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Proceedings OF THE Blavatsky Association.

No. 1

Nov. 13, 1924.

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Blavatsky Assocn.
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The Blavatsky Association.

COUNCIL AND OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1923—4.

COUNCIL

Mrs. Alice Leighton Cleather.

Mr. William Kingsland.

*Mrs. Wallace Kidston.

Miss Elsie Higginbotham

Miss Mary Garrett.

HON. SECRETARY :

The Hon. Mrs. A. J. Davey.

HON. TREASURER :

Mr. C. H. Collings.

HON. AUDITOR :

Mr. F. L. Gardner.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY FOR THE EAST :

Mrs. Alice Leighton Cleather.

*In April Mrs. Wallace Kidston was obliged, owing to ill-health, to retire from the Council, her place was temporarily filled by Mr. F. L. Gardner, and Mr. W. Hammond kindly undertook to act as Auditor in his place.

THE INAUGURAL MEETING.

THE INAUGURAL MEETING was held at 92, Victoria Street, London, S.W., on Tuesday, the 13th of November, 1923, at 3 p.m. Thirty persons being present. On the motion of the Hon. Mrs. A. J. Davey, who had called the meeting together, the chair was taken by Mr. William Kingsland, who made the following introductory remarks.

"We are met together this afternoon, as you know, on account of the great interest which all of us take in that very remarkable woman, Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, in the writings which she has left for us to study, and the work which she initiated. I think I may say that most of us here are something more than interested—we are enthusiastic in the matter; and some of us are here because of the love and affection with which we look back at our old-time association with, and our personal knowledge of H.P.B.

I am very glad to see Mr. Collings and Mr. Gardner here this afternoon, and others like myself who knew her personally. We look back with gratitude to a Karma that enabled us to meet H.P.B., and to learn from her what we did.

Now H.P.B. has left us a great literature; perhaps none of us as yet know what *The Secret Doctrine* will be thought of 20, 30, or 50 years hence. I am quite sure and certain that that work will be more and more appreciated. Besides that she has left us the *Key to Theosophy*, *Isis Unveiled*, *The Voice of the Silence* and other works. In *The Secret Doctrine*, her principal work, there are three things which I think you will find characterise that work and which are unique. I do not know of any other work which has ever been published, which contains the representations or the subject matter contained in *The Secret Doctrine*. Broadly speaking we may classify that work under three headings. First of all, there is the *science* of *The Secret Doctrine*. Now you must

admit that *The Secret Doctrine* in the year 1890, when the world was practically on the brink of materialism, was a tremendous challenge to the scientific thought of the day : a challenge which was taken up. Of course H.P.B. had a great many very severe critics, but she showed in that work that she had a very much deeper knowledge in many matters than the materialistic science of that day. In physical science especially, her theories have been remarkably confirmed. One thing which I have never forgotten was her determined attitude as to the disintegration of physical matter. Science held that physical matter was indestructible, and that you could not break up a physical atom; but she held that a physical atom was only a very low grade of a universal substance. Her theory of the atomic nature of electricity has since been fully confirmed. The electrons of modern science are her atoms of electricity. As you know, she taught that there are other planes of substance and of matter, beyond the physical and the etheric.

The second great thing which she put forward in *The Secret Doctrine* was to show that whatever we have had, in religion and philosophy, has been derived from the early esoteric teaching of the Gupta-Vidyâ. It was in a remotely ancient time that this knowledge was given to the world by the great teachers whose traditions have been handed down to us in various forms; and in *The Secret Doctrine* it is shown how these can be collated and unified.

In addition to that she raised in *The Secret Doctrine* just one corner of the veil which hides the tremendous possibilities of our individual development. This Ancient Wisdom has to-day its living representatives. You all know that the question of the Masters has been a very burning one for some people; but the great incontrovertible facts which H.P.B. put before us cannot be explained in any other way than by her connection with Masters. I have never forgotten that she once said to me :—"I do not ask you to believe in my Masters, but if you believe in evolution you are bound to believe in Masters;" that is to say in Those who have as much progressed beyond us as we have, let us say beyond an aborigine. The question of individual Masters is a question of individual evidence.

Those are the great things put forward in *The Secret Doctrine*. Every time I come to it I find some further information and some fresh inspiration. Then there is *The Voice of the Silence*, which is still more of an inspiration. I expect most of you are familiar with that book. You get "bucked up" by it, if I may use a colloquialism. Now I do not think I need dwell upon what has happened in the Theosophical Society since Mme. Blavatsky died. Its teachings have quite gone off the lines laid down by H.P.B.; as has been represented in Mrs. Cleather's books, in which she has brought the whole matter to a focus. Not only that, but the Theosophical Society has been split up into a great many sections, and the cause of that disintegration has always been *personalities*. It has always been, in every case, setting one person against another as an authority.

In this Association which we are now forming, having seen beforehand what it is that should be avoided, we shall try by all means that we have in our power to eliminate the causes of these disruptions. We want in our Association not merely to avoid these difficulties, but we want to form an Association which will go back to H.P.B.'s ideals as well as her teachings. We want to form an Association which will, if possible be held together purely on the one basis of H.P.B. and her Teachings and Ideals; and if we can do that, we shall in our own way be carrying on the work which she initiated. It was one of her great ideals that the work should be carried on until the last quarter of the present century. It is a cyclic law that the world is given at the end of each century something of this esoteric knowledge which is in the possession of living representatives, and which cannot be given out in its fulness to a world which is full of materialism; or rather, has not got the necessary spiritual ideals under which alone this esoteric knowledge, this deep profound knowledge of our own nature, can be attained.

This, then, is the ideal which we have before us and will endeavour to realise. I trust, I hope and think that the inspiring note, the inspiration of the Association, will be the ideals which H.P.B. put forward and asked us to realise: and the teachings which she has given us will form the basis of our Association, and will enable us to realise

what those ideals are, and the priceless value of the knowledge which she has left to us in her works."

The following letter from Mrs. Cleather, from Almora, India, addressed to the Meeting was then read by Mrs. Davey:—

. . . "As you know, the Association—its proposed founding—is very near my heart. I had despaired, like my old colleague, Mr. Kingsland, of ever seeing my beloved Teacher's Message to the world even appreciated, much less understood. . . . Upon the faults of others it is not wise to dwell; in my *Great Betrayal* I have done my best to make known to the world at large the sort of 'betrayal' of which those now in command of the T.S. have been guilty. No more need be said (though I could fill many more volumes!). . . . In the proposed Rules we have drawn up we have tacitly shown our attitude towards all this sort of grotesque and mischievous stuff which now passes for 'Theosophy'—(a word 'now soiled by an ignoble use'). It was not a word of H.P.B.'s choosing—though she accepted it, when selected by others. You will doubtless have observed that in the S.D. all the teaching given out is *not* called 'Theosophy'—but 'Esoteric Buddhism,' (with one *d*)—or, 'the Wisdom Religion,' etc., etc. Moreover, those Masters who sent H.P.B. out as Their accredited Messenger for the 19th Century are Themselves *Budhists*—(see my *Life and Work*,* (Chap. 4, pp. 40, 41). . This, of course, does not mean that I am suggesting that members of the newly-formed Association are hereby recommended to become *Buddhists*. Of course not! All *exoteric* Buddhism is almost as misleading as other exoteric religions—though not quite.

"You are intending to do me the honour, I understand, of making me, officially speaking, a Founder of the 'Blavatsky Association,' together with Mr. Kingsland; which is quite correct as to fact, of course; though it gives me only the privilege of making suggestions or offering advice—neither of which I may say need be adopted! But as I am so far away, I am asking my friend and colleague Mrs. Davey, to ask you in my name to adopt the programme of

* H. P. Blavatsky, *Her Life and Work for Humanity*.

'work' briefly outlined in the *seven* points given in the preliminary Memoranda which she and I, and Mr. Kingsland have formulated, and present for your consideration. These points have been most carefully considered. The only one upon which there may be some difference of opinion is No. 7. This last is of my own special construction; and it is one upon which I desire to lay great stress, and for the following reason:—

"An *essential* feature of H.P.B.'s Message was that the Masters of Wisdom make a special effort—in accordance with cyclic law—to help 'the great orphan' Humanity, during the last quarter of every Century, by sending out a trained and prepared Agent. (See footnote, p. 2. of my *Great Betrayal*). The Messenger for the last century was H.P.B. herself, as we know—and as I have tried to show, in my *Life and Work*, and I would like to draw *special* attention to chap. 4. of that book. This 'Letter' from the 'Maha Chohan' (the 'Great Master') is a sort of Magna Charta—and everyone who *wants* to understand H.P.B.'s 'Message,' should try to thoroughly grasp the tremendous importance and significance of His pronouncements. The Masters, as facts in nature, are *an integral part* of H.P.B.'s 'Message,' and although belief in them is of course in *no* sense 'obligatory' it would seem to me quite ridiculous to found a 'Blavatsky Association' in order to study her teachings, and ignore the existence of Those Who taught her and sent her forth on her mission. She herself lays great stress on this point. See Chap. 5. of my *Life and Work* where I quote at some length from the Letter she wrote to the Hindus shortly before her death. If these points are not taken very specially into consideration *at the outset*, 'The Blavatsky Association' will—in my opinion—commit a fatal error; and the little body now coming into being will only form one more wreck among the many which strew the path already travelled in this century. This may seem strong language, but it embodies my most profound conviction—and as I am so closely linked with you all in this endeavour, I beg of you to give my 'warning,' your most serious attention. I am growing old, and probably have not many more years to spend in my present body—and can most solemnly assure you that what I here say is founded on the sad experiences of the past, and upon

profound conviction of the existence of that inner world to which the *real* H.P.B. belonged. 'Other-worldliness' need not imply superstition of any kind—above all we must be guided, in our work and studies, by *reason*; but reason *illuminated and guided* by intuition—which is neither impulse, emotionalism, nor instinct; but the Voice of the God within—in which we all, presumably, profess to believe. This at least is *H.P.B.'s* teaching, as I understand it.

"It occurs to me that I might be of some practical use to you, in your work, by becoming your 'Corresponding Secretary'—for the East, at any rate. I will gladly undertake such a duty, and should at once appoint my colleague, Basil Crump (an old Student), as my Assistant. Between us, I think we might be of real service to you. Will you also consider this point? . . ."

"Reading over what I have just written as to being guided by reason and intuition, I am reminded of a passage in a letter, written by the Master K.H. to Laura Holloway (Mrs. Langford):—'The *mind* can be made to work with electric swiftness in a high excitement; but the *Buddhi*, (i.e., Intuition), *never*. . . .' So many students mistake *impulse*, springing from sentimental emotionalism generally, for intuition, and even *instinct* is thus sometimes confused. *Intuition* is rare, and is a quality of the *Soul*, when we will *let* that obscure and neglected part of our being, speak, which is not often; for it is, above all else, absolutely just and impersonal. *It has to be cultivated*, however, as it does not flourish readily in our modern materialistic 'civilisations.' It belongs essentially to a '*Spiritual* civilisation.' In a letter to A. P. Sinnett, published in *The Occult World*, Master K.H. draws this distinction very forcibly and clearly."

The following proposed Constitution of the Association was then put to the Meeting for discussion:—

THIS ASSOCIATION is formed for the purpose of perpetuating the Memory and Work of H. P. BLAVATSKY, the originator of the Theosophical Movement.

