

Theosophical History
Occasional Papers
Volume IV



W.T. Brown's
“SCENES IN MY LIFE”

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EDITOR: JAMES A. SANTUCCI

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Reprinted from the
Rochester Post-Express, 1886

With an Introduction by
Michael Gomes

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Preface

Readers of *Theosophical History* may recall William Tournay Brown's "Some Experiences in India," reprinted in the July-October 1991 issue (214–23). Although little more than a footnote in history, Mr. Brown is known as a recipient of written communications from the Master Koot Hoomi and as a witness to this same Master in the flesh, all occurring towards the end of 1883. It is essentially the notoriety of these experiences and his initial need to defend their validity from such skeptics as Moncure D. Conway of the *Glasgow Herald* that motivated Brown to write about his experiences. The following account is written in a freer, more idiomatic style—suitable for newspaper supplements of the day—which passes for a more entertaining account of Brown's introduction into Spiritualism and the Theosophical world.

Among his observations while at Adyar are those of H.P.B. ("Hi! Damodar! Whistlebreeches! Flapdoodle! Where's Damodar?"), Colonel Olcott ("If you are liable to soon tire of my constant movement and sigh for rest and inertia at home, then do not come; for I tell you I am so dead in earnest that I would be ready to die any day for my society."), the ritual offering of letters in "the Shrine"—the *sanctum sanctorum*—and the "Occult Room" or "*sanctum*" containing the Shrine ("a drawing room furnished in splendor, replete with Indian tapestry, and emblazoned with mystical symbols.").

Brown's observations and claims are but one of a long list of documents buried in sources out of reach or unknown to most researchers. Our desire is that accounts such as this will shed more light on the personalities and their activities within the Theosophical Movement.

No researcher during the decade of the 1980s and now the 1990s has contributed more in resurrecting significant documents pertinent to the Theosophical Movement as Michael Gomes. He is the author of *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL, 1987), *H.P.B. teaches: An Anthology* (Adyar, 1992), and *Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century: An Annotated Bibliography* (NY, 1994). Currently, he is transcribing and commenting on the H.P. Blavatsky to W.Q. Judge letters that were recently opened to the public by Andover-Harvard Library in Massachusetts for *Theosophical History* (from April 1994 with a projected conclusion with the October 1996 issue). His other publications include Volume I of *Theosophical History Occasional Paper, Witness for the Prosecution*, and a long list of articles and annotated documents pertaining to the early Theosophical Movement in *The Canadian Theosophist* from 1983 to 1991.

One final note on the style of "Scenes in My Life." The original format of the article has been retained. There is no indentation of long quoted passages nor reduction in point size therein.

James A. Santucci

Introduction

In a telling observation in *Theosophical History* the editor noted that the “Theosophical movement has been blessed with an enormous amount of writers, far more so than one would expect given the size of the Parent Theosophical Society and its offshoots.”¹ Part of the literature produced is a sizable amount of reminiscences left by the early participants. Many of these accounts were written years, even decades, after the events described, when the movement had passed through several crucial developments. Recollection of these events had the benefit of the perspective given by shifts in perception about the relative importance of what had occurred. Among the earliest accounts, for instance, Col. Olcott’s *Old Diary Leaves* was written almost two decades after the events described. Even Annie Besant’s *Autobiography* was started five years after she joined the Theosophical Society. We are fortunate therefore when we come across material written fairly close to the proximity of the events described. Such a source is William Tournay Brown’s “Scenes in My Life,” for here we have a first hand account of what early members saw as important at the time.

Brown had written three pamphlets before “Scenes in My Life,” of which his autobiographical *My Life*, published in Germany in 1885, supplies all that is known of his early career. He was born in Glasgow on 16 May 1857 and received his early education there. At the age of 14 he entered the law offices of Bannatynes, Kirkwood & McJannet as a clerk, and at the same time joined the Junior class at Glasgow University, it being the habit for students interested in following a career in Law to attend classes at the University while serving with a legal firm.² The death of his father in 1877, and that of his mother two years later, led him to take a deeper interest in religion. At the end of 1880 before taking his examination, he left the law firm of Bannatynes to visit his elder brother who was at Strassburg, Germany. In April 1882 he received the degree of Bachelor of Law from Glasgow University, which he followed with a tour of upstate New York, seeing Niagara Falls and returning to Edinburgh by way of Montreal and Quebec. Studying for his examination in Court Practice at the end of that year, his health gave way.³ A reading of Spiritualist literature led him to decide to go to London in the spring of 1883 to try the mesmeric cures that were being offered there.

The London milieu that Brown now encountered was one of seances and mediums, phrenologists, homeopathy, vegetarianism, and Theosophy. Describing the London attraction to such things at the time, one of the characters in Mrs. Campbell Praed’s 1885 novel *Affinities* explained, “It was Spiritualism and the planchette till that got vulgar. One day it is mesmerism and will-power, another thought-reading; and now India and

¹ James A. Santucci, V/3: 111.

² *My Life* (1885), 4.

³ The nature of Brown’s illness remains unclear. Although he claims he had been “psychologized, i.e. morally paralyzed or mesmerized,” his illness appears to be related to an emotional crisis in his life caused by his having to face the responsibility of a career and forthcoming marriage.

America have set the fashion to a school of occultism.”⁴ Things “spiritual” were in vogue and often regarded as entertainment. The American Spiritualist James M. Peebles reported attending a seance in London which was “sandwiched between a costly dinner of meats, gravies, and condiments, and a hearty supper, besides the liqueurs, cigars and wines—the dinner was at 7 o’clock and the supper at 11 o’clock at night.”⁵

Through the acquaintance of a lady from Germany (unnamed in *My Life*, but who can be identified as Mary Gebhard), Brown was introduced to A.P. Sinnett and the world of Theosophy. Sinnett, the former editor of the Allahabad *Pioneer*, now settled in London, had become a celebrity of sorts for the account of his relations in India with the Mahatmas or adepts behind the Theosophical Society. Reading Sinnett’s *Occult World* convinced Brown of the reality of Theosophy, and he joined the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society on June 3rd 1883.

At the closed meetings of the London Lodge he would have met like-minded souls who were active in many of the same movements he was now familiar with: C.C. Massey, also a barrister, who had been present at the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875; Dr. Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, President and Vice-President of the Lodge, who propounded their own brand of Christian Hermeticism and had authored *The Perfect Way, or the Finding of Christ*, and were active in the cause of vegetarianism and anti-vivisection; and of course Mr. and Mrs. Sinnett. Within a short time, based on the stories he had heard, Brown decided to go out to the headquarters of the Society at Adyar, Madras, India, and meet the founders Col. Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky.

When the 26 year old Brown sailed from Liverpool on August 25th, he had been a member of the Theosophical Society for less than three months, his familiarity with the subject being only slightly longer. Something of the impulsiveness of his nature is revealed by the fact that only after coming to India did he receive information from Olcott about what awaited him there. Brown thought this letter important enough to include in all three of his autobiographical sketches: “Are you prepared to eat with me the plainest food, to expect neither luxury nor even comfort, to have your private character traduced, your motives pictured as base and sordid, to endure extremes of climate, the fatigue of hard journeys in all sorts of conveyances by land and sea, to know of the existence of *the Masters* yet be denied the privilege to go to them, until by years of toil you have purged your innermost nature of its selfishness and accumulated moral filth and by working unselfishly for the enlightenment of mankind you shall have fitted yourself for the holy companionship? Think of all this. You have not begun the career as yet. Ponder the situation. If your caste or the world attract you, go to them and be happy. The philanthropist’s lot is a hard one: few covet its crown of thorns, fewer still are able to wear it. You are young, life is before you, choose thoughtfully.”⁶

Upon his arrival at Madras at the end of September 1883, he stayed at the Society’s estate on the outskirts of town. The 21 acres with its main building, casuarina trees, coconut palms, and mangoes, had been purchased the year before. Other than Col. Olcott, who was away at the time, Mme. Blavatsky was the only European resident there. Brown became familiar with the casual life at Adyar, saw the “Shrine,” a black lacquered cabinet

⁴ *Affinities* (London: Richard Bentley & Son), I: 99.

⁵ *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, July 20, 1878, 6.

⁶ *My Life*, 20-21.

that hung in a room adjoining Mme. Blavatsky's quarters, proved himself useful by writing letters to the *Madras Times* and *Light* of London defending his new friends,⁷ and received his first letter from the Masters.

After two weeks at Adyar, he left to join Olcott at Sholapur to serve as secretary during the Colonel's lecture-tour. Over the next month they traveled across the north of the country, stopping at Poona, Bombay, Jubbulpore, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Moradabad, Delhi, Meerut, Lahore, and smaller towns. It was at Lahore on November 20th, two days after their arrival, that Brown gained a lasting place in the annals of Theosophical history when he was visited by the Mahatma Koot Hoomi.

The presentation of this event remains fairly consistent throughout all of Brown's autobiographical pieces. First seeing the figure that he believed to be the Master the day before. The visit to his tent in the early hours of the morning of the 20th (only "Scenes in My Life" gives the time)⁸ by Koot Hoomi, who had just left Olcott's compartment (neither *My Life* or *Some Experiences in India* mentions that the Mahatma had also gone to Olcott), the materialized letter and handkerchief in his hand at that moment, the subsequent reappearance at a distance during the evening (all three of his accounts place this on the 21st, but by that time they had already left Lahore). Of all of his narratives, "Scenes in My Life" gives the fullest report. There was another visit later on Nov. 20th not mentioned by Brown, when Olcott was taken to K.H. and conversed with him for almost half an hour.⁹

At the invitation of the Maharaja of Kashmir the party went on to Jammu where Brown saw K.H. again and received a brief note (this incident is not referred to in *My Life* or "Scenes in My Life"). After staying at Jammu until the 29th of November they returned to Adyar via Kapurthala, Jeypore, and Baroda, reaching home on Dec. 15th. The next day Brown wrote Koot Hoomi, who he then believed to be in the neighboring state of Mysore, asking for a personal interview and received a long reply giving the reasons why this was not possible.

His star was now in the ascendant. He read the report of the President of the London Lodge at the Society's annual convention at the end of December, and when Col. Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky departed for Europe on Feb. 20, 1884, he was added to a seven man Board of Control along with two new arrivals, Franz Hartmann and St. George Lane Fox, to oversee affairs at the headquarters. But on April 11 Brown achieved hitherto unparalleled notoriety, coming from of all places his native Glasgow. On that day the *Glasgow Herald* published an installment of Moncure D. Conway's¹⁰ "A Tour Round the World" that dwelt with his visit to the Theosophists at Adyar in January 1884. While recognizing the impact Theosophy had made in India with its platform advocating the revival of Oriental literature, Conway remained sceptical

⁷ His letter to *Light* was printed in the Nov. 10, 1883 issue and reprinted in the November Supplement to *The Theosophist* along with the letter to the *Madras Times*.

⁸ Olcott's diary fixes it 25 minutes later, at 1.55 a.m.

⁹ *The Theosophist* 18 (July 1897): 578; reprinted as *Old Diary Leaves* III. *The Theosophist* 53 (August 1932): 564-73, has a facsimile of the letter received by Olcott. Paul Johnson, who believes the Masters were Blavatsky's cover for Sikh insurrectionists, acknowledges this visit in his 1994 *The Masters Revealed*, but does not reveal who he thinks the visitor was.

¹⁰ Conway (1832-1907), a graduate of the Harvard Divinity School, was pastor of London's South Place Chapel, "an ultra-liberal congregation."

about the reality of Theosophical phenomena and the Mahatmas. Brown was mentioned as “a young man of education and pleasant manners, who told me some of his marvelous experiences,” explicitly those dealing with his meeting Koot Hoomi at Lahore.

In response, Brown issued a pamphlet of fourteen pages titled *The Theosophical Society: An Explanatory Treatise*,¹¹ to set the record straight. Defining Theosophy—“the reconciliation of Science and Religion”—he explained that “Theosophists believe that the fundamental basis of all Religions is the same, that they are all representations of one and the same Truth.” As evidence he listed the Vedas, Upanishads, *Zend-Avesta*, the books of Hermes, the Kabbala, and the Gospels, among world scriptures, along with the existing Theosophical literature, which consisted of H.P. Blavatsky’s *Isis Unveiled*, H.S. Olcott’s *Lectures on Archaic Religions*, A.P. Sinnett’s *Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, and Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland’s *The Perfect Way*. The objects of the Society were given and reference was made to the Mahatmas, the inspirers of the movement. In reply to Conway’s remarks about him, Brown declared: “It will be sufficient here to remark that Mahatma K.H. is a living Adept and that the writer has had the honor of seeing him personally at Lahore and of being spoken to by him and even touched. Letters have been received by the writer at Madras, Lahore, Jammu (Kashmir) and again at Madras, all being in the same handwriting, showing an intelligence and consistency of character which is unmistakable, and corroborating the experiences of the *Occult World* in a conclusive manner.”¹²

By this time he had also prepared another pamphlet, *Some Experiences in India*,¹³ “issued under the authority of the London Lodge,” where he gave further details. After providing a brief resumé of his life, he described his going out to India and the Colonel’s lecture-tour of October and November 1883. “On the afternoon of the 19th November, I saw the Master in broad daylight, and recognized him, and on the morning of the 20th he came to my tent, and said ‘Now you see me before you in the flesh; look and assure yourself that it is I,’ and left a letter of instructions and a silk handkerchief, both of which are now in my possession.” Since the letter was a private one, he did not quote from it. That evening after Olcott’s lecture on Theosophy was over, “Col. Olcott, Damodar and I were sitting outside the *shamiana* (pavilion), where we were visited by Djual Khool (the Master’s head Chela, and now an Initiate) who informed us that the Master was about to come. The Master then came near to us, gave instructions to Damodar and walked away.”¹⁴

At the end of his account he noted that he presented himself as a chela on probation to the Masters on Jan. 7, 1884. “On that occasion I was warned as to the difficulties of the road which I desired to tread, but was assured that by a close adherence to truth and trust in ‘my Master,’ all must turn out well.” He gave further testimony of the reality of the Masters in letters to the Indian press. In the August 25, 1884, *Madras Mail*, he admitted receiving letters from K.H., who “is no phantom, as I recognized him, was spoken to, and touched.”¹⁵

¹¹ The copy in the Adyar Library has the note: “prepared for acquaintances in Scotland.”

¹² Brown, *The Theosophical Society* (1884), 11.

