

### INDEX TO "THE MAHATMA LETTERS"

Editor, *Canadian Theosophist*: — I very much regret to have to warn students of my "Defence of Madame Blavatsky" that they must not rely on Mrs. Conger's chronology of the "Mahatma Letters." One may appreciate the devotion involved but if devotion were sufficient, no doubt H.P.B. would have been vindicated long since. The truth is that very special gifts are necessary for any work of true documentation and this is why documentarians, as opposed to mere research and tabulation workers, are much sought after and very highly paid. I know of only one person in the Theosophical Movement who has the gift and that is Miss Mary Neff. Unfortunately, she has not an equal gift as a writer and so when she takes the pen she is liable to lose control of her matter but as documentarian, with all the intuitive *linking* gift, she is worth her weight in anything the Adyar people could pay—and they waste her on lecturing which many can do.

There is only one term for Mrs. Conger's practical effort, shockingly bad. This may be due partly to the poverty of her bibliography, but also to what seems to me an utter lack of comprehension of the delicate caution necessary, of the way one has to hop and flutter in small areas and then suddenly to fly from end to end of the earth, as it were, and alight "on the spot." Of course, without the complete studies available, even hopping and fluttering will be mostly in vain, and where the flight may depend for success on some even only suspected hidden clue, no wise bird would leave the ground. To leave this allegory which will perhaps only be wholly intelligible to the true documentarian, I must proceed to justify my rejection of Mrs. Conger's chronology. I will only take one block of dates beginning on the second page of the list (page 8), placing Mrs. Conger's text in italics. They come under Year "1881."

*ML 280 XLIX (5) Received Umballa. Aug. 5. K.H.*

The date is one of the few probably correct ones given by Sinnett. But Mrs. Conger's note, indicated by the (5) is misleading. She does not seem to know that H.P.B. and Sinnett went up from Allahabad to Simla *together*. Sinnett describes H.P.B.'s woes on the *tonga* cart journey in "Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky," pp. 187-8.

*ML 204 XXVII Simla Aug. late. K.H.*

This letter must be dated at earliest middle of Dec. It discusses the reply of Stainton Moses written from England on Nov. 21, 1881.

*ML 450 CXVI Simla Aug. late. K.H.*

There is no definite clue in this letter, but as it speaks of the wrangling with Hume and the "debt of gratitude" (owed him for getting H.P.B. some Government work ?) it *may* be late September, 1881.

*ML 207 XXVIII (6) (to Hume) Simla Aug. late. K.H.*

This letter, with a hundred clues to its date, should come soon after Nov. 20th, 1880, not 1881.

*ML 137 XXII Simla Sep. 20. K.H.*

I place this letter Sep. 1882, not 1881. It is in the same strain as Letter X which is undoubtedly 1882, when MKH was making a last effort to open Hume's eyes to fundamentals. Compare the talk about the "Father" with page 304, ML., where MKH writes to Sinnett after Hume's "abdication," Oct. 1882. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that these vigorous letters dealing with fundamentals were written while H.P.B. was at Darjeeling in physical touch with the Masters.

*BL 5 IV (7) Sep. late. M.*

I have not verified date but the note (7) is erroneous. H.P.B. left Simla, not Oct. 1st but much later. She wrote to Madame Coulomb: "I am obliged to remain here till the 25th October as I can make 200 rupees offered me by the Foreign Office for translating a book of Russian statistics." Actually, she left about a week earlier. Sinnett left her at Hume's when he returned to Allahabad. But I must not take up too much of your space. Mrs. Conger has eight wrong notes detectable by me at sight, among the least tolerable being No. 13 where she makes Olcott accompanied by *two*, instead of one, chelas, a bit of news that Hodgson would have been delighted to know; and No. 35 where "the step" is stated as a cabling to Adyar to evict the Coulombs (who had been evicted in May, months before). The "step" H.P.B. was permitted to take was to hand in her resignation. Passing over a series of highly doubtful or quite wrong dates, one finds under "1882:"

*BL 304 CLV (12) Jan. 7 M.*

The notes are not by MM, but by MKH. Hume did not go under the Almorah Swami until late summer 1882, probably not before September. The Hume Letter referred to in Note 12, date Jan. 4, 82, has no connection with MKH's notes.

*BL 365 CCIII Jan. 7 M.*

This letter is also from MKH, not from M. As it refers to Sinnett's reluctance to attend the Bombay meeting in Jan. 1882, and as MKH. went into retreat on Sep. 26th, 1881, the letter was certainly written at some previous time during that month.

I have only looked at this one page of Mrs. Conger's list, but I do wonder in fear of what the rest would show me.

Yours sincerely,  
Beatrice Hastings.

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### **THE CRITIC CORRECTS HERSELF**

Editor, *Canadian Theosophist*: — Your readers who are also students of *The Mahatma Letters* will be amused to see that I, while correcting Mrs. Conger's errors, have myself confused two letters on the same subject. I only noticed it while reading *M. L.* last night, and offer apologies for wasting your very valuable space, and also for adding an unnecessary figure to Mrs. Conger's erroneous total. Letter xxvii does come in autumn, 1881, but there is no reason to place it as "August late." It might more likely be late September, counting the time for exchange of letters between India and London. This letter is not directly important for the defence of Madame Blavatsky, but I much regret my negligence to verify all the same. Where so much is chaos and confusion, to add a bit more is a sin.

Yours sincerely,

Beatrice Hastings.

Worthing, Feb. 22, 1940

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