

NEW UNIVERSE

“Try”

**A Review devoted to the defence of
MADAME BLAVATSKY**

6^{d.}



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Editor - Beatrice Hastings.

Review of a review by Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe of Messrs. Hare's
“Who wrote the *Mahatma Letters*.”

(*Spectator*, June 26th, 1936.)

An intriguing spectacle for the future critic will be that provided by the group of reviewers who, apparently, have determined among themselves to keep an effigy of Madame Blavatsky in the pillory. Why they should undertake this vain task is something of a mystery. But then all is something, if not much, of a mystery in these times. Why should Mr. Chamberlain have had the cheek and impudence (Mr. Herbert Morrison's phrase) to carve up for Hitler's pleasure a country of which our cultured Prime Minister declared that he “knew nothing”? We live in an age like that, when people can do such things. If we said that this age started when Madame Blavatsky was made the victim of a “frame-up” in the interests of intellectual fascism in this country, that would not be wide of the truth.

It is absolutely certain that the grotesque reviewers above-mentioned do not know why they attack Madame Blavatsky, why they carve her up. To know why they do it they would need to study the charges made against her and also to read her writings. The least glance at their articles shows that they have neither studied the charges nor read her writings. They just play the poll-parrot. They slander at second, at hundredth, hand, adding to the “evidence” nothing but their own signature, a signature of not the slightest value, being inadmissible in any court. They repeat what other adversaries of Madame Blavatsky have said about her books. If the adversaries make a wrong quotation or falsify a quotation, so do the reviewers, copying down with a servility that would be amusing were it not so stupid. If they should allege that they are doing a sacred duty by periodically reminding the public what a dreadful charlatan Madame Blavatsky was and by warning people away from the literature connected with her name—“a mountain of rubbish”, as Mr. Ratcliffe designates the part called the *Mahatma Letters*—if these reviewers pretend to some moral right in their attacks, one can answer immediately: “You have no right at all to attack Madame Blavatsky, for your articles show that you have studied neither the charges against her nor her writings”. And so we come back to where we started from, and have to say that we live in an age like that, a half-insane age, when people can carve up other people and give them away and just do what they like. But this age will pass. One day, a world will stand in a two-minutes silence wondering just what kind of curly-tongued hypocrites congratulated Mr. Chamberlain while one thousand Czech officers shot themselves on the Maginot Line and then it will be said that public immorality must have been long breeding in many quarters, and especially in the Press, before public men could venture to play such a diabolical farce.

Believe it—that long foul dastardly campaign against H. P. Blavatsky, carried on with the aid of almost the whole Press, a huge iniquitous LIE of a campaign, a FRAME-UP comparable for impudent villainy with any ever known, believe it that this tragic attempt to incriminate and blot out and murder a woman of such genius has played a horrible part in the slide towards barbarism. An injustice of that sort, repeated and repeated year after year is a poison in the human atmosphere, renders it unstable.

The Theosophists have been blamed for not defending her. I am not sure that a true defence could have been made before the publication of the *Mahatma Letters* where so many scores of confirmatory circumstances and dates assist a vindication. But, I tell Theosophists plainly now that they must and will be held guilty if they do not bring before the public everywhere throughout the world the facts that prove her innocence of the charges made against her. There are some charges that may perhaps evade explanation because such explanation as could be offered concerns the esoteric life of H. P. Blavatsky and could never be really explained to outsiders: but these are *very few* compared with the mass of accusations that can be disposed of completely by mere study of records; accusations that any decently honest person would cast out as having been criminally concocted. It is the duty of Theosophists to call the attention of people all over the world to the “Defence of Madame Blavatsky” which I have prepared with enormous pains and to protest against the repetition of slanders, baseless always and now being one by one refuted. And do not reply that you are doing your part by reading the “Secret Doctrine” and teaching it to others. That would be to class yourself with a man who should hear people saying that his benefactor was a swindler and should reply that he was too busy spending the fortune to bother about that. Occultism destroys people who mishandle it. If ever the key to the “Secret Doctrine” were given, it could not conceivably be given to people whose common moral basis were unsound; and most decidedly unsound is the moral basis of any Theosophist who neglects his part in the vindication of H. P. Blavatsky.

