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1918

EVOLUTION OF Mrs. BESANT:

BEING THE

LIFE AND PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

OF

Mrs. ANNIE BESANT

Secularist, Socialist, Theosophist and Politician

WITH

SIDELIGHTS ON THE INNER WORKINGS

OF

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

AND

THE METHODS BY WHICH

Mr. LEADBEATER

ARRIVED AT THE

THRESHOLD OF DIVINITY

BY

THE EDITOR OF "JUSTICE," MADRAS.



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PREFACE.

An attempt is made in the following pages to follow the career and activities of a woman, remarkable in many respects. The task is by no means easy. An English doctor's daughter ; a Church of England clergyman's wife ; a Secularist writer and lecturer ; a Socialist member of the London School Board ; a disciple of Madame Balavatsky, the founder of Theosophy ; an occultist collaborator of Charles Leadbeater, the High Priestess of Indian Home Rule ; and the political associate of Bal Gangadhar Tilak is rather a complex personality who has been everything in turn and nothing for long. And when this English lady, born in London, the daughter of a Devonshire gentleman, began with a preference to be called Irish, and ended with a desire to be called Indian the complexity became still more perplexing. The Theosophist who can quote the saying of Buddha that "hatred ceases not by hatred at any time ; hatred ceases by love," and at the same time shows all the passions, combativeness and revengeful spirit of an excited politician is somewhat of a paradox. It lends weight to what some of Mrs. Besant's critics have said that her changes are all on the surface

and that she has passed from free thought to Theosophy like a swallow skimming over a lawn, and that whatever the outward changes the central governing idea remains, namely, vanity and the desire for living in the lime-light. In this respect she goes one better than her Guru, Madame Blavatsky—the Russian Virgin. Madame Blavatsky, in one of her letters to her countryman Solovyoff, thus describes her reception in Madras:—“But before the anchor had been cast, a whole crowd of our Theosophists was swarming over the deck. They threw themselves down and kissed my feet and at last hurried us on shore. Here there was a dense mass of people; some thirty vans with bands, flags, gilded-cars, and garlands of flowers. I had no sooner appeared on the wharf than they began to hurrah. I was almost deafened by the furious cries of triumph and delight. We were drawn, not by horses, but by Theosophists in a chariot preceded by a band walking backwards. The Brahmins blessed us, and all welcomed and cheered us. After an hour’s procession, during which all the Missionaries disappeared as if they had rushed off to hell, we were taken to the Town Hall where we found 5,000 people to complete my deafness. Lord,

if you had only been there, how proud you would have been of your country woman. Compare this with Mrs. Besant's description of her reception at Bombay.

"The scenes of Calcutta and Allahabad were repeated—they could hardly be outdone. The route was long and was most beautifully decorated ; the shops had been closed, and the richest merchants of the great Bhatia community brought garlands, and silver plates with gifts of money, and burning camphor, and the silver merchants scattered little flower-like pieces of gold and silver ; flowers rained from the houses, the walls surrounding a great mosque were lined with men, the verandahs were crowded with women, school-children, boys and girls, mingled their shrill voices with the shouts of men. The streets were a sea of heads, and at every crossing carriages and motors stood crowded with cheering men and women. The car in which I was seated became heaped with flowers, which rose over my knees though I was on a high seat. And so to China Baug, where the spacious compound was crowded, and it was imperative that the trio should come on the balcony, while those below shouted themselves hoarse."

Is there not a family resemblance between

the self-glorifications of Guru and Sishya ? If there is a resemblance there is also a difference between the two. Madame Blayatsky only wrote to her countryman M. Solovyoff in order that he might send these accounts to the newspapers in Russia. Mrs. Besant is more aggressive. She attacks newspapers like the *Times of India* for not publishing descriptive accounts of her triumphal progress. The present writer was called "an unscrupulous personal hater" perhaps because there was little in *Justice* about Mrs. Besant's triumphal tour through India. If Mrs. Besant, in her course after the ideal of Buddha has, after nearly thirty years, only reached the Gokhale Hall and the *New India* newspaper, we are afraid that she will never reach Buddha's ideal in this life. Hatred ceases not by hatred, and apparently Mrs. Besant has nothing but hatred and malignity to those who do not worship at her shrine. However, if we have not published a description of her triumphal tour, we are publishing now an account of her life. There is no religion higher than truth, and if the account of Mrs. Besant's life as set forth in these pages is more true than flattering it is not our fault.

THE AUTHOR.

THE LIFE AND PUBLIC ACTIVITIES OF MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

I

Mrs. Annie Besant, the President of the Indian National Congress which was held at Calcutta in December 1917, was born in London on October 1st 1847 at 5-39 P. M. On that day and hour and minute Mrs. Besant says that "my baby eyes opened to the light of a London afternoon", or rather opened her eyes to such light as there is likely to exist on an October evening in London. A friendly astrologer has drawn up Mrs. Besant's horoscope. She says that she knows nothing of astrology. Neither do we; and besides it is too late in the day to trouble about astrological predictions. The events of seventy years of her life lie before us, and it is more interesting to review the incidents of an eventful and somewhat stormy life than to get entangled, in astrological calculations with the certainty of coming to the wrong conclusions in the end. Mrs. Besant's father was Dr. Wood, belonging to a Devonshire family of Woods. Her mother was of pure Irish descent.

Although the daughter of an Englishman, born in London, Mrs. Besant says that "it has always been somewhat of a grievance to me that I was born in London," and recently in a note in *New India* she made the statement that she preferred to be called Irish instead of English, as the English people did not treat her properly. An Irishman said that he became an Irishman because he happened to be staying in Ireland when he was born. Pretty much the same, we suppose, is the case with Miss Wood : she is a Londoner because she happened to be staying in London when she was born. It is a coincidence that Mrs. Besant was born in a house in Grove Road, St. John's Wood, London, not very far from Avenue Road where at the Theosophical headquarters in London, she was destined to become in later years the presiding High Priestess. Mrs. Besant's Irish sympathies are undoubted ; equally evident is her dislike of the English ; the emotionalism of the Irish appealed to her far more than the matter of fact coldness of the English. "Where out of Ireland" asks Mrs. Besant "will you see a whole town crowd into a station to say Good Bye to half a dozen emigrants till the platform is a

heaving mass of men and women struggling, climbing over each other for a last kiss, crying, kneeling, laughing, all in a breath, till all the air is throbbing and there is a lump in your throat and tears in your eyes as the train steams out." Sure, Mrs. Besant, you can see a better crowd than that in India at a railway station to receive people returning from internment rather than to say Good-Bye to emigrants to America. ||

Mrs. Besant was the second child of her parents, the elder one being a boy. Little Miss Wood seems to have inherited her neurotic constitution more from her mother than from her father. Speaking of her father Mrs. Besant says that "student of philosophy as he was, he was deeply and steadily sceptical, and a very religious relative has told me that he often drove her from the room by his light playful mockery of the tenets of the Christian faith. His mother and sister were strict Roman Catholics and, near the end, forced a priest into his room, but the priest was promptly ejected by the wrath of the dying man." The influence of Dr. Wood, who had outgrown the orthodox beliefs of the day, on his wife resulted in a compromise by Mrs. Wood coming to the conclusion that women

ought to be religious while men had a right to read everything and think as they would, provided they were upright and honourable in their lives. The difference between mother and daughter is thus pithily put by Mrs. Besant. "She was of the old regime ; I of the stuff from which fanatics are made", and continues Mrs. Besant, "the Roman Catholic Church, had it captured me as it nearly did, would have sent me on some mission of danger and sacrifice and utilised me as a martyr ; the Church established by Law transformed me into an unbeliever and an antagonist".

A story told by Mrs. Besant about her mother throws a good deal of light on one of her inherited mental peculiarities. It seems that a few weeks after the funeral of Dr. Wood, Mrs. Wood went to Kensal Green Cemetery, where the body of her husband had been laid with a relative. They failed to find the grave, and Mrs. Wood said "If you will take me to the chapel where the first part of the service was read I will find the grave. Mrs. Wood was accordingly taken to the chapel. She looked round, left the chapel door and followed the path along which the corpse had been borne till she reached the grave. The grave

was at some distance from the chapel and was not on one of the main roads. It had nothing on it to mark it save the wooden peg with the number, and this would have been of no help for identification at a distance, since all the graves are thus marked. This and Mrs. Wood foretelling the death of her infant son (a younger brother of Mrs. Besant) are given as examples by Mrs. Besant of "sensitiveness to impressions other than physical ones, that was a marked feature in my own childhood, was present also in the family to which I belonged". Here you have the first evidence of the "mystic" that Mrs. Besant in most respects undoubtedly is. She gives her explanations for these phenomena based on the ordinary lines adopted by the dualists who have a marked predilection for the psychic and admit an active and even creative intervention of the psychic world in the physical world. Such intervention is incompatible with the fundamental diversity of the laws of the two worlds. It cannot be demonstrated by experience. It may be conceivable in a purely verbal manner. We do not want to start a discussion on this difficult problem. We only note in passing the inherited neurotic peculiarity of Mrs. Besant. After the death of Mrs. Besant's

father the family lived for some months at Richmond Terrace, Clapham, and then moved on to Harrow in order to educate Mrs. Wood's son at the famous public school at Harrow. Miss Wood, however, did not remain long at Harrow. She was taken away by Miss Marryat, a sister of Captain Marryat, the famous novelist, to be educated with one of Miss Marryat's nieces, and Miss Wood lived with Miss Marryat at Fern Hill, near Charmouth in Dorsetshire, for five years and received a very careful education under the guidance of Miss Marryat.

II

In 1851 Miss Marryat went abroad to Germany and took her two pupils, Miss Wood and Miss Mann, with her. It was at the University town of Bonn that Miss Marryat decided to spend her holiday. Her two pupils represented different types of English beauty. Mrs. Besant says that "Emma was a plump, rosy, fair-haired, typical English maiden full of frolic and harmless fun; I, a very slight pale, black-haired girl alternating between wild fun and extreme pensiveness." Evidently at this period of her life Miss Wood was a happy blend of *L'Allegero* and *Il Penseroso*. During her stay at Bonn, how-

ever, L'Allegero predominated. The turn of Il Penseroso was to come later. Miss Marryat, the chaperon of the two young English girls, was a maiden lady looking on all young men "as wolves to be kept far from her growing lambs." Here were all the elements required for a rollicking farce. A prim and prudish old maid as chaperon, two young frolicsome English flappers and a town full of University students were the materials that were brought together in Bonn in the spring of 1861. Add to this two sons of the Duke of Hamilton, namely, the Marquis of Douglas and Lord Charles, staying in the same boarding house as the one where the old maid and the two flappers were staying, and you are ready for the curtain to go up. We might give a synopsis of the farce that followed in Mrs. Besant's own words:—"The lads discovered that Miss Marryat did not like her "children" to be on speaking terms with any of the "male sect." Here was a fine source of amusement. They would make their horses caracole on the gravel in front of our window; they would be just starting for their ride as we went for walk or drive and would salute us with doffed hat and low bow; they would waylay us on our way downstairs with

demure "Good Morning"; they would go to church and post themselves, so that they could survey our pew, and Lord Charles—who possessed the power of moving at will the whole skin of the scalp—would wriggle his hair up and down till we were choking with laughter to our own imminent risk". The same old game played generation after generation by University students and pretty flappers. It is only an exhibition of boyish nonsense, absolutely harmless, most amusing to the young folk who are actors in the farce, but most irritating to chaperons, especially if they happen to be old maids. A University student who is not susceptible to feminine charms ought to be "sent down", and the flapper who does not respond to these innocent frolics will display a serious constitutional defect.

One of the excitements of these boy-and-girl episodes is in hoodwinking the prudish chaperon. In the present instance the old maid was of an unusually severe type, who first of all removed herself and her wards from the boarding house where the English lads were staying and took refuge in a girls' school "much to our disgust", according to Miss Wood. But the change of venue brought no relief, for, says

Mrs. Besant, "mischievous students would pursue us wherever we went ; sentimental Germans with gashed cheeks would whisper complimentary phrases as we passed", and thus events passed to the great amusement of the two young girls and to the irritation of the old maid chaperon and after three months of Bonn the two girls were sent home for the holidays "somewhat in disgrace". A couple of months later the two girls joined Miss Marryat in Paris and spent seven months in that city mainly devoted to study and inspection of the treasures of art and of architecture in which Paris abounds. L'Allegero who had triumphed at Bonn had to retire into the background in Paris. Miss Wood's religious nature that had hitherto been latent was roused into activity. Mrs. Besant says :—" I discovered the sensuous enjoyment that lay in introducing colour and fragrance and pomp into religious services, so that the gratification of the æsthetic emotions became dignified with the garb of piety." In fact this return of the religious impression was only a return to what was apparently the normal state of Miss. Wood's mind. She herself says that "with the exception of that little aberration in Germany, I was de-

cidedly unambitious girl. We are afraid that Mrs. Besant is using too strong a word in describing her innocent girlish fun at Bonn as an aberration. The fact of the matter is that the severe Calvinistic teaching which she was receiving under Miss Marryat and her circle was tending to make the young girl, as she herself confessed in after life, a little morbid. In her own home, under the loving care of her own mother, she was the blithest of children, but Miss Marryat in her report of the progress of Miss Wood remarked that she was wanting in cheerfulness. It was not the fault of Miss Wood. She is not the first English girl whose entire nature has been changed by severe training under morbid and puritanical old maids. Reviewing her own life Mrs. Besant says that its keynote "has been a longing for sacrifice to something felt as greater than self". And yet somehow we feel that this is only an apparent keynote. As far as we can judge the keynote of Mrs. Besant's life is vanity, overweening, all-consuming vanity. Even at this early stage of her girlhood there were signs of the development of this powerful human motive. "I was often praised for my piety" says Mrs. Besant "when emulation and vanity were more

to the front than religion ; as when I learned by heart the Epistle of James far more to distinguish myself for my good memory than from any love of the text itself " ; and when she prayed she says, " I too often hoped that God and auntie had noticed I prayed very nicely." 11

Thus in her early life Mrs. Besant showed the existence of many mental characteristics which in later life developed, some more than others, and produced that highly complex human problem known to the world as Mrs. Besant. "The dreamy tendency in the child on its worldly side is fancy, imagination, on its religious side is the germ of mysticism", so says Mrs. Besant. She certainly had a dreamy tendency in childhood, and undoubtedly this tendency in her took a religious turn. Unfortunately the foundation for such strong mental impulses was not very substantial. The brain is the organ of the mind, and when it is tainted with an inherited neurotic constitution and enfeebled by anxieties and worries, with the inhibitory control almost gone the result is disastrous. After Miss Wood's return from Paris she continued her education for sometime longer staying with her mother at Harrow and attending classes in London. When she was 16½ years old she was freed

from the school room and thereafter stayed with her mother who lavished her affections on her only daughter and almost spoiled her by her care and attention. The Easter of 1866 is an important period in the life of Mrs. Besant, for it was then she was introduced to the clergyman whom she afterwards married.

III

At the time when Miss Wood met the Rev. Frank Besant she had no idea of marriage at all. She was still in a state of religious emotionalism. As she herself said, "she had men-friends but no lovers." Her day-dreams "were filled with the one ideal Man, and her hopes turned towards the life of a Sister of Mercy who ever worships the Christ and devotes her life to the service of his poor." Mrs. Besant says, "I longed to spend my time in worshipping Jesus and was, as far as my inner life was concerned, absorbed in that passionate love of the Saviour which among emotional Catholics really is the human passion of love transferred to an ideal; for women to Jesus, for men to Virgin Mary." This is the highly ethereal romantic love of the Middle Ages. In men this romantic love is usually nothing but the wor-

ship of the Virgin transferred to a young earthly maiden, yet retaining the purity and the ideality of religious worship. In the Middle Ages they carried this sort of romantic love to such a high degree that it was sometimes difficult to be sure whether we were concerned with a real maiden of flesh and blood, or only a poetical symbol of womanhood. The supreme type of this ethereal love is illustrated in Dante's Beatrice. This medieval romantic love, however, has been swept away by the movements of Humanism and the Renaissance. As Havelock Ellis says, "The ethereal maiden, thin, pale, anæmic disappeared alike from literature and from art and was no longer an ideal in actual life. She gave place to a new woman, conscibus of her own fully developed womanhood and all its needs, radiantly beautiful and finely shaped in every limb. She lacked the spirituality of her predecessors, but she had gained in intellect". This grand conception of romantic love was beyond the powers of Miss Wood who was swayed by religious emotionalism rather than by the love for an ideal, ethereal being. And the religious emotionalism was satisfied when an opportunity presented itself of becoming the wife of a clergyman. According

to Mrs. Besant. "The position of the priest's wife seems second only to that of the nun and has therefore a wonderful attractiveness, an attractiveness in which the particular clergyman affected plays a very subordinate part; it is the sacred office, the nearness to holy things, the consecration which seems to include the wife, it is these things that shed a glamour over the clerical life which attracts most those who are most apt to self-devotion, most swayed by imagination." Perhaps, these considerations weighed most with the emotional temperament of Miss Wood who got engaged to Rev. Frank Besant in the summer of 1866 and married him in the winter of 1867. Between the period of Miss Wood's first meeting Mr. Besant and her marrying him, two events, which were destined to exercise a great influence over the future life of this young lady, are recorded, and these are the first beginnings of religious doubt and the first introductions to political excitement.

It is a strange coincidence, as observed by Mrs. Besant herself, that at the same time she met the man whom she married afterwards, was the beginning of those doubts which were to break the marriage tie. The commencement

of this religious doubt is thus described by Mrs. Besant:—"In the Holy Week preceding that Easter Eve I had been trying to throw the mind back to the time when the commemorated events occurred and to follow step by step the last days of the Son of Man, living, as it were, through those last hours, so that I might be ready to kneel before the Cross on Good Friday, to stand beside the sepulchre on Easter Day. In order to facilitate the realisation of those last sacred days of God incarnate on earth working out man's salvation, I resolved to write a brief history of that week compiled from the four Gospels meaning them to try and realise each day the occurrences that had happened on the corresponding date in A. D. 33 and so to follow those "blessed feet", step by step, till they were "Nailed for our advantage to the bitter Cross."

This critical analysis of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John disclosed discrepancies which greatly shocked the orthodox religious sentiment of the little girl just free from school. But the consolation that there could possibly be no discord among the Holy Evangelists soon composed the doubts of the immature mind, and Miss Wood imposed on

herself an extra fast as penance for her ignorance and lack of firmness in the faith. Discrepancies in the Bible are easily discovered by anyone who has the patience to look for them. The present writer, though not a Christian, did at one time indulge in the study of the Bible, and discrepancies sprang up not like a serpent hissing in her face, as Mrs. Besant observed, but like blackberries on the hedges in country lanes in England. At the time when the present writer discovered these discrepancies, he was a student at Edinburgh, and the late Professor Henry Drummond was the best guide, philosopher, and friend of all Edinburgh students. He placed his ingenious discovery of the discrepancies in the Bible before Professor Drummond and only elicited the smiling reply "Every comma in the Bible is not inspired". He was advised to look at the grand truth underlying the Christian religion and not to bother his head about the discrepancies in the Bible. We wonder whether Miss Wood ever realised that some of the grandest religions in the world are associated with most miserable theology. This, however, was only the beginning of religious doubt which was easily conquered and paid for by an extra fast; but the religious

doubt returned at a later period with more serious consequences, as we shall see presently.

The other noteworthy incident of this period of Mrs. Besant's life was her first acquaintance with political excitement. In the autumn of 1867 Miss Wood and her mother were staying with some friends of theirs near Manchester. Mr. Roberts, their host, was a solicitor who was affectionately known in Manchester as the "poor man's lawyer". He was a lawyer as well as a political agitator who was Mrs. Besant's first tutor in Radicalism, as she herself gratefully acknowledges. Till the time of her stay at Manchester with the Robertses she had taken no interest in politics. If anything at all, she had a leaning towards Whiggism, and her stay in Manchester happened to be at the time when the affair of the Manchester Martyrs, as it is familiarly known to the Irish, took place. The affair was briefly this. Two men named Kelly and Deasy, arrested in Manchester as vagrants, were found to be Fenians and were remanded for further inquiries. On their way from the police court to the jail a determined attempt was made to rescue them. A number of Fenians commanded by William O'Meara Allen shot one of the

horses dragging the van, stopped the van, surrounded it and fired at the van. In the affray Charles Brett, a police sergeant who was in charge of the prisoners, was shot dead. The door of the prison van was forced open, and Kelly and Deasy were released. They succeeded in escaping to America and have never been re-arrested. But Allen and about twenty others were arrested and committed for trial. A commission of two judges, consisting of Mr. Justice Blackburn and Mr. Justice Mellox, were sent down to try the case. Great excitement prevailed in Manchester during the trial. Miss Wood and her mother were present in the court house at the trial. Five men including Allen were convicted of murder and condemned to death ; others were sent into penal servitude, and several were acquitted. Allen, Larkin, Gould (whose real name was O'Brien), Shore (otherwise known as Condon) and Maguire were condemned to be hanged. A number of reporters for the press who had been in court on business during the trial, signed a petition to the Home Secretary for the reprieve of Maguire who belonged to the Royal Marines and had come home on furlough. Seven respectable witnesses swore that Maguire

was in his own house at the time of the rescue. Maguire received a free pardon and was restored to his position in the Marines. Shore, another of the condemned, also received a free pardon, because it was found that he did not carry a revolver. The other three, however, were executed. But before the execution a disorderly mob broke into the Home Office. When Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who was then the Home Secretary, declined to see them, they declined to leave the premises. Their ringleader proclaimed then and there that if the prisoners at Manchester were executed the lives of Ministers would not be held sacred. But in spite of such threats the law took its course, and the condemned men at Manchester were elevated to the position of Manchester Martyrs by their compatriots. One can well imagine to what extent feelings must have run on this memorable occasion. Racial and political feelings ran high, and the impressionable Irish girl, new to political excitement, received her first impressions of politics from witnessing the scene at the trial of Allen and others, and the cry of the heart-broken girl, who was Allen's sweetheart, to Miss Wood and her mother in piteful tones of "Save my William" must have further

intensified the impression produced on a young and emotional mind. Who can say that the picture of the trial scene of the Manchester Martyrs is not still on the brain of Mrs. Besant and that her desire for grand processions and excited crowds is not in the nature of giving life to the old picture? Thus the first foundations of religious doubt and political excitement were laid immediately before her marriage. How these two powerful influences modified her life we shall leave to the subsequent articles to unfold.

IV

Miss Wood was engaged to the Rev. Frank Besant in the summer of 1866 and married in the winter of 1867. They were an ill-matched pair, and the marriage was a great mistake. There were faults on both sides. Probably both were very ignorant and unprepared to enter on married life. To begin with, the Rev. Frank Besant proposed to his future wife just before he had to catch a train. The serious business of making a marriage proposal ought never to be undertaken in a hurry. One ought to have an ample reserve of time at one's disposal before plunging into a serious action like

this. A good many girls burst into tears when a marriage proposal is made. It requires time to soothe them. You cannot very well leave a girl to whom you have just proposed marriage and who is in tears with the excuse "I am in a hurry, I have to catch a train." Just see what happened in the present case. Rev. Frank Besant proposed marriage to Miss Wood, and Miss Wood says "Startled and my sensitive pride touched by what seemed to my strict views an assumption that I had been flirting, I hesitated, did not follow my first impulse of refusal, but took refuge in silence; my suitor had to catch his train and left me the most upset and little depressed person on the Sussex coast."

The consequence of such a hurried departure must have been unfavourable to the bridegroom who thought more about catching a train than about securing the affection of his future wife. It might have been all right with a girl who understood the world and all life's duties and burdens, but with a young girl, just out of school, with no more idea of the marriage relation than a four year old girl, the consequence was disastrous. In after years when Mrs. Besant had time to ponder over the wreck of her married life she wrote "Looking back on it all I

deliberately say that no more fatal blunder can be made than to train a girl to womanhood in ignorance of all life's duties and burdens and then to let her face them for the first time away from all the old associations, the old helps, the old refuge on the mother's breast. That perfect innocence may be very beautiful, but it is a perilous possession.....Many an unhappy marriage dates from its very beginning from the terrible shock to a young girl's sensitive modesty and pride, her helpless bewilderment and fear". Very true, but unfortunately Mrs. Besant had to purchase this experience at a terrible price.

She ought to have been taught something of the duties and burdens of married life before she got married. The responsibility of giving such instruction rests, in the first instance, with the mother and, in the next place, with the school teacher. But in those days it had not begun to be recognised that ignorant innocence in women was positively mischievous. Even elderly, cultured men believed that it was undesirable to enlighten women on their marital duties and responsibilities. Alphonse Daudet, the French novelist, when asked his opinion of such enlightenment, protested that it was

absolutely unnecessary. But even in those early times there were enlightened people who held a contrary opinion. Coventry Patmore, the poet, in an essay on ancient and modern ideas of purity, protests against that disease of impurity which comes of "our modern undivine silences." Professor Metchnikoff, speaking especially as regards women, declared that knowledge is so indispensable for moral conduct that ignorance must be counted the most immoral of acts. Mrs. Besant's protests above quoted were written some time about 1891. A few years after that, in 1894, the *New Review* collected the opinions of various more or less prominent persons on the subject whether the sexual facts of life should be taught to girls as well as boys, and in that symposium only a small minority of two—Rabbi Adler and Mrs. Lynn Lynton—were against such knowledge being imparted to boys and girls; while among the majority in favour of it were Mme. Adam, Thomas Hardy, Sir Walter Besant, Bjornson, Hall Caine, Sarah Grand, Max Nordau, Lady Henry Somerset, Baroness Von Suttner, and Miss Willard. Medical men were strongly in favour of such education being imparted. The *British Medical Journal* in a leading article

in June 1894 said, "Most medical men of an age to beget confidence in such affairs will be able to recall instances in which an ignorance, which would have been ludicrous, if it had not been so sad, has been displayed on matters regarding which every woman entering on a married life ought to have been accurately informed. There can, we think, be little doubt that much unhappiness and a great deal of illness would be prevented if young people of both sexes possessed a little accurate knowledge regarding the sexual relations and were well impressed with the profound importance of selecting healthy mates." However, these are the opinions of the leading men and women of that time. But it was not Miss Wood's fault if the opinions of the leaders had not percolated throughout society. She cannot be held responsible for her ignorance, but she must be held responsible for one thing: When the Rev. Frank Besant proposed to her rather suddenly, she ought to have intimated to him that the proposal was somewhat sudden and moved an adjournment for some weeks for the consideration of the subject after due notice had been given of the motion. She knew that she did not love this young clergyman in the sense that she

desired him for a husband. She was possessed, from all available evidence, of sufficient will power to secure an adjournment of the consideration of the subject, if not to reject finally the proposal, all at once. In later years she said that she did not decline the proposal because she did not want to give pain. But surely the pain inflicted by the declining of a marriage proposal is nothing compared to the far greater pain of the breaking up of a happy home.

