phenomena . . . From their wonderful stories I could only conclude that the life of their whole family simply teems with mysteries of all sorts. As for Helena Petrovna, various phenomena had occurred with her from her youth.” (pp. 39-42)

“Some days after the arrival of these ladies occurred ‘the phenomenon of the letter.’ Helena Petrovna had persuaded me to submit myself to a magnetic seance by Olcott, and I was to come for the purpose every two days at twelve o’clock. I came once and found several persons in the little drawing-room.”

[Account of this phenomenon. From the Private and Confidential Report of the Society for Psychical Research, Dec. 1884, p. This account, like so much else that tells heavily in favour of Madame Blavatsky, is omitted from the Second Report, Dec. 1885. As the account was copied into the First Report from “Light”, we may conclude that the Committee of the S. P. R. who were then investigating phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society were sufficiently impressed both by the phenomenon and the array of witnesses. The mystery of this First Report may never come to light, but evidently it was composed and probably in the press before Madame Coulomb produced the bundle of idiotic letters ascribed to Madame Blavatsky and asserted that she herself had been an accomplice in fraud. It looks as if the First Report had been in fact already set up in type and that no interference could be made in the arrangement of the Appendices, of which this account is Number Thirty Five; but, above many of the appendices we find remarks, apparently inserted late in the day, all tending to make it appear that the Committee had been from the first highly suspicious of the Theosophists and very wide awake. Some of these remarks pass all that Madame Coulomb herself ever said for sheer absurdity. I quote an instance that I gave in “New Universe”, No. 3, p. .

“Case 16. PROFESSOR SMITH’S ‘NO CHANCE’ LETTER. (Refer Vol. 2. “Defence of Madame Blavatsky”, p. 51.) Prof. Smith: ‘She then desired us to sit down and in so doing took my hands in both of hers. In a few seconds, a letter fell at my feet.’ (Quoted in First S. P. R. Report.)

“Committee’s remark: ‘There is the additional possibility in this case that Madame Blavatsky may have thrown it.’

“Even if she had only thrown it with her disengaged feet without the Professor seeing her, that would have added SOMETHING to her title to permanent remembrance.”
The S.P.R. adjudged H.P.B. a title to permanent remembrance as an impostor. As I write elsewhere the remembrance will be permanent, but not on those grounds.]

(From LIGHT of July 12th, 1884. Quoted in the First Report.)

OCCULT PHENOMENA AT PARIS

“The undersigned attest the following phenomenon. On the morning of the 11th of June, instant, we were

present in the reception-room of the Theosophical Society at Paris, 46, Rue Notre Dame des Champs, when a letter was delivered by a postman. The door of the room in which we were sitting was open so that we could see into the hall; and the servant who answered the bell was seen to take the letter from the hands of the postman and bring it to us at once, placing it in the hands of Madame Jelihovsky, who threw it before her on the table around which we were sitting. The letter was addressed to a lady, a relative of Madame Blavatsky, who was then visiting her, and came from another relative in Russia. There were present in the room Madame de Morsier, Secretary-General of the 'Société Théosophique d'Orient et d'Occident', M. Solovyoff, son of the distinguished Russian historian, an attache of the Imperial Court, himself well-known as a Writer; Colonel Olcott, Mr. W. Q. Judge, Mohini Babu, and several other persons. Madame Blavatsky was also sitting at the table. Madame Jelihovsky, upon her sister (Madame Blavatsky) remarking that she would like to know what was in the letter, asked her, on the spur of the moment, to read its contents before the seal was broken since she professed to be able to do so.

“Thus challenged, Madame Blavatsky at once took up the closed letter, held it against her forehead, and read aloud what she professed to be its contents. These alleged contents she further wrote down on a blank page of an old letter that lay on the table. Then she said that she would give those present, since her sister still laughed at and challenged her power, even a clearer, proof that she was able to exercise her psychic power *within* the closed envelope. Remarking that her own name occurred in the course of the letter, she said that she would underline this through the envelope in red crayon. In order to effect this (she wrote her name on the old letter in which the alleged copy of the contents of the sealed letter had been written), together with an interlaced double triangle or ‘Solomon’s Seal’, below the signature which she had copied as well as the body of the letter. This was done in spite of her sister remarking that the correspondent hardly ever signed her name in full when writing to relatives, and that in in [*sic*] this at least Madame Blavatsky would find herself mistaken. ‘Nevertheless’, she replied, ‘I will cause these two red marks to appear in the corresponding places within the letter.’

“She next laid the closed letter beside the open one upon the table, and placed her hand upon both, so as to make (as she said) a bridge along which a current of psychic force might pass. Then, *with her features settled into an expression of intense mental concentration*, she kept her hand quietly thus for a few moments, after which, tossing the closed letter across the table to her sister, she said, ‘Tiens! c’est fait. The experiment is successfully finished.’ Here it may be well to add, to show that the letter could not have been tampered with in transit — unless by a Government official — that the stamps were fixed on the flap of the envelope where a seal is usually placed.

“Upon the envelope being opened by the lady to whom it was addressed, it was found that Madame Blavatsky *had actually* written out its contents; that her name was there; that she had underlined it in red, and as she had promised; and that the double triangle was reproduced below the writer’s signature, which was in full, as Madame Blavatsky had described it.

“Another fact of exceptional interest we noted. A *slight* defect in the formation of one of the interlaced triangles as drawn by Madame Blavatsky had been faithfully reproduced within the *closed letter*.

“This experiment was doubly valuable, as at once an illustration of clairvoyant perception, by which Madame Blavatsky correctly read the contents of a sealed letter, and of the phenomenon of precipitation, or the deposit of pigmentary matter in the form of figures and lines previously drawn by the operator in the presence of the observers.

Signed Vera Jelihovsky.
Vsevolod Solovyoff.
Nadejda A. Fadeeff.
Emilie de Morsier.
William Q. Judge.
H. S. Olcott.
Paris, 21st June, 1884.”

The Committee’s remark on this is that the letter “may really have been delivered to the servant by an earlier post, thus giving time for it to be tampered with”. In view of this brilliant hypothesis, Solovyoff’s own account in his book will be the more interesting. He says, p.43: “I sat so that I could see Babula open the door, take a letter, come into the room and lay it on the table . . . The letter was not only gummed in a stout opaque envelope, but the postage stamp was affixed in the place of the seal”.

[Readers who are aware that Solovyoff’s book was written to prove Madame Blavatsky an impostor, may wonder how he came to print such a complete rebuttal of the S.P.R. hypothesis. The fact is that he had been in such a hurry to announce to the world his faith in Madame Blavatsky that he had rushed off a letter to the Russian journal, “Rebus”, and his own private account had been published over his signature on July 1st, 1884, eleven days before the article appeared in “Light”. He could not well deny that he had seen Babula take the letter from the postman.]

CHAPTER VI.

[Solovyoff describes a meeting and conversation with Madame “Y” (Jelihovsky) in the Parc Monceau, Paris. This belongs to the Perverted Tale.]

CHAPTER VII.

“It was at this time my lot to see more of Madame Y [Jelihovsky, the widowed sister of H.P.B.] than even of Madame Blavatsky. We used to stroll about Paris together . . . in the charming little Parc Monceau, we sat for about an hour . . . and Madame Y showed me so much sympathy that I was deeply touched. At last she said: ‘But to show you that my feeling for you is more than empty words, I will speak to you on some matters about which I certainly would not open my mouth to any one who was indifferent to me. I have been thinking a great deal about you lately; I fancy you are being too much carried away by the Theosophical Society, and I am afraid that this influence may act upon you injuriously and sadly in every way.’

“‘I heartily thank you for your sympathy’, I said, ‘but do not think I am a man who is so easily carried away as you fancy. No doubt I am greatly interested in the Theosophical Society — it cannot be otherwise — you see, I have already told you that mystical and occult matters of every sort form at present the object of my studies. How can there be anything prejudicial, to me in them? Or are you afraid of my turning Buddhist, under the influence of Olcott and Mohini? You may make yourself perfectly easy on that point.’”

[The rest of the conversation cannot be included in this “plain tale”, except one sentence where Solovyoff makes Madame J. say that she and her sister had little in common. Madame J. was then, and remained, orthodox. She performed the somersault frequently exhibited by the orthodox, even today: she could believe and disbelieve in occult

phenomena, arranging with herself to say that if the phenomena were real, which she could not doubt, they must be of the Evil One. In later years, she apologized handsomely enough for ever doubting her sister, but while at Paris, she seems constantly to have challenged, and almost sneered at, the marvels — the which attitude accounts partly for Madame Blavatsky's "de haut en bas" treatment of her; a second factor was a certain curious jealousy on the part of Madame Vera Jelihovsky of H.P.B.'s beloved aunt, the "Miss X" of Solovyoff's yarn. H.P.B. and this aunt were about the same age and had been reared together and, despite profound differences of religious opinion, they remained devoted. The sister, Vera, was from infancy only a third party and a much younger party, and she resented this inferiority and, when grown up, tried to patronize H.P.B. A hopeless effort at self-assertion! The elder sister could scarcely be patronized and so Vera fell woefully into moralizing confidences with the fascinated Solovyoff. She paid heavily for this. Solovyoff resisted all admonition until it suited his purpose to USE VERA HERSELF as a weapon against H.P.B. Madame Jelihovsky repudiated most of the words that Solovyoff put in her mouth in the Parc Monceau and finally, in a reply she made to his book, drove Solovyoff into such a corner that he himself was forced to produce a letter she had written to him which is so near the wording of the alleged conversation that it looks as if Solovyoff simply took this "conversation" from the letter. Nevertheless, it is clear that Madame J. said to Solovyoff a good deal that she would not have said except on the double supposition that she was really concerned lest he should forsake his religion and that she was speaking to a gentleman. Solovyoff states that Vera expressed severe disapproval of the indulgence of their aunt towards Helena Petrovna — and this is more than likely. In the end, the two sisters compared notes and become better friends than ever was previously possible.]

"So far as concerned this new theosophy and its literature, I had as yet learned nothing [he could neither speak nor read English and the French translation of *Isis Unveiled* was not yet available]; in other words, I was bound to acquaint myself with this literature and doctrine, and to make out clearly what there was in it that was new, and what was drawn from sources already known to me.

"For instance, I, like the rest of the Paris Theosophists, was much occupied with the question of Karma and Nirvana, as set out by Olcott, Mohini and Madame Blavatsky. And this was not the only thing. There was a great deal that was interesting." (p. 62.)

"Helena Petrovna declared that there would be no more phenomena, and that she felt too weak to afford the considerable expenditure of vital force required for these manifestations. From time to time she treated us, though even this very rarely, to the sounds of her silver bell. Sometimes these sounds reached us as though from a distance; they issued from the end of the passage where her room was . . . When the sound of the bell was heard at the end of the passage, Madame Blavatsky jumped up, saying, 'The master is calling,' and went off to her room.

"She showed us also, more than once, another small [*sic*] phenomenon. At some quite considerable distance from a table or mirror she would shake her hand, as though she were sprinkling some liquid off it; and thereupon would be heard from the surface of the table or mirror sharp and perfectly distinct raps. In reply to my question what this was, she could give me no sort of explanation, except that she wished the raps to come and they came. 'Try to exert your will,' she said, 'and perhaps you will get them too.'

“I exerted my will with all my force, but nothing happened with me. And yet, when she laid her hands on my shoulder, and I shook my hand, precisely the same raps came on the table and the mirror as with her.

Twice in my presence there occurred another similar manifestation; more or less loud raps began to be heard all around her, such as are familiar to anyone who has been at a spiritual séance. ‘Listen. The “shells” are amusing themselves’ she said. The raps increased and began to spread. ‘Hush, you rascals,’ she cried, and all was instantly still.” (pp. 65-7)

Notwithstanding that he is thus constrained to testify even eight years later to exhibitions of a power he could not understand—nor, to this day has all the multitude of “researchers” discovered the secret of these raps that are heard in many a seance Solovyoff states that he was already suspicious. Maybe he was; most people do suspect what they cannot explain by the school curriculum. But maybe he was not, and merely found, as so many did, that Madame Blavatsky could be teased by a pretence of incredulity into performing some phenomenon. Also, she could be thus teased into playing what she called “psychological tricks” on impertinent people. But these “tricks” were really feats, mesmeric operations that had demanded a long training. Olcott gives many instances of these feats, and calls them by the Indian word *mayas*, illusions of the senses. It is more than likely that she tried her hand on the conceit and assurance of Solovyoff. However that may be, after the conversations with Madame Jelihovsky, he seems to have pestered H.P.B. for phenomena and at the same time affected now and again, slightly to doubt her powers; it must have been very slightly or she would have rent him and sent him packing. The whole of this plain tale proves that he believed profoundly in her powers and expected great things for himself. That she was irritated with his importunity is clear, and Madame J. states (p. 292) that her diary shows that he besieged Madame Blavatsky for private seances and with requests to be admitted to her knowledge of phenomena. He may even have written such requests for he quotes from a note from her (p. 72):

“I can do nothing in the way of phenomena, and I am so sick of them. Do not talk about them.”

On the same page he quotes her as writing to him about his suspicion of Edouard the clairvoyant subject of the famous paris magnetizer, Robert:

“Dear Mr. Vsevolod Sergyeitch, You are the most incorrigible, not skeptic, but ‘suspecter’. Why, what has this Edouard done to you that you should imagine he simulates? But after all, what does it matter to me? Suspect *all* if you think good. It is the worse for you It is horrible to pass one’s life suspecting all and everyone. I am perfectly certain that you do not intend to express your suspicions of me before people. I at all events have never been a suspecter; and those whom I love, I love in earnest; but of them there are very few”.

[Whether the above is a correct translation may never be known. But, as I call Solovyoff Public Falsificator No. 1, I naturally attach no importance to any unsupported word he says or offers. The latter part of the above may have been written long after. Certainly at this period, Madame Blavatsky would not have tolerated any but the most ordinarily teasing expressions of suspicion, let alone any faintest hint of denouncing her to other people. She herself could never understand the mentality of the approver; the wretch who

suspects everyone and is ready to denounce for the love of it; she could only conclude that the approver had some personal spite against his victim, had “done something” to prompt a revenge. It took her a long time even to comprehend the general mentality of that period when it was considered esprit fort to doubt every psychical experience. Solovyoff had little indeed of this mentality, quite the contrary, but he soon learned the tone of the day in Paris and no doubt occasionally posed as a “suspecter”. Madame Blavatsky’s haughty treatment of even her own doubting sister indicates what luck Solovyoff would have had with any but the most innocuous “suspicions”. As a matter of fact, the “plain tale” proves that he had none at all, but was quite humbly sitting at the feet of the master.]

IX.

“Madame Blavatsky left for London, swearing me eternal friendship and giving me in charge to Madame de Morsier . . . I patiently read through the two bulky volumes of Madame Blavatsky’s *Isis Unveiled*, and this in a manuscript French translation, which Helena Petrovna had left with me, that I might consider if it would be possible to publish it with considerable abbreviations.

“On reading the first part of this work, while Madame Blavatsky was still in Paris, I happened to say to Madame Y: ‘It seems to me that *Isis Unveiled* is the most interesting of Helena Petrovna’s phenomena, and, perhaps, the most inexplicable’.” (pp. 69-70).

[Solovyoff was also having the first of a series of psychic experiences the which he is careful not to mention in his book, and that indicate him as a powerful “subject”. The letter below, unfortunately in extract only, was produced by Madame J.]

Paris, 48 Rue Pergolese.
July 19, 1884.

Dear Vera Petrovna, Your letter has given me the very greatest pleasure; and besides, I thought that you would not forget your promises As my pressing work is now done, and we have time to breathe, there is now plenty of room for gloomy thoughts. I must think of some fresh work . . . Raps and voices and all sorts of ‘uncanny’ things are getting the upper hand. For instance, an invisible voice says to A —: ‘See, there will be raps on the windowpane directly,’ and in a moment the raps begin . . . I almost constantly perceive breathings around me, and the presence of someone, to such a degree that it is growing loathsome . . . I have read the letters of Koot Hoomi, the Mahatma, and their contents please me much. I am reading the second part of *Isis*, and I am quite convinced that it is a phenomenon. (Appendix. p. 293.)

Letter to H. P. Blavatsky. (App. p. 287.)
Paris, Rue Pergolese,
August 18, 1884.

. . . *Alea jacta est* — my letter in the *Rebus* has already raised a considerable storm, and I am beginning to be over-whelmed with questions: ‘What? How? Can it be?’ . . . *Ma ligne de conduite est tracee* — and you must know it. I am not afraid of ridicule, I am indifferent to the titles of fool, madman, etc. But why do you renounce me? . . . I cannot think that any ‘master’ (Mahatma) has told you that you have made a mistake, and that I am not necessary to you.

Letter to H. P. Blavatsky. (App. p. 309) (Apparently first part of above letter).

Dear Helena Petrovna, I have not written to you because there has been trouble in the little house with the little garden. Now things are somewhat easier. Cruel Karma! . . . At a certain sorrowful moment, there was a clear and loud sound of a non-existent bell on the table, and a sudden thought of you came into my head and heart.

[Solovyoff nowhere mentions his companion in his book. The truth seems to be that he was then living with the sister of his wife and later married this sister-in-law. He introduced her to H.P.B. and all company, including the Sinnetts, the next year, as his wife; by that time, there was a child of the union. It may be imagined how singularly this omission of all reference to the lady affects his narrative. He thus leaves himself perfectly free in his alleged movements!]

“From London Madame Blavatsky went at the end of the summer to Elberfeld in Germany and wrote me thence: ‘Here I am, dead beat, but in the company of Olcott, Mohini, and some German theosophists. This is a charming little town and a charming family of theosophists; Mr. and Mrs. Gebhard, his three sons and a daughter-in-law, and nephews and nieces, nine in all. It is a huge splendid house. She is a disciple of Eliphaz Levi and is mad about occultism. Come here for a few days.’ (p.73).

“On a hot August day, the 24th, I left Paris. As I felt very unwell, I decided to rest half-way at Brussels. Besides I had at that time never been in Belgium, and had not seen Brussels. I stopped at the Grand Hotel, slept very badly, went out in the morning to see the town, and on the staircase fell in with Miss A. To my surprise she met me most affably, We were both bored, and simply delighted to see one another. I found that she was in Brussels on some business of her own, and that she was going to Cologne, and then somewhere else.

“‘And why are you here?’

“‘I am going to Elberfeld to see Madame Blavatsky; she is ill and has sent for me.’

“‘Very well, then I will go with you.’

“‘Excellent. When shall we start?’

“‘At nine o’clock tomorrow morning, that is the most convenient train, or else we shall have to arrive at Elberfeld late in the evening, not before ten.’

“This point settled, we passed the rest of the day together, and in the evening, Miss A. told me so much that was startling, marvellous and mysterious that I went to my room with my head positively in a whirl, and though it was very late, I could not get to sleep. I knew very well that in spite of all the efforts of the orthodox science of *yesterday* to deny the *supersensual*, it still exists, and from time to time manifests itself in human life; but I equally knew that these manifestations are rare, and cannot be otherwise. Yet here was the supersensual in the most varied, and sometimes in the most grotesque forms, literally inundating the life of a healthy vigorous person, one who was moreover absorbed in material affairs and business! The whole night through I hardly slept; at seven o’clock I dressed and ordered tea. At about

eight I received a note from Miss A. saying that she had not slept either; a sort of invisible struggle had been going on around her, her head was aching, and she could not possibly start as *all* her keys were lost. I went to her, and found her standing in the midst of her portmanteaux and travelling bags. She assured me that ‘all the keys were lost, every one; yet last night they were all there, under her eyes.’

“‘Send for a locksmith.’

“‘I have sent.’

“The locksmith appeared and opened a portmanteau: in the portmanteau was a bunch of keys, and on the bunch the key of the portmanteau itself!

“‘There you see the sort of thing that happens to me’, exclaimed Miss A. triumphantly.

“‘I do indeed,’ I replied.

“As we had by this time missed the nine o’clock train, we agreed to take a walk in the city, and to start at one o’clock. But I suddenly began to feel an unusual weakness, and a desire to sleep came over me. I begged Miss A. to excuse me, went to my own room and threw myself on the bed. However I did not fall asleep, but lay with my eyes closed — and there before me, one after the other passed, quite clear and distinct, various landscapes which I did not know. This was so new to me, and so beautiful, that I lay without stirring, for fear of interrupting and spoiling the vision. At last, all became misty, little by little, then grew confused, and I saw no more.

“I opened my eyes. Drowsiness and weakness had passed away. I went back to Miss A., and could not refrain from telling her what had happened to me. I described in detail, with all the circumstances, the landscapes which I had seen.

“We took our seats in a coupé of the train, which carried us off, and we were talking together, when suddenly Miss A. looked out of the window, and exclaimed: ‘See, here is one of your landscapes!’ “The effect was almost painful. There could be no doubt about it, just as I could not doubt that this was the first time I had ever travelled by this line or been in this region. Until it grew dark, I continued to gaze in reality on all I had seen in the morning, as I lay on the bed with my eyes closed.

“We reached Elberfeld, and went to the Hotel Victoria; and finding that it was not very late, we set off to see Madame Blavatsky, in the house of the merchant Gebhard, about the best house in Elberfeld.”
(pp.74-6).

X.

“We found our poor Madame all swollen with dropsy, and almost without movement, in an enormous arm-chair, surrounded by Olcott, Mohini, Keightley and two Englishwomen from London. Mrs. and Miss Arundale, by Mrs. Holloway, an American, and Gebhard with his wife and son. The rest of the Gebhards, had left Elberfeld.

“Madame was extremely delighted to see us; she brightened up and began to fidget in her arm-chair, and to ‘let off steam’ in Russian . . .

“We were in a large and handsome drawing-room. It was divided into two portions by an arch, over which heavy draperies were drawn, and what there was behind them, in the other half of the room, I did not know. When we had talked long enough, Helena Petrovna called up Rudolph Gebhard, a young man with very good manners, and whispered something to him, on which he disappeared.

“‘I am going to give you a surprise directly,’ she said.

“‘I soon saw that the surprise had something to do with the half of the room hidden behind the draperies, as a certain bustle was to be heard from there.

“The curtains were suddenly drawn back, and two wonderful figures, illuminated with a brilliant bluish light, concentrated and strengthened by mirrors, rose before us. At the moment, I thought I was looking on living men, so skilfully was the whole thing conceived. But it turned out that they were two great draped portraits of Mahatmas Morya and Koot Hoomi, painted in oils by Schmiechen, an artist related to the Gebhards.

“Subsequently, when I had thoroughly examined these portraits, I found in them much that was unsatisfactory from an artistic point of view; but their life-likeness was remarkable, and the eyes of the two mysterious strangers gazed straight at the spectator, their lips could almost have been said to move.

“The artist, of course, had never seen the originals of these two portraits. Madame Blavatsky and Olcott assured us all that he had painted by inspiration, that ‘they’ themselves had guided his pencil and that ‘the likeness was extraordinary’. However that might be, Schmiechen had painted two beautiful young men. Mahatma Koot Hoomi, clad in a graceful sort of robe, trimmed with fur, had a tender, almost feminine face and gazed sweetly with a pair of charming light eyes.

“But as soon as one looked at the ‘master’, Koot Hoomi, for all his tender beauty, was at once forgotten. The fiery black eyes of the tall Morya fixed themselves sternly and piercingly upon one, and it was impossible to tear oneself away from them. The ‘master’ was represented as in the miniature in Madame Blavatsky’s locket, crowned with a white turban and in a white garment. All the power of the reflectors was turned upon this sombrely beautiful face, and the whiteness of the turban and dress completed the brilliance and life-likeness of the effect.