It is well known that the original Theosophical Society

has been split up, since the death of H. P. Blavatsky in 1891, into a considerable number of separate bodies, each claiming more or less specifically to be the legitimate continuation of the parent Society, and to have occult and authoritative sources of teaching through some particular individual or individuals. The BLAVATSKY ASSOCIATION is not concerned with any such claims, but only with the original teachings of H. P. Blavatsky as contained in her published works.

Further, the term *Theosophy* has, since the death of H. P. Blavatsky—and even through the original Society which she founded—become associated with very much that is not merely foreign to the teachings and ideals which she put forward under that term, but actually the direct opposite of these ideals, both in teaching and in practice. It is necessary, therefore, in connection with this ASSOCIATION to discontinue the use of the term, so that the ASSOCIATION may not in any way be identified with any of the existing “Theosophical” organisations. Persons belonging to any of these organisations are not eligible for membership in the BLAVATSKY ASSOCIATION.

The work which the ASSOCIATION proposes to do may be briefly stated as follows :

- (1) To have a working centre in London with suitable premises.
- (2) To hold meetings for lectures and discussions, and classes for the study of the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky.
- (3) To gather information from literary and scientific sources bearing upon the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky.
- (4) To form a Lending Library of suitable works in connection with the objects of the Association.
- (5) To publish from time to time suitable editions of H. P. Blavatsky's works, or of works bearing upon her teachings, or in exposition thereof.
- (6) To give help, by correspondence, to students of H. P. Blavatsky's works in all parts of the world.

- (7) To elucidate and endeavour to realise individually and collectively the great IDEALS which H. P. Blavatsky set forth in her life and teachings, especially the hope expressed by her that: "When the time comes for the effort of the XXth century [due according to her in the last quarter of the century] besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the new torch-bearer of truth."*

It is highly desirable that the Constitution of the ASSOCIATION should be as simple as possible consistent with the fact that it has to deal with a certain Income and Expenditure. There are, therefore, no officials of the ASSOCIATION other than the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer, and the Executive Council.

There is no fixed Subscription, but the ASSOCIATION relies for its activities upon voluntary Subscriptions and Donations, each member contributing according to his or her means or inclination.

Members of the ASSOCIATION will give what assistance they can in the work of the ASSOCIATION in an entirely voluntary manner.

Some exception was taken to the Clause excluding Members of the T.S.

During the discussion on this point Mr. Kingsland said there was the risk of being swamped by T.S. members. He was obliged to leave the T.S. himself in 1909 because he found it hopeless to try and reform it from inside, and he felt sure it would be ten times more difficult to-day.

A lady who, until recently, had held an important office in connection with the T.S., said: "It is only one who—like myself—was in the T.S. for so many years, that can know what dreadful things go on in it. It is rotten all through." The Constitution was then accepted without amendment.

*See the *Key to Theosophy*, final paragraph.

The following Rules were then submitted :—

RULES.

1. The work of the ASSOCIATION shall be directed by a Council, to consist of five ordinary members and the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer.

2. The members of the Council shall be elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the ASSOCIATION. Any member of the ASSOCIATION wishing to nominate a new member of Council, shall notify the Hon. Secretary not less than four weeks before the Annual Meeting, and the Hon. Secretary shall place such nomination on the Agenda of the meeting which shall be sent to each member of the ASSOCIATION as per Rule 9. Failing any new nominations or any resignations of existing members of Council, the existing members will be considered to be duly nominated. The Council may fill up any *interim* vacancies in their number.

3. The Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer shall be elected annually in a similar manner to the members of the Council, as per Rule 2.

4. At any meeting of the Council four members shall constitute a quorum.

5. If at any meeting of the Council there is any difference of opinion in regard to any proposal affecting the ASSOCIATION, any member of the minority may require that the matter be referred by letter to all members of the Council, and the Hon. Secretary shall thereupon immediately obtain a vote in writing from each member of the Council, and shall place the result before the Council at the earliest convenient meeting and the result shall thereupon be recorded in the Minutes in accordance with the majority vote.

6. Any member of the Council who cannot attend a Council Meeting, or Council Meetings, may appoint a proxy to attend and to vote. Such proxy may be either an existing member of the Council, or some other member of the ASSOCIATION. In the latter case, however, the

proxy must be approved unanimously by the other members of the Council. A proxy may count as part of the quorum.

7. Any member of the ASSOCIATION may nominate a new member by sending his or her name to the Hon. Secretary. The nomination shall then be placed before the Council at the next meeting, and the election to membership shall be by the Council only.

8. The Council shall have power to cancel the membership of any person whose connection with the ASSOCIATION is considered by them to be undesirable.

9. An Annual Business Meeting of the ASSOCIATION shall be held in November, for the election of Council and Officers as per Rules 2 and 3, and to receive the Annual Report of the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer. The Hon. Secretary shall send the Agenda of the meeting to each member of the ASSOCIATION to their last known address not less than one week previous to the date of the meeting.

10. The Hon. Treasurer shall present an Annual Report of Income and Expenditure. The account shall be audited by an Hon. Auditor who shall be a member of the ASSOCIATION, and who shall be nominated and elected annually as and with the other Officers of the ASSOCIATION, but he shall not be a member of the Council.

11. The Constitution or the Rules of the ASSOCIATION shall not be altered or amended except by a unanimous recommendation of the Council confirmed at a special General Meeting of the ASSOCIATION called for that purpose, or at the Annual Meeting. Every member shall be notified of the proposed amendment or alteration at least one week before the date of such meeting.

Mrs. Davey moved, and Miss Higginbotham seconded, that Mrs. Cleather and Mr. Kingsland should be officially recognised as the Founders of the Association. This was strongly opposed by Mr. Kingsland himself, who said that it was above all things desirable to make the Association as impersonal as possible, and not even to have a President. Rule 1 had been framed with that in view.

On being put to the vote Mrs. Davey's motion was rejected by a large majority. The Rules were then passed as submitted.

The following were elected members of the Council :— Mrs. Alice Leighton Cleather, Mr. William Kingsland, Mrs. Wallace Kidston, Miss Elsie Higginbotham, and Miss Mary Garrett.

The Hon. Mrs. A. J. Davey was elected Hon. Secretary, Mr. C. H. Collings Hon. Treasurer, Mr. F. L. Gardner Hon. Auditor, and Mrs. Cleather Corresponding Secretary for the East.

The following Resolution was proposed by Mr. Kingsland, and carried unanimously. "That this Meeting desires to send most cordial greetings to Mrs. Alice Leighton Cleather through whose work and initiative it has been possible to form the Blavatsky Association."

A vote of thanks to the Chairman closed the Meeting, and the enrolment of Members was then commenced.

DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

The Council having considered that it was part of the work of the Association to deal with the various attacks on H.P.B., her life, and her teachings, which were appearing in the Press from time to time, the following resolution was drafted, and unanimously carried at a General Meeting of the Blavatsky Association on March 21st, 1924. "This Meeting of the Blavatsky Association resolves that it is part of the Association's work to defend H. P. Blavatsky's name and teachings in the Press when either are publicly attacked; and wishes to elect a special sub-committee to carry out the work as effectively and expeditiously as possible."

The following members were elected to serve on this Committee :—Miss Garrett, Mr. W. Kingsland, Mr. C. H. Collings, Mr. F. L. Gardner, and the Hon. Sec. (*ex-officio*). Miss E. Higginbotham was co-opted on to this Committee at a later date.

Shortly after their election the Defence Committee met

and drew up the following leaflet for Members of the Association in order to enlist their help in this branch of the work of the Association.

TO ALL MEMBERS,

At the General Meeting of the Association held on March 21st, it was proposed that the Blavatsky Association forthwith adopt a policy of spirited and energetic defence of H.P.B., whenever attacked in the Press or elsewhere. This was unanimously endorsed by the Meeting, and a Committee was elected to carry out the work. The following Members were elected to serve on this Committee.—Miss Garrett, Mr. W. Kingsland, Mr. C. H. Collings, Mr. F. L. Gardner, and the Hon. Sec. (*ex-officio*). The purpose of this communication is to make this resolution known to those Members who were not present at the Meeting, and to enlist the sympathy and help of all to carry out this policy. *Every Member can be of real help*, and the psychic and moral effect of an Association such as ours, brought to bear as one concentrated force upon every traducer of H.P.B., should be practically irresistible. We may now speedily anticipate a hitherto unparalleled state of things, in which those who attack H.P.B.—either as the expression of an honest opinion, or for a less worthy motive—as the case may be, will now in their turn become the targets of an intense and concentrated fire from an Association determined to put an end to this injustice. There has been enough of it, and we have decided to deal with it systematically and effectively.

To carry out this most desirable plan in an efficient and workmanlike manner the following is suggested:—

First.—Observation of what is going on. Will every Member undertake to scrutinize conveniently accessible papers, magazines and so forth, and send me a list of those which he or she will unfailingly keep under observation—not undertaking more than can be easily managed? These lists will be compared and any necessary suggestions made to prevent overlapping.

Second.—Opponents' statements should be checked, and necessary material and references looked up which might be useful to those Members undertaking or deputed to write in reply. This work requires some knowledge of the

Theosophical Movement and its personalities; its own and contemporary publications; some acquaintance with general psychic literature and with the point of view of other bodies—such as the Spiritualists—time to investigate data in the British Museum and elsewhere if required; and a fair understanding of the essential and characteristic atmosphere of the Occult, within which, and according to whose inviolable laws so many of the happenings occurred that puzzle the critic, and cause him through lack of understanding to misinterpret and misrepresent.

Third.—The writing of such communications and articles as may be called for by attacks in the Press upon H.P.B. and to which all the preceding leads up. Members are earnestly invited to answer such attacks, but the Association will not be responsible in these cases for individual opinions. Any answers for which the Association is responsible will have received the sanction of the Defence Committee, alluded to above, and will be signed by the Hon. Secretary.

Whilst at the outset of this desirable and too long delayed enterprise, it may be judicious to group Members roughly into these three classes of workers; yet the aim of all concerned should be to qualify themselves in all respects, as keen observers, having adequate acquaintance with the important facts of H.P.B.'s career and their true import, and an ever increasing ability to wield an accurate, effective and trenchant pen in her defence.

So may we unitedly confound the enemy, and spread abroad the truth about H.P.B. and her Teachings, thus paving the way for the Messenger whom she said we were to expect towards the close of our present century.

All Members are asked to communicate with me saying what work they feel qualified and ready to do, in conjunction with their fellow workers, to forward this important project. Foreign Members are especially called upon to contribute to this work by watching their own papers, and by contributing articles either to these or to the English Press.

For the Council,
IONA DAVEY, *Hon. Secretary.*

Headquarters:

22, Craven Hill, Bayswater, London, W.

April, 1924.

THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE AND SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

In *Pearson's Magazine* for March, 1924, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle made a most unjust and bitter attack on H.P.B. in one of a series of articles on his personal psychic experiences. The Defence Committee thereupon sent the following letter to Sir Arthur.

22, Craven Hill, Bayswater, W.2.
April 15th, 1924.

To Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Dear Sir,—Having read your very interesting and informative autobiographical articles on Spiritualism in the March and April issues of *Pearson's Magazine*, we, as representative members of the Blavatsky Association, feel it necessary to take strong exception to the uncalled-for attack made therein upon the character and bona-fides of Madame H. P. Blavatsky. In view of the evident inadequacy of the reasons you adduce for your attitude to her, we are forced to the conclusion that the attitude is but the natural though regrettable outcome of neglect to fully acquaint yourself with the essential facts of the case.

May we then invite your tolerant consideration of the following brief remarks upon the matter? We have no desire to create ill-feeling, or to sow dissension; we, like yourself, are ardent seekers of the Truth, and opponents of Materialism, scientific and otherwise; equally, we cannot resist the conviction that a further unbiassed study of the question on your part would result in a material re-orientation of your views as to H. P. Blavatsky.

First and foremost, as to her personal character. At the outset, we must definitely request that some rational principal of criticism be observed and followed out logically. H.P.B. cannot (without any show of reason) be declared to be equally genuine *and* fraudulent, in convenient alternation as may accord with the argument or the prejudice of the moment. She was either genuine through and through, or she was a charlatan from first to last. It has to be re-

membered that "this extraordinary and volcanic person" as you not inaptly term her, lived, during her years of public propaganda, no retired or sheltered life. Being what she was she served as a bright and strong centre of illumination, attracting to herself countless people of every shade of character, of knowledge and belief; and was the centre of keen observation and attention from innumerable pairs of eyes and active brains. Small chance for a charlatan to survive all this! You mention Hodgson of the S.P.R., and Solovyoff of *The Priestess of Isis* notoriety as sound, convincing, and authoritative evidence in your favour, to be accepted, so you would persuade us, as an adequate set-off against the numberless competent witnesses who assert—as a matter of their own experience—H.P.B.'s genuineness, and whose reiterated testimony to H.P.B.'s phenomenal powers is simply overwhelming. An astounding argument of yours! You furnish in your own pages convincing and conclusive reasons against accepting anything that emanates from the S.P.R. without substantial confirmation from independent and trustworthy sources—as a particular instance the unsavoury Hope case; unsavoury, that is as regards the S.P.R. and its behaviour in the matter. And yet you actually ask us to accept Hodgson and the S.P.R.'s Report on H.P.B.! Hardly! in view of the nature of your own testimony as to the true character of the S.P.R.—the S.P.R. that appears to have forgotten nothing and to have learnt nothing since the days of the ingenious Hodgson. As for Solovyoff—who reads or regards Solovyoff nowadays? What is his opinion worth? Nothing whatever. Do you suppose that Solovyoff's naive suppositions really weigh against the considered opinion of the many thousand students of the Secret Doctrine? And if you think so, why do you think so? What have the conclusions of an obscure Russian author to do with us, who know better, and with you who should?

And now to come to the point as to positive evidence of H.P.B.'s bona-fides. It does not seem to dawn upon you that in view of what is on record there can be no two opinions about this. Take (for example) that long and fascinating book by your friend, Mr. Sinnett—*Incidents in the Life of Mme. Blavatsky*—full to the brim, as one may

say with definite material that you appear to have singularly overlooked. Take again, the late Countess Wachtmeister's book entitled *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and the Secret Doctrine*, descriptive (as you will no doubt recall) of the precise circumstances under which that remarkable and epoch-making work was written. Most of us knew the Countess personally, and can offer you (if need be) our assurances as to her credibility and competence. Other students contribute their experiences in that same book.

We reiterate the fact: innumerable people, as to whose probity and competence there is and can be no question are unanimous as to H.P.B.'s genuineness, undoubted occult (phenomenal) powers, and, above all, competence as a teacher of the highest code of ethics known to either Eastern or Western world. Nor are all these dead, and inaccessible witnesses; some still survive, and there is no want of definiteness or conviction about their opinions. To quote your own assertion (p. 314) with which we cordially agree. "If the evidence of six persons of standing and honour may not be taken, then how can any human fact be established?"

Precisely! In short, the cumulative weight of evidence, its quality, its consistent existence in time and space, from H.P.B.'s earliest years to her death, in every country and under all circumstances; all this rebuts your too superficial assumptions absolutely and conclusively.

Now as to your views on her relation to Theosophy—truly extraordinary indeed! You begin by paying a well-merited compliment (if we may say so) to the value of Theosophy as an explanation "for some of the anomalies of life." Ignoring (it would seem) those authoritative works of H.P.B., such as *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*—not to mention others—you parade A. P. Sinnett as the faithful and reliable exponent to the Western world of the true Occult Doctrine. Conveniently omitting to notice that H.P.B.'s *Isis Unveiled*—the monumental work that started the Theosophical ball rolling—was published in 1877, you speak with appreciation (and rightly so) of Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*, published in 1883. That was an admirable effort by a sincere and gifted lay student. Might we here introduce in passing (for your information)

Sinnett's own opinion of that book? Discussing *Esoteric Buddhism* he says:—"Really looking back, I am surprised I did not make a worse hash of the teaching than my earliest book is responsible for." (*Collected Fruits of Occult Teaching*, p. 155). This from Sinnett, you will doubtless appreciate at its full value. But the point we are leading up to is this: *Esoteric Buddhism* was based on letters from Mahatmas M. and K.H.—written up from them, as one may say—and in this fact resides such authority and importance as the book may be entitled to. Proceeding: you correctly state in regard to those very letters and H.P.B. . . . "The Koot Hoomi and other Mahatma Letters, all of which passed through her hands," to which you quite injudiciously add "and which she was clearly shown to have tried to deliver in a way which would seem occult. If the delivery was bogus, was not the letter bogus also?"

Now, Sir Arthur, we find here (as occasionally elsewhere) your mental processes a little difficult to follow. Ignoring H.P.B.'s prior authorship, you speak exclusively and appreciatively of *Esoteric Buddhism*. This work, we agree, was based upon the Mahatma Letters. The latter (as you correctly state) passed through H.P.B.'s hands. You then suggest that the aforesaid letters for this reason are bogus. Ergo, you destroy at one blow the authenticity of Sinnett's book (just lauded by you as "notable") stigmatising it as the mere outcome of H.P.B.'s invention (fraudulently conveyed to Sinnett in the guise of Mahatma Letters), thus directly stultifying your just expressed opinion of the book, and writing A. P. Sinnett down an ass!

Well, what are you going to do about it? It is open to explain that Sinnett was an unhappy victim of a scheming woman; but then what about his "fine exposition of Theosophy?" That, automatically, is at once placed to the credit of H.P.B.

Another point. You say of H.P.B., more forcibly than politely, "This woman poisons the very springs of Theosophy as it reached the West. . . Theosophy will be in a stronger position when it shakes off Mme. Blavatsky altogether." Well, this is all very fine, but what precisely, do you intend to convey by it? You have shown that H.P.B. supplied the material for *Esoteric Buddhism*—alter-

natively that it passed through her hands from the Mahatmic source. No one denies that H.P.B. wrote *Isis Unveiled*, and *The Secret Doctrine*. Where then is Theosophy without H.P.B.? What Theosophy would there have been (by your own showing, incidentally) without H.P.B.? What then *do* you mean by your very extraordinary words? What—to come to the point—is the sense of them? Shall we demand that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle be “shaken off” from his two articles under discussion? How can you divorce the author and his work—or do you believe in the existence of the “Grin” without the “Cat?” Or are we to infer from your words that having accepted an inestimable gift with both hands you would kick the giver out with ignominy? Are *these* your Spiritualistic ethics, Sir Arthur?

Allow us to remind you of an important point. *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine* were both written before witnesses. No one questions H.P.B.’s authorship of them. Now, here are three—the only possible, we think—alternative explanations of the production of these books. Either—

1. They were the joint work of the Mahatmas and H.P.B., or,
2. They arose from H.P.B.’s unaided genius, or,
3. They were produced by H.P.B., mediumistically under a very high order of Spirit Control.

Now, these are mutually exclusive. If you accept No. 1 there is an end of the matter. If No. 2, we accept the compliment with pleasure, but point out that the known facts are against the hypothesis, including H.P.B.’s own specific statements, unless indeed you happen to be better informed than the author herself. If No. 3 is more in accordance with your view, well and good. But why, in that case, are you ignoring these productions of the Spirit World and declaring this gifted—this unique medium to be a fraud? On the third hypothesis you or some equally prominent Spiritualist should be teaching Theosophy to all and sundry as a gospel of life direct from the Higher Spheres. Yet the absence of such Spiritualistic propaganda would suggest that No. 3 is not accepted, thereby forcing

us back upon the hypothesis of No. 1 or No. 2. Which of these two you elect, at the moment to accept, is of little consequence to the argument. Remains, as is fitting, that H.P.B. is recognised as indissolubly identified with her work; as all right-minded people will agree.

Do not take it as a personal matter if, in conclusion to this somewhat lengthy communication we indicate one real link between our revered H.P.B. and yourself. You say in the course of your second article (p. 314). . . "I have abandoned my congenial and lucrative work, left my home for long periods at a time, and subjected myself to all sorts of inconveniences and losses in order to get the facts home to people." The right note sounds there—conviction, enthusiasm, self-sacrifice. So also is it true of H.P.B., forsaking all—home, comfort, social position, all that a woman holds dear—she courageously faced a hard life of world-wandering, resolute to find the Truth; she endured without flinching the rigours of the probationary life of Occult training and all that that implies, (a subject in itself!) and finally prepared for her terrific task, but with a body worn, suffering, in constant pain (thrice she nearly died), she faced a cold materialistic scoffing world, contemptuous of her and of all truly Spiritual ideals. So she lived and so she died, in poverty, sick, and ever working, learning to accept and judge ridicule, opprobrium and hate at their true value; content to endure all so that the Teachings of the Masters were made known and spread abroad. She was an inspiration to all those capable of responding to the Ideals she portrayed; never did she swerve from the path of duty, never did she betray anyone. Do you wonder then, that we revere her memory? And are you surprised that we rally to her defence? What would be your opinion of us, if, holding such convictions, we remained silent in the face of mistaken, if sincere, condemnation of the greatest Personality that the closing years of last century and the opening ones of this, have ever known.

Believe me, yours truly,

IONA DAVEY, *Hom. Sec.*

(For the Council).

This letter received the following reply from Sir Arthur :—

Windlesham, Crowborough,
Sussex,
April 17th, 1924.

Dear Mrs. Davey.—All this sarcasm, etc., is quite out of place. I have no desire save to be honest and I have been so. There is nothing incompatible in the Eastern Wisdom being an addition to Western thought, and yet the person who mainly brought it was of very mixed character.

As to her authorship of these two books an expert has traced an enormous number of unacknowledged quotations—often pages in length. This is a compilation rather than a book. Still they show an industry and general knowledge for which she should have full credit. But the use of so much material without acknowledgement is in itself part of that want of scruple which defaces her character.

Olcott admits that her tales about his and her adventures in *Caves and Jungles* were pure invention. How can one trust a person who is capable of such deceit?

One cannot brush away Solovyoff, as if he did not exist. He did exist, knew her well and formed unfavourable opinions for which he gave his reasons. The book is not beside me, but if I remember right he claims that he saw in her possession a packet of the Chinese envelopes in which Mahatma letters arrive.

I have no doubt that she had psychic powers. I said so in my article. But they seem to me to be of a low order. In Spiritualism she never got beyond what was crude and never touched the higher spiritual aspects. Yet in 1875 she was a most ardent Spiritualist, "I would die for it." The rest of her life she was belittling it. She diverted from the main Spiritual channel great forces which might have hastened its eventual victory.