Apart from these considerations there was also incompatibility of temperament. Mrs. Besant says "I must have been a very unsatisfactory wife from the beginning, though, I think, other treatment might gradually have turned me into a fair imitation of the proper conventional article". There is a great deal of truth in that statement, for we agree with the learned judge who said that, "There is no woman who cannot be kissed or kicked into submission." The difficulty lies in sorting out as to which are the ones to be kissed into submission and which to be kicked. Apparently, the Rev. Frank Besant made a wrong diagnosis and paid for his mistake with his domestic happiness. Here is a contrast in the temperament of the husband and wife as given

by Mrs. Besant herself. Speaking of her husband she says. "He, with very high ideas of a husband's authority and a wife's submission, holding strongly to the master-in-my-own-house theory, thinking much of the details of home arrangement, precise, methodical, easily-angered and with difficulty appeased." And speaking of herself she says "I, accustomed to freedom, indifferent to home details, impulsive, very hot-tempered and proud as Lucifer". Here are inflammable materials for you, which would explode at the slightest friction in domestic happiness. In the case of women there is an additional disadvantage arising out of ignorance, namely, that it deprives them of the knowledge necessary for intelligent sympathy with other women. The sympathy and association with other women, would have to a very large extent mitigated the disadvantages from which this ill-mated pair were suffering. "With strangers about me with whom I had no sympathy, visited by ladies who talked to me only about babies and servants, troubles of which I knew nothing and which bored me unutterably, and who were as uninterested in all that had filled my life, . . . was it wonderful that I became timid, dull and depressed?" This is

a question that Mrs. Besant asks, and the reply to that must be that it was not at all surprising; but on the contrary it would have been surprising if things went well. A hot-tempered woman mated to an easily-angered man is bad enough; added to that, if the woman is not only ignorant but was practically incapable of realising her domestic duties, you have the foundation for a domestic tragedy well and truly laid, and the disruption of the happy home was not long in coming.

V.

Mrs. Besant was married in December 1867 and she left her husband after obtaining a judicial separation towards the end of 1873. The six years of married life that she had was a mixture of illness, domestic unhappiness and philosophic doubt. Mrs. Besant has herself summed up her married life tersely in the following words:—"So I slid into marriage blindly and stupidly, fearing to give pain; fretted my heart out for a year; then roused by harshness and injustice, stiffened and hardened and lived with a wall of ice round me within which I waged mental conflicts that nearly killed me." The man who proposes marriage to

the girl of his choice and then rushes off to catch a train has only himself to blame if he gets a refrigerator for a wife. One can scarcely expect a warm reception on his return home after the day's work from a wife who lived with a wall of ice round her. This must have been rather uncomfortable in England ; but might not have been bad during the summer months in India. It is not necessary for us to enter into the details of Mrs. Besant's domestic life during the six years that she lived with her husband except to note certain important facts which have a bearing on the subsequent development of her character and activities.

Her literary activities began in the year after her marriage, activities which fill such an important place in her life. It may fairly be presumed that she took to writing to fill up the void left in her domestic duties by her insulation from her husband by the wall of ice round her and by the cloak of husband's authority on the part of the Rev. Frank Besant. She began with publishing short stories in the *Family Herald*, but her first novel sent for publication in the same periodical was returned by the editor with the remark that it was too political for their pages, but that if she would write one

of purely domestic interest and up to the same level it would probably be accepted. But that novel of purely domestic interest was never written for the best of reasons, that it was not in Mrs. Besant's line. Theology and politics were more in her line than domestic concerns.

We have already seen that Mrs. Besant was never very robust in health and she started with a neurotic disposition inherited from her mother. Her married life did not improve her health. Her first child was born in January 1869 and her daughter was born in August 1870. Two child births within a period of 20 months will undermine the health of even a strong woman. Mrs. Besant was left in very poor health after the birth of her daughter, and a few months after that, in the spring of 1871, both her children were attacked with whooping cough. The strain on the mother brought about by the worry, anxiety and exertions of nursing the two children was great. The seven months old little girl developed bronchitis and congestion of the lung on the top of the whooping cough and lay between life and death for a long period, all hopes being given up by the doctor in attendance, depending entirely on the tender and anxious care of the young mother who sat

up night and day nursing her young offspring. It was, as Mrs. Besant says, "the long months of suffering through which I had been passing, with the seemingly purposeless torture of my little one as a climax, that struck the first stunning blow at my belief in God as a merciful Father of men." The steps by which she passed from religious emotionalism to cold atheism are best described in her own words. "My own bright life had been enshrouded by pain and rendered to me degraded by an intolerable sense of bondage, and here was my helpless, sinless babe tortured for weeks and left frail and suffering. The smooth brightness of my previous life made all the disillusionment more startling, and the sudden plunge into conditions so new and so unfavourable dazed and stunned me. My religious past became the worst enemy of the suffering present. All my personal belief in Christ, all my intense faith in His constant direction of affairs, and my habit of continual prayer and of realisation of His Presence—all were against me now. The very height of my trust was the measure of the shock when the trust gave way". These are not exactly the methods of philosophic doubt. They look more like a nervous breakdown and the sequel will

show the true nature of Mrs. Besant's mental condition at that time. She had become so desperate that she anxiously looked for a door of escape "from a life that losing its hope in God had not yet learned to live in hope for man."

A sudden ray of hope and discovery flashed across her mind. There was a way of escape and that lay in a bottle of chloroform that the doctor had left behind for use in allaying the paroxysms that the baby was suffering from. Says Mrs. Besant "I ran up to my room, took out the bottle and carried it downstairs standing against the window in the summer twilight, glad that the struggle was over and peace at hand. I uncorked the bottle and was raising it to my lips, when, as though the words were spoken softly and clearly, I heard, "Oh! Coward, Coward, who used to dream of martyrdom and cannot bear a few short years of pain." Here are all the symptoms complete in every detail of a nervous breakdown which had lessened the inhibitory power. It is a well-known fact that exhaustion of nervous energy always lessens the inhibitory power. Here is a fragile young lady with an inherited neurotic tendency who was debilitated by two childbirths within a

period of 20 months, broken in health by long nursing of her two children through serious illness, worried through domestic unhappiness and going through the process of reaction consequent on the development of a too precocious religious emotionalism, attempting to commit suicide to escape from her worldly troubles. It is true that she did not actually commit suicide on this or on another occasion either, when she made a similar attempt. It is not always that the states of defective inhibition and impulse are constant. They may be of momentary duration, they may be slight in form or most intense, but the fact is there. It is not a very healthy thing to force any sense or mental faculty into too great activity till its brain substratum is sufficiently developed. Too great development of the moral sense at early stages is as a rule followed by a reaction. The late Sir Thomas Clouston quotes the case of a boy of four who was so sensitive as to right and wrong that he never ate an apple without first considering the ethics of the question as to whether he should eat it or not; he would suffer acute misery, cry bitterly and lose some of his sleep at night if he had shouted too loud at play or taken more than his share of the

cake. But says Sir Thomas Clouston, "The usual anaesthesia that follows the keen feeling succeeded to the precocious moral intensity in this child, for at ten he was the greatest imp I ever saw and could not be made to see that smashing his mother's watch or throwing a cat out of the window or taking what was not his own were wrong at all." This young lady whose imagination was filled with religious dreams when she was seven or eight years old, continued to live in the ecstasy of religious emotionalism exhibiting signs of the inevitable reaction before she was 25 years old. Within a few months after the recovery of her children from illness she herself broke down "and lay for weeks helpless and prostrate in raging and unceasing head-pain, unable to sleep, unable to bear the light, lying like a log on the bed not unconscious, but indifferent to everything, consciousness centred as it were in the ceaseless pain." When after long illness she began to recover gradually, her medical attendant who had fully realised the nature of the case tried to divert her mind into healthier channels by making her study works on anatomy, physiology and other scientific subjects.

We need not follow Mrs. Besant through all

the stages of doubt which converted her from an emotional Christian to a philosophic atheist. Suffice it to note that the unhappiness of her home life increased in direct proportion to her religious wretchedness. One more incident we shall narrate before we close this part of Mrs. Besant's life. In the spring of 1873 Mrs. Besant discovered that she had the germs of oratory in her. One day she went to Sibsey Church where her husband was Vicar, locked herself in alone in that church and delivered her first speech. It was a lecture on the inspiration of the Bible. "I shall never forget the feeling of power and delight," says Mrs. Besant, "but especially of power that came upon me as I sent my voice ringing down the aisles; and the passion in me broke into balanced sentences and never paused for musical cadence or for rythmical expression. As though in a dream the solitude was peopled and I saw the listening faces and the eager eyes, and as the sentences flowed unbidden from my lips and my own tones echoed back to me from the pillars of the ancient church I knew of a verity that the gift of speech was mine and that if ever the chance came to me of public work, this power of melodious utterance should at least win hearing for

any message I had to bring." Thus Mrs. Besant made her maiden speech in the solitude of Sibsey Church and addressed the empty benches on the inspiration of the Bible. But that was enough to intoxicate her. She was intoxicated with the feeling of power by listening to her own words, and the intoxication finds expression in the following eloquent passage. "And indeed none can know, save they who have felt it, what joy there is in the full rush of language that moves and sways ; to feel a crowd respond to the lightest touch, to see the faces brighten or darken at your bidding, to know that the sources of human emotion and human passion gush forth at the word of the speaker as the stream from the riven rock, to feel that the thought which thrills through a thousand hearers has its impulse from you, and throbs back to you the fuller from a thousand heartbeats. Is there any emotional joy in life more brilliant than this, fuller of passionate triumph and of the very essence of intellectual delight?" Undoubtedly the joys of emotionalism are great, but there is something greater and pleasanter than the joys of emotional excitement, and that is the satisfaction of intellectual development. To appeal to the emotions of human beings and to receive

an emotional response is very much like supplying strong drinks to hungry and thirsty men. Intoxicating drinks on an empty stomach produce intoxication easily. But true wisdom lies in giving the people something to eat before they are given wines to drink. Appeal to the intellect when properly made produces a response perhaps not so flashy as the response to emotional appeals. But the pleasure of sowing seeds of thought, of helping people to think, of stimulating the development of the intellect, is far greater, far more substantial than bringing out emotional excitement. Empty words and frothy rhetoric appeal to shallow and uncultivated audiences, but something more substantial than that is required to touch the deeper chords of the human intellect and the deeper springs of character.

VI.

The immediate cause of Mrs. Besant's separation from her husband was her refusal to attend the Holy Communion. One "Sacrament Sunday" she rose and left the church. The refusal of the Vicar's wife to "Communicate" was noticed and commented upon, and some time towards the end of 1873 Mrs. Besant was

told that she must either conform to the outward appearance of the Church and attend the Communion or she must leave the Rev. Frank Besant. Says Mrs. Besant "Then came the distinct alternative; conformity or exclusion from home, in other words, hypocrisy or expulsion. I chose the latter." In thus making her choice and openly breaking with her husband, she was inflicting the severest pain on her aged mother. "The hardest struggle," says Mrs. Besant, "was against my mother's tears and pleading. It was hard to remain steadfast when my darling mother whom I loved as I loved nothing else on earth threw herself on her knees before me imploring me to yield. It seemed like a crime to bring such anguish on her, and I felt as a murderer as the snowy head was pressed against my knees. And yet—to live a lie? Not even for her was that shame possible; in that worst crisis of blinding agony my will clung fast to truth". Those who know Mrs. Besant know that very little value is to be attached to her high sounding words and impassioned language. She believes in what she says, but what is the value of belief when very little reliance can be placed on her judgment. The shock caused by her conduct was

practically killing her mother, and yet not even for her would Mrs. Besant live what she considered to be a lie. But this frame of mind was not of very long duration. Contrast these words and attitude with what happened only a few months afterwards when her mother lay dying. Mrs. Besant's mother had an intense longing to 'Communicate' before she died, but absolutely refused to do so unless Mrs. Besant joined her. This changed Mrs. Besant's attitude towards the Holy Communion. She was prepared to be a hypocrite for once to ease the conscience of her mother during her last hours on earth. This concession a few months ago might possibly have saved the breakdown of the mother's health. But no. Then Mrs. Besant was for truth and stuck to the position that "He who loves father or mother better than truth is not worthy of her." Although Mrs. Besant temporarily changed her opinion, it was not very easy to find a clergyman of the Church of England who could change his principles as easily as Mrs. Besant could change hers. Clergyman after clergyman refused to allow Mrs. Besant to 'Communicate' till at last she went to Dean Stanley who consented to administer the Sacrament to her. The arguments, we might almost

say, the special pleadings with which Dean Stanley anæsthetised his own conscience we need not consider here. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Besant did take the Sacrament administered by Dean Stanley.

Her mother died in May 1874. The period between Mrs. Besant's leaving her husband in August 1873 and her meeting with Bradlaugh in August 1874 was an exceptionally trying period for Mrs. Besant. After her legal separation from her husband, she found herself guardian of her little daughter and possessor of a small monthly income "sufficient for respectable starvation." She could have had a home with her brother, but that would have meant giving up her heretical friends and keeping quiet." It was not for that that she left her husband ; and so she tried to get something to do. She became a governess in a clergyman's family for a very short time but gave it up, and after her mother's death she removed herself to Colby Road, Upper Norwood. We need not enter into the privations she suffered during this period. Writing about her experiences of this time Mrs. Besant says "Recalling those days of hard living I can now look on them without regret ; more, I am glad to

have passed through them, for they have taught me how to sympathise with those who are struggling as I struggled then, and I never can hear the words fall from pale lips 'I am hungry' without remembering how painful a thing hunger is and without curing that pain at least for the moment." Again we ask what value is to be attached to these empty words? It is true that during a certain period of her life she was associated with others in helping the poor. It is true that she became a socialist, even at the risk of giving pain to her dearest friend Charles Bradlaugh; but how easily she has forgotten the hard living of the Upper Norwood days when in a country, perhaps the poorest in the world, she is lavishing her fortune on political propagandism and leaving the poor to say "I am hungry", without her having a chance of hearing these words fall from the pale lips of poor Panchamas. It is idle we know to point out instances of inconsistencies in Mrs. Besant. She is a bundle of inconsistencies, and that is the most interesting thing about Mrs. Besant.

VII

Mrs. Besant, we are told, did a good deal of reading during her Upper Norwood days. She re-read Dean Mansel's "Bampton Lectures," and she tells us that they did much towards turning her in the direction of atheism; she re-read Mill's Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy and studied carefully Comte's "Philosophy Positive." It was also at this time that she wrote a tract on the nature and existence of God. In a conversation with Mrs. Conway, Mrs. Besant was asked by that lady whether she had been to the Hall of Science in Old Street, "No, I have never been there," replied Mrs. Besant. "Mr. Bradlaugh is rather a rough sort of speaker, is he not?" To this Mrs. Conway replied that "He is the finest speaker of Saxon English that I have ever heard except perhaps John Bright." During this time Mrs. Besant happened to go to the shop of Mr. Edward Truelove in High Holborn, and there came across a copy of the *National Reformer*. In that journal she read an article about the National Secular Society which was an organisation devoted to the propagandism of Free Thought. Mrs. Besant wanted to join that society, and so wrote a short note to the editor of the

National Reformer asking whether it was necessary for a person to profess atheism before being admitted to the society. She received a reply that it was not necessary for her to avow herself an athiest, and the editor extended to her an invitation to join that society if she could accept the principles of the society as published in the *National Reformer*. Mrs. Besant sent in her name to join the Secular Society as an active member, and she was informed that Londoners could receive their certificates at the Hall of Science from Mr. Bradlaugh on any Sunday evening. Mrs. Besant accordingly went to the Hall of Science on August 2nd 1874 and there met Charles Bradlaugh.

Mrs. Besant tells us that she looked at Charles Bradlaugh with interest, impressed and surprised. She gives a graphic description of Mr. Bradlaugh's speech that evening and pays a high tribute to his eloquence. After the speech Mrs. Besant says "he came down the hall with some certificates in his hand, glanced round and handed me mine with a questioning "Mrs. Besant?" Of this first meeting Mrs. Besant says, "As friends, not as strangers we met—swift recognition, as it were, leaping from eye to eye; and I know now that this instinct-

ive friendliness was in very truth an outgrowth of strong friendship in other lives and that on that August day we took up again an ancient tie, we did not begin a new one. And so in lives to come we shall meet again and help each other as we helped each other in this." Yes, this meeting in the Hall of Science was one of the many meetings between Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, otherwise known as Lutetia (the name given to Charles Bradlaugh through all his lives) and Herakles (which is Mrs. Besant's name from her days in the Moon.) It was in the sixth round on the Moon chain that Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant first met as human beings. This was probably many many years before Christ, and it was in this round that the animals of the previous generation began to be born as men, at least that is the information vouchsafed to us by that semi-divine personage, Charles Leadbeater, in collaboration with Mrs. Annie Besant. In this round Herakles *alias* Annie Besant is seen as a "woman labouring in the fields advanced enough to cook her rats and other edibles instead of eating them raw and with a whole pack of brothers as husbands—Capella, Pindar, Beatrix and Lutetia *alias* Charles Bradlaugh".

Thus the husband and wife of a million years ago now met again. Then they resided in a hut on the Moon. Now they met in the Hall of Science, Old Street, in a city called London, not on the Moon, but on Earth. Mrs. Annie Besant unfortunately made these clairvoyant investigations after the death of Charles Bradlaugh, and that gentleman never pretended to have any occult powers at all; and so the opportunity was lost for this pair to have the pleasure of a chat over old times. It might have been so refreshing to both of them if, at their first meeting in the Hall of Science, Charles Bradlaugh could have gone up to Mrs. Besant and shaken her by the hand saying "Here we are again meeting once more on Earth" and Mrs. Besant could have replied "Do you remember the gay old time that we had on the Moon and the excellent rat-stews that I used to prepare?" and so on. They might have discussed the time when in another birth they were fellow guardsmen, and yet in another birth when Charles Bradlaugh was a son of Mrs. Besant and probably got punished for being naughty. All those pleasures were lost because information about their previous births became only available long after Charles Bradlaugh's death.

But we see that in Mrs. Besant's previous lives Charles Bradlaugh played but a comparatively insignificant part, the leading part being taken by Sirius *alias* C. W. Leadbeater. We shall not go into that highly interesting subject of the lives of Mrs. Besant on the Moon and elsewhere for the present. We shall come to that subject when we deal with the theosophic stage of Mrs. Besant's earthly existence. For the present we are only concerned with the meeting between Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. With this meeting in the Hall of Science commenced a friendship which lasted for several years and which was only allowed to cool down somewhat by one of Mrs. Besant's periodical changes of opinion when she differed from Charles Bradlaugh and joined the Socialists. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, her father's biographer, in her *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, says "Having enrolled herself a member of the National Secular Society in August 1874 Mrs. Besant sought Mr. Bradlaugh's acquaintance. They were mutually attracted; and a friendship sprang up between them of so close a nature that had both been free, it would undoubtedly have ended in marriage. In their common labours, in the

risks and responsibilities jointly undertaken, their friendship grew and strengthened, and the insult and calumny heaped upon them only served to cement the bond". Thus the two met and commenced their common labours which we shall have to analyse in subsequent articles.

VIII

Those were happy days of congenial companionship and intellectual intercourse for Mrs. Besant and Mr. Bradlaugh. Working at home or enjoying relaxation away from home they were together and happy. "For many years" says Mrs. Besant "he was wont to come to my house in the morning and bringing his books and papers he would sit writing hour after hour, I equally busy with my own work, now and then perhaps exchanging a word breaking off just for lunch and dinner and working on again in the evening till about 10 o'clock." Again in the hours of relaxation they would roam all over the country round London— "Richmond where we tramped across the park and sat under its mighty trees; Windsor with its groves of bracken; Kew where we had tea in a funny little room with water cress *ad libitum*; Hampton Court with its dishevelled

beauties ; Maiden Head and Taplow where the river was the attraction ; and above all Broxbourne where he delighted to spend the day with his fishing rod wandering along the river of which he knew every eddy ". What a delightful time they must have had and what lovely surroundings in which to spend their hours of peace. Shelley wrote his " Revolt of Islam " in Quarry Woods overhanging the Thames just below Marlow. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant perhaps discussed atheism, neo-malthusianism and the fruits of philosophy in the Clevedon reaches just above Maiden Head. But they were not all days of picnicking and holiday making. They got through a good deal of work as well. Mrs. Besant began her contribution to the *National Reformer* in August 1874 a very short time after she first met Charles Bradlaugh, and with her first contribution she entered in right earnest upon the work which was to engross her for many years to come. Over the signature of " Ajax " she commenced a series of notes entitled " Day break " which were to mark " the rising of the sun of liberty when men should dare to think for themselves in theology and act for themselves in politics " and these notes were continued weekly for several years.

From August 1874 to April 1891 Mrs. Besant remained connected with the *National Reformer*, first as contributor and then as sub-editor, becoming shortly afterwards co-editor and co-proprietor. The co-editorship was resigned in October 1887 and the co-proprietorship ceased with the dissolution of the partnership between herself and Mr. Bradlaugh in December 1890. In the beginning Mrs. Besant was earning only a small salary as contributor to the *National Reformer*, but in later days she made her writings pay. Referring to the smallness of her salary on the staff of the *National Reformer* Mrs. Besant says that national reformers are always poor. We do not know whether they are always poor. Mrs. Besant, who is now trying to form or reform the Indian nation, does not appear to be struggling against poverty. She was also in the earlier days of her connection with the *National Reformer* a pseudonymous contributor, because she says that the work she was doing for Mr. Scott would have been prejudiced had her name appeared in the columns of the *National Reformer*. So she wrote to the *National Reformer* under the name of 'Ajax' and signed her name under the work she was doing for Mr. Scott. Later on she reversed the

process and signed her *National Reformer* articles and published the tracts written for Mr. Scott anonymously. This practice does not appear to be quite in keeping with some of her earlier heroics.

Mrs. Besant's first experience of electioneering work was at Northampton in 1874 when Mr. Bradlaugh, unsuccessfully contested that constituency. This election, says Mrs. Besant, gave her first experience of anything in the nature of rioting. The rioting that took place in Northampton after the defeat of Mr. Bradlaugh in 1874 was by no means the only experience that Mrs. Besant had in riotous meetings. Some of the lecture-work in her earlier days of platform propaganda was pretty rough. She says "that in Darwen stone-throwing was regarded as a fair argument addressed to the atheist lecturer, at Swansea the fear of violence was so great that a guarantee against damage to the hall was exacted by the proprietor at Hoyland". She says that she found a hall packed with a crowd that yelled at her with great vigour, stood on forms, shook fists at her and otherwise showed feelings more warm than friendly, and while she was leaving the hall the crowd yelled and swore and struck at her. On

another occasion when Mr. Bradlaugh presided at a meeting which was addressed by Mrs. Besant there was organised interruption and disturbance headed by a pugilist, and Mr. Bradlaugh had to leave the platform and himself evict the pugilist before the meeting could go on. In this way against opposition, sometimes very bitter, she went on with her propagandist work as a free thinker because she says "I seem to hear the voice of truth ringing over the battle field," "Who will go?". This ringing voice in the head seems to be a chronic condition with Mrs. Besant, for in 1875 she heard the voice ringing over the battlefield "Who will go?" and again in 1915 another voice was ringing and she shouted out, "Who will join hands with us?" This desire to fight all round in response to the ringing voice in her head brought her into the midst of a serious complication connected with what is known as the Knowlton pamphlet. At the time Mr. Bradlaugh was blamed for allowing Mrs. Besant to associate herself with him in the Knowlton Pamphlet struggle, but Mrs. Besant was not to be kept out of it. The prosecution offered to withdraw the case against Mrs. Besant and proceed against Mr. Bradlaugh alone. But

Mrs. Besant would not agree to this. With Mr. Bradlaugh, it was a case of his enthusiasm running away with his discretion; with Mrs. Besant it was a case of Mr. Bradlaugh's enthusiasm running away with her discretion. She has never been an original thinker although she has shown a wonderful power of absorbing the thoughts of others. Like many weak natures she showed a fatal facility to be led by others with a stronger will than hers. At first it was Charles Bradlaugh, then it was Madame Blavatsky. She made an enthusiastic follower but unfortunately has not the judgment to make a leader. That she rushed into the Knowlton pamphlet muddle very much against Mr. Bradlaugh's wish we are told by Mr. Bradlaugh's biographer. Having got entangled in that case she made a good fight the details of which we shall examine in our next article.

IX

An American physician of the name of Charles Knowlton wrote and published a pamphlet on the voluntary limitation of the family. It was published somewhere in the thirties of the last century and was freely sold both in America and in England; but in 1877 a book-seller at

Bristol, who had an unenviable reputation as a seller of obscene publications, added some improper pictures to the Knowlton pamphlet and began selling it. He was prosecuted and convicted. The pamphlet was called "Fruits of philosophy: an essay on the population question." The pamphlet had previously been sold by publishers of the highest repute without any interference from the authorities. Probably, it was the evil reputation of the Bristol publisher together with the pictures which he had added to the publication that brought about the prosecution and conviction. Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Bradlaugh's publisher, acting on his advice went to Bristol and declared himself the responsible publisher of the Knowlton pamphlet. He was thereupon arrested and was committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court. Mr. Watts came to the conclusion that the pamphlet was indefensible and decided to plead guilty. Mr. Bradlaugh thereupon came forward as the champion of the pamphlet, severed his connection with Watts and decided to publish the pamphlet himself. Mr. Watts who pleaded guilty at the trial was released on his own recognisance of £500 to come up for judgment when called upon. Mr. Bradlaugh himself is reported to

have said that "If the pamphlet now prosecuted had been brought to me for publication I should probably have declined to publish it, not because of the subject matter but because I did not like its style". In pamphlets of this description the style and manner in which they are written make all the difference in the world, and it seems rather strange that both Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant who did not approve of the style of the pamphlet should have made up their minds to publish it and to risk the consequences. At a later time Mrs. Besant herself wrote a book on the same subject under the title of "The law of population." If this procedure had been adopted a little earlier and the two partners of the Free Thought Publishing Co., had brought out an improved form of the Knowlton pamphlet matters might have been improved considerably; but while admitting that the pamphlet was not written in a desirable style, they should have still persisted in publishing it seems to us rather an inexplicable position.

Before we proceed further with the narrative connected with the Knowlton pamphlet prosecution, we had better explain to our readers the difference between Malthusian and

Neo-Malthusian teachings, so that some at least of the popular misconceptions regarding the teachings of Malthus may be cleared. Malthus was a clergyman, and his essay on population was published in 1798. It was published as a reply to a paper in Godwin's *Enquirer*. Mr. Godwin was a disciple of Rousseau and had drawn up a plan of an ideal village in which mankind were to be happy and at ease without the annoying restraints of property and marriage. This ideal was shattered by Malthus in his essay on population. Malthus said "You may imagine this perfect picture for a little while, but it will not last. It cannot last. Nature is against it. She has a principle—that of population—which is sure to destroy it. Mankind always by her arrangements increase as fast as they can; misery checks their increase and vice checks it but nothing else. A perfectly happy and virtuous community, by physical law, is constrained to increase very rapidly; if you look into the fact you will find that it will double every 25 years, but there can be no similar increase in their food. The best lands are taken up first, then the next best, then the inferior, at last the worst; at each stage the amount of food produced is less than before. By nature human

food increases in a slow arithmetical ratio ; man himself increases in a quick geometrical ratio, unless want and vice stop him, so that if you make him happy in a village community for a moment, he will soon multiply, so that he shall cease to be happy ; there is nothing to stop him ; he will ere long reach the inevitable limit where want and wickedness begin to keep him down". This was what Malthus wrote in the first edition of his essay, but he very soon added something more to his second edition in which he said "Throughout the whole of the present work, I have so far differed from the former, as to suppose the action of another check to population which does not come under the head either of vice or misery". The reference is to the celebrated principle of self-restraint, moral or prudential. In other words Malthus, while laying down the law that mankind increases at a greater ratio than the food supply, only advocated the restriction of family by the exercise of post-nuptial continence. Malthus never advocated anything else, so that it is unfair to call the teachings such as are contained in the Knowlton pamphlet by the name of Malthus. Hence the invention of the name Neo-Malthusian. The Neo-Malthusians

accepted the principles enunciated by Malthus, but they went further, and instead of relying on self-restraint as a check on population proceeded to lay down artificial checks with full directions as to how to use those checks. It was the enumeration of those artificial checks and the elaborate directions given to apply those checks, that a certain section of the British public objected to in the Knowlton pamphlet.