“Madame Blavatsky asked for still more light upon her ‘master’, so Rudolph Gebhard and Keightley altered the mirrors, arranged the drapery around the portrait, and placed Koot Hoomi aside. The effect was astonishing. One had to force oneself to remember that it was not a living man. I could not turn my eyes away.

“... On the way to the hotel, we could talk of nothing but the wonderful portrait of the ‘master’, and in the darkness he seemed to stand before me. I tried to shut my eyes, but I still saw him clearly in every detail. When I reached my room, I locked the door, undressed and went to sleep.” (pp.77-9).

Account sent by Solovyoff to the S.P.R.

October 1, 1884.

(Translation from the French by B. H.)

Having received a letter from my countrywoman, Madame Helena Blavatsky, in which she informed me of her bad health and begged me to go to see her at Elberfeld, I decided to take the journey. But as the state of my own health obliged me to be careful, I preferred to stop at Brussels, which town I had never seen, to rest, the heat being unbearable.

I left Paris on the 24th of August. Next morning, at the Grand Hotel in Brussels, where I was staying, I met Mlle. A. (daughter of the late Russian ambassador at — and maid of honour to the Empress of Russia). Hearing that I was going to Elberfeld to see Mme. Blavatsky, whom she knew and for whom she had much respect, she decided to come with me. We spent the day together, expecting to leave in the morning by the nine o'clock train.

At eight o'clock, being quite ready to depart, I go to Miss A.'s room and find her in a great state of perplexity. All her keys, which she always kept about her person in a little bag and that she had in this bag on going to bed, had disappeared during the night, although the door was locked. Thus, as all her baggage was locked, she could not put away the things she had just been using and wearing. We were obliged to postpone our departure to the one o'clock train and called a locksmith to open the largest trunk. When it was opened, all the keys were found in the bottom of the trunk, *including the key of this trunk itself, attached as usual to the rest*. Having all the morning to spare, we agreed to take a walk, but suddenly I was overcome by weakness and felt an irresistible desire to sleep. I begged Miss A. to excuse me and went to my room, and threw myself on the bed. But I could not sleep and lay with my eyes shut, but awake, when suddenly I saw before my closed eyes a series of views of unknown places that my memory took in to the finest detail. When this vision ceased, I felt no more weakness and went to Miss A., to whom I related all that had happened to me and described to her in detail the views I had seen.

We left by the one o'clock train and lo! after about half an hour's journey, Miss A., who was looking out of the window, said to me, "Look, here is one of your landscapes!" I recognized it at once, and all that day until evening, I saw, with open eyes, all that I had seen in the morning with closed eyes. I was pleased that I had described to Miss A. all my vision in detail as thus say that the route between Brussels and Elberfeld is completely unknown to me, for it was the first time in my life that I had visited Belgium and this part of Germany.

On arriving at Elberfeld in the evening, we took rooms in a hotel and then hurried off to see Madame Blavatsky at Mr. Gebhard's house. The same evening, the members of the Theosophical Society who were there with Mme. Blavatsky showed us two superb oil-paintings of the Mahatmas M. and Koot Hoomi. The portrait of M. especially produced on us an extraordinary impression, and it is not surprising that on the way back to the hotel, we talked on about him and had him before our eyes. Miss A. may be left to relate her own experience during that night.

[Miss A. had nearly the same experience as Solovyoff now tells.]

But this is what happened to me:

Tired by the journey, I lay peacefully sleeping when suddenly I was awakened by the sensation of a warm penetrating breath. I open my eyes and in the feeble light that entered the room through the three windows, I see before me a tall figure of a man, dressed in a long white floating garment. At the same time I heard or felt a voice that told me, in I know not what language, although I understood perfectly, to light the candle. I should explain that, far from being afraid, I remained quite tranquil, only I felt my heart

beat rapidly. I lit the candle, and in lighting it, saw by my watch that it was two o'clock. The vision did not disappear. There was a living man in front of me. And I recognized instantly the beautiful original of the portrait we had seen during the evening before. He sat down near me on a chair and began to speak. He talked for a long time, about things of great interest to me, but the greater part of this interview cannot be reported here as it dealt with matters personal to me. I can say, however, that among other things, he told me that in order to be fit to see him *in his astral body* I had had to undergo much preparation, and that the last lesson had been given me that morning when I saw, with closed eyes, the landscapes that I was to see in reality the same day. Then he said that I possess great magnetic power, now being developed. I asked him what I ought to do with this force. But without answering, he vanished.

I was alone, the door of my room locked. I thought I had had an hallucination and even told myself with fright that I was beginning to lose my mind. Hardly had this idea arisen when once again I saw the superb man in white robes. He shook his head and smiling, said to me: "Be sure that I am no hallucination and that your reason is not quitting you. Blavatsky will prove to you to-morrow before everyone that my visit is real." Then he disappeared. I saw by my watch that it was three o'clock. I put out the candle and immediately went into a deep sleep.

Next morning, on going with Miss A. to Madame Blavatsky, the first thing she said to us with an enigmatical smile was: "Well! How have you passed the night?" "Very well," I replied and I added, "Haven't you anything to tell me?" "No," she replied, "I only know that the Master was with you with one of his pupils."

That same evening, Mr. Olcott found in his pocket a little note, that all the theosophists said was in the handwriting of M.: "Certainly I was there, but who can open the eyes of him who will not see?"

This was the reply to my doubts, because all the day I had been trying to persuade myself that it was only an hallucination, and this made Madame Blavatsky angry.

I should say that on my return to Paris, where I am now, my hallucinations and the strange happenings that surrounded me, have completely stopped.

Vsevolod Solovyoff.
1 October, 84, Paris.

[In his book, Solovyoff tells what happened to Miss A. that same night.]

"I woke at ten o'clock and remembered everything quite clearly. The door was locked . . . In the coffee-room of the hotel I found Miss A. at breakfast.

"Have you had a good night?' I asked her.

"Not very. I have seen the Mahatma Morya.'

"Really? And I have seen him too.'

"How did you see him?"

“ . . . I described to her . . . and learned from her that while she was thinking whether she should formally turn theosophist, or if there was not something ‘dark’ in it, Mahatma Morya had appeared to her and said: ‘We have great need of a “little beetle” like you.’

“That is exactly what he said, a “little beetle”, and he said it in Russian.’

“We set off to the Gebhard’s . . . Miss A. began to narrate our visions. Madame Blavatsky could not conceal the delight that came over her. She forgot all her sufferings, and her eyes flashed sparks. (pp.81-2)

XI.

[Next day, Madame Blavatsky was terribly ill, “all swollen, on a great bed, and groaning . . . Her hand was no more a hand; it was but an inflexible thick log.” Solovyoff promised to stay and correct her manuscript, *The Blue Mountains*.]

“ . . . The same day there arrived from Cambridge, F. Myers, one of the founders and most active members of the London Society for Psychical Research, and his brother, Dr. Myers, who had undertaken to express an opinion on Madame Blavatsky’s illnesses. The two stayed, like myself, at the Hotel Victoria. In the evening, I had a long conversation with F. Myer . . . He begged me in the first place to tell him how I had seen Mahatma Morya, and when I had done so, he began to urge me to communicate the fact to the London society in writing.” (p. 91).

[Solovyoff proceeds to put words into the mouth of Myers the which the latter was obliged to correct. Solovyoff states that Myers told him that “by the rules of our society, your communication must consist only of a simple detailed account of facts without any commentaries or criticisms of your own.” No such rule existed. Walter Leaf says in a parenthesis: “What Mr. Myers believes himself to have said is that the committee would regard as evidence only the mere statement of facts, and could not be bound by any views or comments of Mr. Solovyoff’s own”. Solovyoff’s account sufficiently indicates that he needed no more urging to write this than to write for the Rebus in June before even the signed account could be in print elsewhere; his “own comments” would be unlikely to diminish his own importance as the positive recipient of the Mahatma’s favour and as a bright particular star among the theosophists. In forthcoming letters, he will be seen insisting on his necessity to the Theosophical Society and no doubt he believed himself to be already possessed of “powers”, instead of an intermediary for the power. The note through Olcott seems to indicate that Solovyoff would not be accepted by whoever had come to have a look at him during the night, and the character he finally displayed makes this of no surprise.]

[Solovyoff omits to mention that he was at this period in correspondence with Madame Jelihovsky at St. Petersburg. The relations between her and Helena Petrovna were at their worst, possibly owing a good deal to Mme. J.’s efforts to detach Solovyoff from the Theosophical Society. Madame Blavatsky seems to have passed the most indiscreet comments on her sister to their Russian compatriot. Mme. J. says (p. 314): “He took notes of what I told him about my sister and sent it on to her, as he sent on to me what was said about me at Elberfeld”.

[While at Elberfeld however, and for long after, in fact until late in the following year, 1885, Solovyoff remained sufficiently hopeful of favours and confident of his own value as a Theosophical witness. To Vera he shows some reserve, but there is no mistaking his

general tone.]

September 9, 1884.

Dear Vera Petrovna,

I have just received your letter and hasten to communicate with you . . .

I got back a few days ago from Elberfeld, where I passed a week at poor Helena Petrovna's bedside. I must tell you that in the eyes of European doctors she is in a very, very bad way; yet she, like those about her, believes more than ever in the power of her Mahatmas, and that her sickness is not unto death. In any case, she will have to keep her bed at Elberfeld for a long time. The doctors have diagnosed fatty heart, diabetes and acute rheumatism, from which her left hand is swollen, and which is not far from the heart. She suffers terribly but is wonderfully brave-spirited. As for wonders, there is no end of them. So after all, she may recover and with my whole heart, I hope she may, for I love her. (p. 297).

[On September 26th, he wrote to Madame Blavatsky concerning some troubles among the Theosophists at Paris and also about some rows that had taken place at Elberfeld. He seems to have fancied he himself could put everything right if only Madame Blavatsky would have trusted him. The "rows" were, however most complicated and Solovyoff would have been of no use whatever.]

September 26th, 1884.

Dear Helena Petrovna,

As I am not in possession of magic powers, I cannot know how you are getting on if I receive no news, and if my letters remain unanswered. But why do you not see and know what is going on here? As you have heard, the Duchess de Pomar has resigned the presidency. She is deeply offended with the colonel. The defender of the American negroes has actually shown want of tact when dealing with a European *grande dame*.

Of the various gossip, rumours and scandals it is unpleasant and not worth while to talk. Dramar and Baissac might have been useful, but they have lost heart now. Madame de Morsier is fretting and fuming, and is only held in by her love for Koot Hoomi, and partly by myself. What I can do, I am doing. I care nothing for the Theosophical Society, the significance of which escapes me, thanks to your distrust of me; but I care a great deal for your reputation. If I cannot do anything for it here, I can in Russia. So it is essential that I should meet —— . [Sinnett.] I might, with his help clip——'s wings; I might encourage him, for after the Elberfeld visit everyone wants encouragement, for there were many blunders at Elberfeld — not of your making, but for some reason perhaps you do not know of them. I have nothing to do with the rest, but I must bring you out clear. I cannot write in full detail. If you wish — it will be clear to you. Do speak out.

Yours with all my heart,

Vs. Solovyoff.

XII

[Meanwhile, the scandal that culminated in the Report of the Society for Psychological Research and the judgment — most impertinent on the part of this body which, presumably, constituted itself for research in psychical phenomena and not for police

service — of Madame Blavatsky as an impostor. In “Defence of Madame Blavatsky”, Vol. 2, I have dealt with a large part of the “evidence” as produced by Madame Coulomb, and later I shall deal with the outrageous “report”.

[The CHRISTIAN COLLEGE MAGAZINE of Madras had published certain letters allegedly written to Madame Coulomb by H.P.B. On September 20th, the TIMES published a cabled account of the affair, and all London was set talking. The news must have reached Paris the same day, but apparently, the French papers preferred to wait for rather more evidence against Madame Blavatsky than the allegations of a dismissed housekeeper. I can find no data to show that any of the Paris Theosophists knew of the TIMES sensation; it is almost certain that Solovyoff did not learn about the scandal until some time later. The letter below seems to have taken him quite by surprise. The letter (a translation from the Russian, of course) comes from Madame Blavatsky, still at Elberfeld.]

Dear V. S., *Tout est perdu — meme l'honneur*. What am I to do? If you too have confessed to me that you suspect me to be sometimes capable of substituting fraudulent in the place of real manifestations, you, my good and dear friend, what can I expect from my enemies? Madame Coulomb has got her way. She has written letters which she says are from me, and publishes them (I have not even seen them yet) in a Madras missionary paper. And these letters are said to reveal a whole organized system of fraud. But I have never written two lines to her! It turns out that our Mahatmas are made of bladders, muslin and masks! You saw bladders that night, so now you know. Olcott has several times seen the Master, and has twice spoken to K.H. face to face — both of them in the form of bladders, etc. Mohini will go to you in two days, that is to Paris, on Thursday; so you will tell him and he will explain matters. But how you can help me in spite of all your good-will, I do not know. You say that you

[This rather suggests that Solovyoff now knew of the scandal, had written to her on the subject. If he had done so, the letter may have been burned by Madame Jelihovsky after H.P.B.’s death, as alas were many others. The letters she did produce later, and that are all given here and there in due place in the present book, are a few that were found at Adyar and were sent to her. Happily, by that time, she had got over her incendiary folly and realized that Madame Blavatsky’s defence required the production of all letters. Solovyoff reproduces no letters from himself to H.P.B. except a few lines that do not prejudice his own narrative.]

will have nothing more to do with the Society; but I am ready for

[This may be merely H.P.B.’s exaggeration of his remark, “I care nothing for the Theosophical Society, the significance of which escapes me, thanks to your distrust of me”. It may be, also, that she thought to soothe his wounded vanity by her phrasing. It was not the moment to be rough with her possible allies.]

the sake of the society, for an abstract idea, to give up not only my life but honour. I have sent in my resignation, and shall retire from the scene of action. I will go to China, to Tibet, to the devil, if I must, where nobody will see me or know where I am; I will be dead to everyone but two or three devoted friends like you, and I wish it to be thought that I am dead; and then, in a couple of years, if death spares me, I will reappear with strength renewed. This has been decided and signed by the “general” himself.

[Solovyoff called Mahatma M. thus.]

“First of all, you can say to each and all in Paris that since, in spite of all my efforts, in spite of my having sacrificed to the society life and health and my whole future, I am suspected not only by my

enemies, but even by my own theosophists, I shall cut off the infected limb from the sound body; that is, I shall cut myself off from the society. They have all clutched at the idea with such delight, Olcott and Madame Gebhard and the rest, that I have not even met with any pity. I leave the moral to you. Of course, I shall not depart into the “wilderness” till Olcott, who starts for India by the first steamer, has arranged matters at Adyar, and exposed and proved the conspiracy — they gave the Coulomb woman 10,000 rupees, as is now proved, in order to destroy the society; but when all this has settled down, then I shall go off — where, I do not know yet; it is all the same, besides, so long as it is somewhere that nobody knows. I can address my letters to Katkoff through you. Of course, Olcott will know where I am, but the rest may think what they like. The more absurd such ideas the better. Now, here you can give me real help. I shall trust you entirely, and I can, and will, direct the society better from a distance than on the spot.

There, my dear friend, that is all. The rest I will tell you face to face; for I want to come and see you for a few days without anyone knowing it if you will have me. Answer at once and don't try to dissuade me, for this is the only hope both for me and for the society. The effect of my resignation publicly announced by myself will be immense. You will see. And do you make haste to let it be known in Petersburg, say in the *Rebus* there, that our society is not founded for the production but for the investigation of phenomena; not for the deification of Mahatmas, but for a world-wide cause, and to show that faith in the supernatural is superstition, folly; but that faith, i.e. science, the knowledge of the forces of nature of which our scientific men are ignorant, is the duty of every civilized man; and that, as half the theosophists and all the spiritists consider me, some of them a powerful medium and some a charlatan, I am tired of it all; and since I love the society better than life, I am leaving it for a time of my own free will in order to save the scandal. For God's sake do this, and it will not be too late. Mohini will explain to you all the conspiracy in Madras against Adyar and the society. Discredit these vile Calvinistic missionaries; be a friend to me. And meanwhile answer. I want to start for London at the end of this week. Do me a service. Ask at Rue Byron II bis, if there is a “chromophotographic” artist, Madame Tchang, living there; and if she has left, where she has gone. But she must neither see you nor know where you are. Oh, if I could only see you and talk it over, and arrange and get your advice. Now it is war, for life or death.

We put our trust in the Mahatmas, and shall not be confounded for ever.

Yours to the grave,
H. P. Blavatsky.

P.S. Et les ‘Mahatmas’ ne l’abandonneront pas, mais, la situation est furieusement *serieuse*. O. est bête, mais it n’y en a pas d’autre. K.H.

[A sufficiently distraught epistle! (Be it remembered that we have only Solovyoff's documents and Leaf's versions.) Yet, in her place, many might have written worse and have had no thought for philosophy! All through the Elberfeld visit, H.P.B. had been tumbling from one quarrel to another. A volume would be needed to explain these rows where conflicting ambitions of theosophical aspirants and treachery all around had exasperated H.P.B. When the Coulomb scandal broke, Madame Blavatsky found her “best friends” and even Olcott, ready to believe that there might be grounds for Madame Coulomb's accusations, and they accepted the resignation offered by Madame Blavatsky with a haste that can only be called — indecent. It is not only possible, but certain, that several of her “theosophists” fancied that they could run the society quite well themselves; run it by lecturing and publishing — all they had learned from or through HER! I think,

myself, that it was a pity that she did not abide finally by Mahatma M's decision and disappear and leave them to it! In a very few months, they would all have been at desperate logger-heads, have learned that their mere half-intelligent echoings of what she had taught them could not get them very far with the world in general, and they would have begun to plan expeditions to find her; who could answer all their questions, and implore her to return—Coulomb or no Coulomb.

[The post-script to the above letter was written in blue pencil and in the hand-writing of Mahatma K.H. Madame Blavatsky expressly states that she had authority to use this script, after asking permission, of course; and we need not forcibly imagine that the Mahatma himself took the trouble to write, even to impress a friend of the hunted and distracted H.P.B. Perhaps he did write it. In any case, Solovyoff was so pleased at getting a bit of this writing that he hurried off to boast of his favour to the other Theosophists.]

“That very day, at Madame de Morsier's, I met the most convinced and honest of the French theosophists; and they . . . admitted the postscript to be the authentic work not of Madame's hand, but of Koot Hoomis.” (p. 97)

Letter from Solovyoff in reply to above.

Monday.

Dear Helena Petrovna, I have just received your letter. Believe it or not as you like, neither it nor the Koot Hoomi postscript caused me the least surprise. I shall produce a sensation through Madame de Morsier. Mohini's coming, if he is well and steadily directed, is very opportune . . . What a disgrace that I should not talk English!

It is positively essential that you and I should meet; it is impossible for me to write at length; how happy I should be if you would come to see me . . . And not I alone, but *we*. And you would like it too, I hope. Paris is not far out of the way from Elberfeld to London.

Perhaps we could come to an understanding in Russian . . . And I would escort you to London . . .

I do not know how to beg you not to be in a hurry to resign. Let us talk it over first, and if it is inevitable, then I will leave it to you to say what must be done and where you will go.

What can one do by correspondence. I wait for further news.

Yours with all my heart.,
Vs. Solovyoff.

P.S. Do not get agitated, in the name of all the saints. (p.300)

“In a couple of days Madame de Morsier informed me that she had received a letter from Madame, in which she begged her to meet Mohini . . . ‘It is essential that he should be met,’ Madame de Morsier explained to me; ‘you see, he is coming alone, and, as his French is very bad, he will be entirely lost. Can he not stay with you? Madame could not make up her mind to ask you straight out for this, as she did not know if you would think it proper, so she left it in my hand.’

“‘I have a spare room quite by itself,’ I replied, ‘and he will not be any burden to me with his vegetarianism. To be sure, his bronze face and strange costume will make the people in our *impasse* talk; but that is all the same to me.’

“We went together to the railway-station, and met the young Brahmin. He handed me a letter from Madame. She wrote as follows: —

Dear V. S., I tried to do as you wish, but it is impossible. To go to Paris alone when I can hardly walk would be madness. I shall go to London on Monday. I shall remain (for I cannot help it) a couple of weeks in London, and then I shall come to you in Paris for one week or two, as you wish. *No one must know* where I am except Gebhard, who is entirely devoted to me and the cause. I have resigned, and now there is the strangest mess. The general ordered this strategy, and he knows. I have, of course, remained a member, but merely a member, and I am going to vanish for a year or two from the field of battle. This letter will be handed to you by Mohini. He will stay in Paris until Tuesday. Gebhard will go with me when I wish, and will take me where I wish. But where am I to go so that none but a few devoted friends may know where I am, I positively cannot tell.

Understand, my dear V. S., that it is *essential for my plan* to vanish without trace for a time. Then there will be a reaction and to my advantage. I should like to go to China, if the Mahatma will permit; but I have no money. If it is known where I am, all is lost. Now help me with your advice. The master commanded this, and that in a general way; but left the details and the carrying out to me, at my own risk and peril, as always. If I break down, so much the worse for me. And then there is Russia; you can help me there. Say that in consequence of the conspiracy of which Mohini will tell you, and of my health, I have been obliged to give up active work for a year or eighteen months. And that is the truth; I have no strength left. And now I will finish the second part of the *Caves*, so it will be all the better. But my programme, if you approve, is this; let us be heard of as mysteriously as possible, and vaguely too. Let us theosophists be surrounded now by such mystery that the devil himself won't be able to see anything, even through a pair of spectacles. But for this, we must write, and write, and write. So, till we meet again Mohini will tell you all.

Yours ever, H. Blavatsky.

“Mohini told very little, and it was impossible to gather from his words exactly what was going on. One thing was clear: the theosophists with Madame, had taken fright in good earnest . . . Mohini stayed three days After his departure I received the following letter from Madame Blavatsky, who was already in England: —

9 Victoria Road, Kensington.

Dear V. S., This is my new address for a fortnight, not longer. They are sending me out to Egypt and Ceylon — nearer home, but not home. It shall be done as the master has commanded — not to go back to Madras till Olcott has settled things; but to stay in Europe is equally impossible. We have thought, but thought out nothing. We have not money enough to scatter and live each separately. Some theosophists are going with me now to Ceylon (Mr. and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, who are starting for Madras), but for me to go alone without anyone is not to be thought of. My rheumatism is again about in my shoulder, and a little all over me. If it attacks me again as it did at Elberfeld, then good-bye — it will fly to the heart.

Now how are we to meet? I cannot go to Paris when I can hardly walk. Lord, how I would like to see you

once again! Is it really impossible for you to come here, even for a couple of days? I know that we ought to have a meeting; but what am I to do if fate does not permit it? If I had only been a little better, I would have come. I am dreadfully sorry now that I did not pass through Paris. But I was not alone, and it was impossible to throw over Mrs. Holloway when she had come to Elberfeld with me and *for my sake alone*. Write and advise me, my friend. It is dreadful if I am not to see you again before I start. There is a fearful uproar going on in India. It is a war to the death with the missionaries. *They or we!* 220 students of the *Christian College*, all Hindus, have refused to attend the courses and have left the college, after this dirty plot of the missionaries and the letters they have printed as mine, and the notes to the Coulombs; they have come over to us in a body.