I shall in my book (of which that article was part) modify what I say on the Adyar matter, for there is a case for the defence, but that does not seriously modify my general opinion.

I am sorry if I have given any pain but in such matters one must be uncompromisingly true.

Yours faithfully,

(signed) A. CONAN DOYLE.

To the above the following reply was sent by the Council :—

Dear Sir Arthur,—The letter sent you from our Association was not meant to be sarcastic, and we do not doubt for one moment your honesty in the views you express. What we do feel is that you expressed your opinion without sufficient knowledge of the subject. We are very glad to hear your opinion on the Adyar question is modified, but as this is the case we feel it would be chivalrous of you to express this in the Magazine in which you made the unjust statements, so that those who read it there may have the opportunity of reading your more enlightened point of view.

No one will question your statement that H.P.B. was "of very mixed character," but that is a very different thing, from the sweeping condemnation which you have publicly passed upon her. We reiterate, she was neither fraud nor charlatan. What you seem quite unable to grasp is that the personal character of the bringer of such a message as that which Mme. Blavatsky brought, is indissolubly identified with the character and quality of that message itself. You appear to entertain a hazy idea that H.P.B. was an eccentric Russian of volcanic temperament and doubtful veracity, who picked up odds and ends of Eastern doctrines in a haphazard way during her wanderings, ending up by preaching a new Religion for her amusement to incredulous and scoffing Westerners. That, at all events is the impression you convey.

We are convinced that a further acquaintance with the facts of the case, with the tremendous self-sacrifice and suffering which was involved in H.P.B.'s work and mission, would lead you to modify profoundly the superficial judgment—derived from her enemies—which you have passed upon her.

We will deal very briefly with your present criticisms.

You seem to be unaware that *Caves and Jungles* was a translation from articles written by Mme. Blavatsky in a journalistic manner for a Russian Paper. She never pronounced it to be true or to be accepted as a handbook to Theosophy. It is a romantic book of travels containing descriptions of curious occult happenings which every reader has a right to decide for himself whether he will believe or not, and I have no doubt that in these matters Olcott was left as much "in the dark" as the rest of her readers. This point is clearly proved to you by the Translator who in his Preface quotes Mme. Blavatsky's own words. "You must remember," said Mme. Blavatsky, "that I never meant this for a scientific work. My letters to the *Russian Messenger*, under the general title: *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan*, were written in leisure moments, more for amusement than with any serious design. Broadly speaking, the facts and the incidents are true; but I have freely availed myself of an author's privilege to group, colour, and dramatize them, whenever this seemed necessary to the full artistic effect; though as I say, much of the book is exactly true, I would rather claim kindly judgment for it, as a romance of travel, than incur the critical risks that haunt an avowedly serious work."

The truth about Solovyoff, which I have from those who knew both him and Mme. Blavatsky, was that he asked her to take him as a pupil of Occultism, and she *refused* (she doubtless knew how dangerous the knowledge would be in the hands of such a man). He left her presence in anger saying he would damage her in every way in his power, and the production of his infamous book was the means he chose. It is because the motive for this book is well known that no credence is given to it.

In regard to the unacknowledged quotations you allude to in *The Secret Doctrine*, as I am not acquainted with the passages to which you refer, I cannot express an opinion thereon; but if you would let me have the information you would be doing a great service to students of *The Secret Doctrine*. In any case to infer that she *deliberately* intended to deceive the public or act dishonestly towards any other author is quite unjustifiable. Many works

might be cited where similar things have been done—for example, Mrs. Atwood's *Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery*. Are you going to brand Mrs. Atwood in the same manner?

Again, you can hardly have read what Mme. Blavatsky says herself about the writing of *The Secret Doctrine* when you condemn it for being "a compilation rather than a book." On page 46 of the Introduction to the first volume she says, "I may repeat what I have stated all along, and which I now clothe in the words of Montaigne : Gentlemen, 'I HAVE HERE MADE ONLY A NOSEGAY OF CULLED FLOWERS ; AND HAVE BROUGHT NOTHING OF MY OWN BUT THE STRING THAT TIES THEM.' "

Lastly, in reference to Mme. Blavatsky and Spiritualism. This is a very serious question, not to be disposed of in a sentence or two by you or us. An understanding of her position needs to be and can only be based upon a thorough grasp of the philosophy she taught—quite apart from her large first-hand clairvoyant experience of the subject. The nature of the post-mortem Human entity, and its corresponding environment and experiences, forms one of the most complex and important subjects accessible to the human understanding. Hitherto the Spiritualists appear in this matter to have followed more or less the scientific principles of investigation, which can at the best lead but to partial and misleading success. We strongly urge them to study the *psychology* of the subject, from the Oriental point of view.

We regret to have been obliged to trespass on your time, but the statements in your letter could not in the name of truth be left uncontradicted ; and if you will not say something in *Pearson's* we trust you will at least expunge the whole reference in your book. Think how you *may be*—and that many people think you *are*—maligning a great Soul, whose work for Humanity was certainly as devoted and self-sacrificing as your own. It is a terrible thing to have spoken as you have done of the Pioneer of the great Theosophical movement. To be "uncompromisingly true" is quite a different matter from speaking as you have spoken ; and we trust that the generosity of your nature

will now enable you to recognise this.

Believe me, yours truly,

IONA DAVEY, *Hon. Sec.*

(For the Council.)

The following members of the Council wrote individually, either directly to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or to the Editor of *Pearson's Magazine*:—Mr. W. Kingsland, Mr. F. L. Gardner, Mr. C. H. Collings, and Miss Garrett. The Letters sent to *Pearson's* were not published, but we here insert the correspondence which took place between Mr. Kingsland and Sir Arthur.

“Claremont,”

The Strand, Ryde, I.W.

April 10, 1924.

To Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Dear Sir Arthur,— Though I have not had the pleasure of meeting you personally, I have been to a certain extent a colleague of yours in psychical research through membership in the S.S.S.P., and you may have taken note from time to time of my contributions to the *Budget* of that Society. I also think it likely that my name is not unknown to you through my published works; or if not, then at least through my contributions to the *Occult Review*, *Light*, etc. I think that it is also probable that you have noted my article on *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* in last month's *Occult Review*; and I am writing to you now in connection with that subject because of your reference to Theosophy and Madame Blavatsky in last month's *Pearson's* to which my attention has recently been called.

As one who knew Madame Blavatsky intimately; as one who owes her a deep debt of gratitude for spiritual teaching and enlightenment; and as one who was personally connected with every detail of the Theosophical movement in England from the time that Madame Blavatsky came to

this country until her death, and from then onward till 1909—when I resigned my connection with the Theosophical Society on account of certain developments which had taken place—I must protest with all my power against the extraordinary attack on her work and reputation which you have made in the Article I refer to.

I am far from thinking that you would knowingly do an injustice to any exponent of the Occult; rather I have gathered from time to time that you would endeavour to bring to bear upon any so-called 'exposure' a critical faculty quite free from the *a priori* judgment which is so often both the motive and the method of the 'exposure.' I find, indeed, in your present Article a paragraph confirming this; for you say therein that again and again you have probed these so-called exposures, "and found them to depend upon prejudice or upon an imperfect acquaintance with psychic law." It does not appear to have occurred to you, however, that this *most exactly describes the S.P.R. Report*, which you take as the basis of your present attack. The utter worthlessness of that Report has been exposed over and over again; and I am wondering whether you had ever taken the trouble to examine the Report critically in the light of the rebutting evidence which was afterwards put forward. I shall not, however, trouble you now with the details of the refutation. The necessary matter can be supplied to you if you wish to have it. But I will draw your attention to one very significant aspect of the question.

You have recently had, in the case of the Price-Hope Report of the S.P.R., an example of what this Society can do to-day in these matters. And if they can do such an injustice to-day, when occult phenomena are so much better understood, and so much more generally recognised, what do you suppose they might not be capable of doing 40 years ago, when such phenomena had scarcely a chance of judicial investigation? The very slightest acquaintance with the laws of evidence is sufficient to stultify Mr. Hodgson's "investigations."

Fortunately Madame Blavatsky's reputation to-day does not rest upon the phenomena which she exhibited during the early years of her mission; nor did it in fact ever really

rest on that. It rests on her *teachings* as contained in her literary works: notably *The Secret Doctrine*, and *The Voice of the Silence*—to which you make no reference. How can you possibly speak of the author of these works as one who “poisons the very springs of Theosophy as it reached the West.” Pray through whom did it reach the West if not through her? Her very first work *Isis Unveiled* was that which first attracted the attention of the West. This is a work which is still in great demand. And through whom did Sinnett get the material for his *Occult World and Esoteric Buddhism*, which you mention with so much approval? Every bit of it came through Madame Blavatsky and the Mahatma Letters. You state that all these Letters came through her hands; but this was not the fact of the case; many were received through other channels. You infer that they all *may* have been written by her. But that has been shown over and over again to have been impossible in many cases; and the handwriting expert’s testimony in reference to the others is against this theory. I do not know whether you have read the recently published volume of these celebrated *Letters*; but I do not see how anyone can do so without concluding from internal evidence that Madame Blavatsky was not the author of them. I do not see either how anyone can read these Letters and write about Madame B. as you have done. They throw a vivid light on much that was incomprehensible in her complex character. She gave her very life-blood for the cause of Theosophy. She held on to life for seven years after she should have died, in order to complete *The Secret Doctrine* and other theosophical work. Her own doctor told me personally that he did not know how she was kept alive. It was certainly by occult means, and her own iron will to carry on the work to her last gasp. And yet you can now speak of this noble self-sacrificing woman as “poisoning the very springs of Theosophy”—she to whom the world-wide Theosophical Movement owes *everything*.

How can Theosophy possibly “shake off Madame Blavatsky?” Her influence does not grow less with the years, but is ever on the increase; and her works are more than ever in demand—S.P.R. Report notwithstanding. Why is

this so? It is because of the *philosophy* which those works contain. As Mahatma M. writes in one of the Letters: "If our philosophy is wrong, a *wonder* will not set it right." To which I may add:—If the philosophy is right, an *exposure* of the wonder will not make it wrong. And so no S.P.R. Report can, or ever has touched the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*. They are there as permanent records of what this remarkable woman taught. How or in what way do these works "poison the springs of Theosophy?" Or what are those springs other than what she has indicated in these works?

Surely you must have written this article under a very imperfect knowledge of the *whole* facts of the case. In speaking of your experience of so-called exposures, you mention "imperfect acquaintance with psychic law," as one of the things on which these are based. Are you *quite sure* that you understand all the psychic laws which were brought to play in the life and teachings of Madame Blavatsky? I say "teachings," because the writing or her books was in itself an occult phenomenon. But in any case, what does it profit to slander a woman whose life-count is closed, and whose work stands before the world in a world-wide movement, and a literature that comes more and more to its own as time goes on?

You say that the teachings of Theosophy do not meet your needs in any case, because you "ask for severe proof in all things." Indeed. Proof of what? Of a spiritual philosophy? That you must find in your own inner nature. Of the science of *The Secret Doctrine*? Much of that has already come to its own since that work was written; for example, the atomic nature of electricity and the electrical nature of matter—unknown at the time, and scouted when first put forward by Madame Blavatsky. Much in Biology and Anthropology has since become accepted science. This and much more in this remarkable work will come to its own as time goes on.