To go back to the Knowlton pamphlet prosecution. Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant decided to publish the pamphlet to test the right of publication. On March 23rd, 1877 they went together to the Guildhall to deliver the first copy of the new edition of the pamphlet to the Chief Clerk with a notice that they would personally attend at a certain hour on the following day to sell the pamphlet. The next day Stone Cutter Street was thronged with a crowd of persons anxious to purchase copies of the pamphlet from Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. A few days later, the partners were arrested on a warrant and marched off to Bridewell. From the police court where Mrs. Besant had to endure the indignity of being personally searched, they were conveyed to the Guildhall. Mr. Alderman Fighins heard the charge

and remanded the accused until the 17th of April. At the hearing of the case Mr. Douglas Straight conducted the prosecution, and after a couple of days Mr. Straight offered to proceed against Mr. Bradlaugh alone, letting the charge against Mrs. Besant drop. But to this the latter would on no account agree. Was Mrs. Besant justified in insisting on her being tried along with Mr. Bradlaugh? In the first place there was no question of her deserting Bradlaugh even if she were not included as one of the accused. She could have rendered him all the help that she did render without being a co-accused. Her being associated with Mr. Bradlaugh in standing a trial along with him considerably increased Mr. Bradlaugh's anxieties and responsibilities. In her father's life Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter writes thus on this point. "Upon Mr. Bradlaugh lay the whole responsibility of the defence; his was the mind, that planned it, and he had to conduct the fight, not merely for himself, but for the woman beside him; had to consider two briefs instead of one, and as Mrs. Besant was at that time totally unfamiliar with the procedure of the law courts, he had to instruct her, not only in the things it was desirable she should say,

but also in those which were better left unsaid. He was but too well aware that Mrs. Besant risked not alone imprisonment, but also the loss of her child ; and in the event of failure and the imprisonment of both himself and his colleague the problem naturally presented itself, who was to edit the *National Reformer*, and to look after the new business. Mr. Watts' plea of " guilty " followed by Mr. Bradlaugh's indignation had for the moment produced considerable division amongst former friends, and there had been hardly time to reckon which were friends and which were foes. Nothing could better mark the extent of my father's difficulty than the fact that he had to hand over these onerous duties to us, his daughters, two girls fresh from a dreary country life, and hardly out of our teens. Hence although he was justly proud that a woman whom he held in such esteem should stand by him publicly at such a moment, it increased his anxieties and his responsibilities enormously that Mrs. Besant's risks were so heavy ; and there was thus no trusty colleague free to undertake the burden of a weekly journal and the drudgery of the management of the new publishing business. Some at least of these difficulties were pointed out to

Mrs. Besant; friends besought her by every argument they could think of not to risk the loss of her child; but she had chosen her course and she adhered to it in spite of all entreaties. And such is the irony of fate that she lost the society of her daughter for 10 years, and was subjected to the grossest insult from Sir George Jessel, as Master of the Rolls for defending doctrines she now repudiates." We may take it that the above represent Mr. Bradlaugh's view of the matter. As to the public view, Mr. Herbert Paul in his 'History of Modern England, says, "It added to his (Bradlaugh's) offence in many people's eyes that a lady, Mrs. Besant, had co-operated and been convicted with him." But what about Mrs. Besant herself? We can give the reply to that question in the words of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner—the daughter of Charles Bradlaugh, where she says "Indeed I am inclined to think that she (Mrs. Besant) hardly realised all the gravity of her situation; a true sense of the possibilities involved was perhaps somewhat obscured by the atmosphere of excitement and admiration in which she was living." From what we know of Mrs. Besant we can quite endorse the opinion of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner.

X

To come back to the Knowlton pamphlet prosecution, the Magistrate committed both Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant to stand their trial at the Central Criminal Court, commonly called the Old Bailey. Mr. Bradlaugh did not like the prospect of standing a trial at the Old Bailey, and so he made an application before the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Alexander Cockburn, and Mr. Justice Mellor, for a writ of *Certiorari* for the removal of the case to the Queen's Bench to be heard before a judge and special jury. The Lord Chief Justice remarked, "If upon looking at the pamphlet we think its object is a legitimate one of promoting knowledge in a matter of human interest, then lest there should be any miscarriage resulting from any undue prejudice we might think it is a case for trial by a judge and a special jury". And so the judges took time to consider. They took copies of the pamphlet, and a few days later the writ was granted with the following remarks: "We have looked at the book which is the subject matter of this indictment, and we think it really raises a fair question as to whether it is a scientific production for legitimate purposes, or whether it is what the indictment alleged it to be, an obscene

publication. We think this is a question which will require to be decided by a judge, and we think by a special jury; and, therefore, there will be a writ of *certiorari* granted". The Government, however, commenced to make seizures in the Post Office of literature sent out from the Free Thought Publishing Company. All available copies of Knowlton's 'Fruits of Philosophy' were confiscated. So were copies of the Free Thinker's text book and a pamphlet by Mr. Bradlaugh called 'Jesus, Shelley and Malthus' as well as a large number of copies of the *National Reformer*. The trial of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant commenced on the 18th of June, Sir Hardinge Giffard, Q. C., M. P., the then Solicitor-General, afterwards Lord Chancellor of England under the title of Lord Halsbury, was the leading counsel for the prosecution. Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant conducted their own defence. The object of the defence was to show that the doctrine of the limitation of the family was to be found in many other works in general circulation dealing with economic questions, and that in medical works published at popular prices, some intended for the use of young people, there were physiological descriptions set forth in identical

language. Among the witnesses cited for the defence were Professor and Mrs. Fawcett and Charles Darwin. Professor Fawcett refused to take his *subpaena* and declared that he would send Mrs. Fawcett out of the country rather than that she should appear as a witness in the case. Charles Darwin wrote to say, "I have been for many years much out of health and have been forced to give up all society or public meetings; and it would be great suffering to me to be a witness in court. It is indeed not improvable that I may be unable to attend; therefore I hope that, if in your power, you will excuse my attendance". After this he was not called as a witness.

After a trial extending over four days the jury brought in a verdict "We are unanimously of opinion that the book in question is calculated to deprave public morals, but at the same time we entirely exonerate the defendants from any corrupt motives in publishing it". The Lord Chief Justice told the jury that this was a verdict of 'guilty'. The foreman bowed. The clerk asked if they found the defendants guilty upon the indictment. The foreman again bowed; and a verdict of 'guilty' was recorded. Sentence was postponed for a week. On the

28th of June Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant attended the court of Queen's Bench to receive the sentence of the court. The Solicitor-General opened by moving the Court for judgment, and then Mr. Bradlaugh moved three motions; 1, to quash the indictment; 2, for arrest of judgment; and 3, for a new trial. The Court would not agree to a new trial or to a rule for an arrest of judgment but left the decision as to quashing the indictment to the Court of Error. At this stage the Solicitor-General put in two affidavits, one asserting that Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant had continued to sell the pamphlet since the verdict and the other stating that Mrs. Besant in a speech at the Hall of Science on the previous Sunday had represented the Lord Chief Justice as being favourable to them and the verdict as against his summing up. Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter says that "Sir Alexander Cockburn was greatly incensed at the alleged reference to himself and regarded the continued sale in the light of a grave and aggravated offence." Here is the same Mrs. Besant again who cannot control her tongue, predicting the action of the Lord Chief Justice after the jury had given their verdict and before the judge had pronounced sentence.

The Judge, however, sentenced both the accused to six months' imprisonment and to a fine of £200 each and to enter into their own recognisances for £500 each for two years. But the judgment was suspended till the Court of Error had given its decision. In February 1878 the appeal was argued before Lords Justices Bramwell, Brett and Cotton, who, in a very elaborate judgment, gave their decision in favour of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant and quashed the indictment on the ground that the words relied upon by the prosecution as proving their case ought to have been expressly set out.

Thus Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant won their case on a technical point. That however served their purpose, for they were free and could go on with their Neo-Malthusian propaganda. They were also able to get back the copies of the Knowlton pamphlet seized by the Vice Society at Mr. Truelove's shop. Mr. Truelove himself was prosecuted and convicted and sentenced to four months' imprisonment and a fine of £50. This was in connection with another book. The immediate effect of the Knowlton pamphlet prosecution was to give a great impetus to the Neo-Malthusian propaganda. Works upon the population question command-

ed great sale, and we are told that the birth rate in England began gradually to decline. The Malthusian League was revived on a much larger scale, and Mrs. Besant herself brought out a pamphlet entitled "the law of population, its consequences and its bearing upon human conduct and morals." Writing about this pamphlet Mrs. Besant observes "I wrote a pamphlet entitled, 'The Law of Population' giving the arguments which had convinced me of its truth, the terrible distress and degradation entailed on families by overcrowding and the lack of the necessaries of life, pleading for early marriages that prostitution might be destroyed, and limitation of the family that pauperism might be avoided; finally giving the information which rendered early marriage without these evils possible".

It would be interesting to inquire how Mrs. Besant was competent to write a pamphlet of this description. One could put forward theoretical arguments and sustain them from the study of books; to give practical suggestions on points which would render "early marriage without these evils possible" is not quite so easy, unless one has practical experience or an accurate knowledge of the experience of others, or is a

genius. One might say the same about the "law of population," but of course we know that Mrs. Besant is a genius. In later years, referring to her association with the Knowlton pamphlet and the Neo-Malthusian teachings, Mrs. Besant herself has observed "I was wrong intellectually and blundered in the remedy" and, with the assistance of Madame Blavatsky, came to the conclusion that the correct remedy was "self-restraint within marriage, and the gradual restriction of the sexual relation to the perpetuation of the race." It is extraordinary how it took a very clever lady so many years to come to this conclusion. Why, this was exactly what Malthus advocated. In the writings of Malthus you do not find any directions as to how to prevent conception. Self-restraint within marriage was the remedy that Malthus propounded. A careful study of Malthus' works would have given Mrs. Besant the information she wanted. There was no necessity to go to Madame Blavatsky whose past did not qualify her to be a teacher on such a subject as self-restraint within marriage. But, however, Mrs. Besant paid dearly for her blind impulsiveness.

XI

Almost as a sequel to the Knowlton pamphlet prosecution came the proceedings to deprive Mrs. Besant of the guardianship of her daughter. Proceedings were instituted in April 1878. Rev. Besant's petition alleged that "the said Annie Besant is by addresses, lectures and writings endeavouring to propagate the principles of Atheism and has published a book entitled the Gospel of Atheism. She has also associated herself with an infidel lecturer and author named Charles Bradlaugh, in giving lectures and in publishing books and pamphlets whereby the truth of the Christian religion is impeached and disbelief in all religions inculcated." The publication of the Knowlton pamphlet and the writing of the "Law of Population" were also among the offences for which Mrs. Besant was to be deprived of the guardianship of her daughter. The proceedings undoubtedly were in the nature of a persecution, and great public sympathy was roused for the suffering mother who was to be deprived of the guardianship of her only daughter. The petition came for hearing before the then Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel. Mrs. Besant appeared in person to defend the action, and she lost the case. Subsequently

Mrs. Besant has made some very nasty remarks about Sir George Jessel, but that is only "pretty Fanny's way". The old saying is that if you have no case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney. With Mrs. Besant, if she lost a case the rule seems to be to abuse the judge. When the case was lost and her daughter was taken away from her, Mrs. Besant naturally broke down and was ill in bed for some time. "Through that terrible illness," says Mrs. Besant, "day after day Mr. Bradlaugh came to me and sat writing beside me feeding with ice and milk, refused from all others, and behaving more like a tender mother than a friend; he saved my life though it seemed to me for a while of little value, till the first months of lonely pain were over". When she recovered from this illness she took steps to set aside the order obtained by Mr. Besant forbidding Mrs. Besant to bring in a suit against him; but she got no redress. The deed of separation executed in 1873 was held to be good as protecting Rev. Besant from any suit brought by Mrs. Besant whether for divorce or for restitution of conjugal rights, while the clauses giving Mrs. Besant the custody of the child were set aside. In April 1879 the Court of Appeal upheld this decision, but the Court expressed a

strong view as to Mrs. Besant's right of access to her children. Supported by this expression of opinion Mrs. Besant applied to the Master of the Rolls and obtained access to her children.

We may mention in passing that Mr. Truelove, the publisher, was prosecuted for selling a treatise by a Robert Dale Owen on moral physiology and a pamphlet entitled "Individual, family and national poverty." He was tried at the Central Criminal Court and convicted and sentenced to four months' imprisonment and a fine of £50. Mr. Truelove had to undergo the sentence. Upon this there is an outburst in the *National Reformer* in true Besantine style, which readers of *New India* have since become familiar with. Here is a passage from the *National Reformer*. "My 'Law of Population' was used against Mr. Truelove' as an aggravation of his offence, passing over the utter meanness worthy only of Collette of using against a prisoner a book whose author has never been attacked for writing it. Does Mr. Collette, or do the authorities, imagine that the severity shown to Mr. Truelove will in any fashion deter me from continuing the Malthusian propaganda? Let me here assure them, one and all, that it will do nothing of the kind; and I shall continue to

sell the 'Law of Population' and to advocate scientific checks to population, just as though Mr. Collette and his Vice Society were all dead and buried. In commonest justice they are bound to prosecute me, and if they get, and keep a verdict against me, and succeed in sending me to prison, they will only make people more anxious to read my book, and make me more personally powerful as a teacher of the views which they attack."

The last sentence in the passage above quoted serves as a key to some at least of Mrs. Besant's recent actions. "If they succeed in sending me to prison" she says, "they will only make people more anxious to read my book and make me more personally powerful as a teacher of the views which they attack." There is a good deal of truth in it. The surprising thing is the extraordinary lengths to which some people go to advertise themselves. The result of all these prosecutions was a tremendous advertisement, not only to the Neo-Malthusian views but also to the Radical and Free Thought views of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. Even from a financial point of view the prosecutions were a success. The defence fund committee presented a

balance sheet showing public subscriptions amounting to £1,292-5-4, and the total expenditure up to March 1878 in defending all these prosecutions was £1,274-10s. The account was then closed and the balance of £17-15-4 passed on to a new fund for the defence of other cases. On Mr. Truelove's release from imprisonment he was presented with a purse containing £197-16-6. Mrs. Besant herself received from an anonymous friend £200 in appreciation of the courage and ability shown by her. Over and above all these the Malthusian League received £455-11-9 during the first year of its existence. So from a financial point of view these successive prosecutions were a grand success.

XII

When Mrs. Besant recovered from her long and dangerous illness, she came back again to her work with, as she herself says, courage unshaken. Her writings at this period, especially her writings against Christianity, are marked by considerable bitterness. Her own explanation for this added vigour in her attacks on Christianity is that she felt that it was Christianity that had robbed her of her child. But it is easy to

see that the added bitterness and vigour were only manifestations of what is known as the irritability of weakness. Along with her political and religious propaganda she also took up the study of science. In 1879 she met for the first time Dr. Edward Aveling, D. S. C. of London University, a very able teacher of scientific subjects, and under his guidance she started the study of such subjects as Algebra, Geometry and Physics. She matriculated in the London University in June 1879 and very soon qualified herself as a teacher in eight different sciences, and she taught as a teacher in some of the schools attached to the Hall of Science from 1879 upto 1888. She passed her preliminary scientific and first B. S. C. in the University of London but failed three times in the final B. S. C. in practical chemistry. She did not accomplish all this without considerable difficulty, for the ostracism which was practised against atheists followed her in her scientific studies as well. Both Mrs. Besant and Miss Bradlaugh were refused admission to the Botany class of the University College. Dr. Aveling was dismissed from the chair of comparative Anatomy at the London Hospital, not for bad teaching of comparative Anatomy but for his

being an atheist. Questions were asked in the House of Commons about the action of the Education Department in recognising Mrs. Besant as a teacher. These petty persecutions of Mrs. Besant, Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter, Dr. Aveling and others culminated in the attempt to keep Mr. Bradlaugh out of the House of Commons.

Mr. Bradlaugh's struggles first of all against the House of Commons and then in the law Courts are matters of history. They form a most discreditable chapter in English Political history. The only redeeming feature of it is the tardy reparation that was done to Mr. Bradlaugh, when he was on his death-bed, by the House of Commons expunging from its records its resolution against him. During all these years Mrs. Besant stood by Charles Bradlaugh and the history of her public activities during this period corresponds with the history of Mr. Bradlaugh's herculean fight against blind prejudice. Mrs. Besant also took some part in the Irish agitation which was then at its height. It was the harsh treatment of the Irish race during the early part of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, formed in 1880 that eventually led to the development of the Home Rule policy and its adoption by that great

statesman. This forms the brightest period of Mrs. Besant's public activities. Her political work in conjunction with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and the Irish Nationalists marks the high water level of her public activities. In the meantime the publishing business conducted by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant was thriving and the business was transferred to 63, Fleet, Street where it continued to flourish for many years. Mrs. Besant here started a magazine called "Our Corner" which was conducted for many years mainly in the socialist and labour interest. It was about this time that Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp were prosecuted for blasphemy. The trial ended in a disagreement of the jury, and on a fresh trial they were convicted and sentenced, Mr. Foote to a year's imprisonment, Mr. Ramsey to 9 months and Mr. Kemp to 3 months. During the absence of Mr. Foote, Dr. Aveling undertook the editing of his journal the "Free Thinker". In 1883 another blasphemy trial was instituted, this time against Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey, the charge against Mr. Bradlaugh being that he published Mr. Foote's articles at the Free Thought Publishing Company. Mr. Bradlaugh however pleaded that he did not publish the

article and claimed a separate trial, which was granted. It is interesting to note that at this trial Mrs. Besant was not included as an accused although she was a partner in the Free Thought Publishing Company. This time she was only called as a witness. Mr. Bradlaugh defended himself and the jury returned a verdict of 'not guilty' against him. In the trial against Messrs. Foote and Ramsey the jury disagreed but there was no fresh trial as a *nolle prosequi* was entered.

A public debate held in St. James's Hall, London, between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Hyndman, roused the interest of Mrs. Besant, we are told, in socialism. Mr. Hyndman was as staunch an advocate of socialism as Mr. Bradlaugh was of individualism. A little later on Mrs. Besant met Mr. George Bernad Shaw whom she describes as "one of the most brilliant of socialist writers and most provoking of men ; a man with a perfect genius for aggravating the enthusiastically earnest, and with a passion for representing himself as a scoundrel." Thus began the socialist period of Mrs. Besant's public activities which continued for a period till she shifted once again, this time to become a Theosophist. The development of socialistic tendencies in

Mrs. Besant began to have the effect of gradually estranging from her Mr. Bradlaugh: Remarking on this Mrs. Besant says "Happily Mr. Bradlaugh was as tolerant as he was strong, and our private friendship remained unbroken ; but he never again felt the same confidence in my judgment as he felt before, nor did he any more consult me on his own policy, as he had done ever since we first clasped hands". We need not follow closely the development and progress of Mrs. Besant's socialistic career. It is sufficient here to remark that even here she was bitterly attacked for her socialistic views by some of the Radicals in the free thought party.

Some of the criticisms levelled at Mrs. Besant at this period are interesting. She was described as a "Saint Athanasius in petticoats and as possessing a mind like a milk Jug". The same critic remarked that "Mrs. Besant like most women was at the mercy of her last male acquaintance for her views on economics." Perhaps this is not a very unfair criticism. If we may add anything to it, it is this that when she has no male acquaintance who has any economic views worth the name her own economic views are most astounding. We have carefully studied one of Mrs. Besant's economic

writings of this period, namely one of her Fabian essays on socialism, on the subject of industry under socialism, which shows more imagination than insight into the subject of which she was writing. In this way Mrs. Besant continued her progress as a socialist till at last she resigned her co-editorship of the *National Reformer*. She did not sever her connection with the paper. She remained as a contributor and joint proprietor. The resignation of her co-editorship was due to the "inconveniences and uncertainty that resulted from the divided editorial policy of that paper on the question of socialism." Mrs. Besant explains that there was another reason also which led her to take this step. We might describe it in her own words:—"I saw the swift turning of public opinion, the gradual approach to him of many Liberals who had hitherto held aloof, and I knew that they looked upon me as a clog and burden and that were I less prominently with him his way would be the easier to tread. So I slipped more and more into the back ground, no longer went with him to his meeting; for I had become hindrance instead of help." Noble sentiments nobly expressed. Here at least, Mrs. Besant had the good sense to recognise that she

had become a hindrance instead of a help to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. We hope that she will have the same good sense to recognise that she has become a hindrance in other spheres of public activity to which, it may be said, like the case of the ivy plant the "closer she clings the greater the ruin".

In 1888 Mrs. Besant was elected a member of the London School Board by the Tower Hamlets division. Her experience as a teacher and her generous sympathy for the working classes peculiarly suited her for the work of the London School Board, and perhaps in that capacity she did the best and most useful work of her life. Unfortunately for the continuance of her useful work on the School Board, Mrs. Besant had been growing more and more restless. The astute lady who was the moving spirit of the Theosophical Society from its very inception had been writing in the *Theosophist* from time to time paragraphs and articles referring to Mrs. Besant in somewhat flattering terms, but Mrs. Besant herself, though touched by the flattery of the farseeing head of the Theosophical Society, resisted the temptation to be attracted by the Theosophists. In later years Mrs. Besant in her autobiography wrote thus: "I have

sometimes wondered of late years whether had I met her then (1882) or seen any of her writings I should have become her pupil. I fear not; I was still too much dazzled by the triumphs of Western science, too self-assertive, too fond of combat, too much at the mercy of my own emotions, too sensitive to praise and blame." For the matter of that, Mrs. Besant is even now all that, but some how in 1882 the process of her evolution from Secularist to Theosophist had not been completed. When she says that "since 1886 there had been slowly growing up a conviction that my philosophy was not sufficient; that life and mind were other than, more than, I had dreamt." The growth of this conviction gradually advanced till the year 1889 when Mr. Stead gave her the two volumes of Madame Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine" for review. Mrs. Besant, we are told, was "dazzled, blinded by the light in which disjointed facts were seen as parts of a mighty whole and all her puzzles, riddles, problems seemed to disappear." Mrs. Besant reviewed the book and then asked Mr. Stead for an introduction to Madame Blavatsky. She called on Madame Blavatsky, saw her and was captured. She soon became a member of the Theosophical

Society. Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant's co-worker since 1874, first came to know of Mrs. Besant's conversion to Theosophy from a magazine article and referred thus in the *National Reformer* of June 30th 1889: "I very deeply regret indeed that my colleague and co-worker has, with somewhat of suddenness, and without any interchange of ideas with myself, adopted as facts matters which seem to me to be as unreal as it is possible for any fiction to be. My regret is greater as I know Mrs. Besant's devotion to any course she believes to be true. I know that she will always be earnest in the advocacy of any views she undertakes to defend and I look to possible developments of Theosophic views with very great misgiving." It was thus that Mrs. Besant deserted her friend and co-worker who for fifteen years had stood by her, staunch and true, to become the pupil of Madame Blavatsky.

Before we proceed further we should like to give our readers some idea of Madame Blavatsky. There is no reliable biography of Madame Blavatsky available, but the excellent article in Mr. J. N. Farquhar's "Modern Religious Movements in India" on Theosophy throws a good deal of light on the life and work.

of **Madame Blavatsky**. Mr. Farquhar explains that he himself had to go for the facts connected with the life of this lady to a number of letters which she had written to two well-known Russian men of letters, which have been translated into English and published in the form of a book, and to Mr. Farquhar's book we are indebted for the facts relating to Madame Blavatsky.

Helena Petrovna was born on the 12th of August 1831, the daughter of Colonel Peter Hahn, a member of a German family settled in Russia. In 1848, when she was but seventeen, she married N. V. Blavatsky, a Russian official, a good deal older than herself, but she ran away from him three months after the marriage. From 1848 up to 1874 there are no reliable facts available about her life except what are contained in her own letters. In 1874 M. Aksakoff, a Russian journalist, wrote to Mr. Andrew Jackson Davis, an American journalist interested in spiritualism. The letter was in French, and Mr. Davis, who did not understand French, asked Madame Blavatsky herself to translate it for him. Here is an English translation of the letter. "I have heard Madame Blavatsky spoken of by one of her relatives, who said she was rather a powerful medium.

Unfortunately her communications bear marks of her morality which has not been of the severest type". After reading and translating this letter Madame Blavatsky herself wrote to M. Aksakoff, and in that letter the following passage occurs. "Whoever it was told you about me they told you the truth in essence if not in detail. God only knows how I have suffered for my past. It is clearly my fate to gain no absolution upon Earth. The past, like the brand of the curse of Cain, has pursued me all my life and pursues me even here in America where I came to be far from it and from the people who knew me in my youth. I hated hypocrisy in whatever form it showed itself ; *ergo*, I ran amuck against society and the established proprieties. Result : three lines in your letter which have awakened all the past within me and torn open all the old wounds. I have only one refuge left in the world and that is the respect of the Spiritualists of America who despise nothing so much as free love". Later she wrote again thus : "I really cannot, just because the devil got me into trouble in my youth, go and rip up my stomach now like a Japanese suicide in order to please the mediums. My position is very cheerless, simply helpless. There is nothing left but to

start for Australia and change my name for ever". For some considerable time she lived with a man Metrovitch and was known as Madame Metrovitch. There was also a boy whom she acknowledged as her son for several years, but in 1885 when she created the myth that she was a virgin she told a new and wonderful tale about the boy. In April 1875 Madame Blavatsky married in Philadelphia an Armenian-Russian subject named Michael Bettalay. Yet N. V. Blavatsky was still alive and there had been no divorce. It was a case of bigamy pure and simple. A few years afterwards however, this marriage was dissolved, thanks to the easy divorce laws that prevail in some of the States in America. Madame Blavatsky spent sometime in Cairo and other countries endeavouring to earn a livelihood by giving spiritualistic seances. In 1873 she arrived in New York and continued to reside there for several years and became a naturalised American citizen. In her letters to M. Aksakoff she gives the reason for this policy. "Her youth was now over; she was 42 years of age. She wanted to escape from the results of her dissolute life; but that was impossible in Europe, above all in Russia where her past was so well

known. So she decided to go to America to be far from the curse of her past life and from the people who knew her in her youth." In America she continued to be a Medium, and in 1874 a number of people interested in spiritualism had gathered round a family named Eddy, at Chittenden in the State of Vermont. Amongst those who were there to watch and to see what was to be seen, was Henry Steel Olcott who had served in the Federal Army during the Civil War and bore the title of Colonel, but who was now a journalist and had been sent by the *New York Graphic* to report the happenings at Chittenden. Thither went Madame Blavatsky, and there in October she met Olcott. Both Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott wrote a good deal about spiritualism. Madame Blavatsky describes herself as a 'spiritist' and 'spiritualist' in the full significance of the two titles. Colonel Olcott used every possible means to advertise Madame Blavatsky raising her to the rank of a countess, mixing her up with Princesses, Boyards and imaginary Governors-General and making her out a second Livingstone in her travels in Africa and the Soudan. On her part Madame Blavatsky rendered a similar service to Colonel Olcott by advertising

him. The two writers on spiritualism did remarkably well for a time but unfortunately a peculiarly odious piece of fraudulent spiritism was exposed early in 1875 and public interest in the subject began to die down. The two comrades tried various plans to keep their hold on the people but it was useless. Things were in a bad way. Writing about their condition then, Madame Blavatsky says: "He is far from rich and has nothing to live on but his literary labours, and he has to keep a wife and a whole lot of children". Again writing on the subject she says: "Here you see is my trouble, to-morrow there will be nothing to eat. Something quite out of the way must be invented. It is doubtful if Olcott's "Miracle Club" will help; I will fight to the last." The Miracle Club did not succeed, and as things went from bad to worse the Theosophical Society was started as a desperate remedy to keep the spiritualistic twins afloat. Colonel Olcott says: "The formation of such a society was suggested by myself on the evening of September 7th, 1875 in the rooms of Madame Blavatsky, 46 Irving Place, New York City, where a small gathering of her friends had assembled to listen to a discourse by a Mr. G. H. Felt." At that meeting

Mr. W. Q. Judge moved the formation of the Theosophical Society which was carried *nem con.* On the 17th of November the society was launched as a perfected organisation. Olcott became President, Judge, Vice-President and Madame Blavatsky, corresponding Secretary. We shall follow the development and activities of this society in our subsequent articles.