Que c'est un faux, est tout á fait évident. Only a person who is entirely ignorant of India, such as this Madame Coulomb, could have written such nonsense as they have written there. For instance, *I* write of the conjuring tricks which I have arranged for the "Maharajah of Lahore", when there is no such person in India! and so on and so on. Forgery has already been proved in the case of two or three letters, but the scandal is frightful. You can imagine how they fear and hate me, when a week before the publication of these forged letters, on the day of the municipal elections in Calcutta, there were posted at all the corners of the streets literally in thousands, bills announcing "The Fall of Madame Blavatsky". Well, it is a dodge, and I must be indeed a terrible person to them; it is all the Scotch Calvinistic missionaries, a most vile mean sect, true Jesuits minus the wisdom and craft of the latter. But I am not fallen yet and please God I will let them see it. My "fall" shall be a triumph yet, if I do not die.

Send me an answer, dear man. Tell me if you have finished the French *Isis*, part II. Send it on to me if you do not want it. Madame Novikoff would greatly like to make your acquaintance. Oh, if you could only come here!

Yours to the Grave,

H. Blavatsky. (p.100-2)

"Some time passed without a word from Madame Blavatsky. At last, I wrote to enquire after her. I received the following reply: —

Dear V. S., For God's sake, do not accuse me of indifference. There is a most abominable conspiracy against me; and if we do not take it in time, all my ten years' work will be lost. Later on, I will explain, or Olcott. Olcott is starting for Adyar from Marseilles on the 20th. He leaves London on Wednesday, to-morrow evening, and will be in Paris on the morning of the 14th (Oct. 84.) He stops at a hotel, you will learn where from Madame de Morsier. For God's sake come if you can. I and the devoted theosophists who are going to Adyar with me have taken a little house here together, where I shall stay for two, or at the very most, three weeks; then I am going to Egypt where I shall stay some days. It is impossible to say everything in a letter. Do write, if only a few words. If you only knew what a terrible position I am in, you would not think whether I wrote or not. O Lord, if I could see you! Please write. Olcott will explain all to you.

Your ever devoted, H. Blavatsky.

"Olcott came, and had no fresh news to give, beyond what I already knew from Helena Petrovna's letters . . . It must be observed, however, that in spite of his disagreeable position the colonel wore a truly martial air, and kept boldly repeating: 'Oh, it is all nonsense. I will go and put it right.'

(On October 22nd, Solovyoff wrote to Madame Blavatsky a letter to which he makes no allusion in his book. It is printed on p. 294 in the Appendix: —]

Dear Helena Petrovna, On Friday, though I could hardly stand on my legs, I passed the whole day with Olcott. On Saturday, he and R. Gebhard who is back from the Comtesse d'Adhémar, dined with me; after dinner, I went to bed, and there I have stayed ever since. I had neglected a cold, and it got very bad . . . The second part of *Isis*. I think you must send the first part too to Paris, for the book must be published here, without fail for the benefit of the French. Madame de Morsier is very useful and she is ready for work. It seems to me that if they keep the duchess as honorary president, then, if she is a woman of the least sense of honour and self-respect, she must do something for the society. Let her publish your *Isis*. Send Oakley to her; he will tell her that the Paris society greatly needs the publication of the book, and trusts that the respected duchess will do her plain duty . . .

Perhaps it would be as well for Madame de Morsier to write to her in the name of the society about the need for the publication of *Isis* . . . Think this over and let me know. Meanwhile *au revoir*.

Yours with all my heart,
Vs. Solovyoff.

[Solovyoff was clearly beginning to assume some authority in and responsibility for the Paris branch of which he was a member. He wrote again to H.P.B., a letter.]

“In a few days I wrote again to Madame Blavatsky, once more begging her to come to Paris. She replied: ‘Too late, dear V. S.; telegram after telegram is calling me home. There is such a hubbub there that the world is upside down. Hartmann, one of our theosophists at Adyar, has thrashed a missionary half-dead for a lampoon on the society and me.

[I can find no account of this fight, and ‘half-dead’ is certainly more than a mild exaggeration; but the “hubbub” in India was scarcely to be exaggerated.]

Now the battle is beginning, and it is for life and death. I shall lay down my old bones for the true cause: do not bear me ill-will, my dear friend. Do not be afraid, the master will support me.

[It looks as if she had persuaded the Master, rather, to let her go and fight out the scandal, and that he had consented with his usual warning that the consequences would be hers to take. Far better had she carried out her first Instructions, stayed away and allowed Olcott to act.]

I am going with Mr. and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, friends of Madame de Morsier. They have even sold their house, and are going with me either to conquer the foe together or to die. In the aid of Parabrahm we put our trust and we shall not be ashamed for ever.

(This phrase indicates her state of excitement, for none knew better than she that Parabrahm would scarcely take any interest in the Coulomb scandal! One laughs; but poor Helena Petrovna found it all no laughing matter.)

Think what devotion! You see they have broken up their whole career. I shall not stay more than a

fortnight at most in Egypt, and then home. We start from Liverpool on Nov. 1 in the steamer *Clan MacCarthy*, and we shall stop in Alexandria. I will write you from there and tell you everything. Goodbye for a long time.

Your ever devoted, H. Blavatsky.

[In the meanwhile, Madame Vera Jelihovsky was pursuing her extraordinary campaign against her famous sister, still disguising resentment and, no doubt, that feeling of defeated moral superiority *which* so often characterizes the families of the Ugly Duckling, under a more or less affected—or more or less sincere?—concern for Solovyoff's welfare. During the war that arose between Vera and Solovyoff after H.P.B.'s death, Solovyoff quoted from a letter to him from Madame Jelihovsky. The date was Oct. 27th, 1884.]

You remember our conversation in the Parc Monceau? I could not then put the dots on many of the I's, but I think I explained enough to show you that Helena and I had little in common. I love her and I pity her profoundly. I hope that she loves me too, but—it is in her own way. Apart from this feeling, which has often inclined me to be indulgent, and even to shut my eyes to much that inwardly troubled me, there is nothing but difference between us.

I went to see her, at her expense, on the distinct understanding that not a word should be said about her cause and the society; subsequently this turned out to be impossible; I was drawn into the common whirlpool, and, to my great regret, I agreed to become a member of the society, so far as my conscience and religious convictions allowed it, and I even wrote accounts of what I heard and saw . . . If my accounts contain inaccuracies, they are unintentional, and no fault of mine. But that is not the question. Helena got angry with me, and ceased to write to me, and as I see, accuses me of cruelty and ingratitude. I am very sorry. I say honestly, I am heartily sorry that our relations should have been broken, perhaps for ever; but I cannot sacrifice my *conscience* even for them. I do not accuse her; what she asks me to do seems to her a trifle; to me it seems a *crime*. Perhaps we look differently at things because I am a Christian, and she is — I know not what. She has been pressing me about this for a long time. I cannot fulfil her wish, and I will not; because I consider it not only dishonourable for myself, but fatal for her. The same view of this question was taken by the late — (an uncle, a rigidly Christian uncle, who had played a heavy part in forcing the youthful Helena into her hated marriage) the wisest man and the most thorough Christian I have ever known. He begged me on his death-bed not to yield to her demands, and to show her that above all she was harming herself. And so I have done many a time; but without success. X's [the aunt, H. P. B.'s playmate and life-long friend] great mistake is that she knows no bounds to her pity for Helena. That is why she says that she is the only one who is kind to her and loves her. God grant that this love may not lead to the ruin of both!

V. Jelihovsky.

[What can this "crime" have been? Solovyoff must have known, but is careful not to say! Even he, however, does not imply that Madame Blavatsky ventured to request her "Christian" sister to help her in common fraud. Then, what can have been this CRIME? We are never informed; but I think there is small doubt that it had to do with Madame Blavatsky's aversion from being considered a MEDIUM. I believe that she must have tried, in vain, to convince Vera that her early phenomena were never due to the action of "spirits", but to the help of her Master, even at a time when she did not know this Master at all. As it happened, the whole family, including even Madame Fadeev, the devoted

aunt, would sooner have believed Helena affected by “spirits” than by “masters”. In a “Letter from H.P.B. to A. P. Sinnett” (p. 154), we read:

“. . . I told my aunt that the letter received from K.H. by her was no letter from a *Spirit* as she thought. When she got the proofs that they were living men, she regarded them as devils or *sold to Satan*. Now you have seen her. She is the shyest, the kindest, the meekest individual. All her life her money all is for others. Touch her religion and she becomes like a fury. I never speak with her about Masters.”

“Like a fury” is a bit of verbal exaggeration, but Madame Fadeev decidedly did not like the idea of these uncanny Masters, unprovided for in the Christian programme except as priests and confessors, and probably the whole family regarded them as sorcerers of some kind. This idea would sufficiently account for the death-bed adjurations of the Uncle (Madame Fadeev’s brother) and for Vera’s remorse at having joined the society. In later years, Madame Jelihovsky changed her mind about these Masters and wrote a great deal in defence of her sister; but to the end, she persisted in seeing in Madame Blavatsky only a specially powerful medium. With nothing definite to go on, I come away from all this with the impression that Madame Blavatsky must have tried to convince Vera of her own early acquaintance with the Master that had always been with her and protecting her, but that Vera replied that she had never said any such thing and that she herself would consider it a crime to bolster up a delusion which would be only the worse if it were NOT a delusion. Madame Blavatsky’s dislike of being thought ever to have been a medium led her near fanaticism; on the subject of spiritualistic “guides”, she was plus roi que le roi! We see from the “Mahatma Letters” that the adepts worked with these guides more than once. Perhaps nothing could better indicate that Madame Blavatsky was not disguised as the Masters! The “Eglinton case” proves in fact that she was left considerably in the dark about the whole affair. The only guide she could ever tolerate was one, “Ski”, whom she knew to have been used by her Master, and a certain “John King” who apparently was used to watch her during a psychological crisis but whom she soon threw overboard with small ceremony. The story of the Theosophical Society shows that many a needless difficulty arose through Madame Blavatsky’s rather unjust, and certainly undiplomatic, lack of consideration for the Spiritualist movement that has proved of the greatest human value as a check to the ruthless effort of Jesuitical domination.

[In reply to Vera’s letter, Solovyoff wrote one that proves how far he was at this time from accepting her views of the Masters and her famous sister. Clearly, he had passed on some of H.P.B.’s uncomplimentary remarks, but such was his nature, delighting in mischief. The date is October 30.]

I send you with this a copy of my account of my experiences at Elberfeld, which I have sent to the London Society for Psychological Research. From this you will learn all that interests you, and you will be convinced of my courage in the face of public opinion. However, this courage has its limits, and I decidedly do not wish my adventures to get into the Russian papers. I have written to Pribytkoff about this. A time comes for everything, and in one way or another all will be explained; for there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed. . . . Helena Petrovna leaves Liverpool tomorrow for Egypt first and then on to India. How she is still alive, how she can travel, travel such a distance and at this time of year, all this is a marvel to me. Or, rather, it is one of the proofs of the existence of the Mahatmas. (pp. 295, 298,

App.)

[Three extracts from a letter of Nov. 21 are given by Madame J. (pp. 298, 301, 302, App.)]

Dear Vera Petrovna, I cannot fear for our friendship, however calumnies may threaten it; but what sadness all this causes! . . . It is all clear to me, and indeed one may say that Helena Petrovna has devoted her whole soul to the society. To the society and the cause. She is afraid of your influence on me to the prejudice of the society, and the society has great need of me now . . . I never play a double game with anyone, and in proof of it I may quote some phrases from her letters “You write that you do not care about the society, but I have devoted to it life, health, honour, career.” “If you, my friend, actually suspect me of making a fraudulent phenomenon when a real one does not succeed, what will my enemies say?” But she knows that I really love her, and that I am her friend . . . Now here is a fact. It was also at Elberfeld that I received, to the great envy of the theosophists, an autograph letter of Koot Hoomi, and in Russian into the bargain. That it appeared in a manuscript which I was holding in my hand did not surprise me in the least; I had a presentiment of it beforehand, almost a knowledge. But what did surprise me was that the note spoke clearly and in detail about what we had been discussing a minute before. It contained an answer to my words; and during this minute I had been standing alone, no-one had come near me; and if it is to be supposed that some one had previously put the note in the book, then this someone must have had command of my thoughts, and forced me to say the words, the direct answer to which was contained in the letter . . . This amazing phenomenon I have distinctly observed myself several times, both in my own case and in that of others. What power! And beside this power, at times, what powerlessness . . . And when she comes to the end of her life, which I cannot but think is now only artificially prolonged by some magic power, I shall always grieve for this most unhappy and remarkable woman.

[At this moment, Solovyoff’s beliefs and hopes were evidently high; he believed himself needed by the society; he had had the courage to send his account of the visit from the Master to the S.P.R., and only preferred the affair not to get into the Russian papers yet — “a time comes for everything . . . there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed”. I fancy that he had returned to his early project of a journey to India, now that H.P.B. would be there, and saw himself a future particularly distinguished CHELA of the Mahatma. On this last point, H.P.B. wrote to Sinnett: “No wonder if . . . after having had a good look at him Master would have nothing more to do with him all my prayers notwithstanding”. Solovyoff mentions no letters from Madame Blavatsky, but it is unlikely that he left her alone.]

“Three months had passed when I suddenly received a huge packet from Madras . . . and the following letter:

Adyar, Madras, 3rd January, 1885.

Dear kind V.S., I am worn out and harassed, but still living, like an old cat with nine lives. It is a conspiracy, my dear man, according to all the rules of Jesuitical art. Will you say now that the master does not protect me, openly and palpably? Any other in my place could not have been saved by God Himself and the hundred devils, had I been innocent as a babe at the font! And I have only to show myself and I am triumphant!

He wrote to Vera on Dec. 22nd, '84: he makes no mention of this letter or of the occurrence.

. . . . Three weeks ago, I dined in the green dining-room, which you know, with V. I ate with a good appetite. I drank very little, as always — in a word, I was quite myself. When dinner was over, I went up to my room to have a cigar. I opened the door, lit a match, lighted the candle, and there was Helena Petrovna standing before me in her black sacque. She greeted me, smiled, “Here I am,” and vanished! What does this mean? Here is your question once more, hallucination or not? How am I to tell? That it is enough to make one go out of one’s mind is certain; but I shall try not to do that.]

The January 3 letter continues: —

“Only fancy, they have printed letters with my name, some forty notes and letters, the most silly and senseless in their contents generally, but many of them in my style, and all referring to phenomena which actually occurred. They (the letters) are all supposed to give instructions as to the best way of taking in some dignitary or other; all this with names and titles in full, and with the usual jeers at the supposed “fools”. All this has been published by the missionaries, who, as is now proved, bought them off these scoundrels, who had been turned out of the society for theft and slander, for 3000 rupees, with commentaries and explanations. Even before they appeared in print there were distributed throughout India as many as 50,000 printed announcements of “The Fall of Madame Blavatsky. Fall of Mahatma Koot Hoomi. The Great Adept a Doll of Bladders and Muslin” — all in big letters, and posted up on all the street corners of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, etc. For the space of four months the newspapers, which even do not wait and give me time to reply from Paris whether I wrote such letters and when, have been openly declaring that I am guilty, arguing *en consequence* and abusing me in Billingsgate language. Then the American and London papers take up the part of a Greek chorus; and so the game goes on. Hundreds of theosophists are compromised, and made into laughing-stocks. Not one has wavered, they all stand by me in mass.

[It should be noted that Madame Blavatsky scarcely exaggerates at all throughout this letter as to the facts, incredible as such a campaign may seem to-day. Certain of the Indian Journals protested at the time against such a display of indecency as had never before been seen in India. The narrative she gives of her reception on arrival is perfectly correct.]

They have proved that the letters are forged, that the Coulombs are scoundrels and thieves, and therefore may have imitated my writings with the missionaries (as is now proved).

[Perhaps not proved then so clearly as to-day, but something may be allowed to a victim conscious of innocence.]

They are told that they are fools, that the phenomena do not exist, and never can exist in the world; *ergo*, the explanation by trickery is most natural, especially as Blavatsky is a criminal, a well-known Russian spy (well-known, indeed! Rubbish!) The papers are burying me a little too soon; they thought it was not possible for me to return to India at any time. At last when they found that I was coming back in spite of all this, they begin to cry that *c'est le courage du desespoir*. So much for that. Meanwhile I went to Cairo. There I learned through the consuls (Hitrovo gave me great assistance, and a letter to Nubar Pasha) that the Coulombs are fraudulent bankrupts who had decamped on the sly by night, and had several times been in prison for slander. She is a well-known charlatan and ‘sorceress’, who revealed

buried treasure for money, and was caught red-handed — i.e., with the ancient coins which she used to bury beforehand, and so on. The French consul gave me official authority to hang them (!) and entrusted me with a power of attorney to get 22,000 francs from them. Countess della Sala, veuve Beketoff, nee princess Hussein is ours, so is the wife of the Khedive's brother. Maspéro, le directeur du Musée de Boulak, le grand Egyptologist, *idem*. I left Suez for home after a fortnight's stay in Cairo. *Fin de l'acte premiere*. The curtain falls. Act II. I sail in company with Mr. and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley and the Reverend Leadbeater (a week before our departure from London he was a parson, *un cure*, and now he is a Buddhist), and we sail with a party of eight disgusting missionaries, with whom we all but quarrelled every day about myself.

[In the Memorial book, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley wrote: "Every insulting remark that could be made about H.P.B. was heard".]

These four males and four females of American Methodists had already read the lampoons of their devilish brethren the Scotch Calvinists, and they cackled. I looked at them as an elephant looks at a pug-dog, and got my own restlessness calmed down. They go for my Protestant parson, and he goes for them in my defence. In Ceylon I took public vengeance on them. I sent for the high priest of the Buddhists, and introduced the English parson theosophist to him; I proclaimed in the hearing of everyone that he wished to enter into Buddhism. He blushed, but was not greatly disturbed, for he had seriously made up his mind to do it, and in the evening a solemn ceremony was performed on shore in the Buddhist temple. The parson theosophist uttered the *pansil* (les cinq préceptes); a lock of hair was cut from his head; he became a Buddhist and a novice, and — I was revenged. In Ceylon we were met by Olcott, Hartmann, and many theosophists; a whole company of us set off for Madras. The day before our arrival (Gebhard le jeune, you remember, Rudolphe, was with us too) a new villainy had been done in Madras. In the name of the Coulombs, the missionaries issued a pamphlet in which they added several new calumnies to the old; for instance, that in the year, 1872 (when I was in Odessa), I was giving seances in Cairo, that I produced manifestations by fraud, that I took money for it, was found out and dishonoured. Fortunately, I had asked Hitrovo to get from the vice-consul, who knew me in Egypt in 1871, and used to come to see me, and was considered a friend of mine, a sort of certificate of testimonial of good conduct. Foreseeing that Madame Coulomb (whom I knew at the time in Egypt) would tell lies against me, I put to the consul all the questions which could arise through her in such a case, and received a reply on all the points stamped with the consular seal; to the effect that the consul knew me, that he used to see me every day, and that he neither saw nor heard of any ill-conduct on my part.

[Madame Blavatsky would have been better advised to leave all this out of a letter since it is a very long story. In saying she was in Odessa in 1872, we may allow something to her exasperating notions of dates, but she did not go to Odessa until May or June and was in Cairo in the spring. She appears here almost to deny the séances, but as she never denied them anywhere else, we must suppose her "in a fix" and reluctant to relate the affair to one Whom, evidently, she did not entirely trust even then. She should have left the matter alone. As everyone knows, she hired mediums for séances and these mediums cheated and were caught on a day when, as Madame Coulomb admits, or lets slip, on p.3 of her pamphlet, "Some Account of my Association with Madame Blavatsky" (out of print), Madame Blavatsky was not present. As for the Buddhist affair, it was in bad taste and that is all that can be said — unless that Madame Blavatsky, like many another student of Gautama Buddha's philosophy, had small respect for the ceremonies and trappings that have grown up around the original teaching.]

Well, we arrived; the missionaries were drawn up on the shore to enjoy my disgrace. But before the anchor had been cast, a whole crowd of our theosophists was swarming all over the deck. They threw themselves down and kissed my feet, and at last hurried us on shore. Here there was a dense mass of people; some thirty vans with bands, flags, gilded cars and garlands of flowers. I had no sooner appeared on the wharf than they began to hurrah. I was almost deafened by the furious cries of triumph and delight. We were drawn, not by horses, but by theosophists, in a chariot preceded by a band walking backwards. After an hour's procession during which the missionaries disappeared as if they had rushed off to hell, we were taken to the town-hall, where we found 5000 people to complete my deafness. Lord, if you had only been there; how proud you would have been of your countrywoman! Imagine 307 students of that very Christian College, whose missionary professors had hatched all this plot, signing an address which they publicly presented to me and read amid the loud applause of the public (Hindu of course). In this address, which I send you as a memento, and beg Madame de Morsier to translate, they say what you will see, and abuse their own principals. The chief point is that not one of them is a theosophist, they are merely Hindus. Then I was obliged to get up and make a speech. Imagine my position! After me, Olcott spoke, Mrs. Oakley and Leadbeater. Then they took us home, where I spent the first night in fever and delirium.

(When she was shown the famous hole in the wall in her bedroom, made by Mr. Coulomb, she collapsed in disgust and anger and had a fit)

“But there was no time for being ill now; on the 25th (we arrived on Dec. 23rd), our anniversary began, and some hundreds of people had collected. I demanded that they should let me go into court with a suit against the Coulombs and the missionaries, but they would not permit it. At last, a deputation of our delegates begged me not to take any step without the consent of the committee of the Grand Council, as the quarrel was rather a Hindu national, than an international affair, and I, H. P. Blavatsky, was only a transparent pretext selected in order to crush the society.

[Actually, several Indian journals took the view that the missionaries were attacking the Hindu religion as well as the theosophy that tolerates all religions. This is the explanation of the rally of the Hindu non-Theosophical students. No doubt, a greater blow to Christian propaganda in India was never given than by this extraordinary alliance of a few misguided missionaries with two dismissed servants, the Coulombs, against a woman so much beloved as H.P.B. A frank admission of the blunder would, even now, do no harm to the relations between ourselves and the Indians. As I have shown in “Defence of Madame Blavatsky”, Vol. 2, the Coulomb “fraud letters” cannot stand examination; bit by bit, the whole plot falls to pieces. In a future volume on the Report of Society for Psychical Research, I shall expose the stupidity and wilful injustice of this Report.]

“They say that my enemies are only seeking and longing to lure me into court, as all three English judges are on the side of the missionaries; that the libel is entirely founded on phenomena and Mahatmas in whom and in whose powers neither the law nor the ordinary public believe; in a word, that they are trying to get me into court, to catch me in my words when provoked

[and how easily! H.P.B. was always her own worst witness]

and to condemn me to imprisonment; i.e., to kill the society and morally kill me . . . So I have left myself in the hands and at the disposition of the committee. They sat three days and nights on the letters and documents and called more than 300 witnesses, six of them Europeans, the rest, *les natifs*. They brought in a verdict entirely acquitting me, and many letters were shown to be forgeries of my handwriting.

[An exaggeration. The committee sat on the letters as printed in the **CHRISTIAN COLLEGE MAGAZINE**, but only four of the originals were shown to the theosophists. The handwriting is of small importance compared with the content of the fraudulent parts that I characterize as a most rubbishy fabrication and melting away under the least real scrutiny of facts, dates and circumstances. The whole of the “fraud” passages does not amount to two hundred and fifty lines scattered through some seventy letters; many of these lines are quite startlingly tagged on at the end of innocent paragraphs and others are contained in short notes. The performance of such a trivial forgery would certainly not have taxed greatly the powers of Mr. Coulomb who was a skilled draughtsman!]