Or do you seek for "severe proof" of Reincarnation and Karma? But if you cannot prove to certain people—Mr. James Douglas, for example—that you can communicate with the deceased, I wonder how you are going to get the severe proof you demand for these two fundamental

teachings of Theosophy—unless, indeed, you are prepared to undergo the necessary *occult* training. Do you take nothing as a *working hypothesis* before it has been “rigidly proved?” And even if you have proved it to your own satisfaction—as many have done in the matter of reincarnation—you know quite well that that is a different matter to obtaining the rigid proof which will convince others. Reincarnation and Karma must necessarily be working hypotheses in the first instance—and very excellent ones too. Working hypothesis is the method of science, and should be scientifically applied to the deeper issues of our life, as well as to physical and psychical phenomena.

So now I would ask you to pause and consider whether you may not unwittingly have done a great injustice to an extraordinary and noble woman. Would it be asking too much of you that you should gather more material *on the other side of the question*, and revise an only too obviously imperfect and prejudiced Report of a Society which even to-day can commit a similar injustice. And perhaps, having done this, you will apply to the case of Madame Blavatsky the same course which you recently recommended to the S.P.R. in the Price-Hope case, in order to “right a great wrong.”

I have the honour to be,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) W. KINGSLAND.

To this Sir Arthur replied as follows :

Dear Sir,—My friend, Mr. Gardner,* sent me a copy of Mrs. Besant's defence of the Adyar business which certainly modifies my opinion of that particular episode. I have changed the text in the chapter of my *Memories* which was extracted from *Pearson's*.

I can't, however, change on the main question. I can't understand how Olcott can defend her and yet confess that

* *Edward L. Gardner, F.T.S., Secretary of the English T.S.*

all she said about their mutual adventures in *Caves and Jungles* was invention. If she would invent in such matters how can one trust her?

She was a fanatical Spiritualist in 1875. "Would die for it"—and spent the rest of her life deriding it. I *know* she was wrong there. She never touched real high Spiritualism.

A Priestess of Isis is also a very damaging book—as it seems to me.

No, I don't like her—and can't pretend to. Many Theosophists I do like and respect, though I look on them all as the officers of the Spiritual battle who have deserted their men. It's the suffering masses who want help and they get it in Spiritualism, but all this exotic stuff draws away those who should be their guides.

Your sincerely,

(Signed) A. CONAN DOYLE.

April 12th, 1924.

Reply from Mr. Kingsland :—

Claremont,
The Strand, Ryde, I.W.
April 14th, 1924.

To Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Dear Sir Arthur,—I thank you for your letter of the 12th in reply to mine of the 10th, and I note with pleasure that you have been able to modify your opinion about the S.P.R. Report on Madame Blavatsky; though I note also that you "cannot change on the main question." I am not sure, however, if I understand what you mean by the main question. I do not want to take up your valuable time with unessentials or side issues. There are several matters in your letter to which I should like to reply more at length; but I will endeavour to confine myself to "the main question."

To myself and to others who owe so much to Madame Blavatsky, the question of phenomena is not the main

question. Psychical Research has really, since that time, shown the possibility of everything which she is reputed to have done. The "main question" appears to me to be this : Did H. P. Blavatsky give to the world a spiritual message of which it was greatly in need, and which has in reality been epoch-making?

Now I should say that the undeniable answer to that question is to be found in the world-wide Theosophical Movement; in the renaissance of the Ancient Wisdom Religion—so that even Max Müller was stimulated to write a book on it—and in something added thereto which brings it into line with modern science, psychology, and philosophy—or rather one might perhaps say : which brings these back to the Ancient Wisdom. The answer is to be found even more in the hearts of thousands who have found in her message the key to their deepest intuitions and spiritual aspirations.

All this stands as the monumental work of H. P. Blavatsky—and yet some people can now stoop to slander her.

Her work will be appreciated by the world in general only as time goes on and that work can be seen in better perspective, and altogether apart from the *personal* matters which invariably centre round all great reformers whose teachings appear to run counter to accepted dogmas, vested interests, or individual prejudices. Bear in mind that it was the 'Christian' missionaries who *paid* the Coullombs for their Judas betrayal and forgeries. And now you attack her because her teachings appear to run counter to *your* spiritualistic convictions, which, as you are well aware, are by no means shared by a great many very intelligent persons.

I quite agree with you that "the suffering masses who want help get it in Spiritualism." That is to say, some of them do. But it does not appear to have occurred to you, not merely that there are others who want something more than Spiritualism offers, but also that Spiritualism itself is by no means a universal panacea; nor is it even suitable for a large portion of the "suffering masses." Look, for example, at the work of the Salvation Army with its crude doctrines of 'Salvation.' Is Spiritualism doing anything at all approaching that work in its *practical* effect in the

reformation of individuals? Much as I dislike the Salvationist doctrines, I have just as much respect for the Salvationist missionary as I have for the Spiritualist missionary, in so far as each is desirous of doing good to his fellows. So also with the Theosophical missionary. Does it not show a rather narrow and intolerant outlook on the needs of humanity in its varied aspects, and on individuals in their varied stages of evolution, to speak of Theosophists as "officers of the Spiritual battle who have deserted their men?" Do you speak thus of the University Professor because, forsooth, he does not teach down to the level of the masses? Besides, Reincarnation and Karma are just as much—perhaps more—suitable for "the masses"—whether suffering or otherwise—as anything that Spiritualism can advance. At least they account for the inequalities of life—which I have not as yet found to be done in anything that Spiritualism teaches.

No one can object to your saying that you dislike Madame Blavatsky or Theosophy—as I might say, for example, that I dislike Christian Science and Mrs. Eddy. But I am not therefore justified in publicly stigmatising her as you have stigmatised Madame Blavatsky. It is not merely a spiritual law that we should have the greatest respect for the religious beliefs of others, but it is also a spiritual law that we should endeavour to recognise the *good* and not the *evil* in others; and this is doubly and trebly the case when those others are persons who have devoted their life-energies to some cause—however mistaken we may think it to be—which has for its object the raising of humanity. It may be necessary sometimes, in order to combat a positive evil, that we should expose the pretences or fraudulent practices of an individual. But where is the positive evil in this case? No. Pardon my saying that you appear to have unthinkingly indulged in statements—on hearsay—which can only be regarded as unworthy of a chivalrous nature.

Controvert the teachings of Theosophy and of Madame Blavatsky as much as you like; but what object is there in attacking and misrepresenting the person through whom the teachings come? If the teachings are right, no supposed wrongness on the part of the teacher can stultify

them. You do not admit that your spiritualistic teachings are wrong because so many mediums have been convicted of fraud. Why not apply the same principle to Theosophy?

I am pleased to note that you are changing the text in the chapter of your *Memories* which is extracted from *Pearson's*. But do you not think that you really owe it to make the *amende honorable* in *Pearson's* itself, when so many thousands have read there your calumnious attack, and will not note any amendment which may be published in the Book. This is the course which you recommended to the S.P.R. in the Price-Hope case.

I am, yours faithfully,

(Signed) W. KINGSLAND.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's reply to this was as follows :—

Dear Sir,—I have not changed my opinion, so what is there to write to *Pearson's* about? Olcott's admission that the adventures in *Caves and Jungles* were fictitious is quite enough to shake my faith, and Sinnett seems eventually to have felt distrust. I think *The Priestess of Isis* is also a very damaging book.

I had already in my text dealt with the comparison of our mediums and her—and also distinguished between her and the Eastern Wisdom, so both these points go for nothing.

I fear I can answer no more letters as I am much overworked.

Yours faithfully,

(signed) A. CONAN DOYLE.

April 15th, 1924.

Further letter from Mr. Kingsland :—

Claremont,
The Strand, Ryde, I.W.
April 26th, 1924.

To Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Dear Sir Arthur,—Having been away from home, your

letter of the 16th in reply to mine of the 14th has only now come into my hands. You must pardon me if I say in answer to your question, "what is there to write to *Pearson's* about?" that there is everything to write about. You have grossly misrepresented and maligned a dead woman, and one who did a great work in the world. You have done it on the flimsiest of evidence, and, so far as I can see, for no good motive whatsoever.

The principal point to my mind is that you appear to have entirely overlooked the ethical aspect of the matter. Even supposing that you do hold the opinion about the phenomena which you profess to hold, what you have written would seem to me for all right-minded people not merely to be utterly unjustifiable under the circumstances, but also to be contrary to all that is spiritual, noble, and charitable as taught by our highest exemplars; and even to be a terrible thing to do in view of Karmic Law, which says that "with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged : and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

H. B. Blavatsky's work stands before the world; and she gave her very life-blood to accomplish that work. Your statement that she "poisoned the very springs of Theosophy as it reached the West" is not merely grossly untrue and gratuitously insulting to all Theosophists, but it is also absurd on your own showing; for through whom did Sinnett's two books of which you express such appreciation come if not through Madame Blavatsky? If your statement is true, then these two books are poisonous books, since they owe their existence solely to her work. Are *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence* also poisonous books?

If your attack on H. P. Blavatsky is a sample of the ethics of Spiritualism, then I should say that the less one has to do with Spiritualism the better. We were taught by H.P.B. that the Occultist must refrain from condemning others, even when he knows for certain that there is ground for condemnation; unless, as I have said in my previous letter, such a course becomes absolutely necessary in order to combat some specific evil. But where is the specific evil in this case? Besides, your accusations are spiteful and

rancorous, even if they were statements of facts which should be regretfully made. I never heard H.P.B. condemn any of your fraudulent mediums as you now condemn her. I never heard her speak evil of anyone.

At present I can only think that in your zeal for Spiritualism you have been unconsciously led into making statements which further reflection must surely convince you to have been both uncalled for and unworthy of a generous nature. It remains to be seen whether you will be able to recognise this, and will have the courage to acknowledge it.

I remain, Yours faithfully,
(signed) W. KINGSLAND.

P.S.—You do not appear to have noted the Translator's Preface to *Caves and Jungles*; and as for Solovyoff's evidence, it is worth even less than Hodgson's or the Coulomb's.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's further reply to Mr. Kingsland, dated 27th, April, 1924.

Dear Sir,—I fear that, in spite of your wrath, I must continue to say that which I believe to be true.

As to your assertion that Mrs. B. never spoke harshly of anyone, it must be ludicrous to anyone who has read her letters.

There is no discrepancy in saying that you approve (to a point) of Eastern Wisdom, but disapprove of the individual who first drew attention to it in the West. It is your own mind which clouds you.

I fear this really must close the matter so far as I am concerned.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) A. CONAN DOYLE.

Mr. Kingsland's final letter :—

Claremont,
The Strand, Ryde, I.W.
April 30th, 1924.

To Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Dear Sir Arthur,—I have your further letter of the 27th

inst, but I am afraid that I can hardly let the matter rest at that, for you have as yet said nothing whatever to elucidate or to justify your assertion that Madame Blavatsky "poisoned the very springs of Theosophy as it reached the West."

In order to minimise the correspondence I am ignoring many things in your statements and letters which call for much further comment and refutation, and I am confining myself to this one point.

I have asked you several specific questions with reference to it, and you have not replied to a single one—unless, indeed, your present proposition that one may "approve (to a point) of Eastern Wisdom, but disapprove of the individual who first drew attention to it in the West" can be said in any sense to be an answer.