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“Madame Blavatsky, a woman of boisterous vigour and humour, needed supernatural authority for her gospel”, writes Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe. “She found it in these remote Tibetans, the first two of whom bore the names of Koot Hoomi and Morya. (Not long after the first exposure in India, renegade Theosophists were explaining that Koot Hoomi had been made up from Olcott and Hume.)”

That is the sort of thing that may be printed in the *Spectator*, a journal of world-wide circulation and considered of great authority. You behold Madame Blavatsky, that marvellous writer, that astonishing conversationalist, the delight of every company, thus presented to the readers of the *Spectator*, many of whom would be with her if they were given a fair portrait—you see her presented as a kind of lumbering, horse-laughed peasant with enough cunning to set up as a prophet, *mystique et pocharde*; a coarse humbug, making up idiotic names from other names. Mr. Ratcliffe is of course completely ignorant of the fact that the name Koot Hoomi, although very rare, is one of the oldest in India. The text of the Sama Veda according to the school of Koothoomi has been published by the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. How, in 1880, could Madame Blavatsky have got hold of just this rare name except through one of the order?

Why, one asks, should an ignoramus be permitted to fob off his scurrilities on the readers of the *Spectator*? It is paralysing and stultifying to the mind to reflect that one of the gravest journals in the world should be left at the mercy of such a mountebank.

Mr. Ratcliffe’s admiration (grown in absolute ignorance of the subject) for Messrs. Hare might be described as “boisterous”. He riots in praises, gives them his full (and perfectly worthless) endorsement. As the readers of my “Defence of Madame Blavatsky” are aware, I devoted a section of Vol. I. to Messrs. Hare and, with data that only ended with the space at my disposal, proved them a couple of pretenders. They have been unable to reply on one single point.

“A mountain of rubbish” says Mr. Ratcliffe of the *Mahatma Letters*. I ask such readers of the *Spectator* as will see this page—and they will be several—to consider the following quotation in the light of Mr. Ratcliffe’s pronouncement:

“Did it ever strike you—and now from the standpoint of your Western science and the suggestion of your own ego which has already seized the essentials of every truth, prepare to deride the erroneous idea—did you ever suspect that Universal, like finite, human, mind, might have two attributes, or a dual power—one the voluntary and conscious, the other the involuntary and unconscious, or the mechanical power? To reconcile the difficulty of many theistic and anti-theistic propositions, both these powers are a philosophical necessity. The possibility of the first, the voluntary and conscious attribute in reference to the infinite mind, notwithstanding the assertion of all the Egos throughout the living world, will remain forever a mere hypothesis, whereas in the finite mind it is a scientific and demonstrated fact.” (Page 137.)

And then, take this: “Guided by his Guru, the *chela* first discovers . . . the laws . . . the centrifugal evolutions into the world of matter. To become a perfect adept takes him long years, but at last he becomes the master. The hidden things have become patent, and mystery and miracle have fled from his sight forever. He sees how to guide force in this direction or that—to produce desired effects. The secret chemical, electric or odic properties of plants, herbs, roots, minerals, animal tissues, are as familiar to him as the feathers of your birds are to you. No change in the etheric vibrations can escape him. He applies his knowledge, and behold a miracle! And he who started with repudiation of the very idea that miracle is possible, is straightway worshipped by the fools as a demi-god or repudiated by still greater fools as a charlatan.”

In one of Kingdom Ward’s books, he relates his astonishment that a young chela in the monastery he stayed in was able to go at once and find the growing-place of a flower picked miles away and three months before, whereas the English botanist had sought in vain all those months to find another specimen. They do not waste their time in those monasteries and no wonder they do not want our interference and “progress”!

One more quotation: “At a certain spot not to be mentioned to outsiders, there is a chasm spanned by a frail bridge of woven grasses and with a raging torrent beneath. The bravest member of your Alpine Club would scarcely dare to venture the passage, for it hangs like a spider’s web and *seems* to be rotten and impassable, yet it is not; and he who dares the trial and succeeds—as he will if it is right that he should be permitted—comes into a gorge of surpassing beauty of scenery, to one of *our* places and to some of *our* people . . .” (Page 219.)

If Mr. Ratcliffe could ever, by any Cinderella-sister device, mould his imagination and shape his mind to that style, it would be worth his while to cut and chop himself for a month of Sundays.