“One theosophical rajah offers me by letter 10,000 rupees, another 30,000 rupees, another two villages for legal expenses, if I sue them, but the committee will not permit it. “You”, they say, “are the property of the society. The conspiracy is not against you but against theosophy in general. Sit still, we will defend you.” Even the public understand at last that it was a trick of the missionaries. Several letters have appeared in the papers advising me not to fall into a trap. Lord, what a position! Here is the London Psychical Society (your friend Myers) sending out a member to make enquiry. He too, finds it is a huge plot.

[Hodgson expenses were paid by Sidgwick. At first Hodgson affected to be great friends with the theosophists and most indecently abused their hospitality for many weeks in a curiously economical fashion.]

“Meanwhile, I am “sitting by the sea and waiting for the weather.” The solemnity of the anniversary was immense. When the pamphlets are ready I will send them all. Meanwhile I send groups of the delegates and a group of the residents, all chelas of the Mahatmas. Once on a time, dear friend, you wrote and said that my honour and reputation were dear to you. Do defend me in the *Rebus*, in the name of all that is sacred. You see, they will believe in Russia, and this will be a disgrace. You are my one friend and defender, for God’s sake, my angel, do intercede for me. Write the truth in the *Rebus*, to prevent their believing in the tattle of the papers. And there is another thing. You worried me to send Katkoff my *Blue Mountains* as soon as possible. Well, I sent it from Elberfeld in an insured parcel at the end of September or beginning of October and to this day there is not a word from him. I do not even know if he has received the manuscript, or has only not made up his mind to print. He is writing me to hurry up the second part of the *Caves*, but not a word about *Blue Mountains*. Do for God’s sake write and find out at the office whether it is to be published or if it is lost. Ill luck on every side! May you be well and happy if possible. Answer me soon; I don’t believe that you have turned my enemy too. My greetings to Madame de Morsier and all our friends.

Yours to the end of the World, H. Blavatsky.

Oh, if I could only see you once more alive!

[Up to this point, I have reproduced all Madame Blavatsky’s letters at full length, or so far as they are given; this to show what kind of tone she used towards Solovyoff. I cannot find that it was the tone of a wheedling charlatan towards a dupe! Far from that, she treats him sometimes with small ceremony as one of the numerous bores who crowded around her and annoyed her both with their fits of impotent occult aspiration and of fashionable incredulity. On the whole, however, the tie of nationality prevails over everything else. Solovyoff was a Russian and — sacred! She writes him long letters to

keep his friendship and in these letters there is very little to take out as exaggeration; they are genuine letters of friendship. Considering that she was very ill most of the time at Adyar, almost at death's door for weeks; that she was undergoing mentally something as near the "third degree" as anyone would care to experience; for even Olcott was constantly challenging her to disprove this or that WHICH SHE HAD NO MEANS OF DISPROVING THEN — these letters show remarkable self-restraint and moderation. Also, we have only the translations; and Madame Blavatsky's pen was the pen of a born writer, a genius, so we need not doubt that the Russian originals lose a good deal in lightness of touch if not in sincerity of expression. For the rest of this present book I shall not quote Madame Blavatsky in full, but shall omit all irrelevant gossip notes regarding her health, comfort and surroundings.]

XIII.-XV.

[These chapters contain an abridgment of the Report of the Society for Psychical Research. Why this should be placed thus, in the middle of Solovyoff's NOVEL and quite out of the period is not much of a mystery; he felt the æsthetic need of some support of the same muddy colour as his own inventions, in his perverted tale, about a famous countrywoman. The report does not in the least concern us here, as it was issued long after the events of the next chapter.]

XVI.

"The spring had now insensibly stolen on, and I had not heard a sound or a sign about Madame Blavatsky . . . Olcott announced that Madame had been sick unto death, past all hope; that doctors had pronounced her to be dead, but that Mahatma M. had unexpectedly saved her, and that she was convalescent."

[Letter produced by Madame Jelihovsky, date March 7, 1885.]

Young Gebhard has been here lately, on his return from India. He says that Helena Petrovna is very ill. We have since received Olcott's circular announcing the miracle that has been wrought on her [her recovery]. But in any case, in my belief, her days are numbered. It is terribly soon. Her years are not many, and the chief thing is that her mind is clear, and her literary talent in full vigour. But what of all this now? . . . (p. 305. App.)

"Suddenly I received a letter from Italy:

Torre del Greco, Naples,
Hotel del Vesuvio, April 29th.
Dear Vesvolod Sergyeitch,

Arrived! They have brought me back half dead, and if I had stayed in India I should have been dead altogether. "In the mangle if not in the wash", you see. The intrigues of the Coulombs and the cursed missionaries have not succeeded, not a single theosophist has deserted; they received me on my return to Madras with all but a salvo of cannon . . . The Russians are coming to India through Afghanistan; ergo, the Russian woman Blavatsky must be a Russian spy. No matter that there is not a particle of evidence for it . . . I wish you would come . . . One cannot say everything in a letter, and I have a great deal to tell you before I go off.

I immediately replied to this letter . . .”

[Letter produced not by Solovyoff but by Mme. J.]

Sunday, May 3rd.

Dear Helena Petrovna, I do not know how to express to you my delight that you are in Europe. At all events, it seems that you are nearer, and that a meeting is more possible. Moreover, your departure from India did not strike me as strange; on the first news of our movements in Asia, A. began to assure me that the English would infallibly make themselves disagreeable to you, and that you would leave.

Remember that I told you that the time is rapidly approaching when the Russians and the Hindus will join? You thought it was not so soon. But you see! and apart from human wishes and plans, the inevitable destinies of history do their work . . . I cannot get the *Russky Vvestnik* here, but I heard some time ago from Moscow that your *Blue Mountains* was to begin. Probably it is already in print. Now, you see, it is the very time to write about India. Do get well! Scribble me a line. I will write to you when I am free from work, and that often.

Your sincerely devoted
Vs. Solovyoff. (p.306. App.)

“I communicated the contents of her letter to Madame de Morsier, who was greatly delighted, and at once sent to Torre del Greco a whole bundle of newspapers, with remarks about the Theosophical Society, etc. In the middle of May Madame de Morsier handed me the enclosed letter which she had received.”

[The letter is in French and says that Madame Blavatsky has had no reply to her letter to Solovyoff. She wonders if Solovyoff is still a friend. She says also, that Hodgson had pronounced all the phenomena fraudulent and everyone, H. P. B. herself, Olcott, Damodar — all charlatans.]

“‘What do you think of this’ Madame de Morsier asked me.

“‘. . . I think . . . that it would be well for me to make by way of pendant to Hodgson, . . . a careful and dispassionate inquiry. Unluckily, I cannot go to Naples now.’” [pp. 120-1]

[Letter produced by Mme. Jelihovsky.]
Paris, 48 Rue Pergolese, May 18, 1885.

Dear Helena Petrovna, What does this mean? I have written to you twice, and posted the letters myself. I have had from you one letter in which you announced your arrival at Torre del Greco. To-day, Madame de Morsier tells me that you have not got my letters. I telegraphed to you at once, and I am sending this letter registered. Where our letters disappear I cannot conceive . . . But in any case you have no right to doubt my sincere feeling for you. I do not change; that is not in my character. I too, am very ill, dear H.P., I am suffering seriously from my liver, and no-one here has done me any good. There is no getting away from ill-luck and annoyances . . . Believe me that I am doing everything in my power to come to see you, if I can only get strength enough and a spare week. But in my position this is so extremely difficult, and I am so tied in every way, that I much fear it will remain a dream . . . What am I to do? . . . I have no right to live my own life . . . I had an idea of passing this spring in Italy, — then I would have met you accidentally, so to speak . . .”

[Mme. J. writes: "Here follow details of how he was being deceived and swindled. He goes on:]

Generally speaking, I have been greatly disenchanted with the people here. Relations that began by being friendly have invariably ended in every sort of exploitation, and rude demands on my purse . . . Your enemies' trick about the investigation of the phenomena may be all nonsense too. But force must be met with force. I must see you; but I have only one head, two hands, two feet, a very sickly body, and Karma binds me in every direction. Do recover! This is my heart-felt wish.

Yours, Vs. Solovyoff.

[H. P. B. had come from India accompanied by Dr. Hartmann, a Theosophist, Mary Flynn, a devoted, although rather erratic, young lady from Bombay, and Babaji Dharbagiri Nath, a CHELA of Mahatma K.H. H. P. B. replied to Solovyoff, describing these persons; says that she is going to write the "Secret Doctrine" and intends going to a quiet German town to live. H. P. B. wrote again to Madame de Morsier (where is the original letter?) thanking her for a sum of money sent by an unknown Parisian friend, and refers to Solovyoff: "I like very much my friend Solovyoff, but he says stupid things about our Mahatmas, this poor unbelieving Thomas." Considering the tone of Solovyoff's own letters, there is not much evidence of this unbelief! One can only conclude that Madame Blavatsky was indulging in a little ironical flattery of his occasional exhibition of the ESPRIT FORT A LA MODE. He next writes concerning his efforts on her behalf. Letter produced by Mme. J.]

Paris, 4 Rue Balzac,
Friday, June 12, 1885.

Dear Helena Petrovna, The last two weeks have not passed in vain. Crookes and Sinnett have been here. I have made their acquaintance; but the thing is that all is arranged and prepared to overwhelm, here at least — that is in the Paris press — all this rabble of Coulobms and all the asses, to what learned society soever they may belong, who could for a moment pay attention to her abominable pamphlet. The pamphlet has produced universal indignation here, and I have not even had to defend you to anybody — so that after this dirty intrigue, they have only increased the sympathy felt for you . . . Ah, if I could only see you!

Your sincerely devoted and affectionate
Vs. Solovyoff. (p. 302. App.)

XVII

[Evidently, Solovyoff escaped somehow from his financial and domestic embarrassments in Paris, for we next find him in Switzerland with Madame de Morsier.]

" . . . I sent Madame Blavatsky our address. At the end of July, there was a letter from her: —

Dear V. S., Pardon me, I could not write; my right hand is so swollen that my fingers are numb. I am in a bad way. I start tomorrow to settle for the winter in Wurzburg, a few hours from Munich . . . I shall go there with Babaji and Miss F., my friend, but a great fool. Lord, how sick I am of life! Now do write if you cannot come yourself . . . Madame X [H. P. B.'s aunt] promises to come. I do not know if it will be so . . . I shall go through Rome and Verona.

“Five days later came a telegram from Rome . . . I telegraphed, ‘Come here’, and explained by what route they should come . . . having agreed with Madame de Morsier that if Madame did not come we would meet her at Geneva. But she came.”

[Solovyoff describes the plight of poor Madame Blavatsky, swollen, worn out and venting her fatigue and ill-temper on the two companions.]

“Somehow or other all was finally arranged, and in an hour Helena Petrovna settled in an adjacent house, dined with a poor appetite, and scolded on

““There, my friends, now you see my position yourselves. Some days I can move neither hand nor foot and lie like a log, and no one to help me in anything. Babaji only spins like a top and never stirs from his place and this Mashka F. is a born fool, and I curse the day when I agreed to take her with me. You see, the fact is that she was dreadfully bored there at home and thought that she would find some agreeable distractions in travelling’

“She suddenly calmed down, changed her manner . . . and soared into the other spheres.”

[Everyone notes this extraordinary sudden change of H. P. B. from a frenzied despair at even some trifle to “other spheres”; her anger was always ephemeral and unmalicious.]
“And from these other spheres was heard her inspired voice.

“Her thoughts . . . were always expressed by Helena Petrovna with an unusual simplicity and clearness which were an indubitable proof of true talent, and were in fact the principal magnet that drew me to her. At times, and quite unexpectedly, she changed into a really inspired prophetess, she was entirely transfigured . . . (pp.132-6)

[Solovyoff decided to pass the summer at Wurzburg. Both he and Madame de Morsier appear to have become enchanted with H. P. B., despite her fits of temper that flashed up and passed. A week on the mountains had done her a world of good.]

“I wrote to Myers that not knowing Hodgson or his investigation, or how exact and dispassionate it was, I should undertake one of my own; I should pass a longer or shorter time at Wurzburg, where Madame Blavatsky was to settle, and should learn everything. The results of my investigation I should report in proper time.

“This letter I showed in Madame de Morsier’s presence to Madame Blavatsky, and she . . . was highly delighted.” (p.138)

XVIII

“I found her at Wurzburg . . . There had been arranged for her [by Dr. Hartmann] very convenient and roomy lodgings in the Ludwigstrasse, the best street of the town . . . She again fell very ill; Babaji came running up to me, all trembling with terror . . . Madame was very bad, a doctor, a famous specialist for internal complaints, was greatly alarmed . . .

“To my inquiry about his patient, the doctor replied: ‘I never saw anything like it in the whole course of

my many years of practice. She has several mortal diseases — an ordinary person would have been dead long ago from any one of them. But hers is a phenomenal nature; and if she has lived so long, she may, for all we can tell, live on yet.’

“‘For the moment then, her life is not in danger?’

“‘Her life has been in danger for years, but you see she is alive. A wonderful, wonderful phenomenon.’

“‘I again found Helena Petrovna all swollen up and almost without movement. But a day passed, and she managed to crawl out of her bed to her writing-table, and wrote for several hours, gnashing her teeth with anguish . . . pages and sheets were pouring from her pen at an astonishing rate”

[There are several things of importance that Solovyoff sees fit not to mention; that for the first day or two, Dr. Hartmann was at Wurzburg; that he himself was accompanied by his lady companion whom he introduced to everyone as his wife, and their child; that Mme. Fadeev, H. P. B.’s aunt arrived from Russia by, at latest, the 27th of August, a day or two after H. P. B.’s illness; that Miss Arundale and Mohini came from London on Sept. 1st. Thus, Solovyoff could scarcely have passed much time ALONE with Madame Blavatsky. He writes (p.144): “I settled myself in Rugmer’s Hotel and all the time I did not spend in sleeping, eating and walking through the town, I passed with Madame Blavatsky”. Apart from H. P. B.’s other visitors, his own companion, must have made some demand on his time. He keeps her entirely out of the picture in his book although, as his letters say he had considerable domestic “karma”, and was not at all free to do as he pleased. H. P. B. wrote to Sinnett on August 19th: “Solovyoff is so indignant that he has sent in his resignation to the S. P. R. He wrote a long letter to Myers and now the latter answers him, . . . begs of him not to resign and asks him whether he still maintains that what he saw at Elberfeld was not a hallucination or a fraud; and finally begs him to come and meet him at Mancy — where he will prove to him my GUILT! Solovyoff says that since he is placed by their REPORT as so many others, between choosing to confess himself either a lunatic or a confederate — he considers it a SLAP ON THE FACE, a direct insult to him and answers Myers DEMANDING that his letter should be published and resignation made known. He intends stopping here at Wurzburg with me for a month or so, with his wife and child.” On August 28th, she writes again: “I do not see why my aunt should delay your coming . . . She sleeps during the day and talks with me all night . . . Rugmer’s Hotel is close by . . . The Solovyoffs are there . . . We see each other very little though, for we both of us have work to do.” (H. P. B. to A. P. S. pp.113, 117) Miss Arundale and Mohini stayed a week and Sinnett and his wife came immediately after they left. Mrs. Sinnett stayed with H. P. B. and Sinnett at the hotel. Solovyoff says (p.138) that H. P. B. had promised him lessons in occultism: “I give you my word of honour that I will reveal all to you, all that is possible”. Maybe, she said it, in any case, she would have preferred him, an own countryman, to many others. Still, after that first visit at Elberfeld, the Mahatma M. seems to have ignored Solovyoff. Mahatma K. H. wrote him a word or two; as in the case of Hume, Massey, Madame Coulomb and others, K. H. may have been inclined to try patience far longer with these slippery people than the stern “Master”. However much impressed H. P. B. must have been by the undoubted psychical value of Solovyoff, a clairvoyant and clairaudient, although quite passive, she had to reckon with the Master as to the question of revealing PROCESS, and she knew

this; so it is very doubtful that she said anything about revelations, but likely enough that she said she would show him some phenomena and give him the chance of making discoveries for himself — as every novice has to do, no process ever being told to novices. However, very soon after reaching Wurzburg, she began to discern that Solovyoff was an incorrigible gossip and scandal-monger, and a sentence in a letter to him indicates that Vera had told her that Solovyoff had “attacked the society” (p.130). Perhaps it was only through Vera that H. P. B. learned of Solovyoff’s “doubting Thomas” attitude, for not one letter to H. P. B. herself shows anything of the sort.]

XIX and XX

[In these two chapters Solovyoff tells about the phenomena performed for his enlightenment — the which perverted narrative in no wise belongs to this Plain Tale and will be dealt with in the sequel.]

XXI

“Two or three days afterwards I saw Madame X [Mme. Fadeev] who had come from Russia . . . After Mme. X there came to Wurzburg Sinnett and his wife, and Mohini with Miss Arundale.

[Miss A. and Mohini and Babaji left for London BEFORE SINNETT CAME.]

I used to call at Madame Blavatsky’s lodgings to talk to Madame X . . . I used to go for walks with her, leaving Miss Arundale with Mohini and Sinnett with Madame Blavatsky. The latter was now occupied several hours a day, dictating (“Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky”, published 1886.)

“Miss Arundale soon went back to London, taking with her Babaji as well as Mohini. I also was on the point of leaving Wurzburg . . . Before my departure I paid Madame a farewell visit.”

[Madame Blavatsky had prophesied certain future events to happen to Solovyoff during the next two months. We never learn WHAT were these prophecies, but among them certainly was some kind of statement referring to Solovyoff’s psychical development and, possibly, that he would once again be taken in hand by the Master M. Maybe, H. P. B. fancied that she could persuade the Master; there is plenty of evidence that she frequently exercised her CHELA right to propose a new novice for whom she would be responsible. However that may be, Solovyoff went away so full of faith in his approaching glorification that he sought out Professor Richet in Paris. A letter Solovyoff solicited from Richet after H. P. B.’s death throws some light on Solovyoff’s communication to him, and can scarcely have been quite satisfactory to Solovyoff. I translate from page 346.]

When I saw you, you said to me — “Reserve your judgment, she has shown me some astonishing things, my opinion is not quite decided yet, but I thoroughly believe that she is an extraordinary woman, endowed with exceptional faculties. Wait, and I will give you further explanations.”

Letter produced by Mme. J. p.288. App.]

Paris, Oct. 8, 1885.

Dear Helena Petrovna, Which is the better, to write at random, or to hold one’s tongue and work for the

good of one's correspondent? . . . I have made friends with Madame Adam, and talked a great deal to her about you; I have greatly interested her, and she has told me that her *Revue* is open not only to theosophy but to a defence of yourself personally if necessary. I praised up Madame de Morsier to her, and at the same time there was another gentleman there who spoke on your behalf in the same tone, and Madame Adam wished to make acquaintance with Madame de Morsier, who will remain in Paris as the official means of communication between me and the *Nouvelle Revue*. Yesterday, the meeting of the two ladies took place; our Emilie was quite it raptures . . . It any case, this is very good. To-day I passed the morning with Richet, and again talked a great deal about you, in connexion with Myers and the Psychical Society. I can say positively that *I convinced Richet of the reality of your personal power and of the phenomena which proceed from you*. He put me three questions categorically. To the first two I answered affirmatively (Presumably, that she had shown him phenomena and that she possessed "extraordinary faculties"); with respect to the third I said that I should be in a position to answer affirmatively, without any trouble, in two or three months. But I do not doubt that I shall answer affirmatively, and then you will see! There will be such a triumph that all the psychists (S.P.R.) will be wiped out ... Yes, so it will be; for you did not treat me as a doll? . . . I start the day after to-morrow for St Petersburg . . . What will happen?

Yours cordially devoted
Vs. Solovyoff.

THE SEQUEL

What did happen? Apparently, nothing. Solovyoff was given neither visual, auditory nor documentary evidence of the existence of the Masters. "And then you will see! there will be such a triumph that all the psychists will be wiped out." Solovyoff nursed the remarkable delusion (suffered long since by A. O. Hume and others) that if only HE were put in a position to swear to the phenomena, the world would be quite satisfied; this same world that rejected one who could DO the phenomena! The case is exactly that, for, if Solovyoff had not been convinced that the phenomena were genuine, he would not have dreamed of being able to prove them to the world.

And here he was — completely ignored and rejected; what a position! He had "convinced" Richet and Madame Adam and who knows who else of the powers of Madame Blavatsky; he had patronized "our Emilie", Madame de Morsier, whom, later, when she takes his side, he will call the noblest of women; had certainly shown off to all the Paris theosophists, none of whom had been honoured by a note from the Master, even so much as to tell them that he could not open their eyes that would not see. He had written to the S.P.R. and Myers severe letters, had published his experiences in the S.P.R. Journal and in the REBUS. Above all, again — Richet, he had CONVINCED RICHET: and here he was with all this gossip about him floating around and himself with nothing to show for all his boasting. What could he do? Only one thing—denounce Madame Blavatsky as a charlatan and so be received back by Richet, Myers and Company with some sort of dignity left: as a scientific enquirer, who, like the rest, had thought it his duty to look into these strange matters, impartially; impartially, without fear to find himself the dupe of the charlatan and then —to denounce her, a painful, but public, duty.

And this is what Solovyoff did.

On his return to St. Petersburg, Madame Jell hovsky received him with open arms, sympathized with all his troubles and more than once, as she confesses —

“tried to prevent his losing his head; trusting to his honour (?) I even allowed myself to make statements which, perhaps, I had no right to make. I never concealed my mistrust of the miraculous side of my sister’s work; I told her so openly, and at this time, ignorant of much that I learned afterwards, I was in many ways unjust to her and to those about her. I should, of course, have been more reticent in my admissions, could I have foreseen that he would make use of my friendly confidence, not for his own profit only, but as a weapon to sow discord between us by revealing it.” (app. p.290.)

Vera’s orthodox arguments gave him the best mantles to throw over his defeat; from this time, Solovyoff grasped the possibility of figuring as a saviour of Christian Russia from what he calls the “miasmatic exhalations” of Theosophy. Christians may perhaps not be too grateful to him. He writes on p.284:

“If a new sect has any, success, it gathers adherents chiefly among the hysterical who are susceptible of suggestion”.

The feeblest Christian might object to this analysis of the beginnings of successful religions.

Meanwhile, Theosophical history was being made in other directions, in ways that singularly fortified Solovyoff and his schemes. A scandal concerning Mohini and some ladies had burst in London and Paris. Madame de Morsier was seriously upset. A letter from H.P.B., advising public discretion about the whole affair merely exalted her into the notion of perishing POURVU QUE JE FASSE MON DEVOIR, her notion of this duty being, apparently, to publish the scandal far and wide and thus bring suffering on the innocent numbers of Theosophists.

At this moment, also, the news of the coming Report denouncing H.P.B. as an impostor was sedulously being scattered by the S.P.R. Undoubtedly, Solovyoff was early informed of it by his friend, Myers. At the end of December, he returned to Paris and immediately clanned with Madame de Morsier and her party. He told Mme. de M. that H.P.B. had believed in Mohini’s guilt from the very first. A lie. She never believed it to the last, but none the less, advised against an official enquiry that would have oozed through somehow to the newspapers. In fact, there is no evidence against Mohini further than that he had replied to love-letters from a certain lady. But Madame de Morsier had set off on a path from which she seems to have felt small inclination to return. She showed Solovyoff a letter in which his own precious name was mentioned. He then wrote to Madame Blavatsky a letter that she describes to Sinnett as a “thundering, sickening, threatening letter. He threatens that if I bring his name into this dirty scandal, all my devils (meaning Masters) will not save me from utter ruin. He speaks of Baron Meyendorf — of Blavatsky, and the reputation made for me by FRIENDS in Russia and elsewhere”.