¹³ Reprinted in *Theosophical History* III/7-8 (July-Oct. 1991): 214-23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁵ This letter was also printed in the *Calcutta Indian Mirror* of Aug. 31, 1884.

He reiterated these words in a letter to the *Statesman* of Calcutta, September 6th: “Many of us here know Mahatma K.H. to be a living adept. Even I have seen him, been spoken to, and touched.”

Brown remained in India till the end of 1884. After the December annual Theosophical convention, where he represented the newly formed Scottish branch, he left Adyar on Jan. 4, 1885, stating as his reason: “I could find no sphere of labor in the Theosophical Society. It was profitable to myself to remain at Madras in the capacity of a student, so long as I was enabled to pay my monthly board, but in India I could not realize my sphere and concluded to go once more to the United States.”¹⁶

Traveling by rail to Tuticorin at the tip of the subcontinent, he took a steamer to Colombo, and then headed east to Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong, Yokahama, and Tokyo, arriving in San Francisco March 8, 1885. He tried getting work in a law office there, but having never practiced he found that a degree alone was “practically worthless” in obtaining a position. He then chose a career as a lecturer, going as far as renting a hall, but abandoned this move.

“Failing to find an occupation in the ordinary world,” he says he decided to return to India and pursue his spiritual studies. He left San Francisco at the beginning of June, went east, stopping at Salt Lake City, where he attended Mormon services. From there, he continued on to Denver, Chicago, Rochester, and New York City, where he remained a week, long enough to book passage to Liverpool, England. He reached London July 6th.

After contacting A.P. Sinnett in London, he went to Elberfeld, Germany, to see Mrs. Mary Gebhard, who had introduced him to Theosophy, and remained with her a week. He had intended to return to India via Naples, but suddenly changed his mind in the shipping company’s office. Instead, he settled in Freiburg, Germany, at the beginning of August, where he had gone as a young student, and now decided to become a teacher.

It was during his stay at Freiburg that W.T. Brown wrote *My Life*, which he printed as a 64 page pamphlet later that year.¹⁷ While the first half dealt with his travels, the second part, from pages 32 to 63, gave extensive extracts from Freeman B. Dowd’s *Temple of the Rosy Cross*, published in Philadelphia in 1882, a work Brown considered “the most important book which I have ever read.” His attention had been drawn to the book while in India, and indeed, a copy that belonged to Mme. Blavatsky survives in the T.S. Adyar Archives bearing her signature and the date 1883.

Dowd’s book, subtitled “The Soul: Its Powers, Migrations, and Transformations,” dealt with magnetism, clairvoyance, the idea that the human body had negative and positive polarities, that “each individual is but half of a complete soul until it meets its counterpart.”¹⁸ More interesting for us are the comments Brown interjected. On page 39 he noted, “It is maintained that the Eastern Adept can throw down his physical body as an overcoat and walk out into space in his ‘astral.’ I am convinced now that Adepts like Koot Hoomi have got rid of their physical bodies and that to all intents their ‘astral’ is their physical. They are in possession of the ‘incorruptible body’ spoken of in the New Testament. It was remarked by Olcott

¹⁶ *My Life*, 28.

¹⁷ Olcott’s copy in the Adyar Library bears his notation “9/12/1885.”

¹⁸ For more on Dowd (1825-1910), see John Patrick Deveney’s forthcoming study *Paschal Beverly Randolph* (SUNY Press).

and myself that on the occasion of Koot Hoomi's presenting himself before us that he was magnetically bright, in fact a 'shining one.' I now believe that what we saw was Koot Hoomi's *spiritual body* and that he has no other."

In another aside, on page 49, he felt it necessary to reveal that his "training, thoughts and feelings all tend towards *Esoteric Christianity*. I was shocked when in India to find how neglected were the inner truths of this religion. Blavatsky and Olcott did not know them; for Christianity of any sort was only talked of with a scoff and jeer. This leads me to the reflection that the Theosophical Society is essentially an Oriental movement. It is for the benefit of the *Indian* races, for whom *Koot Hoomi* is 'the Door,' and Sinnett and others have been made use of on behalf of the large portion of humanity resident in India."

By the beginning of 1886, he was back in America. The Rochester *Occult Word* carried the announcement that "Mr. W.T. Brown, late of Adyar, Madras, is a recent arrival in Rochester, and will assist Mrs. Cables, as private secretary, in her large and increasing correspondence with occultists and others."¹⁹ Mrs. Josephine Cables was one of the founders of the Rochester Branch of the Theosophical Society, which met at her home at 40 Ambrose Street. When she was elected its President in July 1886, the group, the oldest branch in America at that time (having been founded in 1882), changed its name to the Rochester Theosophical Brotherhood. Mrs. Cables had also started *The Occult Word* in 1884, self-described as "A Monthly Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Theosophical Society, and for the Dissemination of Oriental Knowledge."

Brown was already known to the Rochester Theosophists. The Nov.-Dec. 1885 *Occult Word* had noticed his autobiographical *My Life*. He came highly recommended, carrying a letter from H.S. Olcott as President of the Theosophical Society giving him the authority "to accept and initiate candidates for membership; in emergent cases and in places where no Branches exist, and where the exigencies of the time forbid reference to this Hdqrs., to a Board of Control, or other recognized representative of the Executive." He could also receive and receipt initiation fees. He was "fraternally commended to the friendship and regard of all Theosophists as a gentleman of unblemished character and honorable motive."²⁰

Evidence of his character soon had a chance to be revealed in a series of letters in the Chicago Spiritualist weekly, the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*. The August 28, 1886 issue carried a long communication from him testifying to his meeting Koot Hoomi at Lahore in November 1883. "We know him to be a living man, possessed, no doubt, of what are practically divine powers, for they are beyond the cognizance of materialistic science."

He reiterated this experience in another letter in the Oct. 16 *Journal*. By this time his "Scenes in My Life," under the pseudonym of Carwood Gerald Clark, had appeared in the Rochester *Post-Express*. But in a joint article with Mrs. Cables in the Oct.-Nov. *Occult Word*, Brown revealed a change of position. While acknowledging the "great desire" among Theosophists for communication with the Masters, it was "useless to strain the psychical eyes towards the HimalayasA great many of us have come to think that we have been running vainly after Eastern mystics and ecstasies, when, within the New Testa-

¹⁹ *The Occult Word* 1/10-11 (Jan.-Feb. 1886): 40.

²⁰ Copy from Olcott, 3 Jan. 1885, Adyar, Madras, in the Minute Book of the American Board of Control for July 5, 1886, p. 25. T.S. Archives, Pasadena.

ment itself, we find the Way, the Truth and the Life . . . We are now prepared to stand by our Essenian Master and to ‘test the Spirits’ in his name. We have been hunting after strange gods, and have ‘denied him thrice,’ but with bleeding feet and prostrate spirit we pray that He may take us once more under His wing and lead us, and all true Theosophists, into the realm of the true magnetic spiritual light. We have wandered far and suffered in our wanderings. We have been living on husks, while the gospel of love and soul invigoration has been always at our hand.”²¹

Upon receipt of this joint “manifesto,” as she termed it, Mme. Blavatsky, who was in Ostende, Belgium, penned an immediate reply and sent it to W.Q. Judge, editor of the N.Y. Theosophical journal *The Path*, for publication. It appeared in the December 1886 issue under the title supplied by the Brown-Cables piece, “The Theosophical Mahatmas.” In her response she asked, “Are you sure of having knocked at the right door? Do you feel certain that you have not lost your way by *stopping so often on your journey at strange doors, behind which lie in wait the fiercest enemies of those you were searching for?*”

Stating that the “chief and only indispensable condition required in the candidate or chela on probation is simply unswerving fidelity to the chosen Master and his purposes,” she fixed on Brown as an example. “I know of one theosophist—let him be nameless though it is hoped he will recognize himself—a quiet, intelligent young gentleman, a mystic by nature, who in his ill-advised enthusiasm and impatience, changed *Masters* and his ideas about half a dozen times in less than three years. First, he offered himself, was accepted on probation and took the vow of chelaship; about a year later, he suddenly got the idea of getting married, though he had several proofs of the corporeal presence of his Master, and had several favors bestowed on him. Projects of marriage failing, he sought ‘Masters’ under other climes, and became an enthusiastic Rosicrucian; then he returned to theosophy as a Christian mystic; then again sought to enliven his austerities with a wife; then gave up the idea and turned a spiritualist. And now having applied once more ‘to be taken back as a chela’ (I have his letter) and his Master remaining silent—he renounced him altogether, to seek in the words of the above manifesto—his old ‘Essenian Master and to test the spirits in his name’.”²²

When she sent her article to Judge, Mme. Blavatsky noted, “I felt bound to say what I thought of W.T. Brown of Glasgow. The fool changes ideas & Masters like match-boxes — tho’ I do not name him, he & others will recognize Mr. W.T. Brown in the portrait, too kind, too generous & too good for him. But he is a fool & I pity him.”²³ Brown’s reaction was to resign from the Theosophical Society, which he did on Dec. 13, 1886.²⁴ Mrs. Cables tried to make the best of the situation in a long editorial, “Dedicated to Our Friends,” in the January 1887 *Occult Word*. She objected to the title of “The Theosophical Mahatmas” given to her piece, claiming that she did not know of it until after publication. “We have no complaint to make, and blame no one but say here it was one of those unaccountable things, not explainable; but

²¹ “The Theosophical Mahatmas,” *The Occult Word* 2/6-7: 21.

²² “The Theosophical Mahatmas,” *The Path* 1/9: 259-60.

²³ Blavatsky to Judge, Nov. 13, 1886. *Theosophical History* V/3 (July 1994): 88.

²⁴ Notice in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Mar. 5, 1887, 6.

we do not believe that the Mahatmas suffer at all concerning it.”

W.T. Brown left Rochester in the spring of 1887 for Boston. A notice in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* has him giving a lecture there on “Theosophical Ethics,” March 27th, under the auspices of the Society for Esoteric Culture,²⁵ and “learning agriculture with the Harvard Shakers” that summer.²⁶ By this time he was actively campaigning against Mme. Blavatsky. In the June 25 *Religio-Philosophical Journal* he announced, “Be it known unto all men that I do not recognize the ‘orthodoxy’ or the ‘authority’ of the so-called Theosophical Society, founded by that person known as Madame Blavatsky, under the reputed direction of ‘Koot Hoomi’ and ‘Morya’ *et hoc genus omne*. I claim to be a Theosophist because of my knowledge of Theosophy, which has been acquired in spite of, rather than because of the Blavatsky travesty, with which in the past, fortunately or unfortunately, I have been, in good faith ‘authoritatively’ familiar.”²⁷ And in the July 23 issue was calling her “an untruthful and unscrupulous deceiver,” believing that like “Goethe’s Faust, I find that she has sold herself, for a temporary consideration, to the devil.”²⁸

His Theosophical career was now effectively over, and after an unfavorable review of Mabel Collins’ popular little book *Light on the Path* that he sent from Oakland, California, for the April 28, 1888 *Journal*, he disappeared from Spiritualist circles. But a year later his name appeared again in connection with Theosophy. The *Madras Christian College Magazine* reprinted a piece attributed to him from a journal titled the *Lyceum* for November 1889. Here Brown had the chance to rewrite his experiences in India, portraying himself as a sincere aspirant after truth who discovered the deception practiced on him by Theosophists. “I have, since that time, done as much as has been given me to do, in order to restrict the peculiar exhibitions of the Thibetan magic within the limits of Thibet. I have sought as occasion offered to discredit the ‘wisdom-religion’ wherever I found others walking into the toils in which I had been ensnared.”

Recalling the Mahatma’s visit to him, he now asked, “What is to be thought of ‘Koot Hoomi’s’ coming at Lahore into my sleeping apartment at the dead of night, of his awakening me by putting a letter into my hands, and of rushing out before I had time to get a light in order to gaze on his sacred countenance?”²⁹ But here Koot Hoomi had anticipated him. In a letter Brown received at Adyar two days after his return from this trip, the Mahatma wrote, “If when after visiting Colonel Olcott I passed over to your room and my voice and words pronounced failed to impress you, and when the letter put into your hand awoke you at last but failed again to make you turn your face, your nervousness paralyzing you for a moment, the fault is surely yours not mine. I had no right to act upon you phenomenally or to psychologize you. You are not ready: that is all.”³⁰

²⁵ “General Items,” *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, April 9, 1887, 4.

²⁶ *Religio-Philosophical Journal* (RPJ), July 30, 1887, 4. See also “A Visit to the Shakers” by Brown in the Sept. 17, 1887 issue.

²⁷ “The Theosophical Society and Dr. Coues’ Remarks,” *RPJ*, June 25, 1887, 5.

²⁸ “Blavatsky and Her Followers,” *RPJ*, July 23, 1887, 2. See Bertram Keightley’s defense “A Reply to W.T. Brown’s Attack on Madame Blavatsky,” in the Aug. 27, 1887 issue.

²⁹ *Madras Christian College Magazine* 7 (January 1890): 547.

³⁰ *My Life*, 25.

Something of the feeling in Madras against Theosophy can be gained by the fact that one of the local papers chose to reprint Brown's tale from the *Madras Christian College Magazine*. When it appeared in the Jan. 21, 1890 issue of the *Madras Mail* as "The Shrine of Koot Hoomi," Richard Harte, Acting Editor of *The Theosophist*, sent a long letter to the paper comparing Brown's earlier statements—referred to by Harte as the "original entry"—with his latest charge—the "cooked account"—to show wide discrepancies. "W.T. Brown is universally regarded in the Theosophical Society as one of the weak, unhappy and eccentric characters that have forced themselves from time to time upon the Founders, and have been 'given a chance,' as in the rule in such cases very often to our subsequent sorrow . . . I hear that he has become a professing Christian and I feel sure that he will be a credit to that faith. It is not poor Brown, but those malicious, lying and unscrupulous persons who are behind him and have taken advantage of his psychic infirmities to make him now give false evidence, that should be blamed."³¹

Perhaps Brown's attention had been drawn back to Theosophy by the contents of a recent novel from Franz Hartmann, one of the former Board members at Adyar in 1884. Titled *The Talking Image of Urur*,³² it had been serialized in Mme. Blavatsky's London magazine, *Lucifer*, appearing in book form in 1890. Hartmann lampooned certain Theosophists he had met during his stay at the headquarters in India. Brown appeared as Mr. Green, an enthusiastic though not entirely discriminating seeker after wisdom. He was described as a "grave and solemn-looking young man with long dark-brown hair, looking like an itinerant clergyman of the Baptist persuasion . . . All his knowledge consisted in a belief in what he had been taught, and this belief was based upon nothing else but a belief in the respectability and veracity of his teacher. If the teacher happened to lose his respectability in the eyes of Mr. Green, then necessarily all belief of the latter, and consequently all his knowledge, went for nothing and were lost."³³

His eventual change of attitude came as no surprise to the Theosophists who knew him. Olcott says that Brown's character had been revealed to him during their visit to the court of Kashmir in November 1883. The Maharaja's Chief Justice had remarked in conversation that the Colonel had so impressed the ruler that anything he asked for would be granted. When the official departed, Brown asked Olcott to get him an appointment as a judge. Olcott exploded, "What! You, who come to India to devote yourself to unselfish work; whom I warned by letter to expect naught but the chance for self-sacrifice; who has just been honored with a visit and letter from a Master, a distinction that has been withheld from some of the oldest of our members—you are ready to snap at the first temptation, and take a post for which you are not qualified?"³⁴

All that is known of William Tournay Brown's life after 1890 comes from Olcott, who records in *Old Diary Leaves*: "He had chopped and changed before coming to us, and has been doing it pretty much ever since; the latest news being that he has turned Catholic, taken the soutane, kept it on only a few

³¹ *Madras Mail*, Jan. 24, 1890, pp. 5-6. Harte's reply was reprinted as a 17 page pamphlet titled "Poor Brown."