And a last word: “On close observation you will find that it was never the intention of the Occultists really to conceal what they have been writing from the earnest determined students but rather to lock up the information for safety’s sake, in a secure safe box, the key to which is—intuition.” (Page 279.)

The mountain may look as if covered with rubbish; but one remembers those poor-looking hermit dwellings that a few explorers have photographed; just a pile of stones, maybe, or a few logs with a rag or two for a roof. Surely no-one ever comes there. Look again! If you know anything about a spoor, you will see that scarcely a stone on the long desert is in its natural position. People must be going there all the time. They don’t go to see a rag shaking in the wind!

The *Mahatma Letters* have gone into many impressions already, and that in spite of the fact that only great devotion can discover the right order of the reading.

LECTURE AT F.M.B. SOCIAL ROOMS.

For September 22nd, on the evening of the day when Mr. Chamberlain took his umbrella to Berchtesgaden, the Friends of Madame Blavatsky arranged a lecture. The subject was "Tiflis and the Caucasus in the time of Madame Blavatsky"; the lecturer, Prince Melikoff, a Georgian nobleman. At seven o'clock I was saying to myself that we need expect nobody on the night of such a crisis. At eight, we were packed to the doors and had to turn people away. Three quarters of the audience were non-Theosophists and in fact no prominent Theosophist came to support us. Some were away owing to the crisis and some, certainly, waited to see what sort of success we might get, quit to turn up next time if we got a good one. The audience was a wonderful response to my appeal to the general public to come and hear the name of Madame Blavatsky pronounced with respect and admiration. Prince Melikoff led off by telling us that the Caucasus was for centuries the gateway from west to east and pointed out how fitting it was that Madame Blavatsky should have spent her years between childhood and early maturity among the forests and mountains of that ancient region. Knowing the region himself like his hand, as they say, the lecturer filled about thirty minutes with instructive and amusing information. Then, coffee and cakes were served and after that, Mr. Christmas Humphreys of the Buddhist Lodge kindly gave us a fifteen minutes' discourse on the Power of Thought. I saw many eyes fixed as if charmed on the speaker, and no doubt some of them for the first time heard of the mystical carrying-power of a thought.

* * *

On October 25th, the Friends of Madame Blavatsky had a conversazione. Invitation was by personal card, as I wished to avoid the rather too grand crush that we had at the lecture. There was a terrible fog on and once again I doubted whether anyone would come, but practically everyone did.

This time, about half were Theosophist members and half non-Theosophist members with a sprinkling of specially invited guests. We had a first-rate violinist, Mr. J. Gold, who played, among other brilliant items, some of the Russian songs that Madame Blavatsky must have sung as a girl. Miss M. C. Debenham sang beautifully and was enthusiastically encored. Between the musical parts, conversation was lively and much of it ran on the defence of Madame Blavatsky. It was generally agreed that this kind of social evening is invaluable as a means of getting together people who would not attend an ordinary Theosophical meeting but who would be inclined to defend H.P.B. once they were told about the "frame-up" and were given some good reasons for defending her.

Members would render the greatest service to the crusade for Madame Blavatsky's vindication by giving social evenings at their own homes. All classes of society might be reached in this way. It would be against our rules to put forth the teachings at such gatherings, the which should be devoted to gaining adherents among the general public, and this public will shy off from anything that looks like a furtive attempt to convert them to the philosophy. What might be done would be to say that there do exist classes for the philosophy and that the guests would be sure of a welcome if they cared to attend.

At both lecture and conversazione our explanatory leaflets were distributed and I noted particularly that all, after being read, were carefully put in bags and pockets and not one remained behind on the chairs or the floor. We took no collections at these first meetings, but several donations were given, and some of our literature was sold.

* * *

Before next “New Universe” appears, we may have changed our London arrangements. Our largest room has proved far too small for public lectures and the next will have to be given in a hall. Meanwhile, visitors’ day is changed to Friday, 4 to 6.

POISON TONGUES.

Dear Mr., Mrs. or Miss Poisoner, This is to inform you that I know all about your whispering campaign. If I were not engaged in a campaign myself to vindicate the honour of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, a victim of people of whom you are certainly the “remains” (you know what I mean), I should take no notice. However, under the circumstances, I must take some notice because you are interfering with my work, and this is the form my notice will take : Wherever I meet you, I shall tickle your ears or tip your hat with a fly-flick.