The fact seems to be that Vera and her daughters, who declared that H.P.B.’s name “stank in their nostrils as Christians”, had gossiped with quite shameful family

disloyalty to Solovyoff, and about matters of which it is very clear they never knew the real circumstances. What the tales were exactly we never hear. Solovyoff cannot produce any of them. His book is quite vague on the subject. Maybe, he got nothing but vague hints. All the rumours about H.P.B.'s "wild youth" boil down to almost nothing! Examination by the gynecological specialist, Oppenheim, proved that she was physically deformed and practically an hermaphrodite and could not have indulged in any of the pranks usually included in the expression, a wild youth. Wild she was, but her wildness was for complete freedom to study occultism. We scarcely need her own statement to confirm the obvious attitude of the orthodox among her family towards this study. . . She says that she deliberately led people to accuse her of seeking love-affairs in her wanderings, as a cover for what she was really engaged in, and for which some of the family would have anathematized her. One of the most touching traits in H.P.B. is her affection for this family that so long treated her as the Ugly Duckling. Her letters to Vera contain a few small deceptions. Whose fault? The families of geniuses are mostly unsympathetic (less so, nowadays, perhaps, when genius is recognized as a commercial asset to possible heirs and heiresses — at least, after a first bit of favourable publicity). Madame Blavatsky knew better than to give babes strong meat, and indeed it took Vera many years to grow up to the view of her sister as a vastly superior personage whom she could only honour without hope of deeply understanding. H.P.B. forgave (though that is hardly the word, but one should rather say, calmly overlooked) all the damage Vera had done to her, took her to her bosom and died happily friends.

Solovyoff's letter drove H.P.B. into a frenzy. It was, as she says, the last straw on the burden of slander, disloyalty and treachery she was suffering from all sides, her only friend near at this time being the angelic Countess Wachtmeister. The S.P.R. Report was out; every post, so the Countess tells us, brought letters from wavering Theosophists when not stark insults from some who resigned. It is a story that would take volumes to tell properly, so many lines cross and re-cross, so many mysteries there are to be unwound; and some are probably beyond unwinding. She was ill as few have been ill and lived. And she was writing the "Secret Doctrine". Fallen on evil days and evil tongues, she continued as genius does continue in spite of all.

I think it likely that Solovyoff, for once, speaks the truth when he says he had not written to her for some time and had left a letter or two (she says that she only wrote him three times) without reply. She must have wondered painfully why he did not reply, for that she had taken him into her almost uniquely wide, if not very deep, perhaps, affection, there is small doubt. She loved everyone in a way and could always overlook any mischief they did to her and I verily believe that if even the Coulombs had turned up again in misery and tears, she would soon have been giving them tea and chatting of old times and saying in that quaint way of her — "But why did you do it, what had I done to YOU? How damned absurd of you! What fools! Well, let it go."

It is likely, too, that she expected that her Master would again take some notice of Solovyoff. Had he not come to see her when she was under the cloud, come even to Wurzburg and stuck to her, sent angry letters to Myers and his resignation from the S.P.R.? From all we can gather, this Master had made up his mind about Solovyoff during that astral visit at Elberfeld: there would be no further relations between them.

The liar and bully he proved himself to be would have been written in his aura as well as the egoistic and upstart motives of his craving for chelaship and the possession of the powers he saw in H.P.B. She would not be told plainly that he was rejected but left to find it out for herself if she could, for such is the rule; but the usual hint she doubtless did get and failed to take, as she had failed more than once before in similar cases, and precisely through that careless liking, she rarely could quite abandon anyone she had known at all intimately. Theosophical story is full of instances of her struggles not to see what was impossible to tolerate in anyone she liked. It is a kind of virtue none too common, but the defect of it is fatal in a chela, whose whole business it is to develop cool clarity of understanding, however charitably he might act. She confused frequently this psychological process, thinking uncharitably but blinding herself and acting as though she had seen nothing to beware of. It was only in piercing to a person's occult capacities that she could be cool; ordinary dealings in human nature found her ready to take everyone to her capacious bosom and many a snake she took! Her adventures in this way would be sufficiently amusing if some had not turned out a tragedy for her. What is certain is that no soul of her sort was ever an intriguer with the least success! She was to the last absolutely unable to refrain from saying what she thought of anyone at the time. . She made enemies of the stupid and pompous, but her friends adored her even although she trod on their own toes. "You know you don't mean it!" could always bring her to that state of winsomeness that both Olcott and Countess Wachtmeister noted as such a lovely trait. Her swearing at you at times became quite unimportant once you knew her.

And so, she liked the amusing, conversational Solovyoff, the Russian from her own Russia, and managed to forget or overlook what she had seen well enough at times, the bitter-minded, ambitious man, a bad gossip too. (See H.P.B. to A.P.S. P. 184.) Yet, a clairvoyant and clairaudient, he had come under notice of her Masters who are said to examine every psychic as a possible blessing to humanity and to be protected, but also as a possible curse and to be left to — those who may be called for short, their father, the devil. Madame Blavatsky knew much about all this that the non-psychic world laughs at, and when Solovyoff departed for Russia, still vowing friendship, doubtless she supposed that he had still a chance. "We bade one another farewell as though we were dearest friends, almost with tears . . . Not a word, except vows that he would stand up for me in Russia, and help me in every way did I hear. And then he suddenly goes and holds his tongue. Without cause or reason he is in quite a different mood in St. Petersburg. You do not know, in the innocence of your soul, but I know; he is simply frightened of the abuse of the Psychical Society . . . You see, they have declared of a Gentil-homme de la chambre that he is either a liar or suffers from hallucinations . . ." Thus she writes to Vera after receiving the "thundering, sickening threatening letter", not knowing at the time what she will soon know; and almost as soon forgive, that Vera herself was for something in Solovyoff's change of attitude, that Vera had exercised her Christian influence and gone the length of telling the scoundrel some early gossip about her sister.

But what could this gossip have been? Obviously Solovyoff was never given any particulars or he would have put them in his book. The story was probably not known in its particulars to Vera who was still a schoolgirl when H.P.B. was married. Vera could only have heard vaguely of a romance that was surely never known in full even to the

elders. Madame Ermeloff gives us a clue in her Memoirs. I had vowed never to draw attention to this romance, but someone else may do worse . . . As a very young girl, Helena Petrovna gazed with awe and adoration on a certain prince, an occultist. She fled to, not with, him, and he almost certainly sent her back home. Then, her father being far away and her mother long dead, the angry grandfather and aunt married her off quickly to Mr. Blavatsky. She speaks to Sinnett of her “prayers and supplications not to be married to old Blavatsky”. There is a story that she herself induced Blavatsky to propose because her governess declared that no-one would marry her, so ugly and ill-tempered. Change that to so disgraced and there may be much truth in it. If she did induce the unfortunate man to propose, she was horrified at the resolution to make her go through with the contract. And she soon fled again, now a real married woman and, as she seems to have understood it, free to take the road to liberty with no grandfathers and aunts to interfere. Off she went, and maybe she met the prince again, maybe not. I should say, yes; but I believe her own words that she loved occultism more than man and her medical dossier proves that, for her, love’s young dream can never have been anything but a dream. Nothing is known. One day, some great novelist may make a story of it, but nothing is known.

The whole province had gossiped, however, and the echoes of this gossip reached Solovyoff, vague even as echoes, for his pen at its most malignant is reduced to blustering hints. Solovyoff’s “sickening threatening” letter has apparently not been preserved. H.P.B. immediately sent it to her aunt, Madame Fadeev, as we learn from a letter to Vera, quoted on p. 314:

“It is my fault that they were angry with you. I have done a foolish act. In vexation and anger at you, I sent off to them a letter of Solovyoff’s to me, that begins in a most mysterious style: ‘After what has happened, I can have no further communication with you’. And it ends with all sorts of allusions to matters twenty and thirty years old”.

To Sinnett, she wrote with more hope of sympathy: “He threatens that if I bring his name into this dirty scandal, all my devils (meaning MASTERS) will not save me from utter ruin. He speaks of Baron Myendorf — of Blavatsky, and the reputation made for me by friends in Russia and elsewhere . . . Solovyoff threatens me moreover that Mr. Blavatsky is not dead but is a ‘charming centenarian’ who had found fit to conceal himself for years on his brother’s property”.

H.P.B.’s reply to Solovyoff begins with a paragraph of pure genius.

“I have made up my mind. Has the following picture ever presented itself to your literary imagination? There is living in the forest a wild boar — an ugly creature, but harmless to everyone so long as they leave him at peace in his forest, with his wild beast friends who love him. This boar never hurt anyone in his life, but only grunted to himself as he ate the roots that were his own, in the sheltering woods. For no reason, a pack of fierce dogs is loosed against him; men chase him from the woods, threaten to burn his native forest and to leave him a wanderer, homeless, for anyone to kill. For a while, he flies before the hounds, although he is no coward by nature. He tried to escape *for the sake of the forest*, lest they burn it down. But lo! one after another, the wild beasts which were once his friends join the hounds; they begin to chase him, yelping and trying to bite and catch him, to make an end of him. Worn out, the boar sees that his forest is already set on fire and that he cannot save either it or himself. What is left? What can the

boar do? Why, thus: he stops, he faces the mad pack of dogs and beasts and shows his spirit, himself as he really is. He bounds on his foes in their turn. He slays them until he has no more strength, until he falls dead — and then he is *really* powerless.”

Imagine a woman who could write like that being pestered to death about a faux pas de jeunesse! The world gets what it deserves, it gets lying novelettes by the Solovyoffs and is stuck deeper in the mire it is so willing to inhabit, but — alas! we others lose all those books that an H. P. Blavatsky might have written had she found the encouragement such an art and an artist demands.

The horrible comedy of the thing is that the faux pas was a next to nothing! A romantic flight of a sixteen-year old at worst. And then, to be married off to an elderly general and sent all wrong in everyone’s eyes through doing the only thing she could do, namely, run away after the marriage. And how she came to exaggerate the sin and wickedness of this youthful escapade! The chance is, though, that she was probably not in the least repentant on the side of Society, but she was certainly terrified on the side of the Theosophical Society, her “forest”, that the mad pack of dogs was trying to burn down, using the pot of old scandal as paraffin. Already, for several months, Hodgson of the Society for Psychical Research and Madame Coulomb had been spreading rumours and lies about her sex past, only stopping at a bunch of three illegitimate children. All this, however, merely annoyed and did not terrify H.P.B., for she knew there was nothing in it; but now, this Russian affair — she knew that there was some truth in that, knew also, how the truth had been mauled and exaggerated in Russia. She knew, too, that people there commonly believed her to be the mother of Baron Myendorf’s crippled son whom she had adopted . . .

I should judge that, in her somewhat blind anger and indignation, in the fury she felt at being chased and bitten by so many supposed friends all around, she could believe anything of anyone, and actually imagined that Meyendorf had, at least, not contradicted Solovyoff’s gossip about the child; actually, it is doubtful whether Solovyoff had seen the Baron, for in a letter to Sinnett she writes: “Then he mixed Baron M.’s names with his lies — and the Baron swore he would cut his nose off, whenever he met him, for he has never told S. anything about me as Solovyoff avers, and I wrote to the Baron. So do not be anxious.” The Baron seems to have been a feeble creature enough who would cut nobody’s nose off; but he knew a great deal about H.P.B. It is likely that she had some occult experiences with him in Paris in 1858 and that he confided in the medium, Dunglas Home, who, like many another medium, hated the occultism that left his own psychic phenomena in the shade, as being entirely outside his own control, and who seems to have warned the Baron that she was a dangerous person. It is possible, of course, that the Baron’s child was not born until after his confidences to Home and that at that moment, he was under no obligation to Madame Blavatsky for saving him and the mother from a scandal that would have ruined them both. I think that it would not be difficult to trace the mother as a member of the Blavatsky family, the which relationship would account for General Blavatsky’s subsequent indulgence in 1862 towards his runaway wife, to the length, indeed, of associating himself with the wardship of the child; and this relationship would account for Madame Blavatsky’s own sacrifice in the matter, sacrifice she pushed to the enthusiastic limit of trying to smooth the future path

of the infant by giving it a public appearance of legitimacy and saying that it was her own! Women do these things.

But what the Baron also knew, probably from H.P.B. herself in a moment of self-deprecation — a confession to set the sinners more at their ease — was the provincial gossip about her own young adventure. Home is said to have hinted that he knew a lot about Madame Blavatsky's youth; and there was nothing but that to know and the fact that she ran away from Mr. Blavatsky. The circumstance that Home heard all this in 1858 when he and the Baron were intimate in Paris indicates Myendorf as his confidant.

In her fit of frenzied disgust, H.P.B. threatens to settle the whole world of traitors once and for all by telling the whole story, everyone's and her own. But she never went further than the threat. To carry out the threat she would have needed to name people, and that she would not have done; also, she had the "Secret Doctrine" to write. These rumours soon passed into the back of her mind and we hear little more concerning them. However, her letter to Solovyoff has fortunately become public and we get a glimpse of her in a real rage — she was not often in a real rage, only in a half-comic temper with tepid coffee and fools or with one of her phenomenally diseased organs her opinions about which she passed on without proper explanation to the nearest handy person. I cannot resist the impression, however, that she rather enjoyed this confession *à la russe*, examples of which we lately saw in the Soviet trials, where you say everything — and something more, where the role of sinner once assigned and accepted is played to bring the house to its feet.

"Believe me *I have fallen because I have made up my mind to fall*, or else to bring about a reaction by telling all God's truth about myself, *but without mercy on my enemies*. On this I am firmly resolved, and from this day I shall begin to prepare myself in order to be ready. I will fly no more. Together with this letter or a few hours later, I shall myself be in Paris, and then on to London. A Frenchman is ready, and a well-known journalist too, delighted to set about the work and to write at my dictation something short, but strong, and what is most important, a true history of my life. *I shall not even attempt to defend*, to justify myself. In this book I shall simply say: In 1848, I, hating my husband, N. V. Blavatsky (it may have been wrong, but still such was the nature *God* gave me), left him, abandoned him — a *virgin* (I shall produce documents and letters proving this, although he himself is not such a swine as to deny it). I loved one man deeply, but still more I loved occult science, believing in magic, wizards, etc. I wandered with him here and there, in Asia, in America, and in Europe. I met with So-and-so (You may call him a *wizard*, what does it matter to him?) In 1858 I was in London; there came out some story about a child, not mine (there will follow medical evidence, from the faculty of Paris, and it is for this that I am going to Paris)."

She never bothered, the certificate given by the gynecological specialist, Professor Oppenheimer of Wurzburg being archi-sufficient for the friends who knew the surgeon and the witness, Dr. Roeder, Medical Officer of the District.

"One thing and another was said of me; that I was depraved, possessed with a devil, etc. I shall tell everything as I think fit, everything I did, for the twenty years and more that I laughed at the *qu'en dira-t-on* and covered up all traces of what I was *really* occupied in, i.e., the *sciences occultes*, for the

sake of my family and relations who would at that time have cursed me. I will tell how from my eighteenth year I tried to get people to talk about me, and say about me that this man and that was my lover, and *hundreds* of them. I will tell too a great deal of which no one ever dreamed, and *I will prove it*. Then I will inform the world how suddenly my eyes were opened to all the horror of my *moral suicide*; how I was sent to America to try my psychological capabilities.

[Footnote: Moral, nowadays, means, of course something to do with sex; but to H. P. Blavatsky, moral suicide meant among other things, that she was not using, or was mis-using, for salon phenomena, the knowledge she had been taught during her first sojourn in Tibet. Her letters a psychological lapse about 1862, was extremely ill, and came under bad occult influences. She fought her way through it, disappeared in 1864 and no doubt worked her “salvation”, for she went again to Tibet in 1867 or early 68 with her Master; it is significant that only then was she introduced to the Mahatma H.H.]

How I collected a society there and began to expiate my faults, and attempted to make men better and to sacrifice myself for their regeneration. *I will name all* the theosophists who were brought into the right way, drunkards and rakes, who became almost saints, especially in India, and those who enlisted as theosophists, and continued their former life, as though they were doing the work (and there are many of them) and *yet were the first* to join the pack of hounds that were hunting me down and to bite me. I will describe many Russians, great and small — Madame S — among them, *her* slander and how it turned out to be a lie and a calumny. I shall not spare myself, I swear I will not spare; *I myself will set fire* to the four quarters of my native wood, the society to wit, and I will perish, but I will perish *with a huge following*. God grant I shall die, shall perish at once on publication; but if not, if the master would not allow it, how should I fear anything? Am I a criminal before the law? Have I killed anyone, destroyed, defamed? I am an American foreigner, and I must not go back to Russia. From Blavatsky, if he is alive, what have I to fear? It is thirty-eight years since I parted from him, after that I passed three days and a half with him in Tiflis in 1863, and then we parted again. Or M — ? I do not care a straw about that egoist and hypocrite! He betrayed me, destroyed me by telling *lies* to the medium Home, who has been disgracing me for ten years already, so much the worse for him.

[She imagines so; actually, Home said nothing much, although he probably said it very often, mainly sneers at her occultism.]

You understand, it is for the sake of the society I have valued my reputation these ten years. *I trembled* lest rumours founded on *my own efforts*

[a splendid case for the psychologists, for Richet and Co.]

and magnified a hundred times, might throw discredit on the society while blackening me. I was ready to go on my knees to those who might help me to cast a veil over my past; to give my life and powers to those who helped me. But now? Will you, or Home the medium, or M — , or anyone in the world, frighten me with threats when I have myself resolved on a full confession? Absurd! I tortured and killed myself with fear and terror that I should damage the society—kill it. But now I torture myself no more. I have thought it all out, coolly and sanely, I have risked all on a single card — *all!* I will snatch the weapon from my enemies’ hands and write a book that will make a noise all through Europe and Asia, and bring in immense sums of money to support my orphan niece, an innocent child, my brother’s orphan. Even if all the filth and scandal and lies against me had been the holy truth, still I should have been no worse than hundreds of princesses, countesses, court ladies and royalties, than Queen Isabella herself, who have given themselves, even *sold* themselves to the entire male sex, from nobles to

coachmen and waiters inclusive; what can they say of me worse than that? *And all this I myself will say and sign.*" (Sic.)

[I confess that I transcribe this tirade with some amusement! Madame Blavatsky's annoyance has entirely run away with her. But immediately she is on a level to which her feet are accustomed, and her anger becomes real again.]

"No, The devils will save me in this last great hour. You did not calculate on the cool determination of *despair*, which *was* and has *passed over*. To you I have never done any harm whatever, I never dreamed of it. If I am lost, I am lost with everyone. I will even take to lies, to the greatest of lies, which, for that reason, is the most likely to be believed. I will say and publish it in the *Times* and all the papers, that the 'master' and 'Mahatma K.H.' are only the product of my own imagination: that I invented them, that the phenomena were all more or less spiritualistic apparitions, and I shall have twenty million spiritists in a body at my back. I will say that in certain instances I *fooled* people; I will expose dozens of *fools, des hallucines*; I will say that I was making trial for my own satisfaction, for the sake of experiment. And to this I have been brought by *you*. You have been the last straw that has broken the camel's back under its intolerably heavy burden.

"Now you are at liberty to conceal nothing. Repeat to all Paris what you have ever heard or know about me. I have already written to Sinnett *forbidding* him to publish my *memoirs* at his own discretion. I myself will publish them with all the truth. So there will be the '*truth* about H. P. Blavatsky', in which psychology and all *her own* and *others'* immorality and Rome and politics and all *her own* and *others'* filth once more will be set out to God's world. I shall conceal nothing. It will be a Saturnalia of the moral depravity of mankind, this *confession* of mine, a worthy epilogue of my stormy life. And it will be a treasure for science as well as for scandal: and it is all me, *me*; I will show myself with a *reality* that will break many, and will resound through the world. Let the psychist gentlemen [S.P.R.] and whosoever will set on foot a new enquiry. Mohini and all the rest, even India, are dead for me. I thirst for one thing only, that the world may know the reality, all the *truth*, and learn the lesson. And then *death*, kindest of all.

"H. Blavatsky.

"You may print this letter if you will, even in Russia. It is all the same to me now."

Solovyoff did not print this letter, at least not until she was dead. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure that his version of it is even correct. In an Appendix, I show that he juggled with one portion to suit his own evil purposes and it is more than probable that he suppressed references to himself and inserted little phrases that give a colouring to suit himself. In fact, the whole of the passage before the last, that contains the portion that we know he faked must be taken with many suspicions. As he changed the grammar and sense in one absolutely important instance, so he may have changed the grammar and sense more than once. Allowing for all possible incoherence owing to the rage of a woman already hunted and wounded, and now faced with the "thundering, sickening, threatening" attitude of one from whom she had parted as a real Russian friend — one feels that there are gaps in the letter. However, the thing being mainly a tirade and actually saying nothing much, it sounds not very important to-day. If she had had anything to confess, she would have let slip some news of it in that state of fury and not have burred Solovyoff with those Balzacian hundreds of princesses and coachmen! I rather wish that she had written the novel!!

[Solovyoff, however, was terribly scared and replied with the following letter, produced by Madame Jelihovsky (p.316):

“Helena Petrovna, You are too wise a woman to yield to the furious madness in which you wrote the letter of yesterday, headed ‘Confession’. If I were really your personal enemy, I should now have awaited with triumph your appearance in Paris and London, and should coolly have looked on at your fall, which can in no way do me any harm; for ever since I have known you I have acted with knowledge. Every step of mine with regard to you, every word that I have spoken or written to you, points straight to my goal, in which there is no discredit to me, as a Russian or a Christian.

This goal as you know I have reached; it was not for nothing that I passed six weeks in fetid Wurzburg. Can you really imagine that it is possible to scare me by impudent slanders and falsehood, and that I have not ready for you in any event — for I have always expected anything of you — a tolerable collection of surprises of all sorts? It is you yourself who are your worst enemy, and you do not know what you are doing, and on what you are rushing; I know perfectly well what I am doing, and what will happen, though I have none of your Mahatmas to incite me . . . You see I have a cool head, as you yourself said; while yours is hot beyond belief, and when it is once fired, you simply see nothing . . .

“Do you want a scandal? You have had little enough already? Very well, if you please, you are welcome. And so we will set to work . . .

“I have nothing more to say to you. I am far, very far, from being your enemy, and I give you my best wishes, especially for your tranquillity, far from all these agitations.

“If you compare yourself with a wild boar, and want to bite — very well; the traps are ready. Pardon this tone. It is yours, not mine.

“Vs. Solovyoff.”

Madame Blavatsky read only one way. Solovyoff was not her enemy, he was far from wishing anything but her tranquillity. He said so; and why should one say so if one did not mean it? Before the day was out, she probably told herself that she was to blame for a misunderstanding; that Solovyoff was sore about being neglected by the masters and was anxious not to get embroiled in the Mohini affair; a complication of different feelings had made him dash off his letter telling her he knew a lot of scandal about her. She was used to scandalous reports, was in the thick of them, the S. P. R. Report above all. One more or less . . . one friend more or less biting . . . this one, evidently, only barked but had no desire to bite. . . . he was not her enemy, he wished her tranquillity . . .