³² *Urur* is the name of the village adjacent to the Society's headquarters at Adyar.

³³ Hartmann, *The Talking Image of Urur* (London: Gay and Bird; New York: John W. Lovell), 56, 62.

³⁴ *Old Diary Leaves* III (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1972), 52.

days, became again a laic, and is now teaching in a Roman Catholic college in Madras Presidency, and married to a Eurasian widow lady of ripe age. May he prosper in his undertakings, and find that peace of mind for which he has so long been hoping.”³⁵

Coming as it does in the middle of his transit through Theosophy, Brown’s “Scenes in My Life” offers an important record of his beliefs. It is neither wholly accepting as his earlier accounts nor as wholly rejecting as his later ones. Freed by the use of the pseudonym “Carwood Gerald Clarke,” he gave more detail than his other autobiographical sketches. Unique to this piece is the extensive use of quotations from the existing Theosophical literature Brown found important in shaping his views. The narrative thus supplies a revealing record of the spiritual quest not existing in similar Theosophical reminiscences. Of added interest is the fact that this material was serialized over the space of five weeks in the local paper, the *Post-Express*. What the readers in Rochester must have thought of such goings on as they opened the paper each Saturday one can only hazard to guess.

The material, reprinted here for the first time, is transcribed as it appears in the pages of the August and September 1886 Rochester *Post-Express*. A few typos have been corrected, but the nineteenth century spellings of places and terms have been retained. Any additions are given in brackets. The date that each installment appeared is added in brackets at the heading of the respective chapters. Brown had an easy and entertaining style of writing, the reader will find his “Scenes in My Life” a welcome addition to our knowledge of Theosophy in the nineteenth century.³⁶

Michael Gomes

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³⁵ Ibid., 338-39.

³⁶ I thank Mrs. Carol Tuzzeo, formerly Carol Emrich of the Local History Division of the Rochester Public Library, for helping me to obtain this and other material from the Rochester papers.

SCENES IN MY LIFE

By
Carwood Gerald Clarke

[*The Post-Express* (Rochester) Supplement. August 7, 1886]

CHAPTER I

Spirit Life In London

“Say, Brookes, have you ever been to a seance?”
“A what?”

“A seance. Don’t you know what a seance is? What ignorance! Do you mean to say that you have returned from Oxford, a graduate with honors, and have never heard of a seance?”

“Never did. Let’s hear about it.”

“Well I *am* surprised. Never heard of a seance! Why, half your life’s gone. Don’t you know that all the fashionable people are talking on the subject? All the tony people are going to seances.”

“Well, but look here. What is a seance, anyway?”

This was the puzzler. My knowledge was no greater than my friend’s. I had the advantage, however, of having caught the “spirit of the age.” Coming up to the metropolis from Scotland, after graduating from Glasgow University, I had discovered that mysticism was in the air and that to be fashionable one must be mysterious. With the shrewdness of my countrymen I had perceived that ghost-hunting had succeeded “slumming it,” which latter had become disgusting. The mashers, dudes and Lydia Languishers were “Psychical Researchers!” and if one had not had interviews with astrologers and “mediums” he was at least expected to be an expert in “Theosophy.” Hence my surprise when my Oxonian friend so readily admitted that he’d never heard of a seance. My knowledge, as I’ve said, was no greater than my friend’s; but having assumed the role of “deep and mighty occultater,” I did not propose to let him know it. We were behind the age. We must have experiences.

Starting out one night in June from our lodgings in South Kensington, Brookes and I resolved to *do* “the spirits.” Whether we succeeded in “doing,” or in “being done,” we must leave the reader to judge.

Taking a bus to Oxford street, we arrived in a gloomy street, close by the British museum, in which the spiritualists had their meeting rooms. Coming to the number which we had been directed, we found what to all appearance was a store, and over the windows was displayed in colored bills the marvellous utility of “Pear’s Soap.” Entering the shop, I ventured to enquire if at this place the spiritualists held their meetings.

"Bless your life!" said the shopman, "there ain't no sperrits here. You means the place where them cranks communicate with their relatives what's gone!"

We indicated by a series of nods that that was the place of which we were in search.

"Well sirs, that's round the corner, No. 45."

Roused to enthusiasm with the prospect of seeing relatives, "what's gone," we strode majestically round to 45. Entering a narrow stairway we came upon a door bearing in legible characters the inscription "Central Association of Spiritualists."

"There we are," said Brookes, "now you do the talking."

I rang the bell. A woman appeared. A kind of tremor came on Brookes. "Confound it, man," said I, *sotto voce*, "this is no spirit. This is the hired girl, who wants to know our business." Then turning to Bridget, I enquired, in dulcimer tones, if Mr. Brighton, the secretary, was expected to be at the rooms tonight. "Begorra he is," answered the spiritual doorkeeper, "will yes jist stíp up to the library?" Entering the library, a capacious room surrounded by shelvesful of books, we seated ourselves at a table and awaited events.

"Brookes," said I, "what ails you? Liver affected?"

"Well I don't know," replied Brookes, "kind of all gone sensation in the region of the stomach. My hair won't keep down on my head."

"You're afraid, Brookes," said I.

"You're another," said he.

Just then there entered the room a pleasant little man, beaming over with smiles.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said he.

"Mr. Brighton?" said I.

"The same," said he.

"We have called," I resumed, "to enquire into the phenomena of spiritualism, and we are desirous of having some experience. Can you assist us?"

"Well," returned Mr. Brighton, "the fact is you could not have come upon a more propitious evening. Mr. Coldwell Sparks, the medium, will be here at 8.30, and some psychical researchers have arranged to come to meet him. I have no doubt that but that I will be able to smuggle you into the party."

"May I ask," enquired Brookes, "if of necessity we must take our seats in the dark?"

"The conditions are always more favorable," rejoined Mr. Brighton, with seriousness, "when the light is excluded. Just as darkness is a matter of necessity in developing a photographic negative, so is darkness more suitable for phenomena of the 'Astral Light.'"

"Astral Light!" echoed Brookes. "Scott! any ladies to be present, think you?"

"We expect Mrs. Pharaoh P. Sarker."

The "Psychic Researchers" began to arrive. The first to be shown up by Bridget, "the gurl," was Heinrich J. Stuhlmann, a merchant from Hamburg. Next, Mr. Elivas Jacobs, a dealer in fruit. Then Mrs. Pharaoh P. Sarker, of Tiffin, Ohio, and, last but not least, Mr. Coldwell T. Sparks. Mr. Coldwell T. Sparks was by profession a piano-forte tuner, and by whatever means the spirits had determined to make of him a choice and chosen "instrument," was extremely difficult to understand. The theory which met with most acceptance, was that, because of many years' practice in harmonizing the jingling strings of "Messrs. Collard and Collard," he had succeeded in tuning his spirit to the music of the spheres.

“Quite ordinary,” whispered Brookes, who in a spirit medium had expected something ghastly or ethereal.

Mr. Brighton, the secretary, having made us acquainted, we adjourned to a *sanctum sanctorum*, marked “Private.” “Now Mrs. Sarker and gentlemen,” said he cheerfully, “we will lock all the doors and turn out the gas. Mrs. S.! will you kindly take the right hand of the medium, and perhaps you, Mr. Stuhlmann, will take hold of his left. Now, if Mr. Jacobs will give his right hand to Mr. Stuhlmann, I, myself, shall take the other. Mr. Brookes! give me one of your fists and Mr. Clarke the other. Now, Mr. Clarke, will you kindly take Mr. Brookes’s left hand and pass your own over to Mrs. Sarker. That’s right. Now the circle’s complete. But just a moment, Mr. Clarke, will you see that the door is thoroughly locked?”

I arose from the table at which we were seated, satisfied myself that the door to the chamber was properly locked, put the key in my pocket, and returned to the circle.

“Well, are we all ready before the gas out?” enquired Mr. Brighton.

“We are, we are,” answered all of us, save Brookes, who did not respond till enveloped in night, when he sepulchrally gasped “we are.”

“We can talk, I suppose,” said I, by way of causing the situation to be readily realized.

“Oh yes,” said Mr. Secretary Brighton, “the spirits prefer that we should be in harmony. We can have some music also.” Whereupon a musical box, which I had previously noticed on the table, was audibly screwed up; we were regaled with “I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls.”

“Nice air,” said I, “I always did like Balfe’s music, so dreamy, so spirit— * * * may I inquire who it is that is breathing so dreadfully?”

“Dat ish de medium,” remarked Mr. Jacobs, “he is entranced!”

“Entranced!” said I; “does one blow like a porpoise when the entrancing business begins?”

“I never heard such breathing in my life,” said Brookes.

“Wake up, Mr. Medium,” I resumed, “we have never heard such exhalations. We are not accustomed to them.” There was no response from Mr. Coldwell Sparks, who continued to breathe heavily, while Mr. Brookes remarked pathetically that a species of cold stream was running up his back.

CHAPTER II

Mr. Brookes Is “Controlled”

The “manifestations” now really began. The table, a beautiful piece of black walnut and as sober a table as one could desire, became affected with “jim-jams.” Literally it seemed to be soaking in “spirits.” It arose three feet from [the] ground, and refused to come down. The unoccupied chairs, by some secret affinity, became demoralized also. By some mysterious process they seemed to be galvanized into life, and race round the room. The racket continued until we concluded that gnomes, salamanders, undines and sylphs had come “out for the evening.”

Our conversation began in the dark. "I say, Mr. Brighton," said I, "what is the meaning of this?"

"This is the work of the spirits," said he. "By the magnetic conditions, which we have created, gravitation has been, for the time being, suspended. The forces of 'space of the fourth dimension' are amusing themselves on the three-dimensional plane. You see it's all done by the help of the 'Astral Light.' "

"You don't say!" from Brookes.

"Oh, this is nothing," remarked Mrs. Pharaoh P. Sarker. "You ought to come to our country and see our seances in Boston. I remember a seance with Mrs. Claud Mord. The furniture was dematerialized before our very eyes, and when the door was unlocked nothing was visible but the floor and bare walls! There had been, so to speak, an etherial blizzard."

"But where did the spirits put the furniture, anyway?"

"Ven, I was in Hamburg," said Heinrich J. Stuhlmann, "a grade medium came from Chicago, and dis man dematerialized anything. Von day he dematerialized his own body, all dat vas found by his friends vas a five-mark piece and von of his boots."

"Scot!" said Brookes, "cremation doesn't begin."

"Oh, ve vill haf more vondersh," remarked Mr. Jacobs, "ven de medium varmsh up to his vork. Ve vill haf shpirit forms shust so how Shaul saw de prophet Shamuel, ven he paid de visit to de vitch of Endor."

"Hallo! Mr. Clarke, how do you do?" inquired a strange voice.

"It's Ebenezer," said Brighton.

"A spirit?" said I.

"Yes, listen."

"There is not enough power," said the voice. "The power is weak."

This was surprising, as we had judged from the animated condition of the furniture that there was plenty of power. "Was Ebenezer a synonym for Samson?" we thought.

"Mr. Clarke, you have mediumistic power!" (Just then a sensation as if some one was pulling me out of my boots).

"Indeed!" "Can you enlighten me on the subject as to where my parents may be?"

"They are in higher spheres."

"You have never seen anything of them?"

"No sir." "I haven't."

"Thank Heaven for that!" "Can you address us," I asked, "in different languages?"

"Yes I speak German and Persian, Hebrew and Greek, but you couldn't guess my favorite language, now could you?"

"Give it up."

"Arabic."

"Arabic?"

"Yes, Gum Arabic."

A feeble snigger was heard to follow this joke.

"Can you make yourself visible to the company present?"

"The power is weak, but I'll try."

There appeared above our heads a luminous phosphorescent ball, which gradually assumed the shape

of a kind of misty face.

"Is that you, Ebenezer?" enquired Mr. Brighton.

"It is," said the vapoury lips.

"What have you done with the medium?"

"He has fallen entranced on the floor."

"How do you feel 'over there?' " I enquired.

"Pretty well, thank you, much as I was when here."

"What is the latest from Sheol and Tophet?"

"Ha, ha! That's good. There ain't no such place as Tophet. I belong way down Sheol."

When the gas was turned on there was a scene at once striking and comic. Coldwell T. Sparks looked dazed and bewildered. His forehead was gleaming with large sweaty dewdrops, and in truth he could not have seemed more exhausted had he run the whole biz himself.

"How do you feel, Mr. Sparks?" I enquired.

"I'm better now, thank you." "Has anything striking occurred?" "Has Ebenezer been there?"

"You bet he has," replied Brookes, "and made the furniture lively. Didn't you know what a thundering row was going on here?"

"Of course not," said Sparks. "I was out of my body." * * *

"Let's have a light seance now," remarked Mr. Brighton, when the gas had been lighted, the chairs been adjusted and quiet restored. "Perhaps someone might be controlled."

"Controlled? How? What do you mean?"

"Why, controlled by a departed spirit," rejoined Mr. B. "For instance, Homer, or Dante, or Shakespeare, or Daniel Webster might speak through our friend, Mr. Brookes."