The newly-started Theosophical Society did well for a time. Writing on the 6th of December 1875, barely a month after the society was started, Madame Blavatsky says "Our Vice-Treasurer, Newton, is a millionaire and President of the New York spiritualists". This practice of enlisting American millionaires on the side of the Theosophical Society has continued ever since to the great advantage of the Theosophical Society. Two years after the starting of the Society Madame Blavatsky produced the "Isis Unveiled." By this time her old spiritualistic allies began to cause trouble, for they felt that she was faithless to them. A Medium, named Home, had taken the trouble to trace Madame Blavatsky's antecedents and to obtain information about her private life. He had also got to the bottom of some of her fraudulent spiritualistic Phenomena,

and about the time that Madame Blavatsky published her "Isis unveiled." Home published his "Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism"; and the exposure of Madame Blavatsky's frauds contained in Home's book agitated her so much and influenced public opinion in America so seriously that Madame Blavatsky decided to leave America for ever and go to India. In December 1877 she wrote thus: "It is for this that I am going for ever to India, and for very shame and vexation I want to go where none will know my name. Home's malignity has ruined me for ever in Europe". In the following December of 1878 Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott sailed from New York and arrived in Bombay, which they made their headquarters for the next two years. Madame Coulomb, a lady whose acquaintance Madame Blavatsky made in Egypt, and her husband also arrived in Bombay at the same time and were established at the Theosophical headquarters in Bombay as friends and assistants of Madame Blavatsky. With the establishment of the Theosophical twins in Bombay began the manufacture of "Phenomena". As Mr. Farquhar remarks "If some prominent European were enquiring about Theosophy a letter from Koot

Hoomi would be sure to fall on his head. Telegrams from the Masters would come tumbling through the air, "precipitated" in Theosophical phrase, but strangely enough bearing the stamp of the British Telegraph Office. The Masters showed themselves now and then in one of their bodies to select people. Lost articles were found, and new things arrived in unheard of ways. Half a cigarette or a lock of Madame Blavatsky's hair would be transported from one place to another by occult means". The recovery of Mrs. Hume's lost brooch was one of these occult occurrences, which, unfortunately for Madame Blavatsky was subsequently exposed and showed in its true light by the *Englishman*, the *Bombay Gazette*, the *Times of India* and the *Civil and Military Gazette* with corroborative evidence from Mr. Hormusji Seervi, a Bombay jeweller. The culmination of all these Theosophical phenomena was attained at Adyar to which place the headquarters of the Theosophical Society had been transferred in December 1882.

We do not want to go into details connected with these Theosophical occurrences but would refer our readers to the *Christian College Magazine* for 1884, which contained

a series of articles entitled the "Collapse of Koot Hoomi." Madame Coulomb placed a number of letters in the hands of the editor of the *Christian College Magazine*, and the exposures made by that journal were based on the contents of those letters. The Theosophists contended that the letters were not genuine. The exposure of these Theosophic "phenomena" attracted the attention of the Psychological Research Society of London which appointed a committee to investigate into the alleged "Phenomena". Mr. Hodgson was deputed to proceed to Madras and carry on the investigations on the spot at the expense of Professor Henry Sidgwick. Mr. Hodgson came to Madras, resided at the Theosophical headquarters and after a prolonged enquiry wrote a report. He came to the conclusion that every "Phenomenon", so far as he had been able to trace it, was fraudulent; that the letters handed over by Madame Coulomb were genuine; and that most of the Koot Hoomi letters were written by Madame Blavatsky herself, though a few were probably written by Damodar. Dr. Hartmann of the Theosophical Society also held an enquiry and published a report defending Madame Blavatsky. The report is entitled "Report of

the result of an investigation into the charges against Madame Blavatsky brought by the Missionaries of the Scottish Free Church at Madras and examined by a Committee appointed for that purpose by the General Council of the Theosophical Society, Madras, Scottish Press, 1885." About this Madame Blavatsky herself wrote to M. Solovyoff thus : " If your heart is not attracted to Hartmann you are quite right. This dreadful man has done me more harm by his defence and often by his deceit than the Coulombs by open lying He is a cynic, liar, cunning and vindictive, and his jealousy of the Master and his envy for anyone on whom the Master bestows the least attention are simply repulsive." And so on and so forth. The Theosophists themselves represented by Colonel Olcott wrote to the *Madras Mail* that the report published by Dr. Hartmann was not authorised by the Committee nor its publication ordered by the General Council. Thus Hartmann's defence repudiated by Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott and other Theosophists collapses. Then there remained the Coulomb letters. The Theosophists at first gave out that they were going to take criminal action against Madame Coulomb and the *Christian College*

Magazine, but subsequently they gave out that they did not intend to take any proceedings against them. Then Madame Coulomb decided to bring the matter before a court of law. Unfortunately for her, Madame Blavatsky herself had not publicly charged Madame Coulomb with forging the letters. So there was no cause of action against Madame Blavatsky. Therefore Madame Coulomb decided to proceed against General Morgan of Ootacamund as he had been foremost in charging her with forgery. Of course in such a case Madame Blavatsky would be the most important witness. But at this juncture Madame Blavatsky's doctor went and begged Madame Coulomb's friends to postpone the case as Madame Blavatsky was so ill that the excitement of her appearing as a witness would probably kill her. The postponement was agreed, in fact several postponements took place and on General Morgan declining to apologise, Madame Coulomb instructed Messrs. Barclay and Morgan to proceed against General Morgan. The very next day the Theosophical Society gave Madame Blavatsky permission to leave India and she embarked on a French steamer the *Tibre*, at Madras on the 2nd of April. Her passage was taken under the name:

of Madame Helen. Madame Blavatsky herself explains the reason for her sudden departure from India. In a letter to M. Solovyoff written at Naples on the 29th of that month she says that she had been called a Russian spy and adds "they certainly could not prove anything, but meanwhile on mere suspicion it might have been a matter of sending me to jail, arresting me and doing who knows what to me. I have only now heard of these in detail ; and they did not tell me and packed me off straight from my bed on to the French steamer". Madame Blavatsky never came back to India after that.

It was this Madame Blavatsky to whom Mrs. Besant went for advice and guidance in 1889. When Mrs. Besant wanted to join the Theosophical Society Madame Blavatsky asked her "Have you read the report about me by the Society for Psychic Research?" "No, I never heard of it so far as I know" replied Mrs. Besant. "Go and read it and if after reading it you come back—well," said Madame Blavatsky. On which Mrs. Besant borrowed a copy of the report and read it ; and after reading the report Mrs. Besant asked herself ; "Was the writer of the "Secret Doctrine" this miserable impostor, this accomplice of tricksters, this foul

and loathsome deceiver, this conjurer with trap-doors and sliding panels?" To all these questions Mrs. Besant could only give a contemptuous answer by flinging the report aside with righteous scorn. And the next day she joined the Theosophical Society and after joining it went to Madame Blavatsky, knelt down before her and clasped her hands and looked straight into her eyes and asked her "Will you accept me as your pupil and give me the honour of proclaiming you my teacher in the face of the world?" And the reply was "You are a noble woman. May Master bless you". And thus Mrs. Besant became the disciple of Madame Blavatsky and came under the blessing of the Masters, Mahatma Moriya and Mahatma Koot Hoomi.

XV

Mrs. Besant was only able to study as a direct pupil of Madame Blavatsky for two years. She joined the Theosophical Society in 1889, and Madame Blavatsky died in May 1891. Since Madame Blavatsky's death Mrs. Besant has been by far the most important personality within the Theosophical Society. At the time of Madame Blavatsky's death Mrs. Besant was in London.

Mr. Judge was in America and Colonel Olcott was in India. On receipt of the news of the death of Madame Blavatsky, Judge wired from America "Do nothing till I come". Mr. Judge arrived in London very soon afterwards and started the manufacture of messages from Mahatmas in the art of which he was an expert. Mrs. Besant in her innocence accepted these messages as genuine and publicly announced at a meeting in London that there could not be any doubt about the existence of the Mahatmas as communications had been received from them since the death of Madame Blavatsky. The mahatmic messages continued to arrive in rapid succession most of them conveying instructions as to the high place which Mr. Judge ought to occupy in the Theosophical Society. Under mahatmic protection Mr. Judge began to ascend in the Theosophical society, and Colonel Olcott who was then in India was so overawed at the special patronage extended by the Mahatmas to Mr. Judge that he resigned his position as President of the Society early in 1892 in order, presumably, to make room for Mr. Judge.

Even though he withdrew his resignation afterwards, at the Annual Convention of 1892 Mr. Judge was elected President of the Society

tor life. This election however was not ratified. Later on when Mrs. Besant came to India and placed all the documents before Colonel Olcott that astute organiser of the Theosophical Society who knew its secrets better than any one else, excepting Mr. Judge, at once saw that some of the documents were forgeries and that the mahatmic messages were written in the peculiar hand-made rice paper, in all probability abstracted from Madame Blavatsky's rooms in London and sealed with a flap doodle seal the existence of which was known to Colonel Olcott. Mrs. Besant carefully studied the evidence, and it is said that she became convinced of Judge's guilt. Colonel Olcott then sent what was practically an ultimatum giving him the option of retiring from all the offices he held in the Theosophical Society, or of having a Judicial Committee convened and the whole of the proceedings made public. Judge refused to resign. It was then decided that a Judicial Committee should be held and that Mrs. Besant should preside over that committee. It was also decided that all evidence should be published. Indian Theosophists, we are told, were foremost in demanding that the fraud should be exposed. The Judicial Committee met, Colonel

Olcott, Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant being present. After a most careful consideration the Committee came to the conclusion that it was contrary to Theosophical principles to decide whether Judge was guilty or not. From a Theosophical point of view the trial was impossible. The publication of the evidence was decided to be equally impossible. It was evident that it was not an easy matter to expose Mr. Judge, for he was in possession of information which would enable him to have a counter-exposure which would damage very seriously the Theosophical Society. Mr. Judge agreed to continue to work with Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant if the affair was hushed up in such a way that his character was not injured. Many Theosophists objected to the matter being thus hushed up. Mr. Old, one of the members of the Inner Section of the Theosophical Society, was one of those who urged the publication of the evidence. He was told that it was too late as all the documentary evidence had been burnt. But the Theosophical Trio little suspected that before the incriminating documents were handed over to Mrs. Besant facsimile copies of all had been taken by Mr. Old. Mr. Old offered to hand over these facsimile copies

to the Theosophical authorities for publication, but the leaders refused to publish. Mr. Old then handed over the facsimiles of the documents to his friend—Mr. Edmund Garrett, who in a series of articles published in the *Westminster Gazette* from October 29 to November 8, 1894, and subsequently republished in book form under the title “Isis very much unveiled” exposed the whole of the hushed up Theosophical fraud.

This unexpected exposure brought Mr. Judge to a defiant attitude. He was at bay, and he denied all the facts and posed as a martyr. He along with a large number of American Theosophists broke away from the Theosophical Society and formed a new Society called the “Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society” in America, of which he was elected the life president. Mr. Judge however lived only for a few months after the formation of this new society, and after his death his place was taken by Mrs. Katherine Tingley. The statements contained in Mr. Garrett’s articles in the *Westminster Gazette* have not been seriously repudiated by any of the Theosophical leaders. Since 1893 Mrs. Besant has spent most of her time in India. She has done very good work in the field of

education. She started the Central Hindu College, Benares, in 1895. She has written extensively on Theosophical subjects, and since the death of Madame Blavatsky she became the leader of the Esoteric Section started by Madame Blavatsky in 1888. In the practice of occultism she has been associated with Mr. Charles Leadbeater. Mr. Leadbeater was a curate of the Church of England but became a Theosophist in 1884. He has been one of the prominent officials of the Theosophical Society. He has carried on a good deal of occult investigations and according to Mrs. Besant he is on the threshold of divinity. We shall consider in detail the methods by which Mr. Leadbeater has arrived at the threshold of divinity in our subsequent articles.

XVI

In our past articles on this subject, we have as far as possible made Mrs. Besant herself unfold the story of her life by keeping faithfully to her own autobiography. In the case of Madame Blavatsky also we are anxious that as far as possible she should be made to tell her own tale; but as this is not a life of Madame Blavatsky we will only reproduce here *in extenso* one of Madame Blavatsky's letters. It

is a letter which she herself called "my confession." The letter was addressed to M. Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff. It will be found published in M. Solovyoff's book translated by Mr. Walter Leaf under the title of "A Modern Priestess of Isis." We will let Madame Blavatsky speak for herself. Here is her confession :—

"I have made up my mind (doubly underlined). Has the following picture ever presented itself to your literary imagination? There is living in the forest a wild boar—an ugly creature, but doing no harm to anyone so long as they leave him in peace in his forest, with his wild beast friends who love him. This boar never hurt anyone in his life, but only grunted to himself as he ate the roots which were his own in the forest which sheltered him. There is let loose upon him, without rhyme or reason, a pack of ferocious hounds; men chase him from the wood, threaten to burn his native forest, and to leave him a wanderer, homeless, for any one to kill. He flies for a while, though he is no coward by nature, before these hounds; he tries to escape *for the sake of the forest*, lest they burn it down. But lo! one after another the wild beasts who were once his friends join the hounds: they begin to chase him,

yelping and trying to bite and catch him, to make an end of him. Worn out, the boar sees that his forest is already set on fire and that he cannot save it nor himself. What is there for the boar to do? Why this; he stops, he turns his face to the furious pack of hounds and beasts, and shows himself, wholly (twice underlined) as he is, from top to bottom, and then falls upon his enemies in his turn, and kills as many of them as his strength serves till he falls dead—and then he is *really* powerless.

“ Believe me, *I have fallen because I have made up my mind to fall*, or else to bring about a reaction by telling all God’s truth about myself, *but without mercy on my enemies*. On this I am firmly resolved, and from this day I shall begin to prepare myself in order to be ready. I will fly no more. Together with this letter, or a few hours later, I shall myself be in Paris, and then on to London. A Frenchman is ready and a well-known journalist too, delighted to set about the work and to write at my dictation something short, but strong and what is most important—a true history of my life. *I shall not even attempt to defend*, to justify myself. In this book I shall simply say: In 1848, I, hating my husband, N. V. Blavatsky (it may

have been wrong, but still such was the nature God gave me) left him, abandoned him—a *virgin* (I shall produce documents and letters proving this, although he himself is not such a swine as to deny it). I loved one man deeply, but still more I loved occult science, believing in magic, wizards, etc. I wandered with him here and there, in Asia, in America and in Europe. I met with so and so (you may call him a *wizard*, what does it matter to him?) In 1858 I was in London; there came out some story about a child, not mine, (there will follow medical evidence from the faculty of Paris and it is for this that I am going to Paris). One thing and another was said of me, that I was depraved, possessed with a devil, etc. I shall tell everything as I think fit, everything I did, for the twenty years and more that I laughed at the *qu'en dira-ton*, and covered up all traces of what I was really occupied in, *i.e.*, the *sciences occulties*, for the sake of my family and relations who would at that time have cursed me. I will tell how from my eighteenth year I tried to get people to talk about me, and say about me that this man and that was my lover, and *hundreds* of them. I will tell too a great deal of which no one ever

dreamed, and *I will prove it*. Then I will inform the world how suddenly my eyes were opened to all the horror of my *moral suicide*; how I was sent to America to try my psychological capabilities; how I collected a society there, and began to expiate my faults, and attempted to make men better and to sacrifice myself for their regeneration. *I will name all* the theosophists who were brought into the right way, drunkards and rakes, who became almost saints, especially in India, and those who enlisted as theosophists, and continued their former life, as though they were doing the work (and there are many of them) and *yet were the first* to join the pack of hounds that were hunting me down, and to bite me. I will describe many Russians, great and small—Madame S—among them, *her* slander and how it turned out to be a lie and a calumny. I shall not spare myself, I swear I will not spare; *I myself will set fire* to the four quarters of my native wood, the society to wit, and I will perish, but I will perish *with a huge following*. God grant I shall die, shall perish at once on publication; but if not, if the master would not allow it, how should I fear anything? Am I a criminal before the law? Have I killed anyone, destroyed, defamed?

I am an American foreigner, and I must not go back to Russia. From Blavatsky, if he is alive, what have I to fear? It is thirty-eight years since I parted from him, after that I passed three days and a half with him in Tiflis in 1863 and then we parted again. Or M—? I do not care a straw about that egoist and hypocrite! He betrayed me, destroyed me by telling *lies* to the medium Home, who has been disgracing me for 10 years already, so much the worse for him. You understand, it is for the sake of the Society I have valued my reputation these ten years. I *trembled* lest rumours, founded on *my own efforts* (a splendid case for the psychologists, for Richet & Co.) and magnified a hundred times, might throw discredit on the society while blackening me. I was ready to go on my knees to those who helped me to cast a veil over my past; to give my life and all my powers to those who helped me. But now? Will you, or Home the medium, or M—, or anyone in the world, frighten me with threats when I have myself resolved on a full confession? Absurd! I tortured and killed myself with fear and terror that I should damage the Society—kill it. But now I torture myself no more. I have thought it all out, coolly and sanely, I have risked all on a single

card—*all* (twice underlined)! I will snatch the weapon from my enemies' hands and write a book which will make a noise through all Europe and Asia and bring in immense sums of money to support my orphan niece, an innocent child, my brother's orphan. Even if all the filth, all the scandal and lies against me had been the holy truth, still I should have been no worse than hundreds of princesses, countesses, court ladies and royalties, than Queen Isabella herself, who have given themselves, even *sold* themselves to the entire male sex, from nobles to *coachmen and writers inclusive*; what can they say of me worse than that? *And all this I myself will say and sign.*

“No. The devils will save me in this last great hour. You did not calculate on the cool determination of *despair* which *was* and has *passed over*. To you I have never done any harm whatever, I never dreamt of it. If I am lost I am lost with everyone. I will even take to lies, to the greatest of lies, which for that reason is the most likely of all to be believed. I will say and publish it in the *Times* and in all the papers, that the ‘Master’ and ‘Mahatma K. H.’ are only the product of my own imagination, that I *invented* them, that the phenomena

were all more or less spiritualistic apparition, and I shall have twenty million *spiritists* in a body at my back. I will say that in certain instances I *fooled* people; I will expose dozens of *fools* (underlined twice), *des hallucines*; I will say that I was making trial for my own satisfaction, for the sake of experiment. And to this I have been brought by *you* (underlined twice). You have been the last straw which has broken the camel's back under its intolerably heavy burden.

“Now you are at liberty to conceal nothing. Repeat to all Paris what you have ever heard or known about me. I have already written a letter to Sinnett *forbidding him* to publish my *memoirs* at his own discretion. I myself will publish them with all the truth. So there will be the “*truth* (underlined twice) about H. P. Blavatsky”, in which psychology and *her own* and *others'* immorality and Rome and politics and all *her own* and *others'* filth once more will be set out to God's world. I shall conceal nothing. It will be a Saturnalia of the moral depravity of mankind, this *confession* of mine, a worthy epilogue of my stormy life. And it will be a treasure for science as well as for scandal: and it is all *me, me* (underlined twice); I will show

myself with a *reality* (underlined twice), which will break many and will resound through all the world. Let the psychist gentlemen, and whosoever will, set on foot a new inquiry. Mohini and all the rest, even *India*, are dead for me. I thirst for one thing only, that the world may know all the reality, all the *truth*, and learn the lesson. And then *death*, kindest of all.

H. Blavatsky.

“ You may print this letter if you will, even in Russia. It is all the same now.”

XVII

Madame Blavatsky's letter to Solovyoff which we reproduced in our last article, will give our readers a fair idea of the character of this extraordinary lady, of which the outstanding feature is its untruthfulness. She seemed to suffer from a constitutional inability to speak the truth. On one occasion Madame Blavatsky said “I was naturalised nearly eight years ago as a citizen of the United States, which led to my losing every right to my pension of five thousand roubles yearly as the widow of a high official in Russia”. On this M. Solovyoff remarks, “What will the modest and honourable

N. B. Blavatsky who, though old, is still alive, say when he hears that he is a high official in Russia and that his widow was to receive during his life-time a pension of five thousand roubles a year? What an irony of fate ! Helena Petrovna, while still almost a child, married a middle-aged official in spite of her relations ; after a stormy and almost incredible career she died at 60 years of age, and he, though she had long given out herself as a widow, survives her.'

One incident narrated by M. Solovyoff we must not omit to mention. It occurred when M. Solovyoff and Madame Blavatsky were both staying at Wurzburg. One day M. Solovyoff received a letter from Madame Blavatsky. The letter was in these terms :—“I have just seen the Master. He has commanded me to tell you something which will be a surprise to you and will decide perhaps not only your fate and mine, but perhaps if you will only trust me for once (only the beauty of it is that it would have been even better for me and better for the cause if you had seen in me alone, a resume of all the so-called imaginary many masters), then you as a patriot could perform an immense service to Russia also. Come as soon as ever you can. H.B.” And on receipt

of this letter when Solovyoff called on Madame Blavatsky, after a long and mysterious preface, she at last came out thus :—“ Look here. This is what it is ; you are soon going to St. Petersburg, now do undertake a very important business of the greatest benefit to Russia. I wish to propose myself as a secret agent of the Russian Government in India. To promote the triumph of my country over those vile English I am capable of anything. I hate the English Government in India with its Missionaries ; they are all my personal enemies thirsting for my destruction. That alone is reason enough why I should throw my whole soul into the struggle with them. And that I can do them immense harm in India is certain ; and I alone can do it, no one else is capable of the task. My influence on the Hindus is enormous ; of that I can easily produce as much evidence as you will. At a sign from me, millions of Hindus would follow me. I can easily organise a gigantic rebellion. I will guarantee that in a year's time the whole of India would be in Russian hands. Only they must give me the pecuniary means—I don't want much. You know how I am in this respect. And they must put it in my power to penetrate into India through Russia, for I cannot go back

any other way since this affair of the Coulombs and the Missionaries ; and I will bring about one of the greatest events in history. I proposed the same thing before, some years ago, when Timasheff was still minister ; but I did not receive any answer. But now it is much easier for me ; I can arrange the whole thing in a year. Help me in such a patriotic cause". This conversation with Solovyoff reported in "A Modern Priestess of Isis" will tell our readers what she was politically. They have already seen what she was morally.

We should think that our readers have enough material now before them to judge of Madame Blavatsky. We will only quote one more passage from her letters, and that is to let her introduce to our readers that extraordinary Theosophical performer, Mr. Leadbeater. Madame Blavatsky in describing her voyage to India in 1884 says "I sail in company with Mr. and Mrs. Cooper Oakley (amicide Madame de Morsier) and the Reverend Leadbeater (a week before our departure from London he was a parson, *un cure*, and now he is a Buddhist), and we sail with a party of eight disgusting Missionaries, with whom we all but quarrelled every day about myself. These four males and

four females of American Methodists had already read the lampoons of their devilish brethren the Scotch Calvinists, and they cackled. I looked at them as an elephant looks at a pug-dog, and got my own restlessness calmed down. They go for my Protestant parson, and he goes from them to me, in my defence. In Ceylon I took public vengeance on them. I sent for the High Priest of the Buddhists, and introduced the English parson Theosophist to him; I proclaimed in the hearing of every one that he was to enter into Buddhism. He blushed, but was not greatly disturbed, for he had seriously made up his mind to do it, and in the evening a solemn ceremony was performed on shore in the temple of Buddha. The parson Theosophist uttered the pansil (*les cinq preceptes*); a lock of hair was cut from his head; to become a Buddhist and a novice and—I was revenged". Little did Madame Blavatsky realise when she took her revenge on the Missionaries by thus capturing a Reverend clergyman of the Church of England and making him a Buddhist and a Theosophist that she was laying a mine under the Theosophical Society itself. But perhaps she knew and did not care. She said to Solovyoff on one occasion that in order to rule

men it is necessary to deceive them. She had a very poor opinion of Theosophists as a class, and even about the best of them, Colonel Olcott, she said: "Olcott is useful in his place; but he is generally such an ass, such a blockhead!

How often he has let me in; how many blunders he has caused me by his incurable stupidity!" Perhaps she knew what Leadbeater was capable of developing into. However, if she thought that she was revenged on the Missionaries, by the conversion of Leadbeater, the Missionaries, we are sure, now consider that the Christian Church is well rid of such an ordained clergyman. Madame Blavatsky is dead, Mr. Leadbeater is still living. We shall leave the dead in peace and study the progress and development of the living Theosophist who "has reached the threshold of divinity."

XVIII

Next to Mrs. Besant the most important individual in the Theosophical Society within recent years has been Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. We learn from the *Theosophist* for November 1911 that Mr. Leadbeater was born on February 17th 1847 and that as a child he went with his parents to South America where he lived a life of

manifold adventure. After returning to England he entered Oxford University, but his career there was cut short by the failure of Overend, Gurney & Co., in which his fortune was invested. He managed however to take holy orders, and he worked as a curate of the Church of England until 1884 when he joined the Theosophical Society. Prior to that time he had been much interested in spiritualism and had made various investigations and experiments. We have seen how Mr. Leadbeater travelled from England to India in 1884, and how he became a convert to Buddhism in Ceylon when he arrived in that country. He worked in Ceylon for some years on behalf of the Buddhist educational movement, subsequently returned to England taking with him a young Sinhalese named Jinarajadasa. In England he became tutor to Mr. Sinnett's only son and among his other pupils was Mr. George Arundale. In 1905 Mr. Leadbeater was a member of the British section of the Theosophical Society and held the office of Presidential Delegate. At that time some unsavoury charges were made against him in America and the American section of Theosophists first communicated these charges to Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater and subsequently appointed Mr.

Burnett as Commissioner and sent him to London to lay the matter before Col. Olcott, the President of the Theosophical Society. We shall give the charges formulated by the American section of the Theosophical Society against Mr. Leadbeater in the words of Mrs. Dennis, the Corresponding General Secretary, American section, Esoteric Section. Here is her letter to Mrs. Besant.

Chicago, January 25th, 1906.