The very word must have been balm to her at that period when the hounds and the wild beasts who had been friends were doing their best to kill her! Countess Wachtmeister writes to Sinnett:

“Do you know that ever since the 1st January (issue of the S.P.R. report), my first thought on waking in the morning has been ‘what impertinence or annoyance will the post bring today’, and a feeling of thankfulness on going to bed if there has been nothing, which is *very rare*. Just imagine what a life to lead, particularly for one in bad health, constantly suffering, and has to write the *Secret Doctrine*. I tell you the book *does not progress* and cannot progress with such constant persecutions.”

But the book did progress. There was behind it a will-power such as even genius rarely creates. Before a month was out, she was writing to Sinnett:

“There’s a new development and scenery every morning. *I live two lives again*. Master finds that it is too difficult for me to be looking consciously into the astral light for my S.D. and so, it is now about a fortnight, I am made to see all as I have to as though in my dream. I see large and long rolls of paper on which things are written and I recollect them. Thus all the Patriarchs from Adam to Noah were given me to see — parallel with the Rishis; and in the middle between them the meaning of their symbols — or personifications. Seth standing with Brighu for first *sub-race* of the Root race for inst: meaning anthropologically — first *speaking* human sub-race of the 3rd Race”

What a distance from Solovyoff! from Coulombs and Hodgsons and the whole pack! But we must get back to Solovyoff. She wrote to him, asking in her way what she had done to him to account for his letter of threats and treacheries.

“And what have I done to you? I am ready to forget all to-morrow and to love you as of old, because I have no spite in me, and because *you are a Russian — a sacred thing* for an *exile* like me.”

And the incredible truth is that she meant it! She would have received him again . . . no doubt, this astounding genius, who baffles all the ordinary science of psychology, had an unfathomable contempt for folk in general, too deep for her own consciousness, and short perhaps of the devil in person, her door would never have been quite shut.

But Solovyoff was busy with his friend Myers restoring himself to the company of the respectable: those who know that occultism is all a fraud and — are so uncertain of their own position that they count no time wasted in “exposing” psychic persons whose phenomenal performances escape explanation except on the basis of fraud! In fifty years, these so-called psychical researches have compiled vast volumes, but they have added nothing to the world’s knowledge of phenomena. The veriest little medium who does a few lines of genuine automatic writing is of more practical use than they.

Solovyoff retired to Dinant to nurse a sick head and there Myers came to receive information. How the “psychists” must have urged the prodigal son to publish something, a something to correct the profound impression that had been made by his Elberfeld vision. All they could get him to say was that he did not now believe that the vision was anything but an hallucination. He must, just in time, have withdrawn his resignation from the S. P. R., as this was not published in the next proceedings, and he resigned certainly from the Theosophical Society, but this only in Feb. 1886, having joined in May, 1884. But he published, against or for, not a word about Madame Blavatsky. He went off to Russia, and we know little more of him. It was only in 1892, after her death, that the Russian public was treated to what he made of *The Plain Tale*.

HOW SOLOVYOFF PERVERTED THE PLAIN TALE — I.

[He prepares the Russian reader to accept him as an apostle of Christianity.]

“Since my return to Russia to this day, I have not written a word about Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society. I have held it worse than useless to allude to this anti-Christian movement, so long

as it remained a matter that was little known in Russia. I kept to myself all I knew, and the documentary evidence I possessed, against the time when a panegyric of Madame Blavatsky might appear in the Russian press, and with it, in one form or another, the propaganda of her name and her newest theosophy. One thing only I desired: that such a time might never come, and that I might be absolved from the moral duty of again alluding to the question.

“Hitherto it has been possible for me to keep silence. But the lengthy articles of Madame Jelihovsky, in which she proclaims her sister, not without grounds, a universal celebrity, and speaks of the ‘new religion’ preached and created by her as a ‘pure and lofty’ doctrine, are in fact the propaganda in Russia of this ‘pure and lofty’ doctrine and of the name of its apostle. These articles . . . cannot but interest our public, credulous as it is and prone to every sort of ‘new doctrine’ . . . In these circumstances to keep silence and to hide the truth, if one knows it, becomes a crime. I therefore find myself compelled to break silence about my intimate knowledge of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and her society.”

He refers to Colonel Olcott contemptuously as “Colonel” Olcott. The President of the United States autographed a letter recommending Colonel Olcott to American officials abroad. He refers to Madame Blavatsky contemptuously as “Madame”. Miss E. Holt tells us that so early as 1873, Madame Blavatsky was called simply Madame by her American friends who seem to have hesitated at her Russian name; the Indians later took the same way out of a difficulty, and everyone came to call her Madame, even the Parisians. She preferred to be called “H.P.B.” and thus she was usually spoken of by intimates.

[With the way thus prepared for himself as a moral man doing a most painful duty to Christian Russia and for Olcott and Madame Blavatsky as doubtful characters, Solovyoff proceeds.]

II.

[Prudently, like Madame Coulomb, he gives few dates. He says that he was living in Paris in May, 1884 and saw in the *Matin* among the news of the day a misleading announcement that H. P. Blavatsky had arrived a day or two before. Such a notice may exist, but I have not found it. It would be absurdly wrong, however, for she had arrived in Paris long since on March 29th, and on April 1st, *Le Rappel* had an article about the Theosophical Society, not the arrival of Madame B., but the meetings. *Le Temps* followed next day. *Le Matin* had about half a column article on the 21st announcing arrival of Theosophists from all parts to meet in Paris. Solovyoff mentions none of these papers but affects to have been shocked by this “short paid-for puff” in the *Matin* (naturally he does not quote it in full) a vulgar reclame “inserted if not by herself, then in all probability by the efforts of one of her nearest friends and associates, with the obvious intention of attracting the absent visitors, and spreading her notoriety in Paris”. (p.21). As seen, he was so shocked that he immediately wrote off to his friend in Russia to procure him a letter of introduction to Madame Blavatsky, not venturing even to call on his famous compatriote “till he had first received her consent”. (p.2). He apparently knew nobody in Paris; but the truth was that he was not only financially on his beam ends but had eloped from Russia with his wife’s sister and was thus doubly barred from knocking at the doors of official Russian circles.

[The papers had been, and continued, full of the Theosophists and their doings and no

paid reclame was at all necessary. On May 10th, the Duchesse de Pomar gave a conversazione. The Paris correspondent of the London World wrote on May 11th: "Embarras de choix. Last night, Anbemon, who used to be called la precieuse radicale when Papa Thiers was the chief ornament of her salon, offered a grand amateur theatrical performance, with half the French academy and all elegant and literary Paris in the audience; the Countess of Caithness, Duchesse de Pomar, President of the "Société Theosophique d'Orient et d'Occident", offered something far more novel, namely, a Theosophical conversazione, at which were present that amiable arch-sorceress and profound metaphysician, Madame Blavatsky . . . Hesitation was out of the question, the attraction of high magic and occult science was irresistible, the more so as the Brocken, in this case, was one of the most sumptuous and luxurious mansions of the Faubourg St Germain."

[This was not the first of the grand Faubourg events. The Duchess had presided at a meeting at her house on May 4th and Gil Blas writes of an introduction to Madame Blavatsky on May 6th: "When I heard of Theosophy I smiled, expecting later to have a good laugh at it . . . The Duchesse de Pomar invited me to her splendid hotel . . . Madame Blavatsky was there. She has an aristocratic look in spite of an air de bon garcon. Her dress is peculiar, a black and loose gown, something like a child's sarran or a priest's robe . . . Mdme Blavatsky in this aristocratic hotel and with that easiness . . . of a grand lady from Russia, was smoking light cigarettes and trying to present Theosophy to me as an attractive theory. All religions are alike, she said, one is copied on the other. 'The essence is the same: Dogma has killed the gospel. The priest has killed religion. This is the reason why we accept members of all sects. But we refuse neither materialists nor atheists. Why? because we believe that everything, even the supernatural, may be explained by science. Those who lean on pure and abstract science are with us. Our Masters would reason with them on miracle as with a theorem of geometry'." Gil Blas writes: "I have laughed at Theosophy, but I laugh no more."

The surest way to get among this society was to present oneself as an earnest seeker with a deep spiritual problem to solve; and this was the way Solovyoff took. Soon, we hear no more of his spiritual problem, only of his financial and domestic problems. Yet, he had a psychical, if not a spiritual problem. He soon proved to be a medium, both clairvoyant and clairaudient; he had long been dipping into spiritualism and was now dipping into mysticism and occultism, looking for materials for a novel. Perhaps he even fancied that all this was really a spiritual problem of a high order, the person concerned being named Solovyoff? He was soon to exhibit the conceit of imagining that if only he, he himself, were to be furnished with the means of convincing the world, that world would be convinced. It was a not uncommon notion among the followers of Madame Blavatsky.

He was rudely disappointed to find H.P.B. in a mere flat in the Rue Notre Dame des Champs; "an unsightly house", with a "very very" dark staircase, and not a single carriage at the door. And "a slovenly figure in an oriental turban admitted me to a tiny dark lobby". Whether or no the house were dark and unsightly — Babula was the pink of Hindu servants, whom the Duchesse delighted to parade on her carriage next to the coachman and who was just home from a visit, as attendant on H.P.B., to the country-house of the comtesse d'Adhemar where, as in other houses, he waited in the

drawing-room. But Solovyoff means to make him ungodly as well as uncleanly: “A most consummate rascal; a glance at his face was enough to convince one of this”. Several thousand persons must have glanced at his face since he became attached to Madame Blavatsky — and no-one else, even Sinnett and Hume in Simla, and accustomed to Hindu faces, ever discovered the arch-villain in his features. Poor Babula! he was considered fair game by both Mme. Coulomb and Hodgson of the S.P.R., who conveniently introduce him as the confederate of Madame Blavatsky on any occasion when neither of the Coulombs could possibly have been present to help her with the “tricks”.

[The person whom Solovyoff omits to mention is the American lawyer, W. Q. Judge; Judge is not even named. This falsifies immediately the story, for Judge was a guest in the house and was revising “Isis Unveiled” under Madame Blavatsky’s direction. But Judge would have defended himself; and he was still alive when Solovyoff wrote. Incidentally, Hodgson also was very careful not even to name Judge; Babula was the man, poor low caste Indian!

Solovyoff omits also to mention the companion of his domestic troubles and this falsifies enormously; throughout, he represents himself as a free lance with all his time to himself; but, as we have seen (p.309), the lady was such a “karma” that he admits to H.P.B. the necessity of meeting her somewhere in Italy “accidentally so to speak”. And this brings us to the general question of time.

[Solovyoff says that he first called on H.P.B. four days before Olcott arrived in Paris. He continues the narrative as though Olcott were there all the time, up to H.P.B.’s departure on June 17th or 18th at latest, and portraits of the Masters having been begun in London on June 19th and finished July 9th, as Olcott notes in *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. 3. p.156. Madame Blavatsky was present at the first “sitting”, and Mrs. Holloway has left a vivid account of Schmiechen’s first strokes on the canvas. (In the S.P.R. First Report, p.601 the testimony to the “letter phenomenon” of June 11th is dated June 21st, clearly a misprint. The document was drawn up immediately after the phenomenon took place; moreover, Olcott and Judge who signed, left Paris on June 13th.)

[Now, Olcott made a trip from London to Paris on May 18th and was back by the 20th. H.P.B.’s aunt and sister were already there, for Vera mentions a conversation that took place with Olcott on the 18th (*Incidents in the life of Madame Blavatsky*, (p.265). Olcott returned to Paris on June 1st and left again with Judge on the 13th. As all the real (confirmed) events mentioned by Solovyoff took place while Olcott was in the house, it looks as if Solovyoff’s first acquaintance with Madame Blavatsky only dated from May 30th to June 17th. He has so vaguely woven his narrative that his events cannot be made to fit the dates at all, the which is very convenient for himself. He speaks of Mohini as being there when he first called. Mohini was in London at an S.P.R. meeting on May 28th and went to Paris with Keightley next day. Olcott followed on June 1st; so this gives only two days, not four, before Solovyoff, as he says, first met Olcott. The whole aim of Solovyoff is to make out that he spent two whole months in Madame Blavatsky’s company, seeing her intimately almost every day and thus had ample opportunity to find her out. As, however, the events simply will not fit his chronology, but do fit the known

dates, I take it that his visits were between May 30th and June 17th; during which period, Madame Blavatsky was engaged with her Theosophical Society, lectures, visits to and from the Duchesse de Pomar, Comtesse d'Adhemar, Mme. de Morsier, Mme. de Barrau and the rest of the members; with her relatives; with Olcott, Mohini, Keightley, Cooper-Oakley; with Parisian visitors including Professor Richet two or three times, Flammarion and others; with Mrs. Holloway from America; with people from London and Germany — and above all with Judge and the revision of *Isis Unveiled*, as well as the translation into French of this book of two big volumes. What time had she for Solovyoff? There is not one single scrap of evidence that he ever had a private interview with her after his first call. It is clear that he could not have been shown the *Matin* of April 21st, “with the news of the day” about Madame Blavatsky, for he was not in Paris until some time in May, and it is probable that the newspaper accounts of the *conversazione* held on May 10th at the Duchesse de Pomar’s were his first incitement to write to St. Petersburg for a good introduction to Madame Blavatsky.]

III.

[Solovyoff joins the Theosophical Society. I give a sample of him at his most novelistic; one sample will do for the whole book, and is indeed sufficient to advise anyone familiar with Madame Blavatsky’s style that he was not even a good novelist, for he cannot invent a likely speech. He says that when he announced his intention of joining, she “brightened up. Ah, how kind you are, indeed! I, as you know, am never importunate, and if you yourself had not expressed the desire, I should never have proposed it.” Broad comedy only should use that sort of simpleton patter! This “as you know” to a stranger, is clumsy invention indeed! To whom, ever, did H.P.B. speak in this fashion?

“But there was worse to come,” Solovyoff writes; “Mohini, now acknowledging me as his brother, began to tell me about his ‘guru’, Mahatma Koot Hoomi, and how he had that morning had the honour of receiving a letter from, containing replies to questions put by himself alone.”

[In what language was this conversation? Solovyoff did not speak English and Mohini did not know enough French to be able to make his way home from a railway-station (p.98)

“The Hindu spoke of this phenomenon with the greatest reverence; but far from believing it, I only felt a longing to get out at once into a purer atmosphere.”

IV.

[This chapter is concocted to convince the Russian reader that Madame Blavatsky was almost ignored by Paris, left alone in her little dark house with the slovenly servant. We need not waste space on that, but it is curious that Solovyoff was never invited to the Pomar house or to Comtesse d'Adhemar’s where H.P.B. often drove out to dine. Perhaps the awkward situation of his lady companion obliged him to refuse invitations? After all, he would have met Russian officials in the Faubourg and risked being cut dead. Or perhaps, being of no particular interest to Madame Blavatsky, and having become an impertinent bit of a bore with his pesterings for occult instruction, as the letters indicate, she never put him on the list of guests to be invited.]

V.

[Olcott arrives. Solovyoff adds to his description a detail that nobody else ever noted. Sinnett says that Olcott had a slight cast in one eye, so slight as to be almost unnoticeable. Solovyoff writes: "The fact is that one of his eyes was extremely disobedient, and from time to time used to turn in all directions . . . suddenly something twitched, the eye got loose and began to stray suspiciously and knavishly, and confidence vanished in a moment." Like Babula's villainy that was to be seen at a glance — by Solovyoff alone! It does not say much for the scores of American and English officials with whom Olcott had dealings that they retained their confidence in him when this eye alone should have been enough to show them a knave. Lord Derby had several interviews with him just at this very time regarding the successful Buddhist Mission . . .

[Then comes "the phenomenon of the letter". In the First (Private and Confidential) Report of the S.P.R., p.120, is an account of this phenomenon, taken from Light of July 12th, 1884. This account, like so much else that tells heavily in favour of Madame Blavatsky is omitted from the Second (Hodgson's) Report. Above many of the Appendices to the First Report we find remarks inserted apparently late in the day, all tending to make it appear that the S.P.R. Committee had never been taken in by Madame Blavatsky and had been quite wide-awake from the first — like Solovyoff. These remarks seem to be all by the same hand, and they frequently pass all that Madame Coulomb herself ever wrote for absurdity.]

VI.

[Solovyoff describes a phenomenon done with a locket. As his is the only version, with no confirmation, I ignore it here; it will have its place in some future article on the controversy between Solovyoff and Mme. Jelihovsky, merely remarking that she proves him once more a liar.]

VII.

[This is mainly taken up with the alleged conversation with Mme. J. in the Parc Monceau. Solovyoff writes: "As for Madame Blavatsky herself, after the conversation with Madame J., I definitely promised myself that come what might I would see through this woman". Now we have him definitely declaring himself to be henceforth a detective. The Plain Tale shows that he was nothing of the sort, but a would-be yogi.]

VIII.

[He starts off his sleuthic literary career with a yarn definitely borrowed from Madame Coulomb, but adorned with his own most particular lying, foolish lying.

"Miss X and Madame Y [Madame Fadeev and Mme. Jelihovsky] said to me one day: 'That Babula is most amusing . . . He has a droll way of telling us all that goes on at Adyar'. 'Yes, and when I ask him', continued Madame Y., 'if he has seen the Mahatmas, he laughs and says: "I have often seen them." 'What are they like?' I ask and he answers: "They are fine!" he says, "Muslin?" and then he laughs again.'

"This conversation seemed to have a certain interest of its own, and I noted it down at the time; and when talking to Helena Petrovna I advised her, with a laugh, to send Babula off at once. 'Mark my words', I said, 'you will have some scandal with him yet; he is not at all trustworthy'. She said nothing in reply,

and I do not even know if she grasped the sense of my words.”

[How kind of the spy who was collecting evidence! We hardly need Madame Jelihovsky’s denial of such a ridiculous story, but she writes: “I faithfully declare on my conscience that there never was a word said about ‘muslin Mahatmas’. Had he ever used such a phrase, I should never, in my then state of incredulity as to the existence of these Hindu sages, have left it unnoticed, but should have questioned both Babula and his mistress, with whom I never hesitated to enter on dispute.”

[If this had ever happened, it would be just about the time Solovyoff was writing to the Rebus. Into such swamps of his own making falls a man who sets out on the impossible task of making a coherent tale of a mixture of truth and lies. It will be worse when we come to documents.]

IX.

Madame Blavatsky left for London. “From time to time I corresponded with her, and while expressing in my letters an involuntary liking and sympathy for herself personally, I none the less held steadily to my aim, and said to myself: ‘I will not stop till I *know* what she and her phenomena really are’. Of course I did not expect that she would at once, especially in her letters, speak out and betray herself; but I already knew enough of her to reckon on her constant ‘little slips’, which when fitted together would form something great and palpable”.

[Disgusting hound! But his own little slip was to forget that he had written to Vera the letter about the raps all around him and the invisible voices. And no doubt he thought that his letter to H.P.B. about the storm his article in the Rebus had raised was safely burned.

“I am not afraid of ridicule, I am indifferent to the titles of fool, madman, etc. But why do you renounce me? . . . I cannot think that any ‘master’ (Mahatma) has told you that you have made a mistake, and that I am not necessary to you’.”

[This chapter includes Solovyoff’s visit to Elberfeld, given at length in the Plain Tale, where the Master took a look at him, and never looked again. But it will be many long months before Solovyoff will be able to believe himself rejected.]

X.

[This chapter on the portraits of the Masters is also given in the Plain Tale. Solovyoff continues his interweaved insults to Olcott and others, splashing on the colour to suit his pretended sleuthic role. However, he has to explain away what the public knew, namely, that he had described the Mahatma’s visit for the S.P.R. He says that he lost his head, his “dream and delusion had been so vivid.” He lost it for some time, for we shall hear of him, more than a year later, writing angry letters to Myers and insisting on the reality of his vision.]

XI.

[Myers arrives at Elberfeld. At this time, Myers was still a member of the Theosophical Society inclined to believe, and still insistent on fairness towards Mme. Blavatsky.

“He begged me in the first place to tell him how I had seen Mahatma Morya, and when I had done so he began to urge me to communicate the fact to the London society (S. P. R.) in writing.”

[Solovyoff then describes a conversation, of which Myers was obliged later to deny an important part. Solovyoff makes himself remark that the “very existence of these Mahatmas is to me quite problematical”. “I do not know if you are right,” said Myers; “that will be seen from our further investigations. [!] In any case, your communication, by the rule of our society, must consist only of a simple detailed account of facts, without any commentaries or criticisms of your own.”

[Solovyoff’s translator, Walter Leaf, corrects, no doubt with a sigh: “Mr. Myers can certainly not have said that ‘by the rules’ of the S.P.R. the narrative must not be accompanied by any commentaries or criticisms, as no such rule exists”. Solovyoff’s version seems to be a garble of the facts that he did thoroughly believe in the vision and wished to write as enthusiastically and positively as in the Rebus. There was nothing to prevent him from being as positive as he chose, and his account is positive. For some reason, the S.P.R. omitted it from their First Report, published in Dec. 1884, but it appears in the Second Report of Dec. 1885. This is sufficiently good evidence that, up to the time this Second and final, Report went to the press (that is after Solovyoff left Wurzburg, went to Paris and “convinced Richet” of Madame Blavatsky’s powers) Solovyoff was sticking to his guns. Moreover, this communication about the vision was only dealt with by Mrs. Sidgwick at the very end of the Report. Things must have been run pretty close; Solovyoff from St. Petersburg must have been able to save the situation only just in time before the printer sent the last proofs, for Mrs. Sidgwick scrambles in a note: “Since writing the above I have learned that, owing to events that have since occurred, Mr. Solovyoff no longer regards his experiences as affording any evidence of occult power”. No longer. Solovyoff says

“In the Report of the London Society for Psychical Research my experience is inserted; and though in obedience to the rules of the society, I do not myself analyze it, yet I do not in any way admit its reality. The society moreover, considered it to be a vivid dream, and declared that I ‘do not regard it as affording any evidence of occult agency’.”

The unhappy Mr. Leaf was obliged also to correct this version of Mrs. Sidgwick’s remark. Solovyoff should have shown his shufflings to the S.P.R. before foisting them in print on his Russian readers, then these little mishaps would not have occurred. It was one thing to allow him to say whatever he pleased about Madame Blavatsky, but quite another to let him juggle with the rules and with the cold print of the S.P.R. Proceedings. Hence all these tears. What the S.P.R. failed to point out was that the juggler with Myers and Mrs. Sidgwick was at least equally likely to juggle with Blavatsky and that all his testimony should be most rigidly examined. Mr. Leaf saved this kind of observation to apply it to Mme. Jelihovsky when, in defending her sister’s name, she made a slip; and I am not certain yet that it was a slip. I hope to find time and space to deal with the incident in an appendix.]

XII.

[This chapter contains the five letters from H.P.B. reproduced in full in the Plain Tale.

Solovyoff, enchanted with the post-script in blue pencil, signed “K.H.”, a proof that he was not cast off entirely, although the inflexible “M.” had taken no more notice of him, had, as he wrote to H.P.B., “produced a sensation” among the other Theosophists.

[It is to be noted how frequently “K.H.” continued to wrestle with the Josephs long after “M.” had turned his back on them as mere ambitious snobs with a complex about great identities. To the end, it was “M.’s” favours that Solovyoff coveted, forgetting the “big stick” of this Master. Solovyoff has to explain away his enthusiasm witnessed by so many people in Paris.]