But to "disapprove" of that person is a very different thing to making public statements such as you have made, or to saying that she "poisoned the very springs of Theosophy as it reached the West."

Apparently you now acknowledge that it did reach the West through her. If, then, your words mean anything at all they mean that she poisoned the *teachings*; for how can the springs be poisoned and not the waters that flow therefrom? Unless you can show how or in what way she poisoned the teachings, your words are simply a gratuitous insult to the great body of Theosophists who accept those teachings as they came from her.

And if you do not mean this, what *do* you mean? If she brought teachings to the West of which you yourself approve (to a point), how can either you or Theosophy possibly "shake off Madame Blavatsky," or deny her the credit of the work she did? The more one looks at your statement the more absurd it becomes.

But it is not because it is absurd that I am writing. One may leave absurdities to look after themselves. It is the malicious slander of a dead woman with which I am dealing. You say that you "must continue to say that which I (you) believe to be true." I fail to see the *must*. There is no obligation to speak evil of a person however much we may think it—unless, as I have already stated, it is for the purpose of combating some specific

evil. And so I must ask you for the third time : where is the evil in this case?

We may *believe* many disreputable things to be true of a living person, but we do not publicly say them, because there are courts of law for such cases—failing our own sense of the rightness of refraining from slander. But you know as well as I do that to slander the dead is doubly obliquitous. Besides, there is always the doubt as to whether our judgment may not after all be wrong—and in the present case the doubt in your mind should be a very grave one indeed, for you have already found yourself to be in the wrong in at least one of your uncompromising statements.

You say in your present letter that my statement that Madame Blavatsky never spoke harshly of anyone is ludicrous to any who has read her letters. I do not know what "Letters" you refer to; but I may say in the first place that I did not say "harshly," I said "evil." In the second place I must challenge you to produce any public, or even private, statement of H.P.B.'s to parallel your present attack.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

(signed) W. KINGSLAND.

The result achieved by this correspondence is shown by the following letters received from Sir Arthur in May, 1924. We are also glad to note that in the passages which refer to H.P.B. in his *Memories and Adventures*—a reprint from *Pearson's*—which appeared this Autumn, his opinions and language are distinctly modified, especially on the subject of the S.P.R. Report, concerning which he admits that "Hodgson may have been mistaken."

Letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

15, Buckingham Palace Mansions,
S.W.1.

Dear Mrs. Davey,—The enclosed is my amended version, but I fear you won't approve it more than the first.

Still, it will show you I took trouble in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A. CONAN DOYLE

They (*Pearson's*) won't publish it.

"Windlesham"

Crowborough

Sussex

To the Editor of *PEARSON'S MAGAZINE*.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

Sir,

In your issue of April* I published an article upon my own psychic views and experiences. In the course of it I stated that I had been repelled from theosophy by the record of Madame Blavatsky. At the same time I admitted the high character of many theosophists whom I know, and testified to the general nobility of the teaching which they derive not from Madame Blavatsky, but from the old Aryan masters of wisdom.

This paragraph in my article has cost me quite a lot of time and trouble, for I have received numerous letters from theosophists remonstrating with me upon my views, some in rather violent terms, others (which were more painful to me) in the language of friends who had been hurt by my remarks. If one seeks truth in this world one has to make many sacrifices, and the hurting of one's friends is among the most grievous.

I took the matter to heart so much that I went over the evidence again in order to see whether I had been too harsh in my judgment. I find myself now still of the same opinion, but with some modification as to detail. It is only fair that I should indicate my reasons.

One modification is over the Adyar case, in which Dr. Hodgson claimed that he had shown the bogus character of Madame Blavatsky's miracles. The evidence ran in two channels, the one being that certain trap-doors were found in the house, the second that certain incriminating letters had been received by Madame Coulomb, who

* It appeared in the March issue (*I.D.*)

managed the place. The attack is to be found in the third volume of the S.P.R. reports, and the best defence in Mrs. Besant's *H. P. Blavatsky*. The latter was new to me, and I confess that it was more cogent than I had expected, and that, without being final, it did at least leave a possibility of innocence. There is a volume of evidence to the effect that Mrs. Coulomb was a revengeful woman, that she might have written or doctored the incriminating letters, and that the trap-doors were made at a time when M. Blavatsky was out of India in order to build up a case against her. It is a dubious matter, and the curious can consult those two documents for themselves and make up their own minds. The letters are the strongest point in the prosecution but the lady's letters were always so wild that it seems to me that an enemy has only to take a handful of them from anywhere and say "There is my case." They are stuffed with contradictions, self accusations, excuses, abuse of her enemies, sneers at her friends—all mixed with a sort of Irish stew of occult scraps, which testify to her memory and to her research if to nothing more. Mr. Emmette Coleman has shown beyond all question that *Isis Unveiled* consists very largely of quotations—there are 2100 of them, some of them very long and most of them without quotation marks of acknowledgment.

I admit then that the Adyar case is non-proven either way. In the defence however, a considerable point is made of Hodgson's suggestion that Madame was a Russian spy. The suggestion was premature but it seems all the same to have been on true lines. In 1886 Mr. Solovyoff represents her as saying: "I wish to propose myself as a secret agent of the Russian Government in India. To promote the triumph of my country over those vile English I am capable of anything. . . . That I can do to them immense harm in India is certain, and I alone can do it. No one else is capable of the task. I can easily organise a gigantic rebellion. I will guarantee that in a year's time the whole of India will be in Russian hands. But they must give me money. . . . I proposed the same thing some years ago when Timashaff was still Minister, but I did not receive any answer." Thus Hodgson's speculation

does not deserve the contempt with which it has been received in some quarters.

What affects my mind more perhaps than anything else is the story of the events of 1874-75 as shown in Olcott's Diary on the one hand, and in Madame's letter to Mr. Aksakoff on the other. Aksakoff was a man of high character, and the letters are obviously genuine so here we are on safe ground. In the Olcott documents we see Madame making an exploration of Spiritualism. She is entirely converted and becomes a red-hot enthusiast. Writing from Boston on July 18th, 1875, she says:—"I am ready to sell my soul for spiritualism." To Aksakoff, who was himself a Spiritualist and Editor of the "*Psychische Studien*," of Leipzig she writes: "I have now been a Spiritist more than ten years. All my life is devoted to the doctrine." She claimed at that period to have had her life directed by a spirit, John King, and he performed in the name of Spiritualism all that the Mahatmas did afterwards in the name of Theosophy.

Yet in the face of this she had in a few months turned against Spiritualism, discovered that the spirits were mere empty shells, discarded John King and replaced him by Koot Hoomi or Morya, and started the new cult by quarrying out vast masses from the work of ancient sages. Olcott was carried in her train, partly by her tempestuous energy, partly by certain psychic powers of a physical nature, which she seems to have really possessed, and partly, I think, because he had a little republican weakness, and that it flattered his vanity to be on close terms of intimacy with one whom he imagined to represent the old nobility of Europe. But what had occurred in the interval to justify so complete a change?

What had happened was a complete slump in Spiritualism as a money-making proposition. She had made 6,000 dollars in a year by posing as its prophetess but she confesses herself that something must be done because the market was gone and the public turned cold. The reason of this coldness was one of these recurring "exposures," so called, that of Mrs. Holmes, in Philadelphia. She complains herself that her income from Spiritualism is gone.

"The financial position here has fallen frightfully low. Olcott has invented a Miracle Club. We will see what will become of that." The lady was clearly in great straits and looking about for some new psychic opening. Then we suddenly have the Theosophical line of thought, the abandonment of Spiritualism, the substitution of a Mahatma for John King, and the formation of the parent society. Do I then exaggerate when I say that "this woman poisoned the very springs of Theosophy as it reached the West?"

I could imagine that Solovyoff was not a very lovable person, but I see no reason why his testimony should be set aside as if it did not exist, as some of my correspondents desire to do. He was a man of intelligence and of some position. He tells us in *A Priestess of Isis* (page 158) how Madame asked him to do bogus Koot Hoomi letters for her. He also gives the following question and answer :

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

"No, the chelas used sometimes to help me, Damodar and Subba Rao and Mohini." He claims also to have seen a packet of the famous Chinese envelopes in her desk.

It is clear from Mr. Sinnett's posthumous papers that his own confidence was sadly shaken, and her chief German supporter, Gebhard wrote "the only thing that surprises me is that knowing the Tartar or Kalmud character of H.P.B., you can be surprised at anything which she may write."

Olcott was very loyal and, as I believe, honest. It is mainly on his word that I am prepared to believe that she had real psychic powers of a low order. Some of the instances which he gives could not possibly have arisen from deceit or self-deception. At the same time these may have been supplemented by fraud, as has often, I fear, been the case with Spiritualistic mediums of the lower class. That would account for M. Solovyoff's experience and the aerial bell. My belief in Olcott's honesty is confirmed by the fact that when in her *Caves and Jungles* she associated his name with some wonderful adventures his loyalty found its limit, and he declared in his published

Diary that there was not a word of truth in it.

As to her moral character it would be better not to discuss it were it not that I have had letters which refer to her as if she was a female Messiah. I will only refer the reader to her own letters to Aksakoff (*Priestess of Isis* Chaps. XXVI. to XXXIX.), in which she gives glimpses of her stormy youth. She was a complex creature and clearly lovable or so many would not be ready to champion her. She was amusing, learned, garrulous, unconventional and extraordinarily energetic—but I fear that the truth was not in her.

I can assure my Theosophic friends that I would not willingly hurt their feelings, that if I have touched upon this matter at all it is because the article in question is really a Chapter taken out of my autobiography, and I am bound to give those reason which influenced me in breaking away from Theosophy and throwing my whole force into Spiritualism.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

ADDITIONAL NOTE BY MR. KINGSLAND.

In the Article in *Pearson's* Sir Arthur acknowledges that he was "deeply interested and attracted for a year or two by Theosophy," and he praises Sinnett's *Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*. He further says, "It would be unjust to condemn the old wisdom simply because it was introduced by this extraordinary and volcanic person."

In his letter to the Editor of *Pearson's* he again testifies to "the general nobility of the teaching"; but he adds that it is not derived from Madame Blavatsky, but from "the old Aryan Masters of Wisdom." Indeed! This is news to us. We certainly thought that Sinnett wrote his books on information, supplied through H.P.B., in the now celebrated *Letters from the Mahatmas*. If he did not, who are "the old Aryan Masters" from whom Sir Arthur says *we* derived the teachings? Sir Arthur professes to think that H.P.B. wrote these letters herself, so that in any case *we* derived the teachings from her, from whatever source she may have obtained them. We also

WHITE LOTUS DAY.

A Special Meeting was held on May 8th, to commemorate the passing of H.P.B. Mr. F. L. Gardner who presided, opened the Meeting by reading the address Mr. Mead gave at H.P.B.'s Cremation. Acting on her instructions conveyed in her Will, portions were read from the *Bhagavad Gita* and *The Light of Asia*. Passages were also read from *The Voice of the Silence*. Mrs. A. L. Cleather and Mr. W. Kingsland sent the following letters which were read at the Meeting.

Letter from Mr. A. L. Cleather :—

Srinagar,
Kashmir,
India,
March 7th, 1924.