DEAR MRS. BESANT,

I have suddenly learned the cause of the boy's bitter hatred and contempt for Mr. Leadbeater, of which I spoke to you in London and which cause he had at that time refused to reveal. It is not, as I had supposed, a childish and personal grievance, but as you will see from the charges and evidences formulated below, was the result of morally criminal acts on the part of Mr. Leadbeater himself. Before he was allowed to go to with Mr. Leadbeater, Mr. Leadbeater had told the parents of this boy that his first effort in training boys was a frank talk on the sex question with careful instruction to them of the necessity of an absolutely pure and virgin life. He stated that he liked to gain their confidence while they were very young and before they had erred through ignorance. He wished to inform them before even a first offence, which he said was fatal, so absolute must be their virginity. This was the understanding between Mr. Leadbeater and the boy's parents in arranging for his travels with him, and in connection with which the following charges are made against Mr. Leadbeater.

THE CHARGES.

First, that he is teaching young boys given into his care habits of demoralising personal practices.

Second, that he does this with deliberate intent and under the guise of occult training or with the promise of increase of physical manhood.

Third, that he has demanded, at least in one case, promise of the utmost secrecy.

Then Mrs. Dennis proceeds to give the testimony of two boys. The testimony as contained in Mrs. Dennis's letter is not fit for publication.

One boy said to his mother " Mr. Leadbeater told me that it would make me strong and manly." The other boy said, when asked what excuse Mr. Leadbeater gave for such conduct :—" Mother, I think that was the worst part of the whole thing. Somehow, he made me believe it was Theosophical !"

Mrs. Dennis then continues as follows :—

Only after searching questions by the parents was the foregoing evidence given ; they have persisted maintaining secrecy as long as possible. At the present time neither of these boys knows of the other's experiences, neither is aware that the other has told his story. There is, therefore, no possibility of collusion as they live some distance apart and practically never see each other. This constitutes the substance of the charges and the evidence which I went to New York to submit to the officials who sign this statement with me. They agree that these charges are so grave, the evidence so direct and substantial, the possible consequences to the movement so calamitous, that immediate consideration, searching investigation and prompt action are demanded. Together

we decided that in justice to the cause which has associated us, to Mr. Leadbeater and to you, we could do no less than place this whole matter before you asking you to advise us what action you will take. We, therefore, await your reply and scarcely need to say that we will do everything in our power to protect the good name of the Theosophical Society, and to keep this matter from the public, not merely to screen an individual but to protect the cause. To this end, those who know have pledged each other to the utmost secrecy and circumspection so that no hint of it shall escape them. A copy of this letter and statement is sent to Mr. Leadbeater registered in the same mail with this. You will also receive by registered book-post, a copy of the "Adams Cable Codes" on the fly leaf of which is written my cable address. This is the code which I use. With deep regret over the necessity for sending you this statement, I assure you that I hope to stand by you in your effort for wise action all along the line.

Faithfully,

(Sd.) HELEN. I. DENNIS.

I Subscribe,

(Sd.) E. W. DENNIS.

The undersigned having heard the statement of Mrs. Dennis respecting her investigation into the alleged fact concerning Mr. Leadbeater are emphatically of opinion that justice to Mr. Leadbeater, as well as to the American section and the whole Theosophical Society, require from Mrs. Besant, as head of the Esoteric Section of Theosophical Society, the most thorough enquiry. And they no less emphatically concur with Mrs. Dennis in her opinion that the gravity of the case demands that such an enquiry

should be carried out with all possible promptness and Mrs. Besant's decision to be made known to them.

(Sd.) ALEXANDAR FULLERTON,
General Secretary,
American Section,
Theosophical Society.
 FRANK F. KNOTHE.
Asst. General Secretary.
 HELEN. I. DENNIS.
Corresponding General Secretary,
American Section, Esoteric Section.
 ELIZABETH. M. CHIDESTER,
Asst. Corresponding Secretary,
American Section, Esoteric Section.

To this Mr. Leadbeater at once replied in the following terms :—

Shanti Kunja, Benares, India,
 February 27th 1906.

MY DEAR FULLERTON,

I have received the document signed by you, Knothe, Mrs. Dennis and Mrs. Chidester. Fortunately it arrived while I was staying with Mrs. Besant, and I at once took into her room and discussed it with her as my copy came before hers. She concurs with me in thinking it best for me to answer it by explaining to you the principle underlying my action and then commenting upon the particular cases adduced. I hoped that my friends in America know me well enough not to attribute to an immoral motive anything that I do, but since this is apparently not yet so I must write with entire frankness about some subjects which are not usually discussed at the present day.

The business of discovering and training specially hopeful and younger members and preparing them for Theosophical work has been put into my charge. Possibly the fact that I have been associated with the training of young men and boys all my life (originally of course on Christian lines) is one reason for this because of the experience it has given me. As a result of that experience, I know that the whole question of sex feeling is the principal difficulty in the path for boys and girls, and very much harm is done by the prevalent habit of ignoring the subject and fearing to speak of it to young people. The first information about it should come from parents or friends, not from servants or bad companions. Therefore, always I speak of it quite frankly and naturally to those whom I am trying to help, when they become sufficiently familiar with me to make it possible. The methods of dealing with the difficulty are two. A certain type of boy can be carried through his youth absolutely virgin and can pass through the stages of puberty without being troubled at all by sensual emotions ; but such boys are few. The majority pass through the stage when their minds are filled with such matters and consequently surround themselves with huge masses of most undesirable thought-forms which perpetually react upon them and keep them in a condition of emotional ferment. These thought-forms are the vehicles of appalling mischief since through them disembodied entities can and constantly do act upon the child. The conventional idea that such thoughts do not matter so long as they do not issue in overt acts is not only untrue, it is absolutely the reverse of the truth. I have seen literally hundreds of cases of this horrible condition, and have traced the effect which it produces in after-life. In this country of

India the much-abused custom of early marriages prevents all difficulty on this score.

(Mr. Leadbeter here enters into details of "This trouble" and of his remedy for it which are not fit for publication)

Proceeding he says :—I know this is not the conventional view but it is quite true for all that and there is no comparison in the harm done in the two cases even at the time quite apart from the fact that the latter plan avoids the danger of entanglement with women or bad boys later on. You may remember how St. Paul remarked that while it was best of all to remain a celibate, in the rare cases where that was possible, for the rest it was distinctly better to marry than to burn with lust. Brought down to the level of the boy, that is practically what I mean and although I know that many people do not agree with the view, I am at a loss to understand how any one can consider it criminal especially when it is remembered that it is based upon the clearly visible results of the two lines of action. A doctor might advise against it, principally on the ground that the habit might degenerate into unrestrained. . . but this danger can be readily avoided by full explanation and it must be remembered that the average doctor cannot see the horrible astral effects of perpetual desire. Having thus explained the general position, let me turn to the particular cases cited.

Particulars concerning the two boys who had confessed certain things to their mothers that they alleged to have taken place while they were in the charge of Mr. Leadbeter, are here given and these particulars are unfit for publication. In speaking of the first boy Mr. Leadbeter

admitted that he tried one experiment and only one and that he did mention to the boy that physical growth is frequently promoted by the setting in motion of those currents, but that they needed regulation. The second boy, he stated, had entered into undesirable relation with a person designated "Z" before coming under his care, and the boy had promised to try to drop these relations and to lead the life of an ascetic. Later on this boy wrote to him and said that he could not lead the ascetic life, and asked for advice; and then Mr. Leadbeater gave him certain advice which he considered under the circumstances the best to meet the case.

Concluding Mr. Leadbeater says:—I write this to you as the first signatory of the document; how much of it you can repeat to the ladies concerned is for you to decide. I have shown it to Mrs. Besant as I shall do any other correspondence that may ensue, for I have no secrets from her. I am very sorry indeed that this trouble has arisen and that any act of mine, however well intentioned, should have been the cause of it. I can only trust that when my friends have read this perfectly frank statement they will at least acquit me of the criminality which their letter seems to suggest, even though they may still think me guilty of an error in judgment.

Mr. Dennis announces his intention of returning unopened any letter from me, which seems scarcely fair, as I believe even a criminal is usually allowed to state his cases. But since he prefers to close all communication with me, it is not for me to ask him to reconsider his decision. If he later becomes willing to allow correspondence with his family to be resumed I am always ready on

my side, for nothing will change my affectionate feeling towards all its members.

Yours ever most cordially,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

P. S.—I see that there is one point in Mrs. Dennis' letter, on which I have not commented—her reference to a conversation on the necessity of purity for aspirants for occult development and to the fact that (for a certain stage of it) one life without even a single lapse is required. It is of course obvious that the lapse mentioned meant connection with a woman or criminal relations with a man and did not at all include such advice as is suggested in the body of my letter, but since there has been so much misunderstanding it is better for me to say this in so many words, so please paste this slip at the foot of my letter on the subject.

Mrs. Besant sent the following reply to Mrs. Dennis :—

SHANTY KUNJA, BENARES CITY.

Feb. 26th, 1906.

MY DEAR MRS. DENNIS,

Your letter causes me some grief and anxiety, and I think I shall serve you, Mr. Leadbeater and the Society best by perfect plainness of speech.

Mr. Leadbeater is very intimately known to you, and you have had definite experiences in connection with him on super-physical planes ; you know something of his relations there, and the impossibility of the existence of such relations with deliberate wrong doing. All this must not be forgotten in the midst of the terrible trial to which you are subjected.

I know him better than you can do, and am absolutely certain of his good faith and pure intent, though I disagree with the advice he has, *in rare cases*, given to boys approaching manhood.

All who have had much experience with boys know that as puberty approaches, they stand in great peril ; new and upsetting impulses come to them, and very large numbers of boys ruin their health for life at that age from sheer ignorance, and suffer all their lives hopelessly. Some are ruined by self-abuse, some by seeking immoral women. Also, even when they resist these, they are tormented by sexual thoughts which poison the whole nature. Most boys are left to struggle through this period as best they may ; they learn about sex from other boys, or from servants, or bad men, and are ashamed to ask help from parents or teachers.

Some think no one should speak to them beforehand. Others think it wiser to speak to them frankly, warn them of the dangers and tell them to ask help if necessary.

Personally I think the latter course the right one. A boy should learn first of sex from his mother, father or teacher. Then comes the question, what advice should be given when sex thoughts torment him. Many doctors advise commerce with loose women ; this I believe to be ruinous. Others, knowing that nature gives relief under these conditions, when they become severe, by involuntary emission, advise that rather than let the mind be full of unclean images for a long period, when the torment becomes great, the whole thing should be put an end to by provoking nature's remedy, and that this, rarely necessary, is the safest way out of the trouble, and does less harm than any other. This I learn is Mr. Leadbeater's

view, a rare hastening of the period of discharge that nature would later cause. I do not agree with it. I think it might cause a very evil habit, and though this evil habit is lamentably common, I would close the door on it by prohibition, and await the natural involuntary relief. I can, however, understand that a good man might with many a precaution, look on this as the least of many evils. Personally I believe the right way is careful diet, plenty of exercise, occupation and amusement, and rousing of the boys' pride and self-respect against yielding. Mr. Leadbeater would do all this, but as a last resort the other. While we may dissent from this, it is very different from the charge of teaching boys self-abuse, pre-supposing foul intent instead of pure. He says he has in three or four cases given this advice believing that it would save the boys from worse peril.

..... case is different. The boy had fallen into bad hands, and Mr. Leadbeater's help was invoked. He explained the way of diet, etc., mentioned above, and also the last resort; the boy selected to try the former. Since Mr. Leadbeater left America the boy wrote saying he could not bear the strain, and Mr. Leadbeater explained the other way, to be used only under great stress. As the boy's letter was written since Mr. Leadbeater left the States, his account, as given now, is obviously false. Mr. Leadbeater says, that when a clergyman, he found that some young men in danger of ruin were saved by this advice and gradually obtained complete self-control.

I have explained to him my reasons for disagreeing with him, though I know that his motives were pure and good, and he has agreed with me not again to give such advice. He offered at once, if I thought it better, to retire

from active work, rather than that the Society should suffer through him. Believing as I do in his perfect honesty of purpose and knowing him to be pure of intent, though mistaken in his advice, I am against the retirement. All of us make mistakes at times, and where the mistake is honest and will be avoided in future, it should not carry with it disassociation from T. S. and E. S. work.

Most profoundly do I hope that you will see the matter as I see it and recognise in the light of your own knowledge of Mr. Leadbeater, the impossibility of the dark charges made. I fully understand the horrible shock, but I know that all who approach the path have to face those searching ordeals, and hold on through all. As one who has passed through many such trials, I say to you, have courage, be steadfast. Even if you blame Mr. Leadbeater, do not let that reflect on Theosophy or lessen your devotion to it, since his view on a most difficult question is his own, and not Theosophy's. Nor must you forget the immense services he has rendered, and the thousands he has helped. He has written to Mr. Fullerton and I think you should read the letter, as should the other signatories and your husband. It is not just to condemn a man unheard, on the statement of two boys, one of whom has not spoken frankly as is shown by his dating his objection from a supposed occurrence at—whereas he wrote to Mr. Leadbeater for a help long afterwards. Your husband is an upright and an honourable man and it would be to him a matter of lifelong regret if he condemned unheard a friend and afterwards found he had condemned unjustly

With constant affection,

Yours always,

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

Mrs. Besant wrote again to Mrs. Dennis at a later date. That letter is very interesting. Here it is.

May 10th, 1906. .

" You ask me what you are to think of my position. This I know, Mr. Leadbeater to be a disciple of Master K. H. I have constantly met him out of the body and seen him with the Master and trusted their work. I know that if he were evil-minded this could not be. I cannot therefore join in hounding him out of the T. S., in which he has been one of our best workers. Further, I know how much terrible evil exists among young men, and the desperate straits in which many find themselves to deal with these evils and which fall to the lot of many clergymen, parents and teachers and I cannot bear unlimited condemnation of the attempt to deal with them. Trials come from time to time—Coulomb attack on H. P. B. Doubtless from the worldly point of view, I should save trouble by deserting Mr. L. but I do not see that to be my duty.

But the American section of the Theosophical Society, as we have already said, appointed a Commissioner and sent him to England to lay the matter before Col. Olcott.

XIX

The American section of the Theosophical Society issued a circular signed by the Secretary, Mr. Alexandar Fullerton. In this Mr. Fullerton narrated in detail the circumstances under which the section had come to the decision to take action against Mr. Leadbeater. He mentions the

memorial that was addressed to Mrs. Besant a copy of which was supplied to Mr. Leadbeater. It analysed the evidence on which the charges were founded and then proceeded to state that the whole case had been carefully considered by a committee which came to a unanimous decision (1) that Mr. Leadbeater should be presented for trial to the Lodge whereto he belonged, (2) that a special delegate should proceed as quickly as possible to England and personally see Col. Olcott, the General Secretary of the British section, the authorities of the defendant's Lodge and the defendant himself. This delegate, Mr. Robert A. Burnett of Chicago, sailed on April 20th armed with discretionary power as to the settlement of the case. It was understood that if Mr. Leadbeater agreed to retire absolutely from all membership in connection with the Theosophical Society and its work, the prosecution before his Lodge would not be pressed. Successive telegraphic reports by the delegate were that the local sympathy with him in his mission was very strong and that Col. Olcott had telegraphed to Mr. Leadbeater to go at once from Italy to attend the meeting of the British Executive Committee on May 16. The committee of enquiry met in London at the Grosvenor Hotel

on May 16, 1906. Its members were Col. Olcott (in the chair) Mr. Smith, Dr. Nunn, Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Stead, Miss Ward, Miss Spink, Mrs. Hooper, Mr. Keightly, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Glass who acted as Secretary. There were also present Mr. Burnett as representing the American section and M. Bernard as representative of the French section. Mr. Leadbeater was present at the committee and had the fullest and amplest opportunity of explaining, defending and justifying himself.

He admitted that the charge which was brought against him of teaching self-abuse to boys was true and also admitted something else which both in England and in America would bring him within the pale of the criminal law. Mr. Thomas put this question to him: "There was definite action?" Mr. Leadbeater, "You mean touch. That might have taken place." Mr. Leadbeater had asked Col. Olcott what he had better do and the Colonel told him he should resign. A few minutes before the committee opened Mr. Leadbeater wrote a letter of resignation to Col. Olcott to be used if necessary. The letter was in these terms: "Dear Col. Olcott.—In view of recent events and in order to save the Society from any embar-

rassment I beg to place in your hands my resignation of membership.—Yours as ever—
(Sd.) C. W. Leadbeater.” At the end of the enquiry the committee deliberated as to whether Mr. Leadbeater’s resignation should be accepted or whether he should be expelled from the Theosophical Society. There was a close division of opinion. But in the end the resignation was accepted in the terms of the following resolution: “That having considered certain charges against Mr. Leadbeater and having listened to his explanation, the committee recommend the acceptance by the President Founder of Mr. Leadbeater’s resignation already offered in anticipation of the committee’s decision.” Thus Mr. Leadbeater’s connection with the Theosophical Society was severed in 1906.

The story of how he came back to the Theosophical Society we shall unfold in a later article. There is this to be said for Mr. Leadbeater. Rightly or wrongly he held certain opinions, and he has honestly stuck to those opinions. In 1913 when Mr. Leadbeater appeared in the witness box of the Madras High Court as witness for the defence in the action brought by Mr. Narayaniah against

Mrs. Besant for the recovery of his children, in cross-examination he again admitted the advice that he had given to certain boys, and he further said that some doctors condemned such advice and others were in favour of it. He said that physical growth is frequently promoted by setting in motion all these currents. He further said that in his opinion matrimony is good when there is really strong mutual affection, but matrimony without love and prostitution are both worse than the remedy he suggested. All sexual intercourse is forbidden in the practice of occultism, and Mr. Leadbeater had practised practical occultism. We have already seen in Mr. Leadbeater's postscript to the letter he sent to Mr. Fullerton, that purity meant the absence of any lapse in connection with women or criminal relations with men and did not at all include such advice as was suggested in his letter. Nay, more. In a letter written to Mrs. Besant by Mr. N. D. Khandalwalla, he says: "The whole of Leadbeater's attitude seems to indicate that he believed the foul practice was permissible in occultism and that his Master would not object to it. You say that excitement and misuse of the sexual organ is one way of stimulating astral powers and is largely used by

some schools of occultism. You have put it as a fact before the esoteric section members that excitement and misuse of the sexual organs leads to the acquirement of astral powers" and so on. Thus it would appear that habits of self-abuse are not only intended to develop physical powers but are also capable of stimulating astral powers. If that represents the Theosophic view of this disgusting practice, no wonder that Mr. Leadbeater, the high priest of onanism, is supposed to have arrived on the threshold of divinity. The history of the period after the resignation of Mr. Leadbeater from the Theosophical Society and his return to the Society is unfolded in a series of letters from Mr. Leadbeater to Mrs. Besant. And we intend to let these letters speak for themselves. We shall publish these letters one by one without any comment of ours and let our readers draw their own conclusions from them.

On May 11, 1906 Mr. Leadbeater addressed the following letter to Mrs. Besant:—

NAPLES, May 11th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have your note of April 19th, forwarded from Genoa. I have to-day received a telegram from the Colonel as follows:—

" American commission bringing official charges

meets British Section executive committee in London May 16th. Your presence urgently desired answer Harrowgate—H. S. Olcott, President.”

I suppose that is the “call to London” to which your telegram referred and so I suppose that I must go although I do not at all like the prospect, nor do I in any way acknowledge the jurisdiction of the court: but I think I shall be obeying your wish in going. I wish you were yourself to be present physically on the occasion. The Colonel has concealed my entire programme. Charles Blech advises me as a friend to consider well all the possibilities before going to England, so I suppose he fears that there may be legal arrest and prosecution; it seems as though they were vindictive enough even for that. Raja has spoken very strongly to the Americans, and has sent a letter (denying that the grosser form of the charges can be true) to some of the principal men there. Mrs. Holbrook and Mrs. Tuttle write assuring me of devotion and friendship.

I presume the Colonel will either expel me or request me to resign; the latter I am very willing to do, as you know, to avoid causing any trouble in the Society. I think I might still do the work in Burma, but as a Buddhist not as a Theosophist. What is your opinion as to this? If it all gets into the newspapers I shall be unable to do even that. I want much to see you and talk things over; where and when can we meet? Benares may not be desirable if the minds of our brothers there are poisoned against me. Let me hear fully from you; address Harrowgate until further notice.

With very much love from us all.

I am ever,
Yours affectionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

On May 17th, after the Committee had accepted Leadbeater's resignation, he sent the following cablegram to Mrs. Besant :—

Brief report of Committee meeting Col. advised resignation. Best course. Copies of your letter to Mrs. Dennis and of mine to Mr. Fullerton put before the Committee. Mead exceedingly hostile. Bertram implicated you, stormy debate. Col. accepted resignation. What work should I do now? Cannot do public lecturing? Burma good. I should prefer to spend time in the tropic rather than in England. If there is any work that I can do, please let me know. I might be useful in Australia or in New Zealand. Technically my resignation from the T. S. remove me from the E. S. But I can answer question in unofficial capacity as friend.

On receipt of the above cablegram Mrs. Besant wrote to Mr. Leadbeater the following letter :—

SHANTI KUNJA,
Benares City, May 17th, 1906.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I have just received your telegram. I hope you will have had mine before this reaches you. I wrote to you to Genoa advising resignation as the charge was officially made. It is right to save the Society at our own sacrifice. I wish I might resign also as a protest but have no right to leave it. I fear to write to England lest I should neutralise any action you have taken, but have written strongly to E. Ward. I propose to exclude from E. S. all who have taken active part in this insane action and cancel my American visit. How Fullerton could act

with this indecent precipitance and render impossible any rational action, I fail to imagine. But the time came for T. S. trouble and he was the unfortunate agent. I wish it to be distinctly understood that while I think you have acted rightly in sacrificing yourself to save the T. S. from being entangled in a scandal I am fully, utterly, certain that you acted with good intention in the most difficult problem that parents and teachers have to face. I am writing also to Mrs. Bright on the subject and giving her a free hand to use what I say.

And now, dear Charles, what is to be done? Shall you go and live at Cambridge till Basil is through his University work? Can I do anything in any way to help? If the door is closed to public work it is because Master has other and more important work for you to do. They are so indifferent to the silly world's opinion.

The Bernard business was part of the underhand policy of Keightley and his friends, the effort to undermine all who have now influence by private attacks. He said to H. S. O. that the committee would not have you as Vice-President because you were narrow and bigoted on vegetarianism and smoking etc., were rude to women and so on. H. S. O. showed the letter to Dr. English, to Davidson and Keagy; Keagy wrote to me and others. I did not tell you about it as you had so much else to worry you.

With steadfast love and trust,

Yours affectionately,

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

XXI

On the same day that Mrs. Besant wrote to Mr. Leadbeater from Benares, Mr. Leadbeater also wrote the following letter to Mrs. Besant from England :—

10 East Parade,
Harrowgate, England,
May 17th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I telegraphed to you yesterday in brief the report of the meeting of the British Committee. I talked over the matter with the Colonel before the members of the Committee arrived, and he strongly counselled me to put a written resignation in his hands before the meeting commenced, so that he could use it at the right time. He dictated to me the form which he suggested that it should take, expressly mentioning that I resigned in order to relieve the society from the possibility of any embarrassment. I doubted somewhat whether you should approve, because you advised against resignation in the first place ; but circumstances have changed so much since then, and the vindictiveness of the American persecution has shown itself so clearly, that I hoped you would agree that as matters now stand it was the best course. Burnett, sent over as Commissioner, formally presented the charges before a full meeting of the British Executive Committee : a considerable mass of additional matter was included beyond that which was sent to us at Benares : also copies of your letter to Mrs. Dennis and of mine to Mr. Fullerton—both of which were distinctly private and would not have been used in this way by any person possessing even the rudiments of honour or decency. Many of

the Committee seemed friendly towards me, and the Colonel especially so ; but Mead showed exceedingly bitter hostility, and Bernard, though silent for the most part, asked one very nasty question obviously intended to implicate you in the matter. I appealed to the Chairman as to whether such a question was permissible and the opinion of the majority clearly was that it was not, so I left it unanswered. After two hours of discussion and cross-examination, and then an hour and a half of stormy debate at which I was not present, the Committee recommended the Colonel to accept the resignation, which I had previously placed in his hands ; he formally did so, and so the matter stands at present.

This being so, to what work should I now apply myself ? It is, of course, obvious that I cannot, at any rate for a very considerable time, do anything in the way of public lecturing. I think that Burma might perhaps still be possible : or is there any other piece of work in India which I could undertake ? I could not take the Head-Mastership of a school, because of the want of the University degree, but I might nevertheless be of use in giving English lessons at some such school, or something of that sort. I want a quiet time in which to do some writing, but naturally I should prefer to spend that time in the tropics rather than in England. As far as we know at present Basil and Fritz will continue to be with me and to act as secretaries just as they have been doing so, though during this time the former at any rate will be preparing for his University course with my assistance, as we arranged in India. So if there is any work that I can do, please let me know of it. Please continue to wire to this address as I shall stay here or in this neighbourhood until I hear from you.

I met Martyn in Rome, and told him of this accusation. I found that he had already received a letter from Dennis giving it in a wildly exaggerated form, but had simply put the letter in his pocket and kept silence. (It is possible, by the way, that I might find an opportunity to be useful in Australia or New Zealand). Martyn seemed to feel a little difficulty with regard to the circulation of the last E. S. notice. He asked whether it would not be wiser to send it only to those whom you might choose for the inner school, as if it were sent to members obviously unfit for admission, it could only arouse in them sense of jealousy and wounded pride. He instanced such old members as Mrs. Crozier and Pascoe—both good people in their way, yet always involved in quarrels with others, so that to admit them would be to foredoom the experiment to failure. Mrs. Wilhelmena Hunt is another case in point. He thought that it would make the work much easier if no one knew of the existence of the inner school except those whom you choose as eligible for it. Considering the condition of affairs in Australia there does seem reason in this, and Martyn is so eminently a man of common sense that I always feel disposed to allow great weight to any suggestion which he ventures to make. His earnest desire was that you should yourself personally select members for the inner school when you visit Australia; would it be possible to allow the majority of Australian members to wait until then? Martyn himself and John are, I should think, fully worthy of immediate admission and I think that I should feel sure of three others in Australia but hardly more than that. Martyn also mentioned that you had one time told him that to save time he might receive his E. S. papers for distribution direct from you,

instead of through Mrs. Mead, but that up to the present that promise had not come into effect, as everything still reached him *via* London, and thereby much time was lost. He further says that in sending out such papers Mrs. Mead fails to give any instructions as to how they are to be used, and that in this way he is sometimes left in doubt as to exactly what you wish.

Technically my resignation from the T. S. removes me from the E. S. also, so that I ought not to speak at or even attend any E.S. meetings. Of course if some of the same people, meeting not as an E. S. group but merely as friends, should invite me to meet them and should ask me questions I know of no reason why in that unofficial capacity I should not reply to them. The Colonel saw clearly that if I had declined to resign and had thereby forced the Committee into advising that I be expelled, there would certainly have been a split in the ranks of the society, a catastrophe which you will agree that we must at all costs avoid. Please let me know what is going on, for down here I shall have but little opportunity of hearing. I need hardly say that though not officially a member I am as utterly at your service and the Colonel's as ever.

With very much love from us.

I am ever,
Yours most affectionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXII

On May 23, 1906 Mrs. Besant wrote the following letter to Colonel Olcott, then in England :—

Shanti Kunja,
Benares City, May 23, 1906.