“I was so irritated by Koot Hoomi’s ‘astral post-script’ that at the first moment I was inclined to appeal at once to Madame Blavatsky to forget all about my existence. But I should have repented it if I had followed this first impulse; that very day at Madame de Morsier’s, I met the most convinced and honest of the French theosophists; and they, in spite of all the obviousness of the deception, admitted the post-script to be the authentic work not of ‘Madame’s’ hand but of Koot Hoomi’s. This absolute blindness on the part of people who were perfectly rational in everything but the question of ‘Madame’s’ impeccability, forced me finally to adhere to my original plan. Whatever came I would collect such proofs of all these deceptions as should be sufficient not only for me but for all these blind dupes.”

[The truth is that at that time, he had no plan and never said or wrote one word to warn anyone. On the contrary, the note he had received from K.H. at Elberfeld (p.84) of which he makes no mention and now this blue-pencilled post-script gave him such a sense of importance that he began to boss the Theosophists! He replied to H.P.B. begging her not to resign, to come and talk over the troubles with him, not to get agitated in the name of all the saints, etc.

He works at the French translation of “Isis Unveiled”, ropes in Madame de Morsier to correct mistakes, declares that the Duchess must pay for the publication, without fail, for the benefit of the French, her plain duty; he passes a whole day with Olcott and Gebhard, although he can hardly stand on his legs, wants Oakley over to go and tell the Duchess to pay. He resists all Madame Jelihovsky’s adjurations and sends her a copy of his account of his experiences, says that he sees in the mere fact that H.P.B. is able to travel a proof of the existence of the Mahatmas, reminds her of the marvellous way he received the K.H. note at Elberfeld.

[Be it noted by all the world and the S.P.R. that Solovyoff’s communication to the S.P.R. was signed on Oct. 1st and sent on or after that day. On the 26th he had written to Madame Blavatsky about the Branch troubles in Paris, reproaching her with not trusting him and offering to do goodness knows what to bring her out clear from the Elberfeld rows (of which he really could know nothing but gossip, very complicated rows they were). On Monday, Sep. 29th, he received her letter about the Coulomb scandal, the letter with the post-script. He replied the same day saying that he will make a sensation ‘with this post-script at Mme. de Morsier’s, which he did, and begging her not to resign but to come and talk over things with him. On Wednesday, Oct. 1st, he signed and presumably posted his article to the S.P.R.

[I think that at this point the jury would throw the case out and recommend the lying

accuser, Solovyoff, to the Public Prosecutor. But we must continue. Although this incident alone is sufficient to prove that his book is a “fake”, we must go on to those “events at Wnrzburg” that Professor Sidgwick found so “entertaining”.]

XIII - XV.

(These chapters, Mr. Leaf says, contained an abridgment of Hodgson’s Report against Madame Blavatsky and her phenomena. Solovyoff’s account is not translated, except for one passage where he completely dishes Hodgson’s “Russian spy” theory.

“H. P. Blavatsky was not a spy; and this I say, not because I believe her incapable of playing such a part, but because, in the autumn of 1885 (i.e., at the time when Hodgson’s investigation was completed, and his report, with all its contents, was being printed), she was extremely anxious to become a secret agent of the Russian Government in India. If she wished to become, it is plain that up to that time she was not. How I learned this I will relate in the proper place.”

The boot was on the other foot. Solovyoff proposed to her to do secret work in India. H. P. B. immediately told Sinnett about this. Solovyoff’s concern to put the blame on her may have been due to the circumstance that a gentil-homme de la chambre had no business to be meddling with the Secret Service and also to the fact that the Russian nobility held this service in abhorrence. H.P.B. wrote to Sinnett: “Solovyoff will not forgive me for rejecting his propositions — that you know”. To Vera: “I am publicly accused of being a Russian spy, and this is made the motive of all the (supposed) fraudulent phenomena and of my ‘invention of the Mahatmas’! I, a dying woman, am turned out of India just on account of such a silly accusation, which, in spite of its silliness, might have ended in prison and exile, solely because I am a Russian; and though I have already suffered from this calumny, and do not understand the A B C of politics, I am made to offer To Solovyoff! To him whom I know for an incorrigible gossip and tale-bearer . . . And so I want to be hanged, do I?”

Sinnett, in “Early Days of Theosophy”, p.86 (book none too friendly to H.P.B.) writes of “the loyal tone she really had always adopted in speaking to Indian natives about the British rule. She warned them of the folly of wishing to exchange this for Russian rule, which she plainly told them would be a dismal change for the worse”.

[Leaf remarks regarding all this: “Mr. Solovyoff’s own evidence, far from condemning Mr. Hodgson, will probably be regarded as strong testimony to the acumen of his general view of Madame Blavatsky; and will remove the feeling, entertained by many at the time, that he had on this one point done her an injustice. For on her own statement, as given in chap. xx, she had some years before actually offered her services as a secret agent to the Russian Government . . . Mr. Hodgson thus came very near the truth”.

I have remarked several times in various books during this “Defence of Madame Blavatsky” that people who attack her seem to lose their mental balance. Of course, as they are all lying and juggling and conspiring, there is no wonder. Hodgson’s view was not a “general view” of his, it was his particular view that Madame Blavatsky invented the Mahatmas to conceal her machinations with confederates as a Russian spy. He rejected every other motive. It is not “her own statement” in chap. xx, that Madame

Blavatsky had offered her services — but the statement of Solovyoff that she had said so to him. To pass on a “she said” as “evidence” is the venomous method of poison-gossips. Leaf exhibits this kind of cunning frequently, the unintelligence that must immediately be found out under cross-examination. There is a bad day coming for the S.P.R. when some lawyer will make a world-reputation and a fortune by an exposure en règle of the Blavatsky case.]

XVI.

This chapter is given in the Plain Tale plus the letters Solovyoff suppressed. He feigns to have suggested to Madame de Morsier that “our poor ‘madame’ has been found out” by Hodgson, but that Mme. de M. was not yet quite ready to admit Madame Blavatsky’s guilt. Actually, at the moment, he was busy making the acquaintance of Crookes and Sinnett and writing to her: “All is arranged and prepared to overwhelm, here at least — that is in the Paris press — all this rabble of Coulombs and all the asses, to what learned society they may belong, who could for a moment pay attention to her (Mme. Coulomb’s) abominable pamphlet”.

[The asses were the S.P.R., of course, but it is a great libel on the quadruped who never yet conspired to destroy a human being.]

XVII.

[Solovyoff goes to Switzerland, meets Madame de Morsier, and H.P.B. comes there with Mary Flynn and Babaji.]

XVIII.

This is the first of the three chapters that Professor Sidgwick noted as so important as a supplement to the S.P.R. inquiry.

The time is important. Madame Blavatsky arrived in Wurzburg on the 17th of August. Dr. Hartmann, who had found her rooms, was there to settle her in, how long he stayed is not known. Solovyoff omits to mention Hartmann. Solovyoff himself was there by the 29th. He says: “The time had now come for me to set about my investigation in earnest. I settled myself in Rugmer’s Hotel . . . and all the time that I did not spend in sleeping, eating and walking about the town, I passed with Madame Blavatsky.”

He omits to say that his lady companion, whom he now introduced as his wife, had joined him, bringing a child of the union.

At this time, the Sinnett’s were on their way to a visit to the Gebhards in Elberfeld and intended to visit Madame Blavatsky. On April 19th, H.P.B. wrote to Sinnett: “Solovyoff is so indignant that he has sent in his resignation to the S.P.R. He wrote a long letter to Myers and now the latter answers him . . . begs him not to resign and asks him whether he still maintains that what he saw at Elberfeld was not a hallucination or a fraud; and finally begs him to come and meet him at Nancy — where he will prove to him my *guilt!* Solovyoff says that since he is placed by their Report, as so many others between choosing to confess himself either a lunatic or a confederate — he considers it a slap on the face, a direct insult to him and answers Myers demanding that his letter should be

published and resignation made known. He intends stopping here at Wurzburg with me for a month or so, with his wife and child”.

The ‘Report’ mentioned is not what is known as the First Report but was a provisional kind of report by Hodgson that had been read out to a meeting of the S.P.R. on May 24th, 1885; it was received with contempt and disgust not only by all the Theosophists but many others. When Solovyoff met Sinnett and Crookes in Paris, this was the subject of discussion, the great magnus opus of the “asses”. The Theosophists decided to ignore this report as beneath notice; but between May and December, Hodgson worked on it and, as Sinnett wrote in his brilliant “The Occult World Phenomena” (a work treacherously neglected by the majority of the leading Theosophists to this day): “Mr. Hodgson has employed the time during which his Report has been improperly withheld in endeavouring to amend and strengthen it so as to render it better able to bear out the Committee’s endorsement of the conclusions he reached before he obtained the evidence he now puts forward.” The time was not lost, however, it was employed also in every kind of propaganda to prepare the public to swallow anything that might be said of Madame Blavatsky.

Madame Blavatsky fell very ill. This must have been after 20th, for that day she was not ill. Suppose she were only ill three days, this brings us to the 23rd at least. The next day she wrote for hours, “gnashing her teeth”. Solovyoff, all this time, with this woman in agony, was spying and trying to trap her. So he says. It is a lie — but that is what he says about himself. “For the next couple of days I had a feeling as I looked at her that she was on the point of producing some sort of phenomenon. And so it turned out.”

This couple of days would bring us to the 26th. On the 27th at latest, Madame Fadeev arrived from Russia. Yet, the whole of the events of these three chapters is alleged to have happened after Madame Blavatsky’s recovery and before the arrival of her aunt! From Solovyoff’s book one would imagine that many many days were at his disposal for his trapwork. He says, “One morning I called”, etc. Again: Madame Blavatsky was still suffering severely, but she was now able to walk about a little in her room. In spite of her illness, she was working double tides; she was finishing an article for the *Russky Vyestnik*, writing some fanciful stories translating something for her Theosophist and preparing to begin her *Secret Doctrine*”. Another point I have noticed in all the enemies of H.P.B. They all, at moments, write as if compelled; automatically they tell the truth, although the truth defeats them, destroys their case. We see clearly what the genius of Madame Blavatsky was employed with; she was not thinking of Solovyoff! Yet he says of this double-tide writer: “Meanwhile in her complete isolation, she was depressed, and could not do without me . . . Every day when I came to see her she used to try to do me a favour in the shape of some trifling phenomenon’, but she never succeeded”.

[I leave it to writers, for the moment.]

But these one days and nows and every-days won’t do at all. There could not possibly have been more than two days on which, for a short time, between her writings, Madame Blavatsky entertained Solovyoff. According to him, there interludes sufficed to produce all the evidence he needed to convict her!

[Let us begin from where he “called one morning”.]

“Helena Petrovna sat behind her great writing-table in an arm-chair of unusual dimensions, sent her as a present by Gebhard from Elberfeld.”

[Helena Petrovna had had no communication with Gebhard since Novmeber, 1884. There had been a coolness. It was Sinnett who reconciled them when he went to Gebhards at the end of August, 1885. As late as Sept. 2nd, they were still unreconciled, for on that day she writes to Mrs. Sinnett about her sadness at the estrangement, says that Solovyoff himself assured her that the Gebhards had given her up. The dog was never happy unless making mischief that would leave her all t o himself, to teach him the “powers”; from Olcott to Babula, he jealoused everyone around her. But — that armchair was not there then! It was not sent until the Sinnetts had made up the friendship again between Madame Blavatsky and the Gebhards, and most probably a f t e r the Sinnetts came to Wurzburg about Sept. 7th.]

“At the opposite end of the table stood the dwarfish Babaji with a confused look in his dulled eyes. He was evidently incapable of meeting my gaze, and the fact certainly did not escape me. In front of Babaji on the table were scattered several clean sheets of paper. Nothing of the sort had occurred before, so my attention was the more aroused. In his hand was a great thick pencil. I began to have ideas.”

[Why, one asks? What ideas? Because Babaji had paper and pencil?]

“ . . . I was walking about the room and did not take my eyes off Babaji. I saw that he was keeping his eyes wide open, with a sort of contortion of his whole body, while his hand, armed with the great pencil, was carefully tracing some letters on a sheet of paper.

“Look; what is the matter with him? exclaimed Madame Blavatsky.

“Nothing particular’, I answered; ‘he is writing in Russian’.

“I saw her whole face grow purple. She began to stir in her chair, with an obvious desire to get up and take the paper from him. But with her swollen and inflexible limbs, she could not do so with any speed. I made haste to seize the paper and saw on it a beautifully *drawn* Russian phrase.

“Babaji was to have written, in the Russian language with which he was not acquainted: ‘Blessed are they that believe, as said the Great Adept’. He had learned his task well, and remembered correctly the form of all the letters, but he had omitted two in the word ‘believe’ (The effect was precisely the same as if in English he had omitted the first two and the last two letters of the word.)

“‘Blessed are they that *lie*,’ I read aloud, unable to control the laughter that shook me. ‘That is the best thing I ever saw. Oh, Babaji! you should have got your lesson up better for examination!’”

“The tiny Hindu hid his face in his hands and rushed out of the room; I heard his hysterical sobs in the distance. Madame Blavatsky sat with distorted features.

“So you think I taught him this!” she exclaimed at last; ‘you think me capable of such arrant folly! It is the spirit “elementals” who are making fun of him, poor fellow! And what a vexation for me! My God! as though I could not have thought of something cleverer than that if I had wanted to deceive you! This is really too silly.”

Why, if Madame Blavatsky had planned the trick, should she have grown “purple” and struggled in her chair (which wasn’t there) to take the paper from Babaji just when the trick was succeeding? Just when Solovyoff announced that he was writing in Russian?

In what language did Solovyoff talk to Babaji, who knew scarcely two words of French? The phrase was in Russian. How could Babaji know that he had made a mistake? Why should he rush out and sob before the thing could possibly be explained to him? Why should he sob at all?

It looks as if something not quite of the sort took place. Perhaps Babaji was being taught Russian by H. P. B. and had written the phrase with a mistake. And Solovyoff invented the rest. The non-existent armchair and the purple face, and Solovyoff’s speech, he who could not speak English, to Babaji, who could not speak French, are all my eye and Betty Martin.

Solovyoff’s dramatic ingenuity does not stop here. He introduces with a powerful absence of comment a remarkable “Declaration of Madame de Morsier”:

“Lorsque Bavadjée passa à Paris, au mois de Septembre il me dit ceci à peu près: A vous on peut tout dire, je puis bien vous raconter que Madame Blavatsky, sachant qu’elle ne pouvait gagner M. Solovioff que par l’occultisme, lui promettait toujours de lui enseigner de nouveaux mystères à Wurtzbourg et même elle venait me demander à moi: ‘Mais que puis-je lui dire encore? Bavadjee, sauvez-moi, trouvez quelque chose, etc. Je ne sais plus qu’inventer’.

“E. de Morsier.”

Translation: “When Babaji passed through Paris in the month of September he said to me nearly as follows: One can say everything to you, I can tell you then that Madame Blavatsky, knowing that she could only secure M. Solovyoff through occultism, was always promising to teach him new mysteries at Wurzburg and she even came asking me: ‘But what more can I tell him? Babaji, save me, think of something, etc. I can’t invent anything more.’

“E. de Morsier.”

* * *

No date, as usual. I am half inclined to believe the thing a complete forgery, only hesitating because there is nothing much in it and Solovyoff would have made it quite incriminating. Yet, it is hard to believe that Madame de Morsier, who on Solovyoff’s own testimony (p.143) had had an “affecting parting” from Madame Blavatsky only a month before, and who continued her office in the Society for three months, allowed Babaji to talk to her in such a manner but never asked Madame Blavatsky for an explanation. However, Theosophical traitors bred one a day around the woman of genius whom they, and not the Coulombs, almost broke down, and so, this undated trap signed de Morsier must be accepted in the absence of any evidence that Solovyoff forged it, although it would not be accepted in any court.

We have to suppose, on no grounds whatever, that Mme. de M. spoke English, as Babaji knew no French; she was Swiss, the which accounts perhaps for the rather curious French and the punctuation, and her English, if she knew English, would be incomparably worse, for she seems to have lived only in Switzerland and France. So, in any case, we have a report in French of a conversation in English by a lady who was no adept in either language. (Or, was this poor French Solovyoff's? I still doubt. It is more than strange that Mme. de M. should spell Babaji's name with a v, as Solovyoff himself does whereas B. always signed with a b and was called Babaji by everyone. It is equally, and even more, curious that a woman living for long years in France and actually secretary of the Paris T. S. should write Septembre with a capital S. Had Madame Blavatsky presented such a document we know what kind of thunder the S.P.R. would have used. Nothing would surprise me less than to come across some letters of Mme. de M. spelling Babaji à la français and writing the month as might be expected of a woman who passed so much of her time in French correspondence. And then, this "knowing that she could only secure M. Solovyoff through occultisme" . . . it is almost too good, too exactly what Solovyoff needed to buttress his own otherwise absolutely unsupported statements. What evidence there is goes to prove that Madame Blavatsky gave him very little of her company at any time and her letters treat him only as a Russian friend. There are no references to any phenomena either performed or contemplated, except the Elberfeld vision the which was known only through his own revelation. He pestered her for phenomena and she says that she is sick of phenomena, wants no talk of it. Mme. Jelihovsky states that H.P.B. said she did not know what to do with him and his importunacy:

"He used to besiege her with requests to admit him to her knowledge of particularly convincing phenomena" (p.292).

"He only became of any considerable interest to her after the Coulomb scandal when he espoused her cause against the "learned asses" and resigned from the S.P.R. Naturally enough, especially for her, there seemed all reason to make a fuss of him, and quite probably she promised him at last to try and teach him something. But I doubt whether there was anything much in her mind, for Solovyoff had already seen, in company with other people, a great deal of phenomena and needed no more for conviction if he were going to be convinced. On Solovyoff's showing, she immediately settled to "double-tide" work, at Wurzburg, and he forgets to invent even a reasonable conversation on what he calls "the promised phenomena".

And then again . . . "was always promising to teach him new mysteries at Wurzburg": this bears out Solovyoff, but where was Bavaji imagining himself to be standing on the globe when he heard about this, at Wurzburg or where. And how could he understand what the two Russians who always spoke either Russian or French were saying?

It gets fishier and fishier . . .

[But after all, the whole accusation only amounts to a cri de coeur by Madame Blavatsky. "What more can I tell him?" Babaji, save me from this importunate bore. Invent something. I'm at my wits end. The subtle (or clumsy) "etc." allows every length

of speculation, but speculation only ends in a wonder why, if Solovyoff fabricated the document, he did not make it incriminating and above all did not write *do* instead of merely *tell* him. That is my personal sole reason for hesitating to denounce this otherwise suspect document as a forgery. I *believe* it to be a forgery.]

XIX.

“Madame Blavatsky was still suffering severely, but she was now able to walk about a little in her room. In spite of her illness, she was working double tides;” “Meanwhile, in her complete isolation, she was depressed, and could not do without me. I was bound, come what might, to make the most of the time, for as soon as her ‘non-Russian’ friends arrived she would slip out of my hands”. “Every day when I came to see her she used to try to do me a favour in the shape of some trifling ‘phenomenon’ but she never succeeded. Thus, one day her famous ‘silver bell’ was heard, when suddenly something fell beside her on the ground. I hurried to pick it up — and found in my hands a pretty little piece of silver, delicately worked and strangely shaped. Helena Petrovna changed countenance, and snatched the object from me. I coughed significantly, smiled and turned the conversation to indifferent matters.”

Still; now; every day; one day.

Solovyoff has to make the most of his time, however, for Madame Fadeev will arrive on the 27th! And he does make the most of it. *Everything* necessary to his end will happen. First, the silver bell. He will pick it up, and it actually is — a pretty little piece of silver! But what does the S.P.R. Report say?

“Madame Coulomb asserts that they (the ‘astral bells’) were actually produced by the use of a small musical-box, constructed on the same principle as the machine employed in connection with the trick known under the name ‘Is your watch a repeater?’ and she produced garments which she asserted had belonged to Madame Blavatsky, and showed me stains resembling iron-mould on the right side slightly above the waist, which she affirmed had been caused by contact with the metal of the machine . . . I think the ‘astral bells maybe thus accounted for. . .” (Hodgson’s Report, p.263).

Pay your money and take your choice: pretty little silver piece or iron-stains on Madame Blavatsky’s chemises stolen by Mme. C. and examined by Hodgson. Solovyoff will have to cough much more significantly if the *patronne* of the S.P.R. is to be coughed out with her musical-box.

Madame Olga Novikoff wrote to Myers in 1884: “My dear Mr. Myers, — I see no difficulty whatever in telling you what happened in my presence a few days ago at Mrs. A’s house, where I had been dining with Madame Blavatsky. In the midst of conversation, referring to various subjects, Madame Blavatsky became silent, and we all distinctly heard a sound that might be compared to that produced by a small silver bell. The same phenomenon was produced later on, in the drawing-room. I was naturally surprised at this manifestation, but still more by the following incident: I had been singing a Russian song . . . After the last chord of the accompaniment had died away, Madame Blavatsky said, ‘Listen,’ and held up her hand, and we distinctly heard the full chord — composed of five notes — repeated in our midst.”

Should the S.P.R. Report ever serve as stuff for a musical farce—and it is rich enough in situations!—this would be the moment for the entry of the Committee, preceded by Hodgson bearing — the Chemise!

* * *

We are at the last day before the arrival of Madame Fadeev, this miraculous day of Solovyoff's triumph, but he brings in another time.

“Another time I said that I should like to have some of the real essence of roses made in India.

“‘I am so sorry,’ she said, ‘I have none with me. But I will not guarantee that you may not receive some essence of roses from India, such as you speak of, and that very soon.’

“Watching her from that moment, I distinctly saw her open one of the side drawers of her table and take something out. Then some half-hour later, after having walked around me, she very gently and cautiously slipped some little object into my pocket. If I had not watched her every movement, and had not guessed why it was she kept passing around me, I should probably not have noticed anything.

“However, I immediately produced from my pocket a little flat flask, opened it, smelled, and said, ‘This is not essence of roses, Helena Petrovna, but oil of oranges; your “master” has made a mistake.’

“‘Eh, devil take it!’ she exclaimed, unable to restrain herself.”

Evidently, the stiff and swollen Madame Blavatsky had acquired some agility! But what a clumsy fool to be called the most ingenious impostor of the age! She lets herself be seen taking out the flask, then she walks around and around, and lets herself be felt dropping it into the pocket. First of all, by a speech, she warns her dupe to be on guard. And she tries to pass off oil of oranges for attar of roses. I am not going to waste time and space on such rubbish. If anything of the sort ever occurred, Madame Blavatsky must have been pulling the leg of this man as she sometimes did when people bored her stiff.

“*At last* [italics mine] came the decisive day and hour.” H.P.B. told him that her aunt was coming “in a few days”. We are at the 26th, although according to Solovyoff's chronology, we should be well into the next month, and Madame Fadeev came on the 27th at latest.

“‘I am very glad to hear it,’ I said, and thought to myself: ‘Now there is no time to be lost, while she has no accomplices, and is still in this humour!’ At this very moment a lucky chance came to help me.”

Astounding as it seems that Solovyoff should dare to insinuate that Madame Fadeev was an accomplice, he was sure of support from the S. P. R. at least. Hodgson had already insulted this lady in his Report. Yet, for Solovyoff to do so is almost incredible. She was widely-known and infinitely respected as a philanthropist and a profound student. Her friends saw to it that Solovyoff should get his deserts in Russia. He died miserably, ostracised by the nobility.

The “Lucky chance”.

“Madame Blavatsky was talking about the *Theosophist*, and mentioned the name of Subba Rao, a Hindu who had attained the highest degree of knowledge.

[H.P. B. certainly never said any such thing.]