"Not if I know it," said Brookes.

"But you won't know it," said Brighton; "you'll be entranced."

"Oh, its very entrancing," said Brookes. "What is required to be done before the 'controlling' comes on?"

"We sit as we are, in the light, like the Quakers, until the spirit moves some one to speak."

Arranging ourselves comfortably, we tried to look as natural as possible in the circumstances. Nothing remarkable occurred for some time. We enjoyed the solemnity of the silence, and were active in contemplating and inwardly criticizing each other, when a visible change came over my friend, Mr. Brookes. His eyes became glassy, his limbs rigid and wooden. He assumed the appearance of a gigantic automaton. The figure arose from the chair and essayed to speak.

"Brookes, old man," said I, "what's on your mind."

"Vain mortal, address me not as Brookes. See'st thou not I am no longer Brookes. I am *King Nebuchadnezzar*, and have come to exhort you."

"He is controlled by a spirit," remarked Mr. Brighton. "Let us listen with reverence."

"He'll come out of all this by and bye?" I enquired.

"To be sure. There's no danger. Speak, mighty king."

"Say, Brookes," said I, "now you're coddling. You stop."

"Ho, ho!" bellowed Nebuchadnezzar, née Brookes, "knowest thou not, as a verity that spirit commu-

nication can be effected? For three thousand years have I roamed earthbound in the astral plane, and now, by means of this becoming and cheerful young man (not a smile) can I unburden myself of my message and pass on to sunnier climes farther up. Why do you, my friends, continue to slaughter animals and eat of their corpses?" (We all squirmed with horror.) "You are no better than the tigers and lions. Why not return, fallen man to the natural food of your race? Why revel in blood the ox and cow, when thou canst have the grain of the field and the fruit of the tree? Behold in me a crank and reformer. I never eat meat. I have a predilection for grass. And again, my dear friends, permit me to inquire why you adhere to that barbarous custom of pairing your nails?" * *

"Now you stop, Brookes," said I, becoming somewhat alarmed at the realism of "Nebuchadnezzar."

"Eh?" "What?" "What has happened?" said Brookes, in his natural voice.

"You know very well what has happened."

"Pon my word I do not." "I seem to have been sleeping and dreaming."

"Why, you've been personating King Nebuchadnezzar."

"Scott! Been doing something disgraceful?"

"You see, Mr. Clarke," remarked Mr. Brighton, "all is perfectly genuine. You can't surely suppose your friend Mr. Brookes would deceive you." * * *

Around in our Kensington sitting-room, after journeying home by the "underground railway," and without having uttered a word, I took Brookes aside. "Now see here, old man, confess that you tricked when you spoke as old Nebuchad Ned."

"I did not."

I don't believe Brookes would lie, friends. Do you?

[August 14, 1886]

CHAPTER III

Mrs. Sarker Dilates On Theosophy

So deeply impressed was I with the "spiritual" experiences already recorded that I resolved to "read up" the subject. I read with interest the following works: *The Debatable Land*, *The Phenomena of Spiritualism*, *Spiritualism and Modern Miracles*, and *People From the Other World*. I discovered that spiritualists were the most remarkable manics which it had been my good fortune to meet. If they formed the mass of the great army of "cranks," at least no one could deny that there was *method* in their madness. Generally speaking, their theory was that at death an aetherial counterpart of the man passed into the invisible world, that the invisible world was in and around our everyday life on earth, that certain persons called "Media," could act as "go-betweens," as their name signified, 'twixt the invisible and visible realms, and that spirits could clothe themselves with the "biogen," drawn from the organisms of both medium and Investigators, thus presenting an appearance of natural solidity on the "material plane." They maintained,

that for the appearance of ghosts, proper “conditions” must be observed, and that spiritual phenomena were as dependent on *law* as are the phenomena in a chemical laboratory.

Having satisfied myself fully there was “something in” Spiritualism, I proceeded to ascertain if Theosophy might not be equally fruitful.

Sitting meditatively, one hot day in July, on a bench in Hyde park, and philosophising as to the number of gaudy equipages, which rolled in the glare of the afternoon sun, I was suddenly awakened from reverie by the stoppage in front of me of a cabriolet. A lady spoke from the window and I was invited to enter. Whom should she prove to be but Mrs. Pharaoh P. Sarker. Charmed by the prospect of having an hour’s conversation with the lady from “Tiffin, Ohio,” I accepted with pleasure.

“Been to any seances lately?” she inquired, as her driver took place in the procession of carriages.

“No,” replied I. “The fact is, I have become interested in Theosophy and have suspended my enquiries into spiritualism, on the principle, doubtless, that the greater mysteries must include the less.”

“How strange,” said Mrs. S. “There must be between us some secret affinity. I am a Theosophist and Researcher in Psychics! Have you read *The Occult World*?”

“Not yet,” replied I, “but mean to at the earliest opportunity. Tell me generally what Theosophists believe.”

“Well, I suppose I must first tell you about Madame Blavatsky. Madame Blavatsky is a Russian by birth. She is the widow of General Blavatsky, governor of Erivan, in Armenia, and the eldest daughter of the late Colonel Hahn, of the Russian Horse Artillery. When she was quite a girl remarkable phenomena took place in her presence, and it is said that the domestics in her father’s household were almost scared to death by the knockings which were heard and the apparitions which appeared in and around the apartments of old Hahnberg castle. She was known as a wild, daring girl, fonder of being on the field with her father’s soldiers than knitting or piano-playing in the ladies chambers. Shortly after her marriage to General Blavatsky she bid adieu to Russia, setting out alone on the perilous journey to Thibet, and under the guise of a Thibetan peasant, succeeding in passing the barriers of that mysterious and well-guarded country. Now you will wonder,” resumed Mrs. Pharaoh, “why this woman should leave a life of honor amid the aristocratic, or rather autocratic refinements of Russian society, to wander a stranger ’mid the mountains and valleys of semicivilized Thibet. Well you may wonder. She had learned that in Thibet were to be found the remaining members of the ancient order of Magi—those men who in all ages have been regarded as miracle workers; men who, by special and abstract study, have acquired mastery over the occult planes of Nature. It was with a view to giving a scientific explanation of Spiritualism that Madame Blavatsky absented herself from society and the world, and there, in the mountainous solitudes, after seven years of rigid preparation in a Thibetan convent or Lamasery, was she initiated into the Occult Fraternity known as The Adepts of the Himalayan Brotherhood.

“Armed with her mystic knowledge, she came forth to fight the ignorance and superstition of the world. She came to show the scientist that there were realms of science of which he did not even dream; to show the philosopher that speculation was unfruitful unless he grasped the methods of the experimental metaphysics of the east; to show the narrow dogmatist that there were other and more ancient religions than his own, and to show the ardent Spiritualist that the ghosts of a seance room were not always what they seemed. She came, in fact, to teach the doctrine of self moral culture and development; to warn people

against 'mediumship' or passivity; to urge them to be active in developing their inner senses and in rising to their latent powers. She taught that there is but one 'ism' in this world, and that is moral truth for the individual, accompanied by free thought and charity. In short, Mme. Blavatsky's system is the philosophy of evolution, or completed Darwinism. Have I tired you?"

"Not at all. Pray go on. Can you tell me also about Colonel Olcott?"

"Oh yes," resumed Mrs. S., glancing from side to side at the occupants of the passing vehicles and occasionally recognizing an acquaintance. "Colonel Olcott is a well-known countryman of mine. He was a lawyer in fine practice in New York, when he suddenly developed a desire for hunting ghosts. Distance was no object so long as there was a 'medium' to be seen; and it was when on one of his ghost-hunting expeditions in the eastern states that he 'fell in' with Her Excellency, Madame B. Madame B. soon found in Colonel O. an apt and willing pupil, and in a short time the latter had given up all thoughts of spectre-hunting and settled down to study Asiatic literature. It soon leaked out that the great Russian and Colonel O. had joined in partnership and were about to found the Theosophical Society. The Theosophical Society and Universal Brotherhood was duly formed in New York city on the 17th of November, 1875, with the Colonel as president and the Madame as corresponding secretary."

"What are the objects of this strange fraternity?" I then inquired.

"Well, the first object is the cultivation of the principle of universal brotherhood, irrespective of race or religion. That's good, isn't it? Then the second object is the promotion of the study of Aryan literature, religion and science. Theosophists believe, you know, that India is the fountain head of all religions, and that a great civilization spread over that continent long before the civilization of Egypt, or the later ones of Greece and Rome. They hold that the Vedas are the oldest 'Sacred Books of the East,' and that in the Sanskrit language lie the brightest gems of science, literature and philosophy."

"All right so far," I rejoined. "Now, what about the third object?"

"The third object is one of the most interesting to the advanced scholars of the day. It is the cultivation of the psychical faculties latent in man. This object has for its groundwork the belief that all knowledge is a growth; that by leading a particular kind of life man may develop an inner and higher vision, and wield control over the unseen or occult planes of nature; that in fact he can become a magician and work miracles."

"But there's nothing supernatural about Theosophy, I understand?" said I.

"Of course not. That's the beauty of it. Everything is done naturally and according to law. Theosophy is the only thing, (if a system of ethical and physical science can be called a thing) which explains the phenomena of spiritualism and their connection with materialistic science."

"Where are Blavatsky and Olcott now?" I inquired.

"They're in India, carrying on the work of their society. After establishing the society in New York city, they removed their headquarters to Bombay and Madras, forming branches here, in London and in Paris on the way."

"Then there is a society in London now?"

"Of course there is. It is presided over by A.P. Sinnett, late editor of the *Pioneer*, Allahabad, and author of that remarkable book, (which you must read) *The Occult World*. He was one of Blavatsky's and Olcott's first converts after they got out to India, and has lately come back to this country to reside."

“How fortunate,” said I. “Can you make us acquainted, do you think?”

“Will be delighted. There will be a meeting of the London Lodge Theosophical Society in the chambers of the Hon. G.B. Finch, Q.C., on Tuesday next, at 5 o’clock. Be there.”

“All right. Good bye. I must step out and leave you. Hope you’ll get home in safety and be benefitted by your drive. Adieu.”

CHAPTER IV

Mr. Clarke Becomes Interested In “The Occult World”

In a few weeks I had had the honor of being introduced and initiated into the London lodge of Theosophists. The ladies and gentlemen, who composed this august body were markedly philanthropic, intelligent and thoughtful. The principal business on hand was the dissemination of Theosophical knowledge, as contained and discussed in the following books: *Esoteric Buddhism*, *Isis Unveiled*, *The Perfect Way*, and *The Theosophist* magazine. We were supposed to have read and digested Sinnett’s book, *The Occult World*, so well known in both hemispheres as the sensational book of its season. The following passages are some of the most interesting, and for the sake of the general reader it will be well to give them entire:

“Who are the adepts who handle the tremendous forces of which I speak? There is every reason to believe that such Adepts have existed in all historic ages, and there are such Adepts in India at the moment. The identity of the knowledge they have inherited in occultism follows irresistibly from an examination of the views they hold and the faculties they exercise. Let us consider the position of the Adepts as they now exist. They constitute a Brotherhood or Secret Association, which ramifies all over the east, but the principal seat of which for the present I gather to be in Thibet. But India has not yet been deserted by the Adepts, and from that country they still receive many recruits. For the great fraternity is at once the least and the most exclusive organization in the world, and fresh recruits from any race or country are welcome, provided they possess the needed qualifications. The door, as I have been told by one who is himself an Adept, is always open to the right man who knocks; but the road that has to be travelled before the door is reached is one which none but very determined travellers can hope to pass. It is manifestly impossible that I can describe its perils in any but very general terms, but it is not necessary to have learned any secrets of initiation to understand the character of the training through which a neophyte must pass before he attains the dignity of a proficient in occultism. The Adept is not made; he becomes, and the process of becoming is mainly in his own hands.”

“Probably there is not one real adept who does not look with greater aversion and repugnance on any life *except* a life of seclusion than we of the outer world would look on the notion of being buried alive in a remote mountain fastness where no foot or voice from the outer world could penetrate. I shall very soon be able to show that the love of seclusion, inherent in Adeptship does not imply a mind vacant of knowledge of European culture and manners. It is on the contrary compatible with an amount of European culture and experience that people acquainted merely with the commonplace aspects of Eastern life will be surprised to find possible of a man of oriental birth.”

“Now, Madame Blavatsky is an initiate—is an adept to the extent of possessing this magnificent power of psychological telegraphy with her occult friends. How it came to pass that her occult training carried her as far as it did and no further, is a question into which it is fruitless to enquire, because the answer would manifestly entail explanations which would impinge too closely on the secrets of initiation, which are never disclosed under any circumstances whatever.”

“The gulf of difference which is really to be observed between any of the occult phenomena I shall have to describe and a conjuring trick, which might imitate it, is due to the fact that the conditions would be utterly unlike. The conjuror would work in his own stage or in a prepared room. The most remarkable of the phenomena I have had in the presence of Madame Blavatsky have taken place away out of doors, in fortuitously chosen places, in the woods and on the hills. The conjuror is assisted by any number of confederates behind the scenes. Madame Blavatsky comes a stranger to Simla, and is a guest in my own house under my own observation. The conjuror is paid to incur the expenses of accomplishing this or that deception of the senses. Madame Blavatsky, instead of earning money, as the conjuror does, has sacrificed everything which the world holds dear.”

“The occult transmission of objects to a distance is susceptible of some explanation for ordinary readers. It is not contended that the currents which are made use of convey the bodies transmitted in a solid mass just as they exist for the senses. The body to be transmitted is supposed first to be disintegrated, conveyed on the currents in infinitely minute particles and then reintegrated at its destination.”

“One day I asked Madame Blavatsky whether if I wrote a letter to one of the Brothers she could get it delivered to me. I hardly thought this was possible, as I knew how very unapproachable the Brothers generally are; but, as she said that she would try, I wrote a letter addressing it ‘To the Unknown Brother.’ It was a happy inspiration that induced me to do this, for out of that small beginning has arisen the most interesting correspondence in which I have ever been privileged to engage—a correspondence which, I am happy to say, still promises to continue.

“The idea I had specially in my mind when I wrote the letter above referred to, was that of all the test phenomena one would wish for, the best would be the production in our presence in India of a copy of the London *Times* of that day’s date. With such a piece of evidence in my hand, I argued, I would undertake to convert everybody in Simla, who was capable of linking two ideas together to a belief in the possibility of obtaining by occult agency physical results which were beyond the control of ordinary science.