MY DEAREST HENRY,

You will have seen Mrs. Dennis' letter to me about Charles, and my answer. I understand that you and a large number of people have seen definitely formulated charges, with the evidence of the boys concerned. I have not been allowed to see anything of these but am receiving hysterical letters demanding that I should denounce and ostracise Charles, and abusing me for not having done so already. Now I have seen nothing but Mrs. Dennis' letter, and a copy of a note from Charles to a boy named Douglas. As I said to Charles and to Mrs. Dennis, I entirely disagree with the advice he gave, and think it likely to lead the boys into a very vicious practice ruinous to health. But I believe he gave it with good intent and in good faith. It *may* be that the formulated charges disprove this view of mine; but until I see them, I cannot judge, and they have been withheld from me. As a member of the T. S. Council, these charges should be laid before me, if I am urged to take action. Has any first-hand evidence—the statements of the boys themselves—been submitted to you? Have these boys been questioned by some one free from bias and not determined to prove charges already believed? Has there been any semblance of impartiality and fair dealing? Or have you only one-sided statements by hysterical people and their report of

statements forced from frightened boys by people determined beforehand to convict?

Mead threatens me that I cannot appear on any English platform if I do not denounce Charles. I would not condemn an enemy, much less a friend, and ruin him for life, without evidence—and I do not call Mrs. Dennis' letter evidence. It is a serious thing to destroy one of our best workers, and the procedure should be grave and judicial not a mere chorus of howls. You may have the evidence; I have not and till I have, I shall do nothing beyond what I have done—counselling the putting in by him of his resignation, and an appeal to you for investigation.

I think the Americans have behaved disgracefully in making all this public without waiting for you to see the evidence and give your decision. No one is safe, if he is to be condemned on evidence wrung from frightened boys without cross-examination. Charles had far better challenge a legal investigation, where some semblance of justice would be granted.

It would have been easier for Fullerton to have sent you the charges, and for you, if you thought it best, to have asked Charles for his resignation. The whole thing would have been done quietly and the T. S. would have been safeguarded. Now God knows what will happen. I had advised Charles to tell you the whole thing and take your advice. Any sane person, caring for the T. S., would have acted thus, instead of shrieking all over the place.

Knowing of this, I advised Charles not to go to Paris and when Zipernovsky telegraphed me asking if he could go to Hungary, I telegraphed him that I did not think he could go; but I gave no reason, as I thought no rumour of trouble should get about until you had been consulted.

Charles only wishes to keep the Society clear of his troubles, and for the sake of the Society will no doubt forego self-justification. But I have written him that he should draw up a statement saying how his life as a clergyman forced him to face this problem, how he came then to his present position and advised young men on this line, and had given similar advice to a few lads in the T. S. This statement should go to those who know of the accusations.

The loss of Charles, if so it must be, is a terrible blow to the Society. Still worse is the readiness to jump at the foulest ideas and hound a man to ruin without ruth or justice.

Will you please order a copy of the charges and evidence to be sent to me? From Mead's letter it would seem that charges of malpractices are made, not only of bad advice. But in a letter I have this week from Fullerton it is said that no graver charge is made than that of advising what may be called a regulated self-abuse. (This is my phrase not Fullerton's). It is certainly not fair that I should be asked to act, without any evidence being shown to me.

Ever affectionately yours,

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

P. S.—Please do not show this letter as it may only increase bad feeling, but I wish you to know what I think of the matter.

XXIII

On June 12, 1906 Mr. Leadbeater sent the following letter to Mrs. Besant :—

Permanent Address—10, East Parade,

Harrowgate, England,

June 12, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Your letter of May 17th and 24th have been forwarded to me together. *Your* resignation is absolutely unthinkable; it will not do to desert a ship because some of its crew mistake their line of action under difficult conditions. My own resignation was because there must not be even a possibility that the Society may be credited with an opinion from which the majority of its members dissent. I quite agree that the action in America has not only been precipitate but insane. I think Fullerton now begins to doubt somewhat, for he tries to justify that precipitancy by complaining that Raja was writing to certain friends in my favour, and that so he was forced to abandon his wish for secrecy. Dates, however, show this claim to be inaccurate; your reply to Mrs. Dennis' letter was dated February 26th, and could not therefore reach her before the end of March, whereas those letters from Miss Munz which I sent you were dated March 9th and 15th respectively; so that the matter was known to many, Fullerton was telegraphing and writing about it, considerably *before* our answers were received. Even if this were not so, it would seem ridiculous that the Committee of a Section should feel itself forced into suicidal action by anything that Raja could say or do. The truth seems to be that they all lost their heads, and so were hurried into a serious mistake,

... perhaps impelled by those who are always ready to take advantage of our errors. I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I recently wrote to Fullerton, pointing out what I think should have been done ; but it is useless to assail his triple-armoured prejudice when once he has made up his mind. As to the E. S. that is your province, and I dare not even attempt to advise ; but I feel strongly that, though the action of these people seems to me insane, cruel and ungrateful, they have yet persuaded themselves somehow that it is their duty—even their painful duty ; so that their error is one of judgment, not of intention, and I have made too many mistakes in judgment myself to feel in the least angry with them.

When I attended the meeting of the British Committee I saw for the first time what is called the additional evidence, or "rebuttal" ; I presume that both that and the report of committee meeting have reached you long before this. Douglas Pettit was their third boy ; it is true that he has had epileptic seizures, and is at present undergoing treatment which is curing them, but they have no right to try to connect this with me. During the twelve months that he was with me he was perfectly well and would have remained so if he had stayed with me. The boy who had previously engaged in undesirable practices was George Nevers. The other points I answered in a previous letter.

You suggest my living at Cambridge or Oxford until Basil takes his degree. I also had thought of this, but our best friends in London are strongly of opinion that if I stay in England the enemies of the Society will make some endeavour to set the law in motion against me. While I cannot see how such a charge could be sustained, it is:

unfortunately true that if it were publicly made, the harm to the Society would be the same whether it succeeded or failed ; so I am taking their advice, and waiting quietly in *pralaya* for a while. As to the future, I should like your advice. For the moment I am living comfortably and inexpensively in retirement, and I can continue so until matters settle down a little, so that we can see what is wise. If there is still work that I can do—work not openly Theosophical, so that the eager Mead and Keightly cannot follow me with their persecutions—I shall be glad to do it, if it be in India so much the better, of course. Is there any possibility of Rangoon, considering the Chakravarthi and Dhammapala influence? Also if it brings me in enough to live upon, it will be well, for I suppose the income from royalties will drop almost to zero. While I am quiet here I shall probably do some more writing, though I must wait some time before I can publish, unless I can do so under a *nom de plume*. But in any case there is no harm in resting quietly here for a few months, if you have no suggestion which requires immediate action.

With very much love from us both,

I am ever,

Yours most affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

P. S.—I have had remarkably good letters from Keagy and Mrs. Courtright ; they seem to have had some intuition which guided them nearer the truth than most people.

XXIV

On June 30, 1906, Mr. Leadbeater wrote as follows to Mrs. Besant.

Permanent Address :—10, East Parade, Harrowgate,
June 30th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Your letter of the 7th has just reached me, and I will try to answer it as clearly as possible. I do not know what you have heard, but evidently some exaggerated or distorted story. I held back nothing consciously when we spoke at Benares—why should I from you, whom I have always so fully trusted? Besides, you are perfectly able to see all for yourself, so I could not conceal anything even if I would. I could ask no better statement of my case, if it had to be stated, than that which you yourself suggested in one of your recent letters. But, dear, you are now bringing in all sorts of occult and complicated reasons which for me have not existed. My opinion in the matter, which so many think so wrong, was formed long before Theosophical days, and before I knew anything about all these inner matters. I did not even originate it, for it came to me first through ecclesiastical channels, though I should be breaking an old promise if I said more as to that, save that there also there were unquestionably none, but the highest intentions. It was put somewhat in this way. There is a natural function in the man, not in itself shameful (unless indulged at another person's expense) any more than eating or drinking; but, like them, capable if misused and uncontrolled of leading to all kinds of excesses and sins. The Church would say that a very few, the great saints (as we should say, those who had practised

celibacy in past lives) can altogether repress this and rise above it, just as a very few have been able in ecstasy or trance to pass a long period without food ; and certainly where that is possible it is the highest course of all. But for the majority this function also will have its way, the accumulation takes place, and discharges itself at intervals—usually a fortnight or so, but in some cases much oftener the mind in the latter part of each interval being constantly oppressed by the matter. The idea was to take in hand before the age when it grew so strong as to be practically uncontrollable, and to set the habit of the regular, but smaller artificial discharge, with no thoughts at all in between. This, it was said (and I think truly enough) would prevent the boy from turning his attention to the other sex, save him from any temptation later towards prostitution, and bring him to the time of his marriage (if he was to marry) without previous contact with any other woman (prostitution was always held up to us as the summit of wickedness because its effect on the woman, its degradation of another to minister to our lust). I have known cases in which precisely that result was attained, though I think the suggestion was intended chiefly for those who were-expected to adopt a celibate life as priests or monks. The interval usually suggested was a week, though in some cases half that period was allowed for a time. The recommendation was always to lengthen the interval so far as was compatible with the avoidance of thought or desire upon the subject. Of course, you will understand that this sexual side of life was not made prominent, but was taken only, as one point amidst a large number of directions for the regulation of the life.

I knew this to have worked well with many in Christian days, to have saved many boys from the constant and uncontrolled self-abuse which is very much more common among boys of fourteen than any one who has not had the opportunity of enquiry can possibly imagine, and from the looseness of life which almost invariably follows a few years later ; and when I learnt from Theosophy a so much wider view of life, there seemed little to alter these considerations. The power to see the horrible thought-forms which so frequently cluster round children of both sexes, and since even more fully than before the widespread of evil among the young, were, if anything, additional arguments in favour of definite regulations. So when boys came specially under my care I mentioned this matter to them among others, always trying to avoid all sorts of false shame, and to make the whole appear as natural and simple as possible, though, of course, not a matter to be spoken of to others. If you read any of my notes to the boys referring to this (I am told some of them have been pilfered and circulated) you will find me asking carefully for exact particulars, and cautioning them on no account to shorten the period prescribed, whatever that may have been—for it naturally varied in different cases a week being the most usual. The regularity is the preliminary step ; it makes the whole thing a matter of custom instead of irregular yielding to emotion, and also makes the habit of keeping the thoughts entirely away from it until the prescribed moment.

Pardon me for going into these distasteful details but I do not wish to leave anything unexplained. I thought I have conveyed all these in my letter to Fullerton (please look at it again and see) and in our conversation at

Benares : but now at least it is surely clear. It appears to me that arguments hold good...that probably on the whole this is the least dangerous way of dealing with a very difficult problem ; but, as I told you at Benares, I am entirely willing to defer to your judgment, and since so many good sensible friends, besides yourself, are decidedly against my view, I am ready to yield my opinion and refrain from mentioning it in the future ; so you will not hear any more of it.

Now that I have tried to make everything as plain as I can, may I in my turn seek for a little light as to what is happening ? You know the American Officials wanted me cast out lest they should be supposed to be identified with this opinion which they abhor ; well, practically that has been done. I have resigned, and all connection is severed. *What more do they want ?* They apparently blame you for affording me sympathy and countenance and they talk as though you were resisting my expulsion from the Society even though I am already outside it ! Do they wish to interfere with our private friendship ? One would suppose so, since that is all that is left...though indeed that to me means everything, and I care little for the outer form of association, pleasant though that was too while it lasted. Assuredly, I am sorry to leave the Society to which I have loyally devoted twenty-three years of service ; yet I know that I, inside, am in the same as ever, and that if my friends will not let me do the work of the Masters in one direction, they will find means to employ me in some other. I cannot now hold any office in the Theosophical Society or the Eastern School, but if in my private capacity I can help you in any way (as, for example, by answering questions from those

who are still friendly to me) you know how glad I shall be.

You speak of *defending* the advice I gave ; but you cannot defend it, because you do not agree with it, as you have said clearly from the first, therefore the clamour of the American section against you is silly. All that you can say when you think it necessary, is that you know my intention in giving such advice to be good ; but it is not a matter of great importance whether other people recognise that fact or not, for surely it matters little what opinion they hold of me. " To our own Master we stand or fall"; and He understands.

I wish very much that we could have been together on the physical plane to meet all these "charges"; so many people seem to be *anxious* to create misunderstanding between us, and their poisonous work is easier when we are thus far apart. Yet they *shall not* succeed.

With very much love

I am as ever,

Yours most affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

Some three weeks ago Basil sent you a copy of a letter of mine to Fullerton on some of these points ; I suppose it reached you safely !

XXV

Mrs. Besant wrote the following letter to Mr. Leadbeater on July 14 1906.

SRINAGAR, July 14, '06.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

Thanks for yours of June 19th, that came to me by the last mail. A week is lost on the journey here.

Leblais of Marseilles sends you an affectionate greeting, with thanks for what he learned from you when you visited Marseilles in 1902 and for all he has gained from your books.

I suppose all that is going on in America is the excited attempt to justify their methods. Mrs. Dennis, Mrs. Brougham, Mrs. Haveris and others have resigned E. S., because I uphold you. Mrs. Balche has resigned because Mrs. Dennis and others persecute you. Certainly America is having a violent shaking. Mr. Fullerton is setting himself a little against the extremists, and objects to the people who would refuse to sell your books. There was a good letter from Mr. and Mrs. Pettit quite quiet and reasonable objecting to their boy being taught anything he might not tell them, but asking my general opinion on the whole matter.

I agree with Martyn and other friends that silence is the wisest and most dignified course. Nothing you could say, on the charge no one has ventured to make openly, would carry weight. I think the calm and absence of resentment you have shown are very fine; few could have borne such a trial as you have borne it.

I shall be in Europe, I expect, next year and we must certainly meet. This cannot break the bond of affection and trust between us wrought out of knowledge these things cannot touch. I have thought that the old Greek view of these matters perhaps largely dominates you, coming as you do from old Greece, without intermediate touches with this world. The view taken then was so very different from the present.

I shall do nothing about the general E. S. wreck in America for some months to come, I had thought that it

would have been better to leave the officers as they were, just to keep things going till I should go over, but I think that is becoming impossible as Mrs. Dennis seems to be getting wilder and wilder. I have suspended everything till the whirl subsides.

I have been up here since June 20th making arrangements for the new college. I had a long talk with the Resident and won him over and on the 17th instant we lay the foundation stone of the new building, both the Maharaja and the Resident being present. The Maharaja has given a splendid piece of land and a State grant of Rs. 1,500 p. m. Having got this done I leave again on July 20th. You remember I asked the Princess of Wales to try to get a signed portrait of the King for our college at Benares. I have just had a note to say she has obtained it and is sending it to me to present to the college on her behalf. That is very kind and good of her to have remembered in all her whirl of duties.

For the moment Good Bye, with constant affection

Ever Yours,

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

XXVI

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Annie Besant on August 7th 1906.

Permanent address :—10, East Parade, Harrowgate,
England,

August 7th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have your letter of July 10th. I am more and more disgusted with the way in which the officials in America are acting, I literally should have refused to believe it of

them, and it is a lesson to me as to how one may be deceived about people. Of course, I knew that they had possibilities of evil, like others, but I thought they had strength enough to hold them down. I have seen a letter of Fullerton's to one of the boys which is mean and despicable—trying to worm out evidence as to personal secrets, yet refusing to accept it when it does not tell in the direction he wishes. My affection for the old man cannot change, but I am so sorry to find him descending to this, quite unwittingly I am sure yet there it is. Then Mrs. Dennis sets on foot the theory that you have dishonestly obtained possession of Masonic secret and that you are maintaining in Italy a woman proved guilty of immorality—poor Mrs. . . . I suppose. However, Mrs. Dennis will probably find it wise now to forget what she has said on these subjects on the strength of your E. S. message. Did you see in her circular of May, (which has only just now reached me) that she quite definitely is not in accord with the ideas of the new inner school, and consider it entirely subversive? This business is sorting out and testing people in the strongest manner and the results are often unexpected. There are some, however, who show up well. The chief people in Australia telegraph to me of sympathy and continued respect and many letters from America take the same line. Have you noticed how grandly Keygey and Mrs. Courtright are coming out under it? I wish I could show you a letter of Raja's which I saw; it was to a lady who had been much disturbed by the E. S. message, and was consequently doubting you; one passage ran, I recollect:—Remember, the queen can do no wrong, our hearts may ache now for a while but everything will be righted soon. Of that I feel sure, for our queen is the

essence of bravery, and she will right the wrong when she sees it. In any case do not let us for a moment say anything criticising her." I wish there were more of that spirit, it is like the remark of the psalmist "though he slay me yet will I trust in him", and it re-echoes so exactly what I have felt myself. Raja mentions by the way, that he has heard from you that you have sent a statement to Mrs. Dennis which you asked her to show him, but though many days had passed she had not shown it. I fear you simply cannot depend upon her now ; she will act only as she thinks good for her side. Mrs. Tuttle seems to be coming out well under this stress ; she is emotional, but utterly loyal, and we may depend upon her to tell the truth as far as she knows it. I hear that they have telegraphed to you to go over to the American Convention ; I suppose that will scarcely be possible for you, will it ?

You mention in your letter a cipher note of mine to one of the boys ; that is just an example of the extraordinary unfairness and the savage prejudice with which they have behaved all through. They have never sent that note to me ; they have left me to guess to which boy it belongs, they never asked for the previous note, so that they might have understood to what the words refer. If I had chosen to descend to their level and violate confidences in my turn I might perhaps have surprised even *them* ; but I will never do ; and when people are capable of thinking as these our critics seem to do, it is surely of no interest to any decent person *what* they think ! But it is all done now, and it does not matter.

What you say in your letter as to the law is exactly what (without knowing much about such matters) I had

always supposed—that it requires to be *put in motion*.
Now who in England would or could *put it in motion* ?

I do not know anything about the fruitful field of labour in Japan of which you write, but I should much like to know. Have you any definite information as to what there is to be done—that comes within my power, I mean ? I think I should like to look round a little and study the possibilities of the country before assuming the Yellow Robe; but am willing to be guided by your advice. We shall see what offers itself during the next month or two ! I am not sorry to have a little time to be quiet and to try to write some of the books that I have in mind ; but will such books now repay their cost when they are published ? With very much love,

I am as ever,

Yours most affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXVII.

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Annie Besant on August 10th, 1906 :—

Ye Olde Grasshopper Hotel,
St. Helier's, Jersey,
Established 1789,
F. G. Alpin, Proprietor,
August 10th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I wrote to you a few days ago, but have just received your letter of July 14th, and hasten to congratulate you most heartily on the two happy events therein described.

The signed portrait of the King is a grand acquisition, and ought soon to become a very highly magnetised centre of the loyalty and noble feeling, capable of affecting for good, generations of Indian boys. The Emperor has done a wiser thing than perhaps he knows; and it was nice of the Princess to remember—but I thought she would. Then the satisfactory arrangements for the Kashmir College is another great victory, and cannot but be specially pleasing to the Master K. H., who still loves his beautiful native land. I am indeed glad of these two brilliant gleams of light, for in other directions our sky is dark enough.

Letters continue to pour in from America. I suppose you can hardly realise what a crushing blow your E. S. message has been to those who, up to that point, had come nobly through the test, and still held loyally to both of us and to our Masters. You know they were quietly arranging to resist in the name of charity and common-sense the passing at the Convention of Sept. 16th of those resolutions which Fullerton ordered them to support in his abominable "confidential circular" which he sent even to unattached members! and I think the majority would have declined to endorse the persecution; but now they quote your name in its support, and our faithful friends are utterly paralysed, while I am told that the most savagely spiteful of the persecutors actually danced with unholy glee on reading the message. And it is too late now to undo that effect! After this I am a convert to our theory of the minute and detailed interference of malicious powers in the minor events of life, for it must have been a really ingenious demon who engineered that such a blow should fall just at such a time.

The same hand, probably, has been interfering with our posts, for even to this day I have never received a copy of that message from you, and of course I know that you would not have so written about me without sending one to me. I have sometimes cherished a wild hope that the whole thing may be a ghastly forgery, and not yours at all, because it seems so unlike you ; how happy I should be if that could be so ! For you see I really do not care what all these other people think, who have so little opportunity to know ; but when you also misunderstand me—yet I suppose the thing would not be perfect if you did not.

But I *don't* quite understand, You have been in daily contact for years with my astral and mental bodies, and you know they are not impure or sensual in the ordinary meaning of those words and there are other higher things too. You doubted the highest once, you remember, not unnaturally, but summoned up again, and said at leave-taking : “ You will not think again that I am only a dream will you ? ” Can you have doubted again ? Remember, He spoke other words also, and we discussed the whole interview on the physical plane at the time ; there was no faintest possibility of mistakes. You *know* that all that was so, and that it could not have been if my intention had not been good ; you *know* better than I that *that* life is the grand reality, and that *this* is only a pale world of shadows in comparison with its glorious light. If anything in *this* seems out of harmony with the certain truth as we know it in *that*, it is *this* which is false, *this* which is distorted, never *that*. And you knew all this when we were together at Benares ; and nothing fresh has since occurred, whatever falsehoods may have been told to you. I held back nothing consciously from you then ;

you must *know* that also. Details may have been mentioned since which did not occur to us then ; if they *had* occurred to us they *would* have been mentioned. I have always been perfectly frank with you, and I clearly understood your attitude then—that you disapproved of the advice and consequent action, but held my intention to be good, in which you were absolutely right. Yet your circular says I have fallen as Judge fell. Well, you must have thought of all this often, and I have no lightest thought of blame in my mind ; I can bear all these things, but it is hard to see the suffering of the poor souls who trusted us, and now feel all the ground cut away from beneath their feet. For they naturally say “if there can be so much of doubt as to so large a block of the testimony, how can we know of any certainty anywhere?” There are some who trust sublimely even through this hour of darkness. Raja writes. “I am utterly sure she will realise the truth one day, and will make amends on a royal and magnificent scale.” But I don't see how even you can undo what is so efficiently done. It all comes from this disastrous separation on the physical plane ; but you see these people cannot understand what a difference that makes, because they do not know that you do not always remember, and so they think that we are both acting with full knowledge. I hope my “comment” which I sent to you a fortnight ago, may help some of these poor creatures a little, but it is a bad business. But at least with absolutely unchanging and unchangeable affection through it all.

I am,

Yours as ever in deepest devotion,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXVIII

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Annie Besant on August 28th, 1906.

Permanent Address :—10, East Parade,
Harrowgate, England,
August 28th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have your letter of the 2nd, and I thank you profoundly for what you say as to our private friendship. There would be no need that that should be affected even if our opinions differed, but, as I have repeatedly said, I am quite willing to defer to your opinion, and by no means insist on retaining my own. I accepted a certain course as probably the best solution of a difficulty, and people will insist upon writing and talking as though it were a cardinal point in my belief, to which I cling with fanatical enthusiasm. You will remember that I told you at once at Benares that I was quite ready to give up my view to yours; and if the hostile party in America had really been actuated by Theosophical feeling, that would surely have been all that they could desire. They did *not* wish only that a certain teaching should not be repeated; they wished to force a certain person out of the Society. They might reasonably have begged me not to continue such teaching; they might even have said that they themselves would resign rather than remain to some extent responsible for it if I had declined to discontinue it; but I do not see that they were right in assuming that they alone were the Society, and that one who had not agreed with them, even though willing to accept their view, might

legitimately be hounded out of it by the aid of direct falsehood and the most dishonourable methods. I bear them no ill-will, because ill-will is wrong and foolish, and I recognise that they are merely instruments ; but I cannot think that they behaved well. Nor were they a whit more reasonable in their attack upon you. In the very first letter you clearly said that you did not at all agree with me, but you knew that I meant well. From the Theosophical point of view that attitude was perfect, but you know it made them furiously angry, because there was nothing in it of their spirit of persecution. Letters from America tell me that they are now openly boasting that they have forced you by their firm attitude to take sides against me as they put it ; and that again seems to show them as not entirely Theosophical in their thought. It must be that a kind of possession has descended upon these people, for *as I knew them* they would never have gone astray like this.

I suppose you must not tell me who is the American friend who sent the £ 20—through you, but I hope that you will be so kind as to express to him my hearty thanks for his thoughtfulness. He probably realises that the historical action of his country-women is likely to cost me dear financially.

I have thought much of your suggestion that I might work in Japan. Have you any information as to the nature of the work that I might do there, and as to the way in which I might maintain myself. If I went there I should, I think, be obliged to leave Basil to undertake his University course but no doubt Fritz would accompany me, or possibly Van Manen, and Basil could join me when his work at Oxford is done. I know that other possibilities may open up ; but I should like to collect

information about Japan if I can, so as to have the materials for a decision when the time comes.

The argument that while holding certain views I could not remain a member of the Society seems to me to overlook the fact that while holding those views I *did* remain a member of it for twenty three years, and during that time I did a good deal of work for it—work which I should have been capable of continuing for some time yet had it not been for the hysterical action of these people. Have they done well for our cause and for the world? Madame Blavatsky of course must have known quite fully what I thought, yet she did not take their line. However, it is useless to look back upon the past : they have had their wish, and are rejoicing over their success. Yet I cannot forget that they were all very kind to me before this possession seized them, and so I stand ready to help them in any way that I can.

Since I wrote the previous page a letter has reached me from Mrs. Howard, which I enclose because I think you ought to see it. Please return it to me to preserve with the rest of the documents. It reveals an incomprehensible attitude of mind ; those people evidently think the office of Outer Head is elective and that they are the electors. Several have written to me saying that, knowing this attitude on the part of Mrs. Dennis and others, they *cannot* honestly continue to work under her, while they are full of the most earnest loyalty to you and of love and gratitude to the School, and they ask whether under these circumstances they ought to tender their resignations, or whether they can depend upon your relieving them. What advice ought I to give? Hitherto I have urged them to stay at all costs, because I did not believe that you *could* support

Mrs. Dennis, so I have told them that they would be deserting you if they resigned because of the local rebellion. I do not think you can have any idea of the methods of the disaffected. Another letter tells me how a woman went to the rooms at Chicago to buy a copy of "The Building of the Kosmos," but was dissuaded by the manager because the book, being yours, was not reliable! Another asks where my books can now be obtained in the States; and that while Chicago has a large stock of them of which they have rendered no account! The Colonel is to preside at the American Convention; I wonder whether we can depend upon him to contradict some of the more glaring falsehoods which are being so industriously circulated.

Just at this point arrives your letter of the 9th, and the long expected copy of your letter to the E. S., for all of which many thanks. I have written before with regard to your circular and I do hope that you have long ere this, issued my little comment on it for the helping of the poor people whom it has confused. I can only say once more "This thing is not so; the facts are wrong" I see now why you (*out* of the body) regretted so deeply; that we had not been together, because I could have saved you from some at least of the errors. As to which of us lies under glamour only the future can decide; but you know by this time that it has been shown that the epileptic fits were *not* due to my advice, and I also utterly deny the suggestion that I ever advised daily practice. I did tell you at Benares every thing that occurred to me, as I think you know now; and if we had only been together when these other points came up I could have contradicted the falsehoods.