B. H.

IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN.

She sat all day and half through the night, very fat, very hot, often very ill, writing, writing, trying to enlighten their ignorant souls; and they took it for granted that she should do it all. Until Damodar came, she addressed envelopes and even toiled out to post them herself. Then Damodar sat up half the nights, taking some of the burden off her hands. They hurt her, these hands, being rheumatic, but the *Theosophist* came out every month with pages of the stuff that today delights writers and will be preserved by critics for all time. The pygmies poisoned her existence. If she spent money, they wondered where she got it from; if she did not spend, they said that she must be making a good thing out of the fees and donations. When she was goaded at last to issue a balance-sheet, the auditors found that she and Olcott must have contributed some 18,000 rupees to the cause. Did that stop their venom? No. They turned up just the same, spying out something else; she never could see through them until they had damaged her considerably. If she remained silent, she must be guilty; if she swore them off the premises, even more guilty. If she clothed herself, she was extravagant; if she dressed anyhow, she was a slut. She could never do anything right for them. They said that she antagonised them. Not they, *her*, the Golden Goose! They went off to mischief; she went on, laying the golden eggs. From the first, some tried to jump the claim, loot the machine, form committees to break up her Society and start one themselves—and that went on to the end, one after another, from Hume to Kingsford, from Sellin to Coues, and more and more of them. What a story is yet to be written of all these raids !

At first, she used to complain a bit, tell them what a hell of a life she had to lead in order to keep the work going. They sympathised: “So sad to think of you with such a burden to carry. Do hope you will soon recover from your illness. I wonder if you would mind sending me next *Theosophist* to enclosed address? I am going to the country for, a few weeks.” It was too humiliating to continue telling these people about her difficulties and so we only gather from a letter here and there how she grew nervous and worn-out, frequently left her home where there was some comfort and slept anyhow, and caught cold, and ate the wrong things at the wrong times and came back out of both pocket and health, to find a pile of letters waiting. They didn’t care a damn. All they cared for was to get her to start them off in the mystical business. Some of them cashed in on the market she created and made a lot of money. *They* did not give the profits to the Cause, not it!

It is a rotten story and one would need a steady stomach to write it all. Those who never turned on her . . . a single hand would suffice to tick them off! Damodar was one of these, and the Masters took him.

POLITICS.

After the Munich crisis, I felt that I should burst if I remained silent while such iniquities were being committed, so I wrote a pamphlet called "Our Own Business". The immediate result of this was an invitation to speak at a meeting in Trafalgar Square, so I spoke in Trafalgar Square; incidentally, for the first time in my life as I have always imagined that my voice was no good even for indoor meetings, but, put to the test, it proves to be what the stump orators call a "carrier". Then, things began to work all around me and I started a movement to unite all true democrats. Result of this, a descent of *dugpas*, such as I always have to meet and conquer no matter what I undertake. Now they've had their ears boxed and *The Democrat* is shouting the nation from its perilous lethargy.

Several prominent Theosophists have written to congratulate me. But—imagine my amused contempt to discover that some of our Theosophist F.M.B.'s thought I ought not to dash into politics but should confine my energies to the F.M.B. ! Now, that is treating me as though I were hired to clean up their dirty house and liable to be called over the coals if I did not put in an appearance. Nothing of the kind as H.P.B. would have said: Nothing like it! And I have flung off a few notes here and there in this "New Universe" that may stick in some caps, and that's all I care. Hoity-toity! You find one of the most exclusive writers ever born willing to take up the defence of your teacher, you do little more than sign your names or a sub. (often an ananias) and then you claim a monopoly! You grumble and criticise and some of you slander like billy-o . . . run away, or else cease your gossip and come in and DO something. I have just had to spend over an hour tracing a new member's address. As a rule I make the entries at once when despatching the receipt and card, every name meaning two entries, usually a letter, the card, envelope, stamping and posting: and just remember it. If the application is sent through a second person, there is no record except in the letter of that person; that is all right enough when there is a whole list of names, but when it is a case of one single name in a letter, that name must be entered in the files at once or may get laid away with the letter. As I was in London, without the files, a name got mislaid so hence my tears and swears this morning. Again: I had to look through a huge pile of cuttings for Mr. Ratcliffe's article. Twice, thrice, and at last I found it. You may imagine how I love these grumblers. What a tale I could tell of all this work on H.P.B.'s defence! I would, except that it would be a very useful addition to the hostile arsenal.¹

Instead, I will tell you charitably a few stories about H.P.B. and Co.