“A day or two after I found one evening on my writing table the first letter sent me from my new correspondent. I may here explain what I learned afterwards, that he was a native of the Punjab who was attracted to occult studies from his boyhood. He was sent to Europe while still a youth at the intervention of a relative—himself an occultist—to be educated in western knowledge and since then has been fully initiated in the greater knowledge of the east. My correspondent is known to me as *Koot Hoomi*. This is his ‘Thibetan mystic name’—occultists, it would seem, taking new names on initiation.”

Mr. Sinnett, the author, then goes on to give in full the various letters received from the illustrious Adept K.H. As they embody in small compass a great deal of occult knowledge given forth in a mellifluous style, the present writer will put aside for a time his narrative form and devote himself to the task of putting before his readers one of these wonderful letters, regarded by many as the most remarkable of the age.

CHAPTER V

A Master's Letter

“Precisely because the test of the London newspaper would close the mouths of the skeptics it is inadmissible. See it in what light you will the world is yet in its first stage of disenthralment, hence, unprepared. Very true we work by natural, not supernatural means and laws. But as on the one hand science would find itself unable, in its present state, to account for the wonders given in its name, and on the other the ignorant masses would be left to view the phenomenon in the light of a miracle, everyone who would thus be made a witness to the occurrence would be thrown off his balance, and the result would be deplorable. Believe me, it would be so especially for yourself, who originated the idea, and for the devoted woman who so foolishly rushes into the wide open door leading to notoriety. This door, though opened by so friendly a hand as yours, would prove very soon a trap—and a fatal one, indeed, for her. And such is not surely your object. Were we to accede to your desires, know you really what consequences would follow in the trail of success? The inexorable shadow, which follows all human innovations, moves on, yet few are they who are ever conscious of its approach and dangers. What are, then, they to expect who would offer the world an innovation which, owing to human ignorance, if believed in, would surely be attributed to those dark agencies the two-thirds of humanity believe in and dread as yet? The success of an attempt of such a kind as the one you propose, must be calculated and based upon a thorough knowledge of the people around you. It depends entirely upon the social and moral conditions of the people in their bearing on these deepest and most mysterious questions which can stir the human mind—the deific powers in man and the possibilities contained in nature. How many, even of your best friends, of those who surround you, are more than superficially interested in these abstruse problems? You could count them upon the fingers of your right hand.

“Your race boasts of having liberated in their century the genius so long imprisoned in the narrow vase of dogmatism and intolerance—the genius of knowledge, wisdom and free thought. It says that, in their turn, ignorant prejudice and religious bigotry, bottled up like the wicked *djin* of old and sealed up by the Solomons of science, rest at the bottom of the sea, and can never, escaping to the surface again, reign over the world as in the days of old; that the public mind is quite free, in short, and ready to accept any demonstrated truth. Ay, but is it verily so, my respected friend? Experimental knowledge does not quite date from 1662, when Bacon, Robert Boyle, and the Bishop of Chester transformed, under the royal charter, their ‘invisible college’ into a society for the promotion of experimental science. Ages before the Royal Society found itself becoming a reality upon the plan of the ‘Prophetic Scheme,’ an innate longing for the hidden, a passionate love for, and study of, Nature, led men in every generation to try and fathom her secrets deeper than their neighbors did. *Roma ante Romulum fuit* is an axiom taught us in your English schools. The *Vril* of the *Coming Race* was common property of races now extinct. And as the very existence of those gigantic ancestors of ours is now questioned—though in the Himavats, on the very territory belonging to you, we have a cave full of the skeletons of these giants—and their huge

frames, when found, are invariably regarded as isolated freaks of Nature—so the *vril*, or *akas*, as we call it, is looked upon as an impossibility—a myth. And without a thorough knowledge of *akas*—its combinations and properties, how can science hope to account for such phenomena?

“We doubt not that the men of your science are open to conviction; yet facts must be first demonstrated to them; they must first have become their own common property, have proved amenable to their modes of investigation, before you find them ready to admit them as facts. If you but look into the preface of the *Micrographia* you will find, in Hooke’s suggestions, that the intimate relations of objects were of less account in his eyes than their external operation on the senses, and Newton’s fine discoveries found in him their greatest opponent. The modern Hookees are many. Like this learned but ignorant man of old, your modern men of science are less anxious to suggest a physical connection of facts which might unlock for them many an occult force in Nature, as to provide a convenient classification of scientific experiments, so that the most essential quality of a hypothesis is, not that it should be *true*, but only *plausible*, in their opinion.

“So far for science—as much as we know of it. As for human nature in general, it is the same now as it was a million of years ago. Prejudice, based upon selfishness, a general unwillingness to give up an established order of things for new modes of life and thought—and occult study requires all that and much more—pride, and stubborn resistance to truth, if it but upsets their previous notions of things—such are the characteristics of your age. What, then, would be the results of the most astounding phenomena, supposing we consented to have them produced? However successful, danger would be growing proportionately with success. No choice would soon remain but to go on, ever *crescendo*, or to fall in this endless struggle with prejudice and ignorance, killed by your own weapons. Test after test would be required, and would have to be furnished; every subsequent phenomenon expected to be more marvellous than the preceding one. Your daily remark is, that one cannot be expected to believe unless he becomes an eyewitness. Would the lifetime of a man suffice to satisfy the whole world of sceptics? It may be an easy matter to increase the original number of believers at Simla to hundreds and thousands. But what of the hundreds of millions of those who could not be made eyewitnesses? The ignorant, unable to grapple with the invisible operators, might some day vent their rage on the visible agents at work; the higher and educated classes would go on disbelieving, as ever, tearing you to shreds as before. In common with many, you blame us for our great secrecy. Yet we know something of human nature, for the experience of long centuries—ay, ages, has taught us. And we know that so long as science has anything to learn, and a shadow of religious dogmatism lingers in the hearts of the multitudes, the world’s prejudices have to be conquered step by step, not at a rush.

“As hoary antiquity had more than one Socrates, so the dim future will give birth to more than one martyr. Enfranchised science contemptuously turned away her face from the Copernican opinion renewing the theories of Aristarchus Samius, who ‘affirmeth that the earth moveth circularly about her own center’ centuries before the church sought to sacrifice Galileo as a *holocaust* to the Bible. The ablest mathematician at the court of Edward VI., Robert Recorde, was left to starve in jail by his colleagues, who laughed at his *Castle of Knowledge*, declaring his discoveries vain phantasies. All this is old history, you will think. Verily so, but the chronicles of our own modern days do not differ very essentially from their predecessors. And we have but to bear in mind the recent persecutions of mediums in England, the burning of supposed witches

and sorcerers in South America, Russia and the frontiers of Spain to assure ourselves that the only salvation of the genuine proficient in occult science lies in the skepticism of the public; the charlatans and jugglers are the natural shields of the Adepts. The public safety is only ensured by our keeping secret the terrible weapons which might otherwise be used against it, and which, as you have been told, become deadly in the hands of the wicked and the selfish.—K.H.”

* * * * *

“So you mean to tell me, Mr. Sinnett, that the Adepts live, move and have their being? You are sure they’re not myths?”

“Most certainly, my boy. Go out to India and prove the matter for yourself!”

[August 21, 1886]

CHAPTER VI

Mr. Clarke Goes To India

“Say, Brookes, old man! I’m going to India.”

“The deuce you are! What’s up now? Can’t you find ghosts enough to hunt in Great Britain and Ireland?”

“Well, the fact is, old chap, there’s truth in this Theosophy, and I’m going to prove it.”

“But, look here, Clarke, it’s a dreadful thing for a decent Scot like you to go away to ‘forin pairts’ and identify himself with a lot of ‘miracle workers.’ It’s ‘no canny.’”

“Oh its true,” replied I, “that Madame Blavatsky’s a Russian and Olcott’s a Yankee, but you know the Theosophs are strong on the question of ‘*Brotherhood*.’ Besides, Sinnett’s a level-headed Briton. What’s good enough for him is good enough for me. *Ex Oriente Lux*. I’ll be *there*.”

“But how the Clarkes will swear when they discover that C.G. has gone to join the ‘*Blavatsky Cup and Saucer Miraculous Manufacturing Company (limited)*’!”

“Well, let them swear. I want to prove to the religious stick-in-the-muds that there are more things in heaven and earth (and Tophet) than are dreamt of in their philosophy. And then, perhaps, I may prove to be a bull in Blavatsky’s china shop. Who knows?”

“Then how are you off for lucre?”

“Oh, that’s all right. I’ve enough for several years in addition to expenses for travel. Besides, the Theosophs are vegetarians, and live on ‘oatmeal and ether.’ When the provisions run down, I’ll make application to Madame Blavatsky! She’ll get one of her *Mahatmas* to materialize plenty of food!”

“And when do you think you will go? You’ll sail by the Peninsular and Oriental Company’s steamer, of course?”

“Of course not. I’m going from Liverpool, on the 25th August, by the Glasgow steamer ‘Clan McIntosh.’”

“The Clan line! Oh, yes; you’re a Scotchman. You’d rather be drowned in a ship of your nation than have your safety ensured in a boat from the Thames. You know the ‘Clan’ line’s reputation. If you reach Madras without experiencing a breakdown or collision, I, for one, shall regard you a perambulating miracle. But, in the language of ‘Dizzy,’ it’s the ‘unexpected’ that happens. Therefore, God bless you, old boy. *Au revoir.*”

* * * * *

On the 1st of October, 1883, the brave ship ‘Clan McIntosh,’ arrived at Madras. In the early morning the steward knocked at the state-rooms with the cheerful intelligence that the voyage was over and land was in sight. Never shall I forget the sense of anticipation with which I rushed up the companion-way to get my first view of old Aryavarta, the land of marvels and mystery. The bustle of the native crew was intensified as they sniffed the palms of their country and witnessed the shoreline increasing in view. Never can I forget the impressiveness of the scene as the steamer entered ‘twixt the lines of the “breakwater” and lay peacefully in the tumultuous harbor. Soon the barges came out from the shore manned by naked humanity, to receive the cargo assigned to the port, and our deck was alive with custom house officers and government doctors, to see that we landed dutifully, and were void of small-pox or cholera.

The massive buildings of the city stood out in full view—the Madras university and Free Church Christian college, the government buildings, hotels, and post-office. The variety in color and quaintness in dress, which Indian cities alone can evince, strike the new arrival with a sense of enchantment and splendor, and never elsewhere can be presented such food for reflection as when he gazes in wonder at the swarms of mankind. The pompous civilian, who reflects the Anglo-Saxon self satisfaction; the Brahmin who, with pious complacency, and lofty indifference, views the rush and rattle of business; the bearded disciple of Mohammed, who yearns for the day when he’ll rise with the sword of the prophet to smite the unholy Kafir; the sudra, or “coolie” who exposes his back to the glare of the sun and in the throes of his labor is gleaming with sweat,—all betimes demand philosophic attention. The Babel of languages strikes on the ear, and jargons of Tamil, Telugu, Hindustani and English arise to the gods. Never, except in Oriental seaports can such kaleidoscopic views of seething humanity be subjected to gaze.

The hatches are opened and steam cranes are discharging the cargo. The captain and officers, with a sense that their labor is over and the haven is reached, are pleasantly marching the decks. The passengers, preparing for leaving ‘mid the tumult around, are bidding each other good bye and vowing neverending esteem and affection. The “catamarans” are alongside for receiving the luggage and passengers, and with one beneficent well-wish we bid adieus to the captain, jump down the gangway, give three cheers for the Clan Line, and make way for the shore.

CHAPTER VII

Adyar And “The Shrine”

Arrived on the beach, who should come forward to greet me but Madame Blavatsky? The great Russian has come, in her buggy, to welcome the stranger from England. With what wonder I gaze at her ponderous form! Dressed with indifference to “society” manners, she stands like a goddess. Her Indian helmet covers a brow unmoved by a wrinkle, and her large blue, unsensual eye bespeaks the mystic and scholar. Can it be that I stand in the presence of the modern sphinx?—she who hovers ’twixt the realms of man and the gods? Is it she through whom the great Koot Hoomi has spoken, who has pierced by her bravery the Thibetan barriers and wrested by force the Kingdom of Heaven? Is it she who has founded the greatest organization on earth, with adherents in every part of the globe, who has been chosen by Morya and K.H., as the gatherer-in of the nations? Is this cheerful, talkative woman, the author of *Isis Unveiled*? It is she; and with a pride which the pioneer feels in the success of his labors, I lead her back to her carriage and take my place by her side.

“Welcome to India, Mr. Clarke. Mr. Sinnett has written of you, and we are right glad to see you. Olcott is off on one of his lecturing tours, but he left word that, after you’ve settled, you’re to travel and become his assistant. I must remain at Adyar to edit *The Theosophist* magazine and act as Priestess at the Theosophical Shrine. There you’ll see the Hindu *chelas*, or neophytes. By and by you’ll be a *chela* yourself, for you’ve the make of a mystic.”

Along the coast southward for seven miles rolled our chariot, with magnificent villas or “bungalows” on our right and the eternal roaring Bay of Bengal on our left. Occasionally we pass Indian villages, with their quaint native buildings and interesting displays of cheap merchandise. At length we come to the Adyar viaduct, and cross a magnificent river.

“Do you see that house on the other side near the sea?” inquired Madame Blavatsky. “Well, that’s your home. That’s our ‘compound.’ That’s the headquarters.”

Over the bridge and down the right bank of the river, along a finely trimmed avenue, we pass numerous outhouses and stop at a marble stepped doorway.

“Hi! Damodar! Whistlebreeches! Flapdoodle! Where’s Damodar? Oh! there you are!” as an interesting Hindoo, clad in flowing priestly robes, crossed the marble vestibule. “Here’s Mr. Clarke from England. Show him his room and tell Abdullah to prepare ‘tiffin’ (breakfast) at once, or I’ll break every bone in his Mohammedan body. Now be at home, Mr. Clarke. We’ll meet by-and-bye.

* * * * *

“This way,” said Damodar, as we passed the balustrade facing the river and prepared to enter a stairway. “Madame B. and the *chelas* are standing before the shrine, awaiting our presence. We are about to communicate, phenomenally, with our Thibetan Masters. You’ve read my Master’s letters to Mr. Sinnett in the *Occult World* no doubt? Well, we’re going to bring ourselves *en rapport* with him and receive

his instructions." Mounting a stairway of stone we cross a verandah, on which the moonlight is falling. Eternal serenity reigns, the solemnity being increased by the not distant roar of the ocean. We enter a drawing room furnished in splendor, replete with Indian tapestry, and emblazoned with mystical symbols. A handsomely ornamented lamp sheds its light on the table, increasing, contrastedly, the gloom which hovers above. Bookcases, arrayed with mystical volumes, stand up in sombre solidity, and rich lounges and rocking chairs rest in disorderly order. A rich carpet covers the ground, with occasional mattings of curious workmanship and islands of tiger-skins.