Even now you are receiving information from America which does not agree with what comes to us. Raja is *not* making a party, but Fullerton is accusing him of it to contrary written evidence which has been sent to me. It would in any case be impossible for a vote of the American Convention to "reinstate" me. The agitation is being promoted chiefly, I think, at Chicago and Kansas City, and entirely by Americans. They have expressly assured me that they do *not* wish to displace Fullerton, but refuse to ratify his resolutions. Your name is being used by the Fullerton-Dennis party, *not* by the others. There is no question whatever now as to the advice that I gave, and no possibility of the identification of the Society with it; what these people are objecting to is the way in which their committee acted, and so far I think we both agree with them. If copies of all their circulars have been sent to you, you will by this time have discovered these facts that I have mentioned. It is practically certain after your E. S. letter that the Dennis faction will sweep everything before them at Convention, so I do not see how there can well be any split. It is all very pitiable, and all so unnecessary. I will do whatever I can to calm people, but you see you have rather cut away my influence, have you not? Anyhow I am most thankful that we remain true friends and I hope we may still help one another in very many ways, even though you feel that I have been deceived. Yet if I had been, should I have been so willing to yield my opinion to yours? With very much love as ever

I remain,

Yours most affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXIX

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Annie Besant on August 29th, 1906.

Permanent address :—10, East Parade,
Harrowgate, England,

August 29th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Yours enclosing your circular to the E. S. reached me yesterday while I was writing to you, and my comments upon it were therefore made somewhat hurriedly, as I had to catch a certain post. After a night in which to think over it, it is borne in upon me that I ought perhaps to write a few more—that if it were thinkable that our positions could be reversed. I should wish to receive from you the very fullest and frankest statement of feelings that was possible. I think I owe it to you and to the loyal friendship of so many years, but I have withheld it so far because I have to the uttermost that faith in you which you have perhaps somewhat lost in me—also, I think, because I shrank from obtruding my own personality in the midst of the crisis.

As I have said before, when we discussed this matter at Benares I did not consciously make the slightest mental reservation. I was strongly oppressed by the feeling that the whole affair was taking up much of your time and causing you much trouble, and therefore I proposed as little as possible of alteration in what you wrote to Mrs. Dennis. You may perhaps remember that I did make two different suggestions, one concerning the fact that full explanation had never been given by me to Robert Dennis and the other deprecating the emphasis you laid upon the words "in rare

cases". Upon the first you acted, but it gave you the trouble of rewriting a sheet of the letter; the second you did not notice, and I did not press it, not in the least realising them that it might later come to be a question of primary importance. But in explaining matters to you I did not speak of rare cases, but of all where absolute abstention was obviously not possible. You dissented quite definitely from the advice I had given, but there was not the slightest hint then about my having "fallen" or being a victim of glamour.

Now, dear, I am most anxious not to hurt you in any way, and not to give you an impression of a feeling of blame which is utterly absent from my heart if I know it. But from my point of view *nothing whatever* has happened since to account for the tremendous change which has come over your opinion. You have received additional evidence from America which is mostly false, which I have never had the opportunity for seeing or going over with you, and on the strength of that your proclamation was issued. You yourself put my own case for me in the aptest words when you intimated in one of your letters that I might perhaps find it necessary to publish some sort of statement in contradiction to worse rumours that were flying about; you yourself said how monstrous it was that a man's character should be taken away by unsupported and unexamined evidence given by a few boys who were being so badgered by excited relations that they hardly knew what they were saying. To that has since been added the report (which again I have not seen) of a savagely hostile committee obviously bent upon making the worst they could of everything; and that is how matters stand.

I need not remind you of our long work together, of the hundreds of times that we have met out of the body, and even in the presence of our Masters and of the Lord Himself. We have a record behind us, and you know me well ; was I ever an impure person ? I have not changed in the least, yet you say now that I have "fallen" from the path of occultism or rather, I suppose, that I never was really on it at all. Yet recollect how many experiences we shared, and how often it has happened that they were also corroborated by the memory of others. Have you any evidence of this "fall" beyond your own conviction that because I held certain opinions it must be so ? If not, will you in justice to me look at the probabilities of the case and consider whether it is more likely that both you and I and several others should have lived a whole life of glamour for many years (the result of that being nevertheless a considerable amount of good work) or that you should now for this once be misinterpreting something ? Pardon me for suggesting that there may be a mistake, but you have yourself allowed it on a far more extensive scale than this. Your theory implies that I have never seen the Masters, and that it has been an evil illusion that has sustained me by its glory and its beauty through the work and the hard struggles of twenty three years ; yet surely that illusion has led me to do work which could scarcely be supposed to be pleasing to any evil powers. My "illusion" of the work under the direction of the Masters continues now as ever, and now as ever none but the most elevating teaching comes to me from them, nothing but the more perfect love and compassion. Would you have me deny them because they have not cast me off ? I will say nothing as

to the knowledge that they must have had as to the advice I gave, because you would say that they also must be part of my delusion ; but you can hardly think me deluded in knowing that Madame Blavatsky trusted me and worked with me though her insight must have shown her my thoughts. I am not venturing to suggest that they or she would agree with the advice, but that they do not perhaps consider that an honest error on such a point makes a man altogether bad, or makes it impossible to work with him.

I am not for a moment seeking to convince you that my advice was right, I always recognised that there was much to be said on both sides, and I am quite willing to accept your strong opinion as outweighing many other considerations. But may it not be possible that a man who honestly held an opinion differing from yours may yet not be an impure or abandoned person—that Madame Blavatsky and the Great Ones behind her may have recognised a good and pure intention even in this unconventionalism, and may therefore have thought it possible to use that man in the work? But your message states that you cannot work with me, even though I abandon that advice in deference to your wishes.

A man holding such opinion cannot remain in the Theosophical Society, but must be cast out of it—even though he changes that opinion apparently! Yet even so, it should not be by falsehood that he is cast out, and we have had plenty of it both from poor dear old Fullerton and Mrs. Dennis. Your own message contains that inaccurate statement about daily practice, and the other about epileptic fits, and (what I felt more than all) the suggestion that I was not quite

honest with you at Benares. That perhaps was good for me, for it may be that I was unwittingly a little proud of being always open and honest, so that to be doubted raised for a moment a sort of outraged feeling.

Well, the thing is done now, and with all the might of your world-wide authority I am branded as a fallen person. Even if upon reflection you do not feel quite so sure that you were right at that moment and wrong during all previous years, there is no undoing such an action as that. I would not for a moment ask it, because to withdraw would, as it were, stultify you and convict you of acting hastily, which would not be good for your people. Yet if you can modify it in any way, or can contradict for me those things which are definitely untrue, it might perhaps be well—I don't know. At any rate, I thought I ought to write to you with absolute frankness, so that there should be no possibility of misunderstanding that I could avoid; if I had only been with you, there would never have been any. Ask the Master plainly whether I am abandoned and fallen and see what is the reply. Believe me when I say that I have never blamed you: I do not wish to get back into the Society, I do not ask to be rehabilitated, but I do want to clear up the position between us if possible. I know very well how hard it is, when the mind is once set in a certain groove, to drag it out and judge impartially. Yet I hope that you may be able to make this stupendous effort, which few in the world could make. But whatever you may advise, my affection remain the same.

Yours ever in love and confidence

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXX

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Annie Besant on September 11th, 1906.

Permanent address :—10. East Parade,
Harrowgate, England.
September 11th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE.

I have your letter of August 16th. I am sorry you cannot see your way to sending out my little comment, but of course if you feel that attitude to be your duty there is no more to be told. I will try to send that note to some of the people, but I do not know the addresses of large numbers, and it is inevitable that I shall fail to reach many. Also I run some risk of sending to some who have not seen your letter, which I wished to avoid. However, we must do the best we can.

What I do not yet quite understand is the complete change which seems to have come over your attitude since we discussed the matter at Benares. You had all the facts before you then, except only that you supposed the intervals to be longer, as I understood it; but you had not then adopted this theory of glamour, nor cast behind you the consistent experience of many years. And although the idea of shorter intervals might alter your opinion as to the advisability, it cannot affect the principle of the thing, that was surely the same then as now, and you yourself, though disapproving the advice, spoke of it as at least better than that often given by doctors to young men. So I do not quite understand the reason of the sudden change. Nor I do quite see why you write as though I were still

persistently teaching these doctrines, though I have repeatedly said that I am willing to defer to your opinion. You know I never for a moment suggested that the Masters dictated or approved of such teaching ; I should myself simply infer that they left me to make my own discoveries, and presumably therefore did not consider that this one thing outweighs everything else, as you apparently do now, though you certainly did not think so when we were together at Benares. Both matrimony, and prostitution must obviously be worse, because in each case they involve action upon another person, yet those seem to be differently treated.

Since Bertram, of whose actions at Adayar you once told me, is still a Theosophical Leader; Col. Olcott's testimony to the existence of the matters is true, even though he has sometimes lapsed in sexual matters. It is not contended that he is perfect, or that all his teaching has always been accurate ; but it is unquestionable that he stands in a certain relation to the Masters, and that they are using him for work. Even supposing that opinion of mine was utterly and radically wrong, is it not more probable that in spite of that defect they were willing to use what was good in me, than that both of us and several other people have been consistently and successfully deluded for many years—especially when you consider how much good work came out of the delusion ? If we are to suppose the whole transaction carried out by dark powers at the cost of infinite trouble, do you not see that balance of result of that transaction is enormously against them. I suppose it is useless to write because you have felt a certain line to be your duty, and you naturally therefore see everything from that

point of view ; but at least do not let yourself be persuaded to think that I am still carrying on that line of teaching in spite of you ! I yielded my opinion to yours at once, but it does not seem to have made any difference. All through the affair I have guided myself as far as possible by what you would wish.

Do not think from the above that I am repining or blaming you in any way ; so long as our friendship remains, opinions are a matter of minor importance. I trust you absolutely, knowing that you will always do, and are now doing, what seems to you your duty. I think if I had been physically with you, you would have seen more fully exactly what I meant, and perhaps your decision would have been different ; but in that case the trial for me would have been quite different also ; so probably full advantage has been taken of the present position of affairs. In the end all will certainly be well, even if things are a little comfortless in the meantime, and at least nothing can ever change my affection and regard for you, so if ever I can be of use by standing at your side again you may count upon me as already there.

With very much love,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXXI

Mrs. Besant wrote the following letter to Mr. C. W. Leadbeater on September 13th, 1906.

Shanti Kunja,
Benares City,
September 13th, 1906

MY DEAR CHARLES,

Your notes of Aug. 14th and 21st came together by the last mail. I had a friendly note from Kent and responded

in like spirit. If I go to Australasia it will be in 1908, I suppose. I do not want to go, but probably shall.

I doubt if the sales of your books will cease, for they have intrinsic value. I have many letters and always answer that in the main I believe them to be reliable, but that like H. P. B.'s and my own, there are sure to be some errors of detail, that will be corrected by fuller knowledge. I shall certainly have time to look over any manuscript of yours. I am in favour of the T. P. S. continuing to publish.

There is no particular news here, and in England every one seems to be holiday-making. Would you care for me to send you the C. H. C. Magazine to keep you in touch with one side of my work?

Life goes rather hardly with me, but I can wait.

Always with love,

Very affectionately yours,

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Annie Besant on October 9th, 1906.

Permanent address :—10 East Parade.

Harrowgate, England.

October 9th, 1906

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Many thanks for yours of September 18th. I am very sorry to hear that life hardly goes with you just now; if there is anything that I can do to help I am sure you will not fail to let me know. I wish you had allowed me to remain near you in India, for I believe I could have saved you some at least of the many troubles. Certainly I shall be glad to see the Hindu College Magazine, for

I have naturally just as much interest as ever in all our activities. It is pleasant to hear that you will find time to look over my manuscripts when they are ready, and that you are in favour of their publication by the T. P. S. Bertram probably will not be willing I should think; but we shall see when the time comes. By the way, absolutely privately between ourselves, how much would it cost to buy out Bertram's interest in the T. P. S., and about what average interest for his money would the person who bought him out usually get? If you would like to be free from him and to have instead a mere sleeping partner who trusts you thoroughly, it might be possible to arrange it if the amount required is not too large. This is only because I have sometimes thought that your relation with Bertram might occasionally be irksome; if it is not so, we need think no more of the matters. It will be satisfactory if the sales of my books still continue, as that is my only certain source of income; though I hear that some friends in America are banding together to offer me some sort of contribution to compensate for the financial injury done to me by the stupidity of their Executive Committee.

I hear from Chicago that the Colonel's action at the Convention was too autocratic for the American taste, and that a prominent member who is an official of the Associated Press prepared a protest to be simultaneously issued in 700 newspapers! He was however dissuaded by Raja, who urged patience with the Colonel because of his age and his known connection with the Masters, and his splendid service in the past. In return for that service (of which of course the Colonel does not know) the President-Founder has just cancelled Raja's membership in the Society. A

hasty note from Raja is all that I yet have on the latter point ; he says "There were charges, but no trial, for I would not put in my defence unless the trial were *formal*, and this the Colonel refused." I await fuller information, but so far as I know the only charge that can be truthfully brought against Raja is that of protesting against the methods of the American Executive Committee. I am outside of the Society and have no voice, but is this the kind of thing that you mean to sanction? Is it now considered right in the Theosophical Society that a man should be cast out without trial or defence? It seems to me that we are admitting rather a dangerous principle, and most unfortunately it seems to be part of the American plan to keep you in the dark or to misrepresent matters to you ; they have apparently already written falsehoods to you about Raja, and they may be doing so still. There is a certain unscrupulousness and want of honour in the American character which may be a troublesome factor in the new sub-race ; and it seems to need only a little stress to bring it to the surface even in the better class of Americans. Well, all must come right in the end, whatever we do or do not do ; but I suppose we are reasonable for trying to do our best to help the right.

With very much love.

I am ever,

Yours affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXXII

On October 17th, 1906 Mr. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Besant : —

10 East Parade,
Harrowgate, England.

October 17th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have your letter of September 27th. I agree entirely that the tie between us is above and beyond all temporary blunders, and I am most thankful, that it is so. But I cannot agree with you in thinking that if you should discover (as you one day will) that you were *not* under the influence of glamour during all these years, you ought therefore to give up public work. That would be for the world a calamity so great that it were surely better you should not discover the mistake (if there be one) until this physical life is over. But I cannot see the least reason for such a step, because of a slight error in judgment. Your circular puts you under the undeserved imputation of having been misled by glamour through a series of years; surely when you find that after all you were not misled, and that the memories you had temporarily disturbed are reliable, there is *more* and not less reason for people to trust your teaching, and for you to give it out with confidence. Please do not do rashly something which not you only, but the whole world, would have reason to regret for centuries. I feel strongly about this, because I know that you will see the truth, and I want to avoid a catastrophe. Of course I am not for a moment suggesting that you will ever come to agree with the advice that I

gave ; I have agreed to abandon it at your request, so on that point that we are at one already and there is nothing left for you to stand against. I have never from the first tried to persuade you to change your opinion on that point, though I did try to explain my own reasons so that you might understand how I had reached a position which was evidently inexplicable to you (see Black). The only question on which we differ is as to whether my testimony to the existence of the Masters is true, I cannot but maintain that it is because it is at this moment part of my daily life just as much as ever ; you on the other hand maintain in your circular that it is not, and that we have both been for many years simultaneously deceived. Now if you say to me " Is it not possible that the whole thing may be a colossal deception—that other beings may throughout all these years have taken upon themselves to personate non-existent Masters, that in point of fact we may be, like so many others, the victims of some sort of "spirits guides" on an unusually magnificent scale?" I can only reply that unquestionably anything is possible, but that it is in the very highest degree improbable ; and if it be so, at any rate such guides are good and noble guides and have led us to do good and useful work, and have taught us much of truth and therefore I want to follow them still. The whole world may be a delusion, but we must act as though it were true in order to reach the greater truth beyond. Myself I am thoroughly convinced that we have not been deceived, and that the Masters are realities ; I know that you believe this too, yet you somehow think that my testimony to them is a delusion, at least your circular seems to imply that I have not seen them. The only other point

of difference is the apparent imputation that I did not tell the truth at Benares, and that is after all a little personal matter which may be put aside. So the only matter at issue between us is the truth of my testimony to the Masters. I have had printed that little letter reaffirming it, which I sent to you some time ago, and I am sending out some copies—hesitatingly, for I do not know to whom your circular went. Also, many outside the E. S. have heard of that circular which makes another difficulty. I think about 300 copies of my letter have gone out in America, but the number here will be much smaller. A printed copy should reach you by this mail.

So Mrs. Dennis has given up the Secretaryship. It is best so, for in her present frame of mind she is certainly not the person for it. Though I have travelled the country so recently and know it so well, I scarcely know whom to suggest. Raja would have been excellent but that autocratic Colonel has expelled him for issuing that circular about Universal Brotherhood of which he sent you a copy some months ago. Warrington is a good man, thoroughly gentlemanly, and with a wide grasp of Theosophy, upon which he prepared an article for the new American Encyclopædia. John H. Bell is gentle, loving and thoroughly loyal but less cultured than Warrington. I think the Colonel's action about Raja is quite unjustifiable, and I am afraid he has allowed himself to be made the tool of the spite of that Committee. He admitted at the American Convention that if pressure had not been put upon him in London, he would have acted differently in my case. He is growing old now, and is too easily swayed. Raja will send you the papers, I know; please do anything that you can towards justice for him, for he has been

hardly used. With very much love from Basil and myself.

I am ever,
Yours affectionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER

P.S.—I hear that America is getting up a fund to compensate me for the financial loss caused by the diminution of the sale of my books. No doubt that is just, and I should accept it in the spirit in which it is offered; but unfortunately those who subscribe will not be those whose stupidity caused the loss. But it is very good of my friends all the same. Take care of Mr. Chakravathy, he is playing a double game.

You say "such teaching would do much harm in the T. S. and E. S."; but I did not give it to the T. S. and E. S., but only in absolute privacy to a few boys; I am not responsible for its publication; for that you must blame those who broke their solemn pledge of secrecy—Fullerton & Mrs. Dennis. I never dreamt of speaking publicly on such a matter, because I knew it would be misunderstood.

I do not want to write anything that may appear conceited, but it is rather ridiculous that these poor ignorant people should constitute themselves judges of what we do or believe. I should like to say to them quite plainly: "Don't worry yourselves about my opinions or actions, they are my affair, not yours, and if you do not like them you need not—nor imitate them. I am not going to waste time arguing with you; I never argue with anybody. But I have a gospel to preach. I have certain great truths to tell to the world, and if you are not interested in them there are thousands who will be, so drop your peddling

futile criticism of details which you do not understand, and go to work to spread the knowledge of the fact "the great facts of life and death."

We must not forget that Madame Blavatsky during physical life recognised, confirmed and often referred to my direct knowledge of the Masters ; is it suggested that she also was hallucinated ?

XXXIII

On October 30th, 1906, Mr. Leadbeater sent the following letter to Mrs. Besant :—

10, East Parade,
Harrowgate, England.

October 30th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have your letter of the 11th. It certainly does seem incredible that the poor old Colonel should have threatened to arrange a prosecution, but unquestionably words to that effect did appear in the copy which I saw of his letter to Dr. English. I do not know how he meant to set about it ; I suspect it was nothing but a bit of bombast anyhow, at least I hope so. But you ought to see the copy of the letter, so as to know whether it was said or not. I too think that all danger is over, if there ever was any ; but I do not believe that there ever was. Only Miss Spink and Miss Ward so earnestly appealed to me for the sake of the Society not to stay in Harrowgate that I was willing to yield to their entreaties. I think (though I have never heard definitely) that some feared a prosecution initiated by the Police on general principles, the evidence to be obtained by subpoenaing some members of the committee to testify as to what I had said or admitted at its

meeting. But I do not see that such a proceeding would be legally justifiable. I am quite ready to take up any work that may offer itself, but I want to write one or two books as opportunity offers, and I shall go on doing that until something else comes in my way. At present correspondence occupies practically the whole of my time, which I don't like ; yet it seems a duty. So many people seem to have had their faith in the existence of the Masters shaken by your circular, and I am trying to reassure them, but it is difficult to do so without seeming to oppose myself to you, which I will not do. I am obliged to put in somewhat in this way—that Mrs. Besant now supposes herself to have been for many years and on many occasions deceived, and so to that extent withdraws or contradicts her previous evidence, but that I myself have seen no reason for a similar change of opinion, and so I take the side of Mrs. Besant's years of experience as against her present conviction with regard to those years. You see it is not an easy thing to taste, especially as I am myself not clear as to your exact position. Your later letters clearly admits that you recognise the interview with the nameless one as having really taken place, so you must suppose the glamour to have arisen at sometime subsequent to that. But at what special point, and why? You see, before that you had had many experiences together in the presence of our own Masters ; why should the lesser be glamour when the greater was not ? You see it is not as though I had suddenly and recently taken up new ideas on the sex question ; if that were so we might suppose the glamour to date from the moment in which I adopted them. There is what appears to me to be an inconsistency in your theory, and so when people write to

me I cannot explain clearly. Of course apart from that, I do not myself think that we were deceived on the hundreds of occasions when we have seen our Masters together ; that is the point upon which we differ ; but, putting that aside for the moment, I cannot quite grasp your idea, and so I am always afraid of doing you an injustice when I have to say anything about it. You see my experience has been continuous and perfectly coherent, and has been at various points confirmed by the simultaneous experience of many other people besides yourself, Madame Blavatsky herself being one of them. Now you suddenly ask me to believe that all this has not been so, or rather that some of it (the most important of all) is true, and the rest is not.

You did not think that when we spoke of it at Benares, but you have come to think so since, although nothing has changed. You must have a reason for that — I mean, something must have happened to you that I do not know ; and I believe that is where the weak point lies. I am sure that you will sometime realise that inconsistency though I do not think we can expect the Master himself to interfere, as your letter seems to suggest. But why not ask him directly ? I think it is more than a merely personal matter, so I do not see that it would be wrong. I do not for a moment expect you to agree with the advice which I gave, but I should like our testimony to be solid upon this question of the existence of the Great Ones ; though even so I do not see how we are ever to undo the damaging effect of the circular. I have sent out some copies of my little comment on it, but have eliminated the words referring to the E. S. because it is sure to fall into the wrong hands somewhere. A copy went

to you, and with it that circular of Raja's for issuing which the American Committee demanded (& obtained) his expulsion—a sad case of injustice which I was very sorry to see.

With very much love

I am ever,

Yours most affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXXIV

On November 6, 1906. Mr Leadbeater addressed the following letter to Mrs Besant :—

10 East Parade,
Harrowgate, England.

November 6th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have yours of the 18th October. I am sorry though hardly surprised to hear what you say about Mrs. Scott-Elliot, but does she not realise that initiates have means of recognising each other? Many thanks for putting poor Sinnott right, I am sure it must have been a comfort to him, and she has been so faithful through so many years under all kinds of trials that I am always glad to hear of any help that comes to him.

Mrs. Dennis's attitude is a mystery. I have tried to reach her astrally, but it is useless; she gives me impression of a different person altogether. Does this seem to you also? I do not like to make the suggestion, and I shall not hint a word of it to anyone but you, but the truth is that it seems to me a kind of half obsession—as though some one else were working through her. The Mrs. Dennis that I used to know would not have behaved as she has done even if I had really committed all the crimes that she appears to believe; she had not such bitterness and rancour

in her. Mrs. Davis, yes; she was always a mass of emotion, and I have seen her display great venom on other occasions; but not Mrs. Dennis. Still less would the Mrs. Dennis that I knew have disputed your decision, or ventured to blame you, or practically headed a revolt against you. I understand even Fullerton's action better than hers. I think she should have known me better and trusted me; more, but I recognise that, though a dear good fellow, he talks the wildest prejudices, and when once he has started along a line nothing whatever will turn him. I saw all and the pleasant evidence produces no effect upon him. I saw all that in the case of Mrs. Holbrook, and again with Græme Davis but I did not expect him to turn against me! I think he ought to have been wise enough not to begin wrongly but when he had begun I understand all the rest except the breaking of the solemn pledge, of secrecy and the use of private letters, which remain incomprehensible acts of dishonour, the source of all the trouble that has come since.

I wonder how matters would have turned out if I had obeyed my intention and returned to India! I know that in that case you would never have come to hold this strange belief that I was deceived in thinking that I ever saw the Masters; but I mean, how would that have affected the situation in America and elsewhere? Your circular would have been differently worded, and probably the common sense party at the Convention would have been in the majority and would have changed that stupid committee. What else would have happened I know not and it is useless now to speculate. Probably I should have been working for you in India, and I do think that, that at least would have been well, for I humbly venture

to believe that I appreciate you more than some of our Indian friends do, and you know that you can trust me to be loyal to the uttermost. You and I can trust one another thoroughly and that is surely a valuable asset, not too common in these days, can we not somehow utilise it for the work? If there is any way in which I can help you do not hesitate to tell me.

What does Mrs. Dennis mean by saying that the T.S. in America is broken up? All that I have done all through has, as you know, been specially directed towards avoiding any possibility of that, and I know that those who sympathise with me in America have not dreamt of such a thing. If there be any danger of it, it must be her own intolerance that is causing it. By this time they ought to have calmed down, but though I have reams of correspondence I seem to have had little real news lately; but it is said that no news is good news! Where is your tour taking you this time? All this time of year we in Europe begin to envy your Indian weather. Mr. Harvey is just starting out East again by this Mail; would that I were with him! With very much love.

I am ever,
Yours affectionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXXV

On November 14, 1906, Mr. Leadbeater sent the following letter to Mrs. Besant:—

10, East Parade, Harrowgate, England.
November 14th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I do not know that I have any special news this week. The majority of my correspondence still continues to centre round the American affair; I shall be thankful

when they get over that land settle down again in quite steady work. It is instructive, yet it is terrible to see how prejudice obsesses people, good people—until they seem absolutely incapable of seeing straight or even of telling the truth. They continue eagerly to circulate stories that what they have been plainly told are false ; they distort the clearest statements, they appear wilfully to misunderstand, and yet in reality it is all due to this obsession by a fixed idea from which they are not strong enough to escape. Just as they distorted what I wrote, so are they distorting what Raja said. Raja has consistently maintained the attitude which you took at first disagreeing as to the advice given, but claiming good intention for me, and condemning the stupid blundering of the committee. Nearly all who took my side in America hold to those three points of opinion, yet though Fullerton and his people have had that explained to them repeatedly, they still continue to proclaim that all these men favour the advice and constitute themselves its champions. That is supposed to be “good policy” “tactics” etc, and that is where the unscrupulousness of the American character comes in. The meaning of Raja’s circular about brotherhood was surely clear to the meanest capacity, yet they choose to misunderstand it, to read into it what is certainly not there, and on the strength of it they forced the Colonel to explain it. His little speech at the Convention in which he said that you would come to understand us and to do us justice some day, and that meantime we should go on with our work, is twisted to mean that you will presently come to approve *my advice* and that meantime I shall go on giving it ! It would be too ridiculous to take seriously if it were not for the harm that it is doing. Many branches

want to have Raja to lecture for them in spite of the unjust expulsion, but the committee threatens to disband my branches that invite him. One would not think it possible that decent people could behave in such a manner, yet it is happening before our eyes. Never again can it be said that thought is free within our Society, or that we stand for brotherhood and charity. The worst of it is that these people shower their false distorted stories upon you, and (on the principle that if *enough* mud is thrown *some* is sure to stick) I fear that some of their libels may insensibly influence you a little—because you could never believe that such people would act so unscrupulously or so wildly, I could not have believed it either—but there it is. That is why I know that if I had been *with* you things would have been so happily different, for I should have contradicted each falsehood and straightened out each distortion, *as it appeared*, instead of leaving them uncontradicted to accumulate, and so inevitably produce some little effect. Well as Raja put it, we must go on with our work, and hope that justice may be done, and I suppose that even if it is not done in this incarnation, after all it matters very little. What a comfort it is that they who stand behind really know everything, the beginning and the end, and therefore cannot fail to understand! I think Raja will probably come over and help me for a while, as he does not wish to be the cause of still further persecutions by that more than Presbyterian committee. I hope your letters are safely forwarded to you while you are away on tour; can that always be depended? With very much love

I am ever,

Yours affectionately.