The Master M. had come to see them at Girgaum Back Road, Bombay, just after Olcott had resolved never never to give in, and the visit was to come to an end, MM's pipe out and his blessing about to be given. Olcott wanted to keep him somehow a minute longer, just a minute, and he had a brilliant idea. "Come and see the dog!" he said. So they all went out and saw the dog.

And this happened at one of the socials that H.P.B. arranged to attract people to Lansdowne Road. Fashionable people had been entertaining the company when a little most unfashionable man walked shyly in and gazed around for a seat. Instantly H.P.B. sent for him and installed him next to herself. Presently, she announced that he was going to sing a comic song. Horror! However, he sang his song.

¹ When, after the crusade has been won and it will be no longer necessary to keep the adversary in ignorance, the tale may be told. On the shining side will be found some who have given time, energy and money. One member, a busy salary earner, has sent out 3,000 leaflets with his own hands and at his own expense, giving me no trouble but the dispatch to him of the packets. Every F.M.B. could give or send 100.

And then, she asked him to sing it again. Sinnett came up and remonstrated. “But don’t you see, my dear”, she replied, with one of her royal looks—“Don’t you see that it is the only thing he can do?”

If sweetness and light ever surpassed that, I never heard of it.

She had no mercy for snobbery of any kind. When the Avenue Road folk were seized by an epidemic of Nirvanic assumption and were “sailing off on the yogi line” and making of her a Popish idol, she took special measures to cure it. One of them, later a Theosophical celebrity, got a severe dose and had the grace to tell the story. H.P.B. entered a room and found the aspirant to adeptship strangely swaying to and fro on her knees, with hands clasped. “Whatever are you doing, So and So?” enquired H.P.B. suavely. “Oh, H.P.B. I am communing with the Silent Watcher.” Pause. “To hell with the Silent Watcher!” When the devotee recovered, the room was empty.

* * *

Speaking of pipes and tobacco, I propose that on every anniversary of H.P.B.’s birthday, all non-smoking F.M.B.’s should either puff a cigarette or present some smoker with a packet of his or her particular brand. This, “on general principles and as a sign of loyalty to them”, as she said on a certain occasion and a cure for snobbery. The anti-tobacco dictatorship is a dugpa trick, however innocently supported by non-smokers; it would exclude the Master Morya and H.P.B. from many places, and where they were excluded, no other Master would enter. Thus the seven devils would find themselves lords of the swept and garnished chamber. (Mine is du Maurier, red packet.)

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Mrs. Lulu Gray	"
Mrs. O. Kwith	"
Mrs. V. S. White	"
D. E. Sickcls, Esq.	"
Mrs. V. Sickcls	"
Mrs. E. G. Small	(Point Lama)
Mrs. A. Hartley	"
Wilfred Scott, Esq.	(Darlington)

(to be continued)

NOTES:

Reviews of "Defence" and "New Universe" received from "*Federated India*"; *The Theosophical World*; *Amrita Bazaar Patrikar*; *Toronto Theosophical News*; *The Mahratta*; *Lucifer*; *The Theosophical Forum*; *The Canadian Theosophist*; *The O.E. Literary Critic*; *The American Theosophist*; *The Right Review*; *The Theosophist*; *The Path, Ruusu-Risti*; *The Leader* (Allahabad); *The Age* (Melbourne); *The Theosophical Movement*; *The Aryan Path*; *The Spiritualist News*; *Psychic News*; *Light*.

Psychic News must find a space for quotation from its generous article concerning one who was regarded always as an adversary: "It is a long time since I read anything so satisfying to the critical sense as the review, 'New Universe', in which Mrs. Hastings is, point by point and incident by incident, slaying the lies and slanders about Blavatsky. Mrs. Hastings wields a pen of such power that I hope when she has won the battle for Blavatsky, she will turn again to journalism. I was 'nursed' on Blavatsky's writings, and feel the greatest respect for anyone who can master the intricate details of the life and work of one who was inspired by such a fiery spirit that she made enemies by her zeal and fearlessness." (P.M.)