DEAR FELLOW MEMBERS,

This 33rd anniversary of the passing of our beloved H.P.B. from us in visible form, which we are commemorating to-day, is I think, an unusually important one. First in regard to *numbers* (which, as she told us, play a vital part in the lives of men and nations) this year (1924) is the 49th,* since the official founding of the T.S. in New York, in 1875. The number 33 is also significant, for—taken symbolically—it is supposed to mark the beginning of any specific occult “mission” to the world. Taken in this sense, then, it is surely not inappropriate that the first year of our “Blavatsky Association,” founded to perpetuate the memory and the Teachings of a great Messenger from the Lodge of Masters (the Trans-Himalayan Brotherhood), should coincide with the 33rd anniversary of her passing. The formation of our little Association has, further, been ushered in by the almost simultaneous publication of a volume of “Letters” from those Masters who, H.P.B. declared, had sent her forth on her mission and trained her for this work.

* $7 \times 7 = 49$.

A careful study of this enormously important book reveals that it is, *in itself*, the finest possible vindication of H.P.B., for us who accept her, and also a refutation of all the charges of fraud and trickery so vindictively and foully levelled against that great Individuality, that noble and devoted woman, both during her lifetime and after her death.

The world has *need* of just such an Association as ours—though scornfully and tragically unaware of that need. Where an H.P.B. failed to impress upon it the teachings she brought—contained mainly in the two most important and vital of her books, *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*—we can scarcely hope to succeed. We can, at best—“TRY.” We *can* hold aloft, and hand on, the *Torch of Truth*, for our own and succeeding generations. We *can* keep alive H.P.B.’s message; above all by *living it*. We *can* endeavour to spread it by every means in our power; in order that when—only a few short years hence—another Messenger from the great Brotherhood is sent, he may find the hope expressed by H.P.B. at the end of the *Key to Theosophy*, amply realised.

The teachings of the Ancient Wisdom which she brought us *are* in truth sorely needed by our “civilised” but materially-minded world, for without their acceptance it must inevitably share the fate of its predecessors:—“Think you,” wrote the Master K. H. to Miss Arundale, in 1884—“the truth has been shown to you for your sole advantage? That we have broken the silence of centuries for the profit of a handful of dreamers only?” [*Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*—Letter 4, p. 24]: And these most inspiring words are as applicable to us, *now* as they were—40 years ago—to the London Lodge. For *our* task, also, is the “*Spiritual* enlightenment of our fellow men; and whoever works unselfishly to that goal,” wrote the Master, “*necessarily puts himself in magnetic communication with our chelas and ourselves*”* [*ibid*, Letter 31, p. 91]. Though it is true that we cannot all be “occultists,” *i.e.*, conscious students of occultism, yet many of us may be such, in our *inner* natures (unaware of it in daily waking life of our personalities). We *can*, however, all work for the “*Spiritual enlightenment*” of our fellows; and this in

* *Italics mine.*—A.I.C.

the various ways appropriate to our capacities and opportunities.

Let us, then, strive most earnestly to "keep the Link unbroken"—the Flame alight—and make it our task to prove that we have not "taken in vain the name" of H. P. Blavatsky.

Accept the warm fraternal greetings of your four distant members, and the heartfelt good wishes of

Yours most truly,

ALICE LEIGHTON CLEATHER.

Letter from Mr. W. Kingsland :

Claremont,

The Strand

Ryde, I.W.

8th May, 1924.

DEAR MRS. DAVEY AND FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE
BLAVATSKY ASSOCIATION.

I very much regret that I do not find it possible to be with you in physical body, when, for the first time as an Association, we meet for the Annual Remembrance Day known as "White Lotus Day."

Thirty-three years have passed since the great Teacher and Messenger of the Masters, known to us in this outer world as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, left the physical body in which she had so long and so bravely worked with unflinching will and resolve to use that body to the very last ounce of its powers, if so it might be that nothing in the work to which she had set her hand, should be left undone or incomplete. What that effort was to her in suffering, physically, mentally, psychically, and occultly, will perhaps never be fully realised by any of us; but a very vivid light has recently been shed upon this aspect of her endeavour by the publication of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*.

The more you can come to understand and to realise

what she had to suffer in the great Mission which she had accepted, the more you will realise that only a very great Soul, only a very noble character, could have undertaken that mission in the first instance, or have carried it through with the unflinching loyalty and the iron will which she exhibited.

She was a great example as well as a great teacher. She was a great example of that renunciation and endurance which all who tread the Occult Path of Initiation are called upon to make; even to the final renunciation of the well-earned and merited bliss of Nirvana.

I say this because it is perhaps the one thing above all others which has made the deepest impression in my personal knowledge of her, and in what I have been able to gather from other sources. She was absolutely inflexible in her devotion to the service of the Masters. She would do and suffer to the utmost for anything which they wished to be done, and which they gave her the choice of doing.

The recently published *Mahatma Letters* to which I referred throw a flood of light upon this aspect of her character and her work, as well as on many other aspects which were previously obscure. It has brought out clearly that as far back as 1884 she was practically incapable of any further work; she was on the point of death, and had been pronounced by the doctors to be incapable of recovery. Yet she lived till 1891; lived to complete *The Secret Doctrine*, and many other things besides. How was it done?

It was done partly by the Master's occult power, and partly by her own inflexible will. It was done more than once. It was done in 1884 and again in 1886. The latter incident is mentioned by Countess Wachtmeister in her *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky* (p. 75), and is referred to by Mrs. Cleather in her *H. P. Blavatsky—Her Life and Work for Humanity* (p. 60). I well remember H.P.B. telling me herself of this incident. She said that the Master came to her in the night; that he laid his hand on her chest, and told her that when he withdrew it she would either live or die according to the choice which she made. He then showed her what had yet to be accomplished in the work they had committed to her charge, and he gave her her choice—to live to complete it as far as was possible, or to die then and there. She told me that this was

the hardest struggle that she had ever had in her life. She was longing to die. She was not merely utterly worn out physically and psychically, but also she suffered bitterly from the misunderstanding of her mission and the venomous attacks which had been made not merely on her work, but also on her personal character and motives. All this was felt by her not on account of her own person, but because she realised so fully what they meant for the success of the mission itself. Well—she made the choice to live. At that point she made once more the Great Renunciation; she took up the Cross and went bravely on; and she gave us *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and much else besides.

On page 370, of the *Letters*, K. H.—referring to both Colonel Olcott and H.P.B., says of them: "They have that in them which we have but too rarely found elsewhere—UNSELFISHNESS, and an eager readiness of self-sacrifice for the good of others; what a 'multitude of sins' does this not cover!"

And yet some, even to-day, can stoop so low as to malign and slander that great soul—some who certainly *ought* to know better. That the world at large should judge superficially and from hearsay is perhaps only to be expected; nor must we close our eyes to the fact that *externally* H.P.B. exhibited many traits which were peculiarly open to this superficial judgment. But as time goes on, these external superficialities will certainly fade into the background, and the true nature and character of the woman, and the greatness of her work and mission, will become clearer and more and more firmly established. We may take heart by looking back at history and finding many examples of the same thing with great teachers and pioneers. It is our work as an Association to help to bring this about.

Those who judge superficially are thereby unconsciously condemning themselves. History shows us here also that they ultimately themselves stand condemned in the judgment of the world.

But our estimate of H.P.B. requires something more even than the abandoning of a superficial judgment. Behind H.P.B. were certain Occult forces, certain considerations of an Occult nature which are entirely exceptional, and

wholly inapplicable to an ordinary person. It must be part of our work to endeavour to elucidate these, as well as to clear away the misunderstandings of an outward nature.

We have in the *Mahatma Letters* one very significant hint of a profoundly Occult nature. In Letter No. XXVI, K. H. lifts a little of the Occult veil which shrouded the personality of H.P.B., and lets us into the Occult secret that : "No man or woman, unless he be an Initiate of the 'fifth circle' can leave the precincts of *Bod-Las* and return back into the world in his integral whole. . . . One at least of his seven satellites (principles) has to remain behind."

We have to follow up this and other clues, and thus gradually exhibit the great Soul for whose remembrance we meet to-day in a light which will silence the critics and compel the acknowledgment and admiration of the world at large.

We have also to elucidate and to vindicate the teachings which we have received by means of the sacrifice and the sufferings of that great Soul. To a certain extent the teachings also will vindicate themselves as time goes on; but only in proportion as they become by our work and effort living vital truths permeating the thought, the philosophy, and the religion of the Age.

Let each of us endeavour to realise now what a high privilege it is to be able to do something—however little it may be—in the Cause of that Ancient Wisdom Religion which explains so much in the apparently tangled affairs of human life; and without the existence of which no explanation is possible of the life and work of the one in whose remembrance we are met to-day—*Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*.

W. KINGSLAND.

Mr. F. L. Gardner, who was for some time Secretary to the Blavatsky Lodge during H.P.B.'s life-time, showed the Members some interesting relics, letters and photographs of that period. The published collection of Articles written in appreciation of H.P.B. by some of her pupils, entitled, *In Memory of H. P. Blavatsky*, were on sale, and a good number were taken.

LETTER FROM THE VEN. THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA :

The Ven. the Anagarika Dharmapala is one of the most eminent Buddhists of Ceylon, and is the Editor of *The Maha-Bodhi Journal* which is the organ of the Maha-Bodhi Society. He was elected a member of the Blavatsky Association at a Council Meeting on March 24th, 1924. On receipt of his Membership Card he sent the following information about Buddhism and his association with H.P.B.

MY ASSOCIATION WITH H.P.B.

The visit to Ceylon of H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott in 1880 was a great event in the history of modern Buddhism. Ceylon had been the stronghold of Buddhism for 2230 years. Buddhism before it bifurcated into the two great schools of Hinayana and Mahayana was known under the name of Buddha Sasana. The personal disciples of the Lord Buddha were all Arhats, and at the mahaparinirvana of the Lord the chief surviving disciple Maha Kasyapa looking to the future of Buddhism convened the first Council at the Saptaparni cave at Rajagriha and chanted the three pitakas. A hundred years later many hundreds of Bhikkhus met together and held a council near Patna, wherein they decided to abrogate the minor precepts, and recaste the teachings of the Lord to suit their taste. The old school became known as the Theravadas and the new school as the Mahasankhikas. In the time of the great Emperor Asoka a third council was held wherein the Theravada Arhats rechanted the original suttas, and sent the Arhat missionaries to preach the pure teachings of the Lord Buddha, to various parts of Asia. The Maha Sanghikas also held a council and sent their missionaries to disseminate the teachings of their school. The Theravada Bhikkhus were strictly puritanic, while the Mahasankhikas were nonconformists. Both schools propagated their respective doctrines and Buddhism spread far and wide throughout Asia. In those days there were not yet born Christianity, Islam, and the religion known as modern Hinduism. The Lord Buddha was then the undisputed Master of the religious world in Asia.

The religious world underwent a change six or seven hundred years after the parinirvana. Constantinian Christianity appeared as a new force in the religious arena, which has since spread in Europe and America. Again a new force appeared in Arabia nine hundred years after Constantine, shattering the power of Christianity in Asia Minor and the adjacent countries. This religion, under the name of Islam, became a world religion and spread rapidly in countries watered by the Nile, Euphrates and Indus. Three world religions are now at work, one of which is Aryan and the other two Semitic Arabian.