"This is the sanctum," remarked Damodar. "Now for the sanctum sanctorum."

Entering a door to the right, we find Blavatsky, in flowing white robes, standing majestically before a richly ornamented and embroidered recess. Never did altar in Roman cathedral, or Muscovite church, present such a spectacle. Blavatsky is alone standing up. The Chelas are prostrate before the shrine, after the Brahminical fashion of paying devotion.

"Stand by me, Mr. Clarke," said the priestess. "Damodar, advance to the shrine."

I stand by Blavatsky and gaze at the altar. The magnificent curtains have been withdrawn, and we gaze at the seat of the mysteries. The doors of the sacred almirah are open. A golden figure of Buddha gleams from within, surrounded by jewels, articles of vertu and philosophical relics.

"Om Mani Padme Hum," said Blavatsky. "Neophytes, advance with your letters."

The Hindoos rise to their feet, their flowing white robes, showing beautifully, by contrast, the dusky complexion of their finely-shaped heads, and, joining the palms of both hands, advance singly to the innermost part of the shrine and make *pujah*, or offer obeissance. Each neophyte pauses before two magnificent portraits, which for ideal beauty the face of the Nazarene cannot surpass, and compared with which the work of a Royal Academician would be as Hyperion to a Satyr. He draws from within the folds of his flowing robe a letter, too sacred for other eyes than his own, and bearing the simple address "To my Master." He places the letter in the golden bowl, which stands as center piece, and, with face inclined forward, retires. Damodar is the last of the Chelas in placing his letter, whereupon he closes the doors and expectantly awaits. There is a muffled sound as if the ornaments within are being moved by "supernatural" means. The company stands in interested expectancy. Blavatsky stands in her proud majesty, her consciousness gleaming in its activity, thus presenting a marked contrast to spirit mediums, who, in communicating with the unknown and so-called supernatural, require for their phenomena darkness and entrancement.

"The answers have come. You may open now," she quietly remarks.

The neophytes advance to the almirah, which Damodar has already opened, extract the replies which have been "magically" substituted, and, as before, withdraw.

"Here is something from my master, for Mr. Clarke," remarked Damodar.

I advance and receive from his hands a memorandum, written in blue in a bold hand, on Chinese or Thibetan paper. I read: "Why feel uneasy? Perchance we may yet become friends. I have to thank you for your defense of Esoteric Buddhism. K.H. to C.G. Clarke, B.L., F.T.S."

Can it be that the Master has seen my defense of Brother Sinnett's book in the metropolitan journal? And what a prospect! the Master Magician in his Thibetan Lamasery holds out the prospect of making me his friend! Can I be worthy of such honor? Advancing to the shrine, I fold my hands and say: "Koot Hoomi! I sincerely thank you."

“There’s a bell,” said Damodar. “Did you hear it?”

I confessed I did not. “Was it an ether bell?”

“Yes. An astral bell. Listen.”

Far away in the distance, seemingly, although really in the sacred room above the shrine, there pealed a little trio of celestial bells.

“Ah, that’s beautiful. I hear it now,” said I.

“That’s a message from the Master,” said Blavatsky, “indicating that he heard your words.” * * * I retire to rest and dream of the Mahatmas.

[August 28, 1886]

CHAPTER VIII

Allahabad—The Colonel Lectures The Hindoos

Remaining at peaceful Adyar for several weeks, I prepare to join Colonel Olcott. He is lecturing in Hyderabad and the Central Provinces. It is his desire that I should assist him in his labors, and get experience in the manners and customs of the Aryans. The Colonel is a man who knows no fear, and is endowed with indomitable perseverance. The opposition with which he has to contend, not so much from the negative apathy of the Hindus as from the positive antagonism of the aggressive Protestant Christian missionaries, would have daunted, long ere this, the spirit of a less courageous soul. If the peoples of England and America were to waken up to the absurdity of sending missionaries to the sons of Ancient India, who are in every sense their moral, religious and scientific superiors, the Nineteenth century would be spared one of its greatest anomalies. The only advantage which these missionaries in India have brought about is the introduction into common usage of the English language. As a representative Hindu once remarked to a friend of mine: “The only good the missionaries have done on this continent has been to assist in the spread of a language which helps unite our peoples into a nation. The Bengalis, Marhattis, Madrasses and Punjabees have now a common international language and can meet on common ground. But with the English language not only comes the Bible, but the works of Stuart Mill, Spencer, Lewis, Tyndall, and Bradlaugh. Our best young men can never swallow Calvinistic Christianity, but, unless uplifted by the spiritual truths of the Vedas and Theosophy, will develop into mere Agnostics. They profess they don’t know, and know that nobody else can know.”

Before leaving Adyar I receive from Colonel Olcott the following letter, which will best serve to indicate the character of this genuine man:

“We are devoted to the revival of the old Aryan wisdom, and, therefore, have to partake of the moment’s hatred of everything Indian. Of course the affection and respect for us is correspondingly growing among the natives. As American citizens Mme. Blavatsky and I have no difficulty to keep ourselves free from the passions and prejudices that rage about us, and I go about the country as unmoved by the things that are goading the Europeans as though they did not exist. But can you do the same? Do you feel in your heart that the missionary work of theosophy is thoroughly attractive? Are you prepared to eat with me the plainest food, to expect neither luxury nor even comfort, to have your private character

traded, your motives pictured as base and sordid, to endure extremes of climate, the fatigue of hard journeys in all sorts of conveyances by land and sea, to know of the existence of *the Masters*, yet be denied the privilege to go to them until by years of toil you have purged your innermost nature of its selfishness, and by working unselfishly for the enlightenment of mankind, you shall have fitted yourself for the holy companionship? Think of all of this. The philanthropist's lot is a hard one. Few covet its crown of thorns; fewer still are able to wear it. If you are liable to soon tire of my constant movement and sigh for rest and inertia at home, then do not come; for I tell you I am so dead in earnest that I would be ready to die any day for my society."

Colonel Olcott and I have met. We meet at Sholapore in the central provinces. He is a handsome, military-looking man, in the fifties, with lofty forehead, bespeaking candor, eloquence and intuition. We travel by night-mail to Poonah, where Damodar joins us, thence to Bombay and *Allahabad*. Here the Colonel has arranged to lecture to the *Prayag Psychic Theosophical Society*. A large audience of cultured natives crowds the largest hall in the city. The Professor of Sanskrit in the city university occupies the chair, and introduces the lecturer. The vast audience rises *en masse* to welcome to the front of the platform "The President Founder," and volleys forth cheer after cheer. The Colonel begins:

INDIA, PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE

"Until the Englishman, Sir William Jones and his compeers, and the Frenchman, Burnouf, led the way into the splendid garden of Sanskrit literature, until the astonished eyes of the west saw its glorious flowers of poesy, its fruits of philosophy and metaphysics, its crystal-like rivulets of science, its magnificent structures of philology, no one dreamed the world had had any history worth speaking of before the times of the Greek and Roman civilizations. Western ideas of Egyptian, Persian, Babylonian, Chinese, and Indian achievements—physical, intellectual and moral—were as hazy as a fog. Like the wayfarer who tries, with the help of the street gas lamps and the lanterns of his servants, to pick his way through London streets, when one of those dense fogs of theirs turns noon into dark night, they, the historians, were groping after the facts through the mists of their own ignorance—and religious prejudice. You may look through any great library you please, and you will find there whole shelves of authors who have tried their best to prove that everything has happened within the last 6,000 years. You will see some not ashamed or afraid to say that Asia derived her religious ideas, her industries, and her very language from the Jews or early Christians, you can find books which try to prove that Sanskrit is a derivative from the Hebrew. You can also read arguments from Christian writers to show that the parental resemblance of Hindu mythology to Biblical stories is due to the fact that St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus, came to India and preached his religion here! The theory that Aryavarta was the cradle of European civilization, the Aryans the progenitors of western peoples, and their literature the source and spring of all western religions and philosophies, is comparatively a thing of yesterday. Professor Max Müller and a few other Sanskritists of our generations have been bringing about this change in western ideas. Let us hope that before many more years roll by, we may have out the whole truth about Aryan civilization, and that your ancestors (and ours) will be honored according to their deserts. The pride of modern people may receive a shock, but the ancients will be vindicated and the cause of truth advanced.

“The fact will then appear, that long before the first page of the Bible was written, generations before the Jews had a nationality to boast of, before the foundations of Babylon were laid, or the first stone of the Egyptian pyramids had been placed, the Aryans were enjoying a splendid civilization, and had perfected a grammar and language with which none other can compare. If asked to prove my words, I may do so by propounding a question. To what age of the world’s history must the beginnings of the Egyptian state, the monarchy of Mena, the founder of Egypt, be carried back? Those most interested in the solution of this problem hesitate even as to the duration of Manetho’s dynasties—from Mena to the last Pharaoh—the most eminent modern Egyptologists not daring to assign it a more recent period than between 5,000 and 6,000 years B.C. And what do they find on the very threshold of Egyptian history, further back than which western history cannot penetrate? Why, a state of the most marvellous civilization, a state already so advanced that in contemplating one has to repeat with Renan, ‘one feels giddy at the very idea,’ (*on est pris de vertige*) and with Brugsch, ‘there are no ages of stone, bronze and iron in Egypt. We must openly acknowledge the fact that, up to this time at least, Egypt throws scorn upon these assumed periods.’ And now Egyptian history and civilization being the most ancient we have, and this history picturing to us, nearly 8,000 years, a people already highly civilized in social and political order, the next question would be why we should say that India and not Egypt is the older. The Egyptians came according to their records, from a mysterious land (now shown to lie on the shore of the Indian Ocean) the sacred *Punt*; the original home of their gods—who followed thence after their people who had abandoned them, to the valley of the Nile led by Amon, Hor and Hathor. This region was the Egyptian ‘Land of the Gods’—Pa-nuter, in old Egyptian—or Holy-land, and now proved beyond any doubt to have been quite a different place than the ‘Holy Land’ of Sinai. By the pictorial and hieroglyphic inscriptions found on the walls of the temple of the Queen Hashtop, at Der-el-bahri, we see that this *Punt* can be no other than India. For many ages the Egyptians traded with their old homes and the reference here made by them to the names of the Princes, of Punt and its fauna and flora, specially the nomenclature of various precious woods to be found but in India, leave us no room for doubt that the old civilization of Egypt is the direct outcome of that of the still older India.

“So then we see that thousands of years before a single spark of civilization had appeared in Europe, before a book had been printed, before the doors of a school had been opened, those great Aryan progenitors of ours were learned, polite, philosophical, and great. The people were not, as now, irrevocably walled in by castes, but they were free to rise to the highest social dignities, or sink to the lowest positions, according to the inherent qualities they might possess.

“If there were great philosophers in those days, so also there were great philologists, physicians, composers, sculptors, poets, statesmen, warriors, architects, manufacturers, merchants. In the Chatoosushtee kala Nirnaya, of Vatsavana, are mentioned fifty different professions that were followed in the Vedic period, and that shows that not only the actual comforts, but also the luxuries and amusements of a civilized community were common then. We have the enforced testimony of even Christian authors, that neither in what the west calls ancient nor modern times have there been produced such triumphs of the human intellect as by the Aryans of India.

“Now I have been often asked by those who affirm the superiority in scientific discovery of modern nations, whether the Aryans or their contemporaries could show anything so splendid as the electric telegraph and the steam engine. My answer is that the properties of steam are said to have been known in

those ancient days; that printing was used at a most remote antiquity in China, and that the Aryans had, and certain of their descendants now have, a system of psychological telegraphing that enables conversation to be carried on at any distance, and that requires neither poles, wires, nor pots of chemicals.

“And then the Aryans knew a branch of science about which the west is now speculating much, but has learnt next to nothing. They could navigate the air; and not only navigate it but fight battles in it, like so many war eagles combating for the domination of the clouds. To be so perfect in aeronautics, as he justly says, they must have known all the arts and sciences related to that science, including the strata and currents of the atmosphere, their relative temperature, humidity, and density, and the specific gravity of the various gases. At the Mayasabha, described in the Bharat, he tells us, were microscopes, telescopes, clocks, watches, mechanical singing birds articulating and speaking animals. The ‘Ashta Vidya’—a science of which our modern professors have not even an inkling—enabled its proficient to completely destroy an invading army by enveloping it in an atmosphere of poisonous gases, filled with awe striking, shadowy shapes, and with awful sounds.

“The modern school of comparative philology traces the migration of Aryan civilization into Europe, by a study of modern languages in comparison with the Sanskrit. And we have an equally, if not a still more, striking means of showing the outflow of Aryan thought towards the west, in the philosophies and religions of Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, Rome and northern Europe. One has only to put side by side the teachings of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Zeno, Hesiod, Cicero, Scaevola, Varro and Virgil, with those of Veda Vyasa, Kapila, Goutama, Patanjali, Kanada, Jaimini, Narada, Panini, Marichi, and many others to be astonished at their identity of conceptions—an identity that upon any other theory than that of a derivation of the younger schools of the west from the older ones of the east would be simply miraculous. (Applause.)