“And then he has such a wise, wonderful face . . . I wonder if you ever cast your eyes on his face?”

“I don’t remember.’

“Well, wait a moment; look there, in the table; open the drawer and look, — I think there must be a photograph of him, with me and Babaji.’

“I opened the drawer, found the photograph, and handed it to her — together with a packet of Chinese envelopes such as I well knew; they were the same in which the ‘elect’ used to receive the letters of the Mahatmas Morya and Koot Hoomi by ‘astral post’.

“Look at that, Helena Petrovna! I should advise you to hide this packet of the ‘master’s’ envelopes farther off. You are so terribly absent-minded and careless.’

“It is easy to imagine what this was to her. I looked at her, and was positively frightened; her face grew perfectly black. She tried in vain to speak; she could only writhe helplessly in her great arm-chair.”

[That was not there.]

What is not easy to imagine is that the Sleuth, with the pieces of evidence in his hands, did not secure even one envelope. But then, this would have engaged him later to produce it . . . it was safer to represent himself as *once more* merely giving her good, if satirical, advice: this is not made of unprocurable Chinese paper. Still, look at him — on this last great day, having before his eyes and gripped in his own hands, those Chinese envelopes. Madame Blavatsky, gone from “purple” to “black”, writhing helplessly in her chair . . . and what does he do? We do not hear, can only conclude that he put them back in the drawer!

And a month after this, he “convinced Richet”!

Countess Wachtmeister writes in “Reminiscences of Madame Blavatsky”, p.57: “Madame Fadeev — H.P.B.’s aunt, wrote to her that she was sending a box to Wurzburg containing what seemed to her a lot of rubbish. The box arrived and to me was deputed the task of unpacking it. As I took out one thing after another and passed them to Madame Blavatsky, I heard her give an exclamation of delight, and she said, ‘Come and look at this that I wrote in the year 1851, the day I saw my blessed Master’; and there in a scrap-book in faded writing, I saw a few lines in which H.P.B. described the above interview”.

H.P.B. must have had a clear conscience about that “lurid past” the slanderers ascribe to her to trust a stranger to unpack that old box of letters and documents. G. R. S. Mead writes in the “Memorial”, p.75: “According to my experience she was ever over-trustful of others and quite prodigal in her frankness. As an instance, no sooner had I arrived than she gave me the run of all her papers, and set me to work on a pile of correspondence

that would otherwise have remained unanswered till doomsday”.

We need not wonder that the Sleuth failed to secure one of those Chinese envelopes in that drawer: there never were any there.

There is not a scrap of confirmation of all these incidents of the three supplementary and “entertaining” chapters to the S.P.R. Report; the paper with the Russian writhing is not secured and produced; the silver bell vanishes; the oil of oranges evaporates; the Chinese envelopes go back in the drawer. Anyone who had a mind to it could make up Solovyoff’s story — if they were so foolish and wicked, and I do not know which comes first: or, if they felt secure of such unscrupulous protection as the S.P.R. offered to Solovyoff.

One is bound to conjecture that he had secured their protection before ever he published his Russian attack. Otherwise how, *knowing that they possessed all the documentary evidence necessary to convict him of literary imposture*, could he have dared to publish? They had his communication of October 1s 1884, describing the Master’s astral visit at Elberfeld. They knew, therefore, that he lies in chap. xii, where he says that two days before he sent them this communication for publication, he had definitely promised himself to collect proofs of all Madame Blavatsky’s deceptions. They knew that on or about, September 20th, 1885, he had sent in his resignation to the S.P.R. and a letter of protest against Hodgson’s report; that he had written angry letters to Myers and was publicly taking the side of Madame Blavatsky; that, therefore, he lies in saying that he went to Wurzburg for the purpose of trapping her and exposing her. They knew that he did not withdraw his resignation and protest until some time in November at earliest.

They knew that he went from Wurzburg to Paris towards the end of September and there sought out Richet: in Richet’s own words —

“When I saw you, you said to me, ‘Reserve your judgment, she has shown me things that astound me, my mind is not quite made up, but I do believe that she is a most extraordinary woman, gifted with exceptional powers. Wait and I will give you more ample explanations”.

When Richet wrote his “testimonial” to Solovyoff, unless he knew Russian, he could scarcely have read what Solovyoff had written about Wurzburg, as happening only a month before. It says long on the timidity of the scientist that he never, publicly anyway, denounced Solovyoff. But Richet had read the S.P.R. Report . . . and he had visited Blavatsky. It looks as if, sooner than admit to having ever countenanced the “impostor” Richet was willing to rope in anyone as *aparatonerre*, lightning-conductor, and flatter him — for he highly flatters Solovyoff and signs, “Yours most affectionately” — and paint him white. Even the self-accusing and jet-black Coulombs became grey under the brush of the S.P.R.

Mais, ce qu’on peut affectionner en fait d’ordure . . . ! Richet must have been told the gist of Solovyoff’s tale, and must also, have been told that, at the very date Solovyoff allots to the silver bell and the Chinese envelopes, he was actually resigning from the S.P.R. Or, was Richet told nothing? Positively, we must conclude so, for it is one thing, for fear

of ridicule and damage to one's scientific reputation, to scurry away from a publicly denounced "impostor" whom one has visited, but quite another to take part in a conspiracy to suppress documents that would exonerate the accused person and prove the accuser an impudent liar. I prefer to suppose that Richet was never told of these documents. His flattering letter to Solovyoff arouses contempt for his judgment of character; his failure to perceive in Madame Blavatsky one of the greatest psychics the world has ever seen, although, as he admits, she had shown him "some phenomena", will always disgrace his reputation as a researcher in metapsychical science: but we need not go further than that. The S.P.R. deceived the whole world and may well have deceived Richet too.

What the public may justly demand now is the production of the S.P.R. records with Solovyoff's 1885 resignation and letter of protest. Through their sponsorship of this "entertaining narrative", and Madame Jelihovsky's public attack on it we have all the rest, all the necessary letters and "communications" and newspaper articles with their inexorable dates.

* * *

After his *envelopes*, all Solovyoff had to do was to fit the word to the deed, to make Madame Blavatsky "confess" to him her long vast scheme of imposture. He borrows a choice bit from the S.P.R. First Report. He makes her declaim: "How often has it happened that under my direction and revision minutes of various phenomena have been drawn up; lo, the most innocent and conscientious people . . . have signed en toutes lettres at the foot of the Minutes. Yes, my dear sir, I venture to assure you that in history, even the best attested, there is far more fancy than truth". The style is like none ever reported elsewhere of Madame Blavatsky. She never talked like that.

First Report, p.8: "Many worthy persons . . . would be willing to sign a statement that a small gas-burner gave 'a good light' when, in point of fact, they could scarcely see their hands before them". Like Madame Coulomb, Solovyoff frequently dramatizes and makes an actual happening of some suspicion, sometime, somewhere directed against Madame Blavatsky, her confederates and her dupes. Frequently, I say; but the bigger half of his book is made up from such already published *materiel de roman*. Where he thinks to improve matters, as with his strangely-shaped pretty piece of silver and his spy yarn, he improves only the case for Madame Blavatsky! and "dishes" two nice S.P.R theories hitherto unchallenged, or at least, undisproved.

[We hear more about that piece of silver. But first, we learn some rather astonishing things.]

"Are you alone the author of Koot Hoomi's letters, philosophical and otherwise?"

"No, the chelas used sometimes to help me, Damodar, Subba Rao and Mohini."

[Probably, even today, if such an accusation against the late Subba Rao were known in Madras Presidency, there would be meetings of protest against the S.P.R. Of all the cruel insults to hundreds of good Indian families made in the Report, none equals in wicked insolence this one in the lying book the S.P.R. deliberately foisted on the British public.]

“‘And Sinnett?’

“‘Sinnett won’t invent gunpowder; but he has a beautiful style, he is splendid at editing.’

“‘And Olcott?’

“‘Olcott is not bad at editing either, when he understands what he is talking about . . . He has very often helped me in phenomena, both over there and here. But he never can think of anything for himself.’

‘Please let me see the magic bell.’

“‘She made a peculiar movement with her hand under her shawl, then she stretched out her arm and somewhere in the air there sounded the tones of the Aeolian harp that had astonished everyone. She again made a movement beneath her shawl, and in her hand . . . appeared the little piece of silver with which I was already acquainted.’”

[Now what could Madame Coulomb, with her musical-box and iron-stains, say to that!]

“‘Yes, it is the magic bell,’ she boasted in her thoughtlessness. ‘A cunning little thing. That is my ‘occult telegraph, through which I communicate with the “Master”.’

It is a short step now to the end. But so dramatic a scene must have a good “curtain”, and so the Madame Blavatsky of this narrative is made to burn her last boats.

Save me, help me. Prepare the ground for me to work in Russia . . . and ‘create’ Koot Hoomi’s Russian letters. I will give you the materials for them.’

“No doubt I was bound to expect something of the sort, and I did expect it. But I no longer had the strength to sustain my part; I seized my hat, and without a word, I almost ran out into the fresh air.”

[I, the present writer, feel rather like that myself! With this, as with every other attack on Madame Blavatsky, one needs to master frequent moods of utter and furious disgust. The brain turns away from a feeling that genius may never be safe from the conspiracy of liars, forgers and boycotters.]

“I wished to take the little thing in my hand and examine its construction. But she . . . suddenly put it into the drawer and turned the key.”

Once again, Solovyoff saves himself from a challenge. The silver bell is suddenly locked in the drawer, so he cannot give even a description. However we learn something: the bell was *timed*. First, a “peculiar” movement had to be made, then the arm stretched out, and only then, came the bell sound! Suppose Madame Blavatsky had had no shawl on? At Simla, in 1880 and at Ooty, in 1883, the bell rang scores of times when Madame Blavatsky was at table or in evening dress; it rang in Madras when she was trying to bear life in the scantiest of muslin wrappers; it rang here, there and everywhere, shawl or no shawl. And then, we remember, it rang “with a clear and loud sound” on Solovyoff’s own table when she was in London (p.—)! By the way, as a specimen of Walter Leaf’s

desperate defence of Solovyoff against Mme. Jelihovsky's exposure of him:

“Mr. Solovyoff draws attention to the fact that this letter was written more than a year before the incident with the little bit of silver”

If it were a century before, the bell rang on Solovyoff's table, not Madame Blavatsky's.

[The incident of the little bit of silver never occurred.]

XX.

[Solovyoff says that he rushed home and wrote out everything word for word. Then, “in cold blood” he began to reason and decided that, after all, he had gained nothing. No! not even a Chinese envelope.]

“On the contrary, my position was worse. It is not particularly pleasant to know the truth, to have attained it by so painful a road, and then to have to keep it to oneself, or to hear it said: ‘But yet, my good sir, all this is sufficiently improbable and you have no legal evidence of the possibility of what you say’.”

But — Solovyoff's invention is now at an end. He has been unable to invent one single scene where legal evidence would be available, and he cannot invent one; legal evidence has to be *produced*, and you cannot produce pieces of silver and envelopes that never existed. Curious that this Judas should have had pieces of silver in his fabricating mind! Well, there he is at home . . .

Not alone! His companion with the child is there, sharing the room. All this time, all through these days of miracles, she has been there. She may have known all about Solovyoff's rows with Myers and the S.P.R. As a “karma” needing to be placated, she must have had a “say” in most things. Above all, she must have made demands on his time. The truth is that Solovyoff saw very little of Madame Blavatsky. She wrote to Sinnett: “The Solovyoffs are here . . . We see each other very little though for we both of us have work to do”. Solovyoff himself says that he had found some unexpected business in Wurzburg (p.161.) The lady had nothing to complain of. During these first days, Solovyoff probably never visited Madame Blavatsky except for a cup of tea and a chat over the eternal samovar. She rose at six, worked all day and went to bed at nine o'clock. For two or three days, she lay in bed, helpless. If the “declaration” of Madame de Morsier were genuine, it would only go to prove that Madame Blavatsky desired to be bothered by Solovyoff as little as possible. One may imagine so — with her “article for the *Russky Vvestnik*, some fanciful stories, translating something for her Theosophists and preparing to begin her *Secret Doctrine*”! Once again, I leave it to *writers*. Solovyoff would have been wiser to leave out that trifling list, but he often writes as if automatically, the truth. This psychological phenomenon is to be noted in every slanderer of H.P.P.; even, and especially, in Madame Coulomb. The S.P.R. Report is full of phrases disastrous to itself.

Solovyoff has to round off his tale, however. One would expect, from his “legal” doubts that he is going to produce something at last. Not so. He is only going to make his “Madame Blavatsky” talk some more and finally offer herself to him as a spy. And

again, with a strange providence working to destroy him, he destroys himself. He pretends that she sent Babaji to fetch him and that he went. Presumably his lady had noticed nothing of his excited state when he rushed home, supposed he was doing business while writing “word for word”, left him in peace to think over the “legal” blanks in his narrative and made no objection to his rushing out again. As she is never once mentioned in the book, these considerations do not hamper the author or intrigue the reader who is kept unaware of the “karma’s” existence. Madame Blavatsky has conveniently allowed him time to jot her down, “word for word”, and to have a bit of a think “in cold blood”, and off Solovyoff goes again.

[Madame Blavatsky denies, as she well might, having asked him to “create” Russian Mahatmic letters. She may some time have asked him to translate them “for the Russian papers”. Solovyoff then makes her say a few things that she probably did say to him, but at different moments and in a quite different fashion. She seems to have told him at some time or other while in Switzerland about her American marriage and she probably added, with her usual shrug — “Must have been some black magic about!” He dishes it up now as a confession, but, imagining that Olcott must have been a witness, he makes quite a point of this, and so Olcott “signed the register”. Olcott was not present at all. Suddenly, Solovyoff’s “Madame Blavatsky” changed her tone.]

“... It will not do for you to be very severe; you see, that, come what may, you have already deeply compromised yourself by giving the London ‘psychists’ an account of the ‘master’s’ appearance to you . . . you wrote an account and they have printed it over your signature. So it is too late now to go back, and your own self-love will not allow it . . . the only thing for you to do is to *faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu*.’

“‘I have long known that sooner or later you would talk to me like this,’ I answered; ‘but you must please understand that all this does not frighten me in the least. It is clear that you know me but little. I must beg you not to have recourse to a weapon like that.’”

Noble! We are not to be — blackmailed, we beg you not to use such a weapon. Perhaps, after all, it is not quite so nobly furious as one would expect, but this ignoble creature who has not hesitated to proclaim himself falsely a daily sneak and traitor would not be likely to know the proper dialogue for such a situation. He imagines that a man would get “on his dignity” and reply as if he had merely been threatened with ostracism for spilling ash on the carpet.

[Then, he says, she again changed tone and became gracious, made him a series of prophecies of events to happen to him within the next two months.]

“But after all it made no difference; with the poor budget I possessed I could do but little. I could communicate nothing of real importance, no documentary evidence, that is, either to the London Society for Psychical Research or to the Paris Theosophists. My only hope was that in the course of two months something might turn up and my budget be enlarged.”

[So he promises to wait two months and he writes down the prophecies. Perhaps at some time before he left she did make some prophecies, and perhaps some of them came true, but the events were too disagreeable in their *reactions*; in any case Solovyoff never says what they were and we have only his word that they were ever made. The curtain drops on the last scene, that is, on the last words he puts into her mouth, the offer to become a Russian spy.]

“My influence on the Hindus is enormous . . . At a sign from me, millions of Hindus would follow me, I can easily organize a gigantic rebellion. I will guarantee that in a year’s time the whole of India would be in Russian hands . . . I will bring about one of the greatest events in history . . . I proposed the same thing some years ago when Timasheff was still minister; but I did not receive any answer. But now, now it is much easier for me; I can arrange the whole thing in a year. Help me in such a patriotic cause.”

Except for a laugh, there is only one comment necessary. H.P.B.’s life, almost day by day, in India is thoroughly well-known to students. However little she loved the English — and she had small cause to love us — her whole passion, under the direction of her Masters, was to bring about a better feeling and if possible, a brotherly feeling, between Indians and the British Raj. Whoever denies that is simply an ignoramus or malicious. Moreover, she and Colonel Olcott did more to reconcile English and Indians than anyone before or after, and the opinion of the Indian Government might quite confidently be asked on this subject. She knew that the very existence of the Theosophical Society depended on the state of good relations between Indians and the Government.

She landed in India in February, 1879. In July, the organization of the *Theosophist* began. In December, she made her first visit to Sinnett. She spent part of 1880 in Ceylon and again visited Sinnett at Simla in September. During that visit, the Government, that had been watching her and Olcott closely, notified Olcott that they would no longer be subjected to annoying observation.

When had she ever in her mind to organize a revolt? *When* could she ever have proposed to Timasheff to bring about one of the greatest events in history and give over India into Russian hands?

We know her whole life, we know every Indian whom she knew: and we know that Solovyoff lies.

* * *

[What next? He goes to take leave of her.]

“As I was taking leave, I said: ‘Now Helena Petrovna, the hour of farewell has come. Listen to my honest advice, which comes alike from the head and the heart. Have pity on yourself; throw away all this horrible tinsel, resign from the Theosophical Society, as you yourself wished to do not long ago, nurse your health in quiet, and write . . . Let the evening of your life, at least, be bright and calm. Do not take needless burdens on your soul; make a pause.’

“‘Too late.’ she said in a stifled voice; ‘for me there is no going back’. And in a moment, in quite another tone, she went on: ‘Know that all the ‘master’s’ predictions will be fulfilled, and in no more than a month

and a half from now.’

“By these last words she made it possible for me to part from her without any feeling of pity.”

* * *

And he goes straight to Paris and “convinces Richet”.

“Paris,. Oct. 8, 1885.

“Dear Helena Petrovna, Which is the better, to write at random, or to hold one’s tongue and work for the good of one’s correspondent? . . . I have made friends with Madame Adam, and talked a great deal to her about you; I have greatly interested her, and she has told me that her *Revue* is open not only to theosophy but to a defence of yourself personally if necessary. I praised up Madame de Morsier to her, and at the same time there was another gentleman there who spoke on your behalf in the same tone, and Madame Adam wished to make acquaintance with Madame de Morsier, who will remain in Paris as the official means of communication between me and the *Nouvelle Revue*. Yesterday the meeting of the two ladies took place; our Emilie was quite in raptures . . . In any case this is very good. Today I passed the morning with Richet, and again talked a great deal about you, in connection with Myers and the Psychical Society. I can say positively that *I convinced Richet of the reality of your personal power and of the phenomena that proceed from you*. He put me three questions categorically. To the first two I answered affirmatively; with respect to the third I said that I should be in the position to answer affirmatively, without any trouble, in two or three months. But I do not doubt that I shall answer affirmatively, and then, you will see! there will be such a triumph that all the psychists will be wiped out . . . Yes, so it will be; for you did not treat me as a doll? . . . I start the day after tomorrow for St. Petersburg . . . What will happen? Your cordially devoted Vs. Solovyoff.”

* * *

Need anything more be said? We can only guess what happened. He saw himself as the Coming Star; *he* was to prove to the World what it had rejected when offered by H.P.B. under the instruction of her Master; he boasted to the Paris Theosophists and to “our Emilie” and to Madame Jelihovsky. The weeks went by and the Master made no sign. Then, he began to lend an ear to Vera’s exhortations and especially to her disloyal gossip about her sister, and then came the news that Hodgson’s Report would put an end to Madame Blavatsky’s career, once and for all. The fiend at the bottom of him awoke and fed on his vanity and his disappointment, his dread of public ridicule: and the venom that spurts all through this lying book began to rise and filled him.

His is only one case reported among others where the Master of H.P.B. took a look at an aspirant — and refused to make use of a foul character. The story of Madame Blavatsky exhibits several of these ambitious traitors, all more or less psychically gifted, whose friendship for her was based on a hope to climb not only through, but past, her. They all sank in their own mud. They ignored the rule that no aspirant can reach a Master over the body of a loyal chela, through whom they have once approached him, but has to come in led by that chela’s hand. In defending H.P.B., Solovyoff was not concerned with justice but with a reward: a reward for doing the office of any man who believed in her, as he did! He fell down on the first test, of mere patience, saw the time running away and danger brewing, and turned savagely against her, “like a mad dog”, as she wrote to Sinnett. He had it in him to turn like a mad dog, so we need not speculate on what might have happened had he waited and stood firm. “No wonder” writes H.P.B. to Sinnett, “No

wonder if after his first visit, and having had a good look at him Master would have nothing more to do with him, all my prayers notwithstanding”.

He was left to himself, his own determined path and he did his utmost to ruin her. His greatest punishment must have been to hear of her, not ruined at all, although broken in physical health, but achieving her *magnus opus*, the Secret Doctrine, surrounded by worshipping and influential friends well able to protect her. Also when those letters were brought to light, he must have realized that, one day or other, the name of Vs Solovyoff would become a synonym for a rogue, for a man of so debased a character that he would not hesitate to invent a false accusation against himself, to represent himself as a secret daily spy, cunning, wheedling, deceiving everyone — in order to make the charges against his victim sound more probably true.

* * *

I ACCUSE THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH OF 1895 OF DELIBERATELY DECEIVING THE PUBLIC BY SPONSORING AND PUBLISHING SOLOVYOFF’S “MODERN PRIESTESS OF ISIS” WHILE IN POSSESSION OF DATED DOCUMENTS THAT PROVED IT A FABRICATION.

I DEMAND THAT THE RECORDS OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE YEARS 1884, 1885 AND 1886 SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO INVESTIGATION, BY A NEUTRAL COMMITTEE.

ONLY BY SUCH FRANK AND OPEN CONDUCT NOW CAN THE PRESENT S.P.R. BE RELIEVED OF THE ONUS OF ONE OF THE MOST ATROCIOUS CONSPIRACIES OF MODERN TIMES.

In substantiation of her challenge to the Society for Psychic Research Mrs. Hastings added to her analysis of Solovyoff’s *Modern Priestess of Isis* the review of the book by F. Podmore, one of the leading Researchers. Mr. Podmore swallows all of Solovyoff’s statements without question. He accepts all the assertions made, even when the discrepancies are too obvious to be overlooked. His excuses are lapse of time affects one’s memory, no notes were kept, no dates supplied, etc. Mr. Solovyoff could say nothing wrong. Mme. Blavatsky could do nothing right. This review ties Mr. Podmore up with all the inventions and falsehoods provided by Solovyoff as soon as he knew that Mme. Blavatsky was dead and cremated. He felt safe then and his narrative, abridged and translated by Walter Leaf, another noted Researcher, was hailed with rejoicing by the whole S. P. R. body, who sought, not truth, but any sort of support for their own prejudices and adamant incredulity.

A quotation from Walter Leaf’s book, *Some Chapters of Autobiography with a Memoir by Charlotte M. Leaf* (London: John Murray, 1832) indicates his point of view and reliance on Solovyoff’s falsehoods. Mrs. Leaf, his widow, was the eldest of the four daughters of John Addington Symonds. She was a very amiable lady, and worshipped “Walter” who was devoted to her. The quotation is from page 155: — “He has told in his autobiography how he first became interested in the question of communication from another world; but there is no mention of the question in his diary until, in 1885, he became interested in the claims of Mme Blavatsky. He began to read up Theosophy and to learn Russian, with which equipment he began to translate her confessions in 1893 under the title of *A Modern Priestess of Isis*. It was not until 1889, it seems, that he started going to meetings of the S.P.R., but from that year his attendances were frequent and devoted mainly to experiments in hypnotism. In this year, too, he first met Mrs. Piper, and began with that famous medium a series of seances which never really satisfied his scientific curiosity”

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