India, the home of Buddhism, was invaded by the followers of Islam, about a thousand years ago, and the old Aryan civilization with its representative cult Buddhism was extinguished from the native soil. In India, Buddhism underwent great changes from time to time, and by the end of the tenth century of the European era, a new religion had come into existence under the name of Tantra, which enunciated certain principles based on sexual contact and bacchanalian orgism. The religion of personal purity and individual effort based on Karma and rebirth promulgated by the Lord Buddha disappeared from India, and Islam with Tantric religion took its place. Since eight hundred years the teachings of Buddha have totally disappeared from the holy land of the Buddhists.

To revive the old teachings of the Lord Buddha, came H.P.B. to India in 1879. For the first time in the history of modern Buddhism the echo was heard that in Tibet were living adepts who had learnt to control the forces of Nature, and that they were devoted followers of Gautama Buddha. In 1880, H.P.B. came to Ceylon with Colonel Olcott and the Buddhists gave them a royal welcome. Seven years previous to their coming the Buddhist Bhikkhus had defeated the Christian controversialists at a public debate, and the germs of the modern revival had been impregnated in the island. The visit of H.P.B. and Olcott gave an impetus to the Buddhists as they said that they had come to destroy the religion of the Christian padres, and to help the propaganda of Buddha's teachings. I was then a boy, but it gave me a thrill of joy to hear that there were Arhats living in Tibet, and that H.P.B. was in communication with some of Them. I read the *Theoso-*

phist from its first issue, and I made up my mind to dedicate my life to the study of the Arhat doctrine. It was more than a coincidence to me that at the very time appeared the wonderful poem of Edwin Arnold, the *Light of Asia*, which when I read accentuated my desire to follow the life of self-abnegation as proclaimed by the Lord Buddha. I read the article, *Chelas and Lay Chelas* in the *Theosophist*, which gave me strength to follow the higher life. The Masters about whom Sinnet wrote in the *Occult World*, were to me real living beings, and I surrendered my life to them and silently pledged to lead the chela life. H.P.B. helped me much in my effort, and in December, 1884, when she visited Ceylon on her way to Adyar, I saw her, and she induced my father to allow her to take me to Adyar. I went with her to Adyar, and one day in her room, when I was sitting by her, alone, she advised me to study Pali and to work for Humanity, and that I would get all that I wanted from the Pali books. That was a prophecy. Then there were no Pali texts published in Sinhalese, and the first important Pali work of the great Buddhaghosa on Buddhist Mysticism appeared five years later. Until the day of her departure H.P.B. took care of me. She wrote to me to follow the light that is within me. I have strictly followed her advice, and am glad to testify to her wonderful powers of mystic illumination.

Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater were then nonentities to me, and I believe that after the death of H.P.B. the Masters have withdrawn from the Theosophical Society, as they found that the pure teachings given by them through H.B.P. were sufficient for any earnest, sincere, upright student to lead the higher life enunciated by the Lord Buddha. The publication of the Letters of the Masters to A. P. Sinnett is, I believe, a good sign, inasmuch as they show that the pretensions of Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater are false. They are not in communication with the Himalayan Masters, and I hope that the newly-formed Blavatsky Association in London will tenaciously cling to the original teachings given through H.P.B., just as the Ceylon Buddhists have remained true to the Arhat Teachings during a period of 2230 years. Love to all living beings, small and great, the desire to renounce sensual plea-

asures that impede the progress in the realm of spirituality and the strenuous effort to do meritorious deeds for the betterment of Humanity, forgetting self, have been to me a kind of spiritual pabulum which I have partaken since I came in touch with the wonderful personality of H.P.B.

THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA (LANOO).

Calcutta, April 23rd, 2467

1923

EXCLUSION OF T.S. MEMBERS FROM THE BLAVATSKY ASSOCIATION.

Various criticisms having appeared from time to time in the Theosophical Journals concerning our exclusion of members of the T.S. from our Association, the following letter was drawn up by the Council, and sent to the Press.

It appeared in due course in the following Magazines, Newspapers and Independent T.S. organs :

The Occult Review for August.

The Canadian Theosophist of August 15th.

The O.E. Critic, in August.

The Buddhist Chronicle, August 3rd.

The Maha Bodhi Journal for September.

Dawn, the organ of the Loyalty League (Sydney, Australia), quoted at length from the Letter in its September number and expressed itself as fully in sympathy with our work, though space prevented its publication in full.

The text of the "Letter" is as follows :—

Dear Sir,

Numerous criticisms having appeared in various Magazines concerning the policy of this Association in excluding members of the Theosophical Society, I shall be glad if you will kindly publish the following general reply to such criticisms.

The grounds taken in almost all cases of such criticism has been that by this exclusiveness we are controverting the principle of Universal Brotherhood: the foremost teaching of H. P. Blavatsky, whose teachings it is our object to promulgate. It is difficult to see, however, how this can be maintained unless the right of any Society or Association to use discrimination in the election of its members is denied on the same ground. Why should we be denied that

right? If we did not exercise that right in the broad manner of excluding all members of the T.S., we should have to exercise it in the more invidious manner of admitting some and excluding others. Perhaps it is thought that our exclusion of these is an act of condemnation. But even that is not the case. What we have to guard against by this exclusion is pretty generally known, and need not be dealt with here; but we must repudiate most strongly the idea that we regard all members of the T.S. as being tarred with the same brush. We may in fact admit at once that this exclusiveness is *our* loss, in so far as there are a great many earnest and devoted members of the T.S.—devoted to the pure teachings—who might possibly join us. Yet even these might unconsciously and unintentionally be a disturbing element in our Association.

We do not condemn anyone who elects to remain in the T.S.; neither do we do them any wrong or injury by excluding them from our Association. They are presumably as fully acquainted through the T.S. with the teachings of H.P.B. as they could be through us; and it is to be assumed also that in the T.S. they find their proper and congenial sphere of activity. If we were the *only* organisation through whom the teachings of H.P.B. were available, the case might be different. H.P.B. says in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 49); "We (the T.S.) have, strictly speaking, no right to refuse admission to anyone"; but in the same paragraph she admits that there are undesirables who might be asked to resign, "or, in case of refusal, be expelled." She says that this applies more particularly to the *Esoteric Section*. But we are not an Esoteric Section, nor are we any Section of the T.S., though we think that we may claim to be a part of the great *Movement* initiated by the Masters through H.P.B. That is quite another matter, and that *Movement*, as H.P.B. herself has pointed out, is quite independent of the success or failure of the T.S. as such.

Is it then contrary to the principle of Universal Brotherhood that we should exercise discrimination in the admission of our members, and decline to admit those who have a field of activity and instruction elsewhere? We do not think that a Guru would be accused of "a negation of brotherhood and an exaltation of separateness" because he

would refuse to accept as a pupil one who was already the pupil of another Guru. We do not by our exclusiveness shut out anyone from the knowledge of the *Gupta Vidyâ*, nor do we see why those who have a field of knowledge and activity in the T.S. should desire to join us. We do not intend—as we are credited by the Editor of one Magazine —“to take the place of the T.S.”; nor even to compete with it for members or for popular favour. We are simply an Association of students of the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, desiring also to live up to those teachings, and with the further object of placing them before the world in their original pure and undiluted form. To that extent we are propagandists, but we are not proselytisers; nor shall we—as one imaginative Editor suggests—“bully” any member of the T.S. into leaving that Society in order to join us.

The T.S. has recently chartered a Lodge which excludes women. We should not conclude thereby that the founders of the Lodge condemn women in general, or indeed in any sense whatever, but only that the lines upon which they intend to work make it undesirable that women should be members. We think that they have a perfect right to do this without being judged as to their motives. Should not theosophists above all others refrain from *attributing* motives? We have stated our case fairly and frankly, and ask to be taken at our word.

With the organisation, policy, or work of the T.S., we have no concern, save only where corrupt texts of H.P.B.'s works are in question. Most of the criticisms launched against our policy are in fact based upon the idea that we must necessarily conform to certain “theosophical” ideas which have for so long a time been current both in the “Parent” T.S. and in the offshoots—several of whom claim to be the one and only original. Certain aims and objects are attributed to us in the first place which are quite foreign to us, and then the criticism is launched against these. It is amazing, indeed, in some cases to see what distorted ideas are attributed to us. These, I am afraid, we must assign to the warped “theosophical” imagination of their inventors. It is also amusing to find our policy condemned by certain Magazines which have been most prominent in their attacks on and condemnation of the T.S. in general.

We must absolutely repudiate the idea that our exclusion

of T.S. members is a wholesale condemnation of such members; nor do we consider—as one Magazine suggests that we do—that to remain in the T.S. is “disloyalty” to H.P.B. The bulk of our members are those who left the T.S. years ago, and who are glad to unite again for a work which they have always had at heart. We shall endeavour to keep our Association free from those elements which experience in the T.S. has shown to be a source of discord and disruption. We shall endeavour to do our work quietly and unostentatiously; and we have certainly as an Association no intention of criticising or condemning any “Theosophical” Society or Community. It may perhaps be as well to add that our Association as such cannot be responsible for the individual expressions of opinion of its members.

Yours faithfully,
(For the Council) IONA DAVEY, *Hon. Sec.*

22, Craven Hill, Bayswater, London, W.2.
July, 1924.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

The Council has met 12 times.

Six General Meetings have been held during the year.

The publication of the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, in the spring of 1924, was a matter of deepest interest to the members of the Association, and Mr. F. L. Gardner made this publication the subject of an address at one of the Meetings. Comments on these *Letters* by Mrs. A. L. Cleather and Mr. Basil Crump were also read.

Mr. Stott gave an interesting address on Karma at the Meeting held on June 24th, which was followed by a discussion in which most of the members present took a part. On October 17th, Miss Ella Collings read a very thoughtful and able paper on the Bhagavad Gita, which was also followed by a discussion.

In alluding to these General Meetings, mention must be made to the kind hospitality extended to the Association by Mr. Ingham, who allowed the Meetings to take place in his house during the summer months. Mr. Ingham

and his sister-in-law, Miss Connah, were among those who were in the Movement in the early days of the T.S., and were constantly at Headquarters when H.P.B. was alive, and had thus the privilege of knowing her, and of receiving teaching directly from her.

The Members in general will be interested to here that there are 13 members in the Association who knew H.P.B. personally, and were more or less associated with her in her work.

Readings have been held every week—except during August—at Headquarters, on Wednesdays from *The Key to Theosophy* and from *The Mahatma Letters* and on Thursdays from *The Secret Doctrine*.

A Library of nearly 300 books has been collected at Headquarters, and contains all H.P.B.'s works (correct editions), and a considerable portion of the literature of the early days of the T.S., as well as many works which are in line with her teachings. A printed Library Catalogue is being issued, and will shortly be obtainable by members for a few pence.

Correct Copies of H.P.B.'s Works are on sale at the Blavatsky Association's Headquarters.

Mr. Basil Crump has presented to the Association a stone carved with the sacred Buddhist invocation, "OM MANI PADME HUM." This stone comes from a *Mendong in the Indus Valley, Little Tibet (Ladakh) where Mrs. Cleather, and her son, and Mr. Crump have been travelling during this summer.

For the Council of the Blavatsky Association.

IONA DAVEY, *Hon. Sec.*

22, Craven Hill, Bayswater, London, W.2.

* *A Mendong is a stone wall, sometimes half a mile long, engraved with Buddhist prayers and sacred symbols*