THE PRESENT

“If one who loves the memory of this blessed Aryavarta would not have his heart filled with sorrow he ought not to permit himself to dwell too long over the past. For, as the long procession of great men is passing before his inner vision, and he sees them surrounded with the golden light of their majestic epochs, and then turns to view the spectacle that is presented by the India of today, it will be hard, though he were the most courageous of souls, to escape a sense of crushing despair. Where are those sages, those warriors, those giant intellects of yore? Where the happiness, the independence of spirit, the self-respecting dignity that made an Aryan feel himself fit to rule the world, and able to meet the very gods on equal terms? Where are the cunning artisans whose taste and skill were unrivalled? Whither are departed the Brahmans in whose custody were all the treasures of Asiatic knowledge? Gone; all gone. Like the visions of the night they have departed into the mist of time. A new nation is fabricated out of the old material in combination with much alloy. The India of old is a figment of the imagination, a faded picture of memory; the India of today, a stern reality that confronts and supplicates us. The soil is here, but its fatness is diminished; the people remain, but alas! how hungry and how degenerated. India, stripped of her once limitless forest that gave constant crops and abundant fertility by regulating the rainfall, lies baking in the blistering heat, like a naked valetudinarian too helpless to move. The population has multiplied without a corresponding increase of food supply; until starvation, which was once the exception, has become almost habitual. The difference between so-called good and so-called bad years, to at least 40,000,000 toilers, is now only that in the one

they starve a little less than in the other. Crushed in heart, deprived of all hope, denied the chances of much bettering his condition, the poor ryot, clad in one little strip of cloth, lives on from hand to mouth in humble, pious expectation of what to him will be the happiest of all hours—the one that ushers him into the other world. Once the name Arya and Aryavarta were talismans that moved the heart of an Indian youth to its depth, sent the flush of blood into the cheek, and caused the eye to glitter. Now, the demon of selfishness sits athwart all noble impulse: the struggle for life has made men sycophants, cowards, traitors. The brow of a once proud nation is laid in the dust, and shame causes those who revere her memory to avert their gaze from the sickening spectacle at her fallen greatness. Mighty cities, once the home of hives of population, the centers of luxury, the hallowed repositories of religion and science, have crumbled into dust; and either the filthy beast and carrion bird inhabit their desolate ruins, or the very recollection of their sites is lost. Now and then the delving archaeologist exhumes some fragment which serves to verify the ancient Aryan records, but, ten to one, he tries to twist their evidence into a corroboration of some pet theory that denies a greater antiquity than a handful of centuries to Indian civilization.

“The flowers of Aryan youth are turning materialists under the influence of European education. Hope—that bright angel that gives joy, and courage to the human intellect—is dying out; they have no longer hope in a life of the hereafter, nor in the splendid possibilities of the life of the present. And without hope, how can there be the cheerful resignation under evils that begets perseverance and pluck? The young Hindoos, outside the reformatory Samajes, are losing their old religious belief without gaining or being ready to embrace any other. They are becoming exactly like the great mass of educated youth in Europe and America. Influenced by the same causes, they require the same treatment. It is science which has undermined the foundations of religion; it is science which should be compelled to erect the new edifice. As an incomplete study of nature has led to atheism, so a complete one will lead the eager student back to faith in his inner and nobler self, and in his spiritual destiny. For, there is a circle of science as of all other things, and the whole truth can only be learnt by going all the way around. This, I think, is the strongest corner of the edifice of Theosophy that we are trying to raise. Other agitators come to the young generation claiming authority for some book, some religious observances, or some man as a religious guide and teacher. We say ‘we interfere with no man’s creed or caste, preach no dogma, offer no article of faith. We point to nature as the most infallible of all divine revelations, and to science as the most competent teacher of its mysteries.’ But the science we have in mind is a far wider, higher, nobler science than that of the modern sciolists. Our view extends over the visible and the invisible, the familiar and unfamiliar, the patent and the occult, sides of nature. In short, ours is the Aryan conception of what science can be and should be, and we point to the Aryans of antiquity as its masters and proficients. Young India is a blind creature whose eyes are not yet open; and the nursing mother of its thought is a bedizened goddess, herself blind of one eye, whose name is modern science. There is an old proverb that ‘in a company of blind men, the one-eyed man is king,’ and here we see it practically exemplified. Our western educators know just enough to spoil our spirituality, but not enough to prove to us what man really is. They can draw young India away from their old religion, but only to plunge them into the swamp of doubt. They can show us the ingenious mechanism of our vital machinery, the composition of our digesting fluids, the proportion of fluids and solids in our frame. But Atma is an unscientific postulate, and psychology a species of poetry, in their eyes. Shall we then say that modern education is an unmixed blessing to India? Look at our Indian youth and answer. Christianity, which itself is tottering before the

merciless assaults of the liberal minds within its own household is pre-eminently uncongenial to the Hindu mind. No imported faith will afford the panacea for this spiritual disease that is spreading on all sides. What is needed is that the Vedas shall be once more restored to their ancient hold upon the Indian mind. Not that they should be accepted as a mere dead letter. Not that they should have a merely tacit reverence, but an intelligent appreciation of their intrinsic merits. It must be proven, not simply asserted, that the Vedas are the fountain source of all religions, and contain the indications of a science that embraces and explains all sciences. To whom shall we look for this vindication of their majesty? To whom but to those who unite in themselves at once the advantages of modern critical culture and familiarity with the Sanskrit literature; and most important of all—the knowledge of the hidden meaning of the Vedic allegory and symbolism? For the inspired Vedas are often hidden under the visible writing and nestle between the lines; this I have been told by those who know. And ignorance of this fact, and the taking of the Vedas in their dead letter sense, is what has driven thousands of the brightest intellects into infidelity. Comparative philology will not do our interpretations for us, it can only show the dead letter meaning of the dead letter text. Modern India needs to be instructed in the meaning of the Vedic authors; so that the age may have for itself the perfect certitude that in those far distant ages science was so well understood as to leave no necessity for us to cast aside as rubbish that Book of Books at the behest of modern self-styled ‘authorities’ in science. An Indian civilization, resting upon western religious ideals, is a rickety house of cards. We cannot expect to see, under the totally different conditions of modern times, an exact reproduction of Aryan development, having a strictly national character. Whoever is a true friend of India will make himself recognized by his desire to nationalize her modern progress; her enemy, he who advocates the denationalization of her arts, industries, lines of thought, and aspirations.

THE FUTURE

“Who shall raise the curtain that now hangs in black heavy folds before the is-to-be? Only the eye of the perfect seer can penetrate the secrets of the coming ages. The true Yogi of old could foretell events because he had acquired the power to pass at will into the spiritual universe, and in that condition the past and the future are all merged into one conscious present; as to an observer, who stands at the centre of a circle, every point in the circumference is equally distant. But the true Yogis are now few, and if any are to be met among us, they are hiding themselves, more and more carefully every day, from the sight of men. We must then proceed by the deductive and by the intuitive process. As the Aryan of former times was the very prince of philosophers, so it is in the order of nature that his descendant should become in time among the ablest of statesmen. Already broader and higher spheres of usefulness are opening before him, partly as the result of his own importunities, partly because of the greater economy of administration that his admission to the higher preferments seems likely to offer. We are perhaps at the threshold of a new era of Indian civilization, an era of enormous development. The bad crisis may be postponed, perhaps almost averted, by the aid of liberal science. If the present peaceful and stable order of things should continue—and surely such would be the sincere prayer of every one who wishes well to India, for change would mean a plunge back into chaos—we shall see the barriers gradually melt away that have kept the peoples apart. Gradually they are realizing that, however distant the Punjab may be from Travancore, or Cutch from Bengal, the people

are yet brothers, and the children of the same mother. When this conviction shall once possess the whole body of these twentyfour crores, then there will, indeed, be the rebirth of this nation. And then, with all the modern improvements in arts, sciences and manufactures superadded to abundant labor; with schools thronged with eager students; with the knowledge of the Aryans unearthed from the dust of the ages; with the Vedas revered and appreciated by the whole educated class, who are now coquetting with infidelity, with atheism, with sciolistic science—with everything that is calculated to despiritualize and denationalize them; with Sanskrit teachers well supported and honoured as in former days; with the most distant districts bound together by a network of railways and other public works; with the mineral and agricultural resources of the country fully developed; with the pressure of population adjusted to the capacities of the several districts; and with the last chains of superstition broken, and the eyes unbandaged that have been so long withheld from seeing the truth—the day of Aryan regeneration will have fully dawned. Then once more shall Aryavarta give birth to sons so good as to provoke the admiring homage of the world. When shall we see this glorious day? When shall India take the proud place she might have in the family of nations? Ah, when! The oracle is silent, the book of destiny none can read. It may be only after a century or centuries; it cannot be soon, for the pendulum swings slowly, and on the dial of Fate the hours are marked by cycles and epochs, not by hours or single generations. Enough for us the present hour; for out of the present comes the future, and the things we do and those we leave undone weave the warp and woof of our destinies. We are masters of causes, but slaves of their results. Take this truth to heart, you who hear me, and remember that whatever your faith—if you have any faith at all in man’s survival after death—whether, as Hindus, you believe in Karma, or, as Buddhists, you believe in Skandha, you cannot escape the responsibility of your acts. What you do that is good or bad, and what you might do but leave undone, will equally be placed to your account by the Law of Compensation. The lesson of the hour is that every Indian mother should recall to the child at her knee the glories of the past, that every son of the soil should keep green the memory of his ancestors and that each should do what he can, in every way and always, to be worthy of the name of Aryan.”

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“Did you see that remarkable figure, Damodar, in the midst of the audience?”

“Yes; I know,” replied Damodar. “The master was here in his *astral* form!”

CHAPTER IX

Lahore And Koot Hoomi

On the 19th of November, 1883, I saw crossing the plain on the outskirts of Lahore City, a very remarkable form. The figure presented the appearance of a Brahmin of high degree, well dressed, handsome, and seemingly of about 40 years of age. He passed at a distance of about 100 yards and,

as he passed, smiled intelligently and directed to myself a very meaning glance. We had been told that at some point of our journey the Master K.H. would honor us with a visit, and, as the Brahmin crossed before my gaze, I realized that we would not be disappointed. Without communicating the dictates of my inner consciousness to Damodar or Colonel Olcott, I stored the experience away, and resolved to await events. Our party was encamped on the plain, and a large *shamiana* or pavillion had been erected as a temporary lecture hall. Colonel lectured, as usual, to a large and enthusiastic audience, and, after his labors were over for the night, we retired to rest. The colonel and the writer occupied a tent, which adjoined the *shamiana*, and which was divided into two apartments by a wall of canvas. A covered lobby, or outer court, encircled the inner chambers, and into this lobby there opened doorways both from the colonel's chamber and from mine. About 1.30 on the morning of the 20th, I was awakened by the colonel calling out in Hindoostanee, "Who goes there?" and thereupon I heard the intruder enter into conversation with him. In the course of a few minutes the visitor bid adieu to Colonel Olcott, and proceeded to enter my apartment. My surprise had given place to feelings of a more momentous character, for my experience of the previous day at once flashed through my mind, and I felt, as before, that Koot Hoomi had arrived, and that the visitor was he. I realized I was in the presence of one who, by his daring, had mastered the occult forces of nature, and who, but for his moral character (which constitutes his *white* magicanship), could strike me dead at a blow of his deific will. I felt him standing at my bedside, and heard him say: "Now you see me in the flesh; look, and assure yourself that it is I." I dared not look at him, however. An uncomfortable mixture of reverence and fear seizes me, and I am momentarily paralyzed. I then experience a phenomenon, which must almost be experienced to be believed. Into my right hand, which is hanging loosely over the coverlet, there pours a stream of "magnetism." I *feel* it, and grasp it, and, in the process of grasping, the nature of the substance changes. It solidifies, and I find a letter and silk handkerchief within my hand. I experience at the hands of a magician the phenomenon of transubstantiation. Reassured by the agreeable nature of the article I hold, I rise. My visitor is gone, or, by his magical will, has rendered himself to me invisible. I call to Colonel Olcott, who comes round to my apartment. Colonel Olcott corroborates my impressions even to the veriest details, explains how the master had visited his chamber and then gone round to mine, how as in my case he (the Colonel) had been addressed in excellent English, and how, in token of the visit, he also had received a handkerchief and letter. We proceeded by the light of a lamp to discern our letters. They are in the well [known] K.H. writing, which, once seen, can never be forgotten, and which is known, in different countries, to at least 100 people. My letter is as follows:—

"What Damodar told you at Poonah is true. We approach nearer and nearer to a person as he goes on preparing himself more and more for the same. You first saw us in visions, then in astral forms, tho' very often not recognized, then in body at a short distance from you. Now you see me in my own physical body, so close to you as to enable you to give your countryment the assurance that you are, from personal knowledge, as sure of our existence as you are of your own. Whatever may happen, remember that you will be watched and rewarded in proportion to your zeal and work for the cause of humanity, which the founders of the Theosophical Society have imposed upon themselves. The handkerchief is left as a token of this visit. Damodar is competent enough to tell you about the Rawalpindi member. * * * * K.H."

On the evening of the 21st November, Colonel Olcott, Damodar and the writer were seated on chairs outside of the *shamiana*, enjoying the repose of the short Indian twilight. We were discussing the probability of the master's visiting us again, when suddenly there crossed before our gaze a figure dressed in white. Damodar advanced to the figure conversed with it, and returned to us with the information that the visitor was *Djual Khool*, the head *chela* of *Koot Hoomi*, and that the master, *in propria persona*, was about to come. Then there appeared, about fifty yards distant, the same figure which I had seen on the 19th. Its majesty could never be mistaken, and we immediately made *pujah*, the oriental mode of offering respect. Damodar, as before, advanced to this figure also, received instructions, and returned to us. The last proof being offered me that my visitor of the previous morning was neither phantom nor delusion, and the last doubt being removed as to the possibility of fraud or humbug on the part of Damodar or Colonel Olcott, the master remained for a few minutes in full view, then turned, and walked majestically away.

[September 4, 1886]

CHAPTER X

The Visit To Cashmere

At Lahore, Colonel Olcott was visited by an ambassador from the Court of Cashmere, with the request that the Colonel and his party would accept of the Maharajah's hospitality at the royal palace of Jammu. We accepted with pleasure, and for various reasons:—first, because the kingdom of Cashmere and Jammu is a native state, and beyond the reach of British rule, hence the manners and customs of the nobility and people are in no way Europeanized; secondly, because the Maharajah had insisted upon the expenses of the expedition being paid out of his royal treasury; thirdly, because the visit will assume the nature of one splendid holiday, and we will have the opportunity of seeing the towering Himalayas.

The necessary preliminaries having been arranged, the party left by night-mail from Lahore for Wazirabad.

It may not be out of place at this stage to say something regarding Indian railways. The British government in India has adopted the American style of railway car, and has abandoned the conservative compartment-carriages with side doors, which are in vogue in Britain. Accordingly, one can have a first-class parlor and sleeping car from one end of the continent to the other, and passengers can freely move from place to place, from car to car, from parlor to smoking car. Only the third-class carriages are in the old compartment style, and they are only used by the native rabble of Mohammedans, "coolie" Hindoos and Eurasians. The Eurasians, as a class, are a people whose lot is an unenviable one. Born usually of white father and low caste Hindoo mother, they inherit the vices of both nations and none of the virtues, and are consequently recognized by neither. They ape the dogmatic intolerance of the English civilian (who in turn regards them as bastards and imposters) and attempt to identify themselves with the "ruling class," at which high caste Hindoos laugh. The Brahmin, who regards himself as a much superior man to any European, and as one who is temporarily "under a cloud" in the shape of British rule, is still not disposed

to recognize the production of unnatural intercourse as one to be obeyed, and will not extend to him even the dignity of being an “oppressor.” Hence the poor Eurasians form clans among themselves, and occupy positions chiefly on the railways. In the words of the vulgar proverb, they are neither “flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.” We need not here enter into the moral question as to the righteousness of Anglo-Saxons forming alliances with low caste Hindoo women and then refusing to recognize their offspring. We can characterize their conduct as shabby and mean, and in other words appropriate to the occasion, but the facts remain. What sweet peoples we are to send missionaries to India!

From Wazirabad we proceed by carriages to Sialkot, the boundary line between British India and Cashmere. To this point the Maharajah has sent his state carriages for our reception, and we set out in royal style. Soon the Himalayas stand out in their imposing grandeur, the loftiest mountains on earth, clad in eternal snow. They rise abruptly from the plains, as the cliffs of Dover, England, rise abruptly from the sea. It is now the “cold season” in India, but the sun is shining brightly and the white peaks and shoulders are glittering in the ambient air. At length we reach the Ravi river, to which point the Prince has sent two royal elephants. A crowd of natives has gathered to see the royal guests. The elephants kneel for our accommodation, and we mount the ladders and take our seats in richly ornamented howdahs. The patient animals then rise, the native drivers mount up on their heads, and we prepare to cross the river. With what care and wisdom the brutes place their feet and stand like columns in the rushing water! They never slip, and are surefooted as they are intelligent. At length we are again on *terra firma*, and, after an hour’s ride, arrive at the barracks, where the bungalow set apart for the British resident and other distinguished European guests has been fitted up for our reception. Colonel Olcott, because of his sympathy with the revival of the ancient intellectual and spiritual glories of India, is received as a guest of the first degree.

On the following day, after resting from our journey, we are sent to attend an audience with the king. Again we mount the faithful elephants, and, attended by a guard of honor, make our entry through the palace gate. The military guard presents arms, and his highness gives audience in full court. The Maha Rajah Saheb and his sons, the Princes Rama and Amara Singh, express themselves much interested in Colonel Olcott’s exposition of Theosophy. Everyday the Maha Rajah accords us an interview. On each occasion at the palace, a guard of honor was in attendance and presented arms. The Maha Rajah is a genial kind of man, about 60, dressed richly, handsomely, and yet unpretentiously. He shows a fine display of pearls and diamonds. He does not seem carried away by his attendants’ sycophantic flattery, of which, in common with all eastern potentates, he gets enough. With the two elephants and four saddle horses placed all the time at our disposal, we make grand excursions up the Ravi river and explore the ravines and hillsides in the immediate vicinity. The snowy Himalayan peaks are ungetatable, so we content ourselves with distant admiration. On the day before departing, his highness sent a special messenger with a *khilat* (present) consisting of cashmere shawls, embroidered coats, and scarfs, which we accepted with all condescension and politeness. Altogether our visit to royalty was a success, and, in the language of the Americans, we had a “right good time.”

CHAPTER XI

What Damodar Has To Say

“For me the problem is now solved. For the last few years I have been a chela of Mr. Sinnett’s correspondent. While on my tour with Colonel Olcott, several phenomena occurred—in his presence as well as in his absence—such as immediate answers to questions in my master’s handwriting and over his signature, put by a number of our fellows, and some of which are referred to in the last number of *The Theosophist*; while others need not be mentioned in a document going into the hands of the profane reader. These occurrences took place before we reached Lahore, where we expected to meet in body my much doubted Master. There I was visited by him in body, for three nights consecutively, for about three hours every time, while I myself retained full consciousness, and, in one case, even went to meet him outside the house. He whom I saw in person at Lahore was the same I had seen in astral form at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, and the same again whom I, in my visions and trances, had seen at his house thousands of miles off, to reach which in my astral Ego I was permitted, owing, of course, to his direct help and protection. In those instances, with my psychic powers hardly developed yet, I had always seen him as a rather hazy form, although his features were perfectly distinct and their remembrance was profoundly graven on my soul’s eye and memory, while now, at Lahore and elsewhere, the impression was utterly different. In the former cases, when making pranam (salutation) my hands passed through his form, while on the latter occasion they met solid garments and flesh. Here I saw a living man before me, the same in features though far more imposing in his general appearance and bearing than him I had so often looked upon in the portraits in Mme. Blavatsky’s possession and in Mr. Sinnett’s. I shall not here dwell upon the fact of his having been corporeally seen by Colonel Olcott and Mr. C.G. Clarke separately, for two nights at Lahore, as they can do so better, each for himself, if they choose. I need not speak of his visits to me at Jummoo almost every day. But what happened one morning almost everyone in Jummoo is aware of. The fact is that I had the good fortune of being sent for, and permitted to visit a sacred Ashrum where I remained for several days in the blessed company of several of the much doubted Mahatmas of the Himavat and their disciples. There I met not only my beloved Gurudeva, but several others of the fraternity, including One of the Highest. I regret the personal nature of my visit to those thrice blessed regions prevents my saying more of it. Suffice to say that the place I was permitted to visit is in the Himalayas, not in any fanciful Summer Land, and that I saw him in my own sthula-sarira (physical body) and found my Master identical with the form I had seen in the earlier days of my Chelaship. Thus, I saw my beloved Guru not only as a living man, but actually as a young one in comparison with some other Sadhus of the blessed company, only far kinder, and not above a merry remark and conversation at times. On the second day of my arrival, after the meal hour, I was permitted to hold an intercourse for over an hour with my Master.

“These are all stern facts and no third course is open. What I assert must of necessity be either true or false. In the former case, no hypothesis can hold good, and it will have to be admitted that the Himalayan Brothers are living men and neither disembodied spirits nor the creatures of the over-heated imagination

of fanatics. If these few lines will help to stimulate my brother fellows in the Society or one right thinking man outside it, to promote the cause the Great Masters have imposed upon the devoted heads of the Founders of the Theosophical Society, I shall consider that I have properly performed my duty. ADYAR (MADRAS), 7th December, 1883.”—*The Theosophist* for January 1884.

CHAPTER XII

The Shrine; The Master’s Letter, And Conclusive Proof

On returning to Adyar, Madras, about the middle of December, I resolved to ask the Master *Koot Hoomi* for the favor of another interview. Recognizing fully the favors which I already had received, I was not at all sanguine that my request would be entertained and granted. But consoling myself with the reflection that at most I could only meet with a refusal, I wrote a letter ending with these words: “If you honor me with a reply, please return this letter, so that I may show my actual written request along with your instructions. C.G.C.” I ought to mention also that I had been informed that the master had come as far south as the province of Mysore, to which place I anticipated that my letter would be taken. Carefully sealing my letter and communicating its contents to no one, I addressed the letter “To the Master Koot Hoomi Lal Singh” and proceeded, along with Damodar, to the Astral post-office at the shrine. My readers may remember the description of the shrine, given in a previous chapter, and of the manner in which letters were delivered instantaneously by occult, electric forces at Thibet, and returned to Adyar in an incredibly short space of time, with intelligible answers enclosed. Damodar, who generally acted as “postmaster-general,” placed my letter in the customary manner in the golden bowl, and shut the “post-office” doors. We stood silently for a few minutes, when the same muffled sounds were heard, indicating that the electric forces of abstraction were being put in operation. Damodar then assumed an attentive attitude and said: “Clairaudiently I hear my master’s voice. He tells you to have patience.”

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Next evening, in the presence of Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, Major-General Morgan (Madras Army), Norendro Nath Sen (editor *Indian Mirror*), Mohini Mohun Chatterji (M.A., Calcutta University), F. Hartmann (M.D., Munich), and others, on turning round in my chair I find on a ledge behind the identical letter which Damodar had placed in the Shrine on the previous day. The envelope, to all appearances, has never been opened, the address only being altered from “Koot Hoomi Lal Singh” to “C.G. Clarke, F.T.S.”

On cutting open the envelope, I found my own letter and in addition a letter of eight pages from the master. The writing is the same as that of the letter materialized into my hand at Lahore, when Madame Blavatsky was at the other end of India; and the matter proves its author to be none other than the great Adept. *Koot Hoomi* says:

“I have told you through Damodar to have patience for the fulfillment of your desire. From this you ought to understand that it cannot be complied with, for various reasons. First of all, it would be a great injustice to Mr. Sinnett, who, after three years devoted work to the Society, loyalty to myself and the cause, begged

for a personal interview—and was refused. Then I have left Mysore a week ago and where I am you cannot come, since I am on my journey and cross over at the end of my travels to China and thence home. On your last tour you have been given so many chances for various reasons. We do not do so much (or so little, if you prefer) even for our chelas, until they reach a certain stage of development necessitating one more use and abuse of power in communicating with them. If an eastern, especially a Hindu, had even half a glimpse, but once, of what you had, he would have considered himself blessed the whole of his life. If all that you saw was imperfect in itself it was due to previous causes. You saw and recognized me twice at a distance. You knew it was I and no other. What more can you desire? If when after visiting Colonel Olcott I passed over to your room, and my voice and words pronounced (Now you see me in the flesh; look and assure yourself it is I) failed to impress you, and when the letter put into your hand awoke you at last, but failed to make you turn your face—your nervousness paralyzing you for a moment—the fault is surely yours, not mine. I had no right to act upon you phenomenally, or to psychologize you. You are not ready that is all. If you are earnest in your aspirations, if you have the least spark of intuition in you, if your education as a lawyer is complete enough to enable you to put facts in their proper sequence, and to present your case as strongly as you, in your innermost heart, believe it to be, then you have material enough to appeal to any intellect capable of perceiving the continuous thread underneath the series of your facts. For the benefit of such people only, you have to write, not for those who are unwilling to part with their prejudices and preconceptions for the attainment of truth from whatever source it may come. It is not our desire to convince the latter, for no fact or explanation can make a blind man see. Moreover our existence would become extremely intolerable, if not impossible, were all persons to be indiscriminately convinced. If you cannot do even this much from what you know, then no amount of evidence will ever enable you to do so. You can say truthfully, and as a man of honor, ‘I have seen and recognized my master, was approached by him and even touched.’ What more would you want? Anything more is impossible at present. Young friend, study and prepare. * * * Be patient, content with little. * * * My influence be over you and this ought to make you feel calm and resolute.—K.H.”

CHAPTER XIII

A Theosophical Celebration

“**L**ast night Patchiappa’s hall, Madras, was crowded to hear a number of delegates from various parts of India, Ceylon, England, and America report as to the work of the branches of the Theosophical Society. Among those present were Rajah the Hon. Gujapathe Row, the Rajah of Pettapur, Major-General Morgan, C.V. Cuniah Chetty, Babu Norendro Nath Sen, editor of the Indian Mirror, Mr. E.D. Ezekiel, of Poonah, Mr. Niblett, Allahabad, Jugga Row, Nellore, Rawal Shree Harrisingi Rupsingi, cousin of the Thakore of Bhownuggur, Mr. Subramanya Iyer, Madura, Mr. W. d’Abrew, from Ceylon, Rajah Sir T. Madava Row, Mr. Willie Grant, Mr. Ananda Charlu, the Rev. Mr. Alexander, and others.

The President, Colonel Olcott, called upon the delegates to address the meeting. A large number responded, among them the following:

Dr. F. Hartmann, who represented the Theosophical Societies of America. Mr. Carwood Gerald Clarke, of the London Theosophical Society.

“The glorious truths of ancient science are being appreciated in the west, and the doctrine of brotherly love is having its due appreciation also. It was extraordinary that those in the west could now look through their holy scriptures, and the Orientals could look into eastern sacred books, and both find the same glorious truths. Instead of asking the Hindus to leave their caste, their customs and their family circles, the theosophists simply asked them to search their own scriptures, and live up to the grand principles contained therein.” He greeted the eastern theosophists with the very best wishes of those of the west, and remarked that there was a glorious future before them. Major General Morgan, representing the three Paris societies, and the Duchess de Pomar, their president, said that the societies he represented, studied the Aryan religion and literature, and were in accord with the parent society, now assembled.

Mr. Ezekiel, from Poonah, made a few remarks as to the co-operation of Jews with the Theosophists.

Mr. William d’Abrew, of Colombo, alluded to the wonderful progress of Theosophy in Ceylon.

Mr. Soondrum Poulle, of Pondicherry, greeted the Theosophists present on behalf of their brothers in the French East Indies.

Mr. Norendro Nath Sen, of Calcutta, met with an ovation. Branches were springing up in Bengal as fast as those of the *Brahmo Samaj* did some years ago.

A pundit from Lucknow remarked that he felt quite happy and “at home” among so many Theosophists in Madras.

Another pundit and Mr. Niblett, of Allahabad, having spoken.

Mr. Jugga Row, of Nellore, said one good result of the working of the Theosophical Society had been the formation of Sanskrit schools. Colonel Olcott then addressed the meeting, and met with an enthusiastic reception. He said that one of the cardinal principles of Theosophy was to vindicate the importance of the ancient Aryan philosophy and science. They had simply to prove by an abundance of citations that there did exist in man those rare peculiar psychological powers, and they *could* prove it. That was the beauty of the ancient Aryan system that the psychology was drawn from observed facts. Western people had not arrived at the time when they could present a perfect philosophy. What the Society was trying to do here in India was to impress upon the minds of the Indian youth that if they would take the trouble to read their national records they would find that Mill, Bain, Spencer and others had evolved nothing which was not to be found in the Hindu *Shastras*, and nothing so good as could be found there,” etc., etc.

The writer now brings his story to a close. He has taken his readers over a large area of ground, sometimes in a humorous, sometimes in a serious, vein. He has shown sufficiently the truths of Occult Science, the latent powers in Man, and the unseen planes of Nature. In conclusion, he would say that, though he points out the truths of Esoteric Buddhism, he would in no way lessen or belittle Esoteric Christianity. The character of K.H. only recommends itself to him in so far as it is in accordance with the life of Christ. Jesus of Nazareth was an ideal man, a master *Magus*, a great *mahatma*, and a Son of God. He lives unseen today, as when on earth some 1800 years ago, and blesses those who reasonably and intelligently place their trust in him.

THE END.