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXXVI

On November 21, 1906 Mr. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Besant:—

10, East Parade,
Harrowgate, England,
November 21st, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have yours of the 18th from Bhavnagar. I wish I were there with you. I remember Kathiawar clearly, for I was in some way especially drawn to it; it seemed less changed than some other parts of India—less affected by European influence, I mean. Yet I think the south of India has been more my home than the north, and my strongest attraction lies some where in the Trichinopolly or Tinnevelly District—or perhaps over on the Malabar Coast, where I have not been in this incarnation.

Raja's expulsion was based upon that circular of brotherhood of which you have had a copy. No doubt all the documents are before you by this time and I trust you have been able to find time to look through them. One count of the original indictment was that he had insulted you by saying that he had perfect faith in you, and that he could therefore afford to wait until you understand his position and did justice. The whole thing has been a very serious piece of injustice; the Colonel simply yielded to pressure in America, as he admits that he did in London. I do not think you can have any idea of the venom and hatred that has been exhibited; I should not have believed it myself if I had not actually seen the letters which have been written. It is a scandalous thing that such spite and ingratitude should be

shown by the officials of a section of the Theosophical Society ; but since the President allows them to make him their tool, I do not see that we have any redress. You see the Society has taken quite a new departure in expelling a man for an opinion, and the Colonel ought, I think, to have seen the principle and resisted it, for it can never again be said that thought is free in the society. The accusation was obviously trumped up, for they objected even to the statement that the society imposes neither belief nor code of morals upon its members, and tried to distort it to mean an encouragement of immorality. I have made every effort all through to avoid anything which might lead to a division in the society ; but really I am beginning to doubt whether it might not have been for its true interests to gather together those who showed charity and brotherhood, and let the bigoted officials withdraw if they wished. Raja was the very man who saved them from a split at the convention, and with difficulty persuaded them not to expose the Colonel's arbitrary methods through the press association ; and this is how they reward him !

As to the T. P. S. I felt sure that you would prefer to have some one more loyal than Bertram as a partner, and I should think that it might be managed. It is evident that the person of whom I had thought would not be suitable, it was one whose sole income is derived from money invested in stocks, and as the rate of interest is not high I thought it might as well be invested in the T. P. S. But what is required is some one who for the sake of the work will practically give whatever amount is necessary, or at least lend it indefinitely without interest. I suppose it is possible that such amount might gradually be repaid so as

to leave you sole proprietor. Have you any idea what amount would be required?

I hope your letters reach you safely while you are on tour. I am writing regularly each week, so if there is a—you will know that one has gone astray. It is getting cold here now, so that more and more we envy people whose lot is cast in the Tropics. With very much love.

I am ever,

Yours affectionately,

(Sd) C. W. LAEDBEATER.

XXXVII.

On November 27, 1906 Mr. Leadbeater sent the following letter to Mrs. Besant:—

10 East Parade,
Harrowgate, England.
November 27th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Two letters from different towns in America tell me that determined efforts are being made to force all members to accept one of two alternatives—either to express approval of the action of the American Executive Committee or to resign their membership. The party doing this claims to have the support of the Masters, expressed apparently through Miss Sarah Jacobs. Miss J has for many years had teaching (good teaching so far as I have seen) from astral entities announcing themselves, I think, as Persians, and her faculties were developing in good order; but now conceit seems to have seized her, with the above results. But is not this surely an infringement of the liberty of opinion which it was once supposed that we enjoyed? I am quite certain that you would not support the officials if the facts of their

behaviour were really before you ; but they brandish your E. S. Circular as proof that you are on their side, which seems a pity. They are manifesting a most extraordinary persecuting spirit and they will not allow the disturbance to quiet down. The American Section will be a source of weakness to the society instead of strength, if this sort of thing is allowed to continue. I hope to see Raja shortly, and I shall no doubt hear additional particulars from him, but being an outsider I can do nothing to check all this suicidal foolishness. Are you still thinking of visiting the States next year ?

With very much love.

I am ever,

Yours affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

XXXVIII

On February 14, 1907 Mr. Leadbeater sent the following letter from Sicily to Mrs. Besant.

Villa Zuccaro, Taormina, Sicily.

February 14th, 1907.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I am sending this in duplicate to Adyar and Benares because I do not know where you will be when it arrives. Your letter of January 23rd has just reached me, but I have not received the "hurried previous letter" which you mention, so this brings me your first comment on recent events. I cannot tell you how glad I am that the veil is at last lifted, and the idea of glamour banished from your mind. I did not wish to contradict you ; it was painful for me even as seem to suppose your decision in that little circular letter which I issued ; but you see I

knew that there was no mistake as to our work under the Masters, and so I left it my duty to those who trusted us to reassert my knowledge. Now that you are also convinced I know you will forgive me for that one little protest, and I am more than thankful, more than glad, that the clouds have rolled away.

They seem to linger yet a little over some minor points especially as to what I am supposed to have accepted at that meeting in London; and since you are going to issue a notice to the Eastern School, it would be a relief to me if in it you could do me justice on these also.

(1) I never in any case advise daily practice. Do you not remember in the report of the proceedings of that advisory board that Sinnett specially asked a question as to that, and that I emphatically denied it? I do not think you could have had a full report of that meeting before you when you wrote your circular, or you could not have made the statement that you did. It is utterly, absolutely untrue, for that is a point about which I was always particularly careful; so it really should be contradicted. Please look at the stenographic report now, and if it be a true one you will find Sinnett's question and the answer.

(2) As to the question of advice given before puberty I wrote you fully a few weeks ago, so you know now that I did not "awake sexual passion" and that I spoke until certain symptoms were already present though certainly before there was any probability of connection with women, in order to prevent the possibility of such connection in future, and to prevent thought from turning to it. Since therefore the two points which caused the change in you are neither of them true, it seems evident that your first

position in Benares was the right one. If only I had—come back to you in India I could have explained everything, and you would never have abandoned it. But now I trust you have returned to it, so we must try to cancel the results of the interval,

(3) Of course I accept the Masters' decision, but you know that I did not need it, for a year ago at Benares I told you that our own strong opinion was sufficient for me, and that I would therefore not repeat the advice. I said the very same thing in answer to a question at the end of the meeting of that advisory board; once more refer to the report and you will see. If it will help any of our loyal people, by all means quote what I then said, or what I write now,

If I may be allowed to speak quite frankly Mr. Chakravarthi's theory that the appearance of the Masters to the Colonel was a masquerade by black magicians seems to be ridiculous. I know exceedingly well how closely evil entities can simulate the appearance of the Masters, but I am quite certain that such a test would not be permitted at the death bed of the President-Founder, an old faithful and devoted servant, even though, like all human beings, he has made mistakes in his time. Besides a black magician would not put in power a person like yourself, whose whole life is such as to make it impossible for him to influence you: he would obviously choose a weak person who could be swayed by his will, or some one like poor Bertram, with points in his past-life that give the dark people power over him.

Madame Blavatsky herself once told me that a Master occupied as he always is with business of world-wide importance often sends a pupil to represent him

and even to take his form when delivering a message "just" she said "as your queen sends her commissioner to give assent to the bills passed by your parliament, yet the assent is just as legal as if the queen herself were present". Also she told me of cases in which a master simply projected a thought, and *thought* took his shape through the mediumship (as it were) of any devoted person present on the physical-plane whose organism lent itself to such use. She said also that in such cases the form of words used, though not the spirit of message, might be largely affected by the organism employed. It occurs to me that some points in the Colonel's account which struck me as curious may perhaps be explicable along these lines; but I am quite clear that under circumstances personation could not have been permitted.

You already know my views as to your nomination as President, for I wrote fully upon that subject before. I think it will be the salvation of the society, and will open before it a career such as it has not had yet. You say you wish I were with you; my dear, you know I should be most delighted to be with you, if there is any way, no matter how humble, in which I can be of use. Now that I am not a member of the Society, I have no desire to be reinstated, for I am much freer as I am, but my whole life is devoted to their work, and if I can serve you I am always at your command, though at the moment I do not quite see what I can do. But you know that you can always thoroughly depend upon me to the uttermost—and that is a useful quality in these days,

I must say I am rather indignant about this last falsehood of Fullerton's. I shall write to him, and to-morrow I will post you a copy of what I say, but I am afraid

nothing will do much good. There really *would* be some excuse for supposing *him* to be under the influence of glamour—his actions are so incomprehensible. Did you see that awful letter that he wrote to Douglas Pettit? Mrs. Tuttle said that she sent you a copy of it. It was the vilest and most dishonourable production that you can imagine; how any gentleman could ever degrade himself to pen such an effusion I cannot understand. And now comes *this* story; of course he cannot have *invented* it; but that he should even *believe* it argues such incredible blindness. He may vote against you for the presidency, but America as a whole certainly will be in your favour by a large majority, unless she contrives to obscure the issues and hoodwink the members.

Very, very many congratulations and very much love from us both.

I am ever,
Yours most affectionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER

XXXIX.

On February 15, 1907 Mr. Leadbeater wrote the following letter to Mrs. Besant:—

Villa Zuccaro, Taormina, Sicily,
February 15th, 1907.

MY DEAR ANNIE.

I wrote to you at great length yesterday, but to-day your letter of Jan. 31st. (the first sent *direct* to Society) has arrived, and there is just a chance that if I answer at once I may catch the same mail with this. I am very glad to have the opportunity of seeing your defence of Raja; it is a very able one. Note, however, in addition

that the stenographic report of Raja's talk with Fullerton shows that he did not make that alleged assertion about a higher morality than the ordinary, the "recollection" of the other parties to that conversation is flatly contradicted by the verbatim report. That may be useful if ever the case comes up again.

I am ever,
Yours most affectionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBEATER.

LX

Before concluding the series of correspondence we might give here a letter that Col. Olcott sent to Mr. Leadbeater. The Colonel sent this letter almost on his death-bed. The letter is both interesting and important as conveying the opinions of the Mahatmas on the teachings of Mr. Leadbeater. Our readers may find it instructive to compare this letter with three others which we shall publish later on written by Dr. Van Hook at the dictation of the Mahatmas:—

Adyar, January 1907.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

The Mahatmas have visited me several times lately in their physical bodies, and in the presence of witnesses. As my life seems to be drawing to a close, they have wished to discuss with me matters they desired arranged before it was too late. They asked me to set right the dispute between you and Annie concerning the glamour question (it appears that after the troubles in America

Mrs. Besant had attributed to "glamour" her experiences with Mr. Leadbeater on what Theosophists call "the astral plane.") and I enclose what they said about it, which Mrs. Russak took down at the time. I am glad to know that it was no glamour, for I have always felt that she (Annie) made a mistake in saying that it was.

Concerning the other matter about the disturbance your teachings have caused, both Mahatma M. and Mahatma K. H. assured me that you did well to resign, that it was right to call a council to advise upon the matter, and that I did right in accepting your resignation, but they said we were wrong in allowing the matter to be made so public, for your sake and the sake of the Society. They said you should have stated in your resignation that you resigned because you offended the standard of ideas of the majority of Society *by giving out* (the italics are by Veritas) certain teachings which were considered objectionable.

Because I have always cherished for you a sincere affection, I wish to beg your pardon, and to tell you before I die that I am sorry any fault of judgment on my part should have caused you such deep sorrow and mortification, for I should have certainly tried to keep the matter quiet, had I not thought that it would have reflected on the Society if I did so. I feel sure that the Blessed Ones are striving to calm the present turmoil and hold together our Society from dividing against itself and I also feel sure that you will be called upon to help, and to forget the self for the good of the whole.

There is nothing I think that would tend to quell the present turmoil so much (and I should die happy if I knew you had done it) as for you to bow to the will of

the Divine Ones behind the movement and save the situation. Certainly Their wisdom is your law as it is ours, and They have told both Annie and myself that your teaching young boys to * * * * * is wrong. I do implore you from my death-bed to bow to Their judgment in the matter, and make a public statement that you will give them and us your solemn promise to cease *giving out* (the italics are by Veritas) such teachings.

It might be that if you did this the Masters would open out the path of reconciliation to the Society, and you could take up the great work you were obliged to give up, because you unwisely placed yourself in the position of being unable to defend yourself against charges that gravely offended the accepted moral standard of your country, thus bringing upon the Society you loved a great blow which shook it to its foundation, because you were so universally loved and respected.

Once more, my dear friend, I beg you to consider what I ask.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) H. S. OLCOTT.

LXI

Before we terminate the quotation of the letters of the leading actors in this Theosophical drama, we must refer to one letter which has become notorious under the title of the cipher letter. It is alleged that Mr. Leadbeater and some of his

boy disciples were in the habit of corresponding with each other in ciphers. The letter, a photograph of which is in our possession, is one of those cipher letters sent by Mr. Leadbeater to one of the boys. Mr. Leadbeater has not entirely repudiated this letter, but has said that he cannot recognise it in this form, whatever that may mean. To our knowledge Mr. Leadbeater has not said that this letter is not his. Mrs. Besant has also an ingenious explanation for the existence of these cipher letters which our readers will find in her letters to the members of the Theosophical Society, which we shall publish later on. For the present we only refer to this notorious cipher letter as it was produced as an Exhibit in the Police Court case. Speaking about this letter, Mrs. Besant from the witness box said "I saw a key to the document, but never worked it out. I cannot say positively what is shown to me is the key. I read it five years ago, and the translation was so filthy that I did not care to go through it". We have also seen a key to the cipher and we have taken the trouble to work it out and we entirely agree with Mrs. Besant in thinking that the translation is filthy. Therefore we give the letter as it is without the key. Here is the letter.

My own darling boy, there is no need for you to write anything in cipher for no one but I ever sees your letters. But it is better for *me* to write to you in cipher about some of the most important matters; can you always read it easily? Can you describe any of the forms in rose-colour which you have seen entering your room? Are they human beings or nature spirits? The throwing of water is unusual in such a case, though I have had it done to me at a spiritualistic seance. Were you actually *wet* when you awoke, or was it only in sleep that you felt the water? Either is possible, that they would represent different types of phenomena. All these preliminary experiences are interesting, and I wish we were nearer together to talk about them.

Turning to other matters, I am glad to hear of the rapid growth, and of the strength of the results. Twice a week is permissible, but you will soon discover what brings the best effect. The meaning of the sign O is osauisu. Spontaneous manifestations are undesirable and should be discouraged. Eg eu dinat xeuiou iamq, ia oaaet socceoh nisa iguao. Cauoiu *iii* iguao, is i a xemm oi u dina xamm. Eiat uiuu iuqqao xiao zio usa utmaaqq tell me fully. Hmue taotuueio et ti qmautuou. Uiiotuo lettat eusmeoh.

One more passage before we resume our narrative. We have in our possession a copy of a statement made by one of the boys who was under Mr. Leadbeater's—shall we say spiritual training. The statement is made before, and attested by, Mr. B. W. Wood, Notary Public for the State of Washington, residing at Seattle.

King Co. And in this statement the boy says :—
“In the year 1903 I was visiting in the city of Vancouver, British Columbia, with my parents and then and there met Mr. Charles W. Leadbeater. I was then 13 years of age and Mr. Leadbeater from the first treated me in a very affectionate manner. At his suggestion my parents consented to my accompanying him to California on a pleasure trip. We remained in California three months, at the expiration of which time I accompanied Mr. Charles W. Leadbeater to the Atlantic coast visiting *en route* a number of large cities. Mr. Charles W. Leadbeater and myself occupied the same bed habitually, sleeping together”. Then the boy proceeds to describe what used to take place every night. We need hardly say that this description is unfit for publication. It may be all right for those who are on the threshold of divinity, but is far too indecent for ordinary human beings. We shall quote the last paragraph of this boy's statement in which the boy says : “ I make this statement with the motive of thus giving a warning which may enable parents to protect their children from pernicious teachings given by those who pose before the world as moral guides, but whose practices debase and destroy both children and men.”

And now we can proceed with our narrative. Colonel Olcott died on the 17th February 1907. He was the President of the Committee which sat in judgment over Mr. Leadbeater's actions and which finally decided to accept Mr. Leadbeater's resignation from the Theosophical Society. There was thus some difficulty in getting Mr. Leadbeater re-admitted into the Theosophical Society so long as Colonel Olcott continued to be its President, but with the death of that venerable gentleman on the 17th of February 1907 the way was clear for the supporters of Mr. Leadbeater to make the necessary efforts to get him reinstated in the Theosophical Society. It is stated that Colonel Olcott had nominated Mrs. Besant as his successor before his death, but it was not till July 1907 that she was actually elected President of the Theosophical Society. Even before she was elected President she received a telegram from Blavatsky Lodge in these terms:—"Would you as President permit Mr. Leadbeater's re-admission?" To this Mrs. Besant replied in these terms. "If publicly repudiates teaching, two years after repudiation, on large majority request of whole Society, would reinstate; otherwise not". In this telegram Mrs. Besant, the candidate

for the Presidency of the Theosophical Society, has distinctly laid down the conditions on which she would reinstate Mr. Leadbeater. We want our readers to remember this and to compare these conditions with the ones under which Mr. Leadbeater was actually re-admitted later on. We will leave the matter there for the present, and trace the development and incidents which eventually led to the re-admission of Mr. Leadbeater into the Theosophical Society.

In one of the issues of a journal called *The Link* which we believe is only circulated among pledged members of the Theosophical Society, the following passage occurs "I was told by H. P. B. last Spring when I went home to the Master's Asramam one night that a defence of Mr. Leadbeater must be made against the distortions and exaggerations continually poured out on him. I was also told that I was not to make it, but to take advantage of its being made to the speak (sic) on the whole question ; I wrote to Dr. Van Hook that a defence would have to be made and suggested certain lines. Meanwhile H.P.B. had herself taken the matter in hand and a strong impulse set Dr. Van Hook to work." This is delightfully Theosophical. Here

is Mrs. Besant who has publicly stated that she cannot reinstal Mr. Leadbeater unless he repudiates his teachings. She is at the same time anxious to defend Mr. Leadbeater. In this difficult position she invokes the aid of the dead Madame Blavatsky and sends a suggestion to Dr. Van Hook that Madame Blavatsky wants him to produce a defence of Mr. Leadbeater and suggests certain lines on which to develop that defence. Dr. Van Hook was the General Secretary of the American section. His full name is Weller Van Hook and was an enterprising young Theosophist quite up to the latest Theosophical tricks and ready to oblige the Masters in any manner within his power. No sooner the suggestion was received, or rather a strong impulse was set in motion by higher astral powers, Dr. Van Hook produced his defence of Mr. Leadbeater in three long letters. We are very sorry to trouble our readers with these long letters but we can assure them that the letters will repay persual. For downright Theosophical impudence we have seen or read nothing to beat these three letters of Dr. Van Hook. Dr. Van Hook does not believe in half way measures and his defence is no halting, half-hearted apology, but he goes boldly

to support Leadbeaterism in a most thorough-going manner. In one of his letters Dr. Van Hook says "The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical world is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the world. No mistake was made by Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it, nor did he make any mistake in the just estimation of the consequences of any other solution of the terrible problem which was presented to him." What stronger justification and defence can Mr. Leadbeater want? Dr. Van Hook predicts the permeation of the thought of the world with the teachings of Mr. Leadbeater and in order to give sanctity to his defence of Leadbeater, Dr. Van Hook said that the letters were dictated to him word for word by a Master, Mahatma M. and for which Dr. Van Hook claimed nothing for himself save the function of a scribe. What more do Theosophists want? Here is the Mahatma himself approving the teachings of Mr. Leadbeater and dictating three letters to Dr. Van Hook for publication to the credulous and admiring Theosophists. We are told that Dr. Van Hook did not make the statement that the letters were

dictated to him by Mahatma M. publicly. It seems that Dr. Van Hook had said this privately with a request that it should not be published. We can quite understand that. We know that

- ◆ the most effective way of publishing anything is to whisper it in confidence to a woman and ask her not to reveal it to anyone. This is a better method of obtaining publicity and it has the merit of saving advertisement charges. But whatever the method of publicity may have been, Dr. Van Hook has not denied that he did say that the letters were dictated to him word by word by the Masters. Here are the letters dictated to Dr. Van Hook by Mahatma M.

Open Letters to the Members of the American section of the Theosophical Society:—

I

The Enemies of Mrs. Besant are the Enemies of Charles W. Leadbeater, of the Masters and of the Future Religion of the World.

It must be clearly seen by all that the defence of Mr. Charles W. Leadbeater is closely associated with and, indeed, involves the defence of Mrs. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society, who for many months has been the object of insinuations, innuendos and open, malicious charges of unfairness, duplicity, vacillation, lying and greed of power.

Of these charges which have been made against our President, the most heinous are statements as to those

acts of hers which are most characteristic of the leaders of our Society.

It is she who, since H. P. B., has most strongly insisted upon the peculiar character of our Society, one of the missions of which is to aid in the establishment of the next new religion, which is to be built upon foundation stones that in their turn rest, on the one hand, upon the recognition by the Western World of the validity of the evidence furnished by sixth sense perception and on the other hand, upon the acceptance of the truth that all religions have their esoteric occult side.

The coming religion will frankly return to the ancient and time-honored custom of affirming the supernormal or supernatural revelation of facts about God and his manifestations in Nature. It will differ from earlier religions in asserting that there are no miracles in Nature. None are possible, but the supposed miracles are produced by those who, skilled by their predecessor in such lore, know how to bring to bear certain laws of Nature not now known to the generality of men. And it will assert that these revelations of fresh facts about God and Nature are going on continuously. The religion will remain active and virile, a living religion so long as it has still associated with it in leadership those who are able to receive such information from the Hidden World and Those Who in it *know*.

But religions differ from our Society in their work. It is their mission to provide men with a crutch-like apparatus which may aid them in advancing. The instrument is given over to them. But all history shows that religions once given out lose, after a time, their occult character and, living only on the exoteric or form side,

become, on account of the degeneration of the priesthood, the dying shells of the former living bodies.

It is and must remain the peculiar and distinctive characteristic and merit of our Society that it maintains and will maintain unbroken the chain of those who are able to receive and give out new information to the world from the Great White Lodge, whose members are the custodians of the Divine Wisdom.

No one is required to believe in the validity of the Adyar phenomena, which were witnessed by Mrs. Besant and Mrs. Russak at the bedside of the late Colonel Olcott, President-Founder of the Society. Yet the great majority of the members of the Society throughout the world, we rejoice to say, do believe. And we rejoice in this because it shows that the great bulk of our people to-day, as well as a full generation ago, believe in the ability of their leader to receive messages from The Other Side and to furnish the conditions which make possible the appearance among us of Those Who, by the necessity of their lives, must dwell in the retired places of the earth, far from the social activities of men.

Yet the statements of Mrs. Besant about these phenomena are among those most hotly contested by her enemies. No one is to be regarded as a heretic who refuses to "believe in these particular phenomena," nor is his right to membership in the Society to be forfeited for his disbelief. But we feel constrained to say that the statements of Mrs. Besant's opponents might at least have been kept within the limits of that courtsey due, under all circumstances, to a lady and it might have been possible for disbelief to have been so expressed as to enable the speaker or writer to make his point as to disbelief

without stating, as has been done, that the phenomena did *not* occur as represented, that the report of their occurrence was falsified or garbled, or that the lady who, they could easily see, was about to be elected to be the head of the Society, was insulted and publicly discredited.

Now, this charge against Mrs. Besant's enemies I reaffirm in plainer terms. Those very persons who have been the most vindictive in their persecution of Charles W. Leadbeater have been the most open and virulent in their accusations against the genuineness of the phenomena and have been at least pains to conceal their malevolence toward Mrs. Besant.

Have these people not realized and do they not realize that, when they discredited Mrs. Besant, who was so evidently about to be elected to the Presidency, they threw discredit upon all that has ever been said about the Masters and their association with our Society? And have they altered their attitude of impeachment of her since her election? Do they not continue to cast aspersions upon her and try to tear down her reputation for fair dealing, accusing her of autocratic and unfair conduct?

One member, who had been chosen by Mrs. Besant to be Vice-President, so far forgot himself as to boast that Mrs. Besant's predecessor in practical occultism, H. P. Blavatsky, had had less to do with the practical success of the Theosophical movement than he, forsooth! And after Mrs. Besant had asked him to give up a position which he had so manifestly shown himself unfit to hold, he burst into violent abuse of her, asserting that she is unfair and autocratic, determined herself to rule at any cost.

This man not only forgets his early services to the Society; but his early scorn of those who would not accept the evidence of the phenomena attendant upon the inception of our great movement and the courtesy which, as an English gentleman, he ought to show to a woman, but he forgets that every blow aimed at the head of the Society is a blow at the Masters Who make its existence possible.

Every obstruction her opponents place in her way but adds so much to the burden They carry. Strong enough They are for all requirements, all of which have been foreseen by Them—and nothing too great for Them has been undertaken. But woe to him through whom such added burdens have been laid upon Them.

It must have been seen by all that it is Mrs. Besant's desire to stand or fall with Charles W. Leadbeater. How can he be an Initiate and not be acknowledged such by her. At Munich, at Chicago and elsewhere, she has boldly stated in no uncertain terms that he is her fellow-Initiate. And in Chicago she made in addition this following awe-inspiring statement: "Let me assure you in all solemnity that the Initiates who are disciples of the Masters do not press their presence upon the Theosophical Society or any other society in the world. We stand on other ground. We offer our services. You may reject them or take them, as you will, but after the experience that H. P. B. endured, that he and I have endured, let me assure you that there is no anxiety in the ranks of the Initiates to come forward and offer services which you do not desire to accept"

Mrs. Besant's enemies have passed the limits of polite debate and long since have entered the realms of vitu-

operation. Yet the attacks of her enemies have thus far drawn to Mrs. Besant's support but light and weak words of defence.

But the members of the American section refuse longer to remain quiet under this abuse of the President. They reject with scorn the imputations cast upon the veracity of Mrs. Besant. They equally refuse to permit her accuracy of observation to be called in question. Whole volumes of her observations and thought they have studied for years in organized classes. They decline to accept the cheap assertion of mendacity and weakness of observation made by those of her enemies who masquerade in Theosophic garments.

The incredible lengths to which these detractors of Mrs. Besant have gone! Having hounded one Initiate, Charles W. Leadbeater, off the public rostrum, which he had occupied for eighteen years, they have done their best to drive from public view his fellow-Initiate, Mrs. Besant.

It is well for us that the Great Unseen Leaders of our Society would not permit this—well that the love and veneration of thousands of devoted members have aided in forestalling such a possibility!

(Sd.) WELLER VAN HOOK.

II

It seems desirable to add to what has been sent you in the printed pamphlet entitled "Open Letters to Members of the American Section of the Theosophical Society," a further statement from another point of view in regard to the remarkable case of Mr. Leadbeater, which has for about two years engaged your attention.

Mr. Leadbeater, an English gentleman now about sixty years of age, educated for the Episcopal priesthood

and trained for clerical work, occupied a responsible post in the service of that church at the time Madame Blavatsky was about to leave England for India in 1884. This was in the period of the Theosophical Society's infancy when the conditions of its existence were infinitely more difficult than they now are since the atmosphere of the Western World, surcharged with materialism and selfishness, had not been acted upon and altered by those spiritual forces, the activity of which has been made possible by this very Society. Without a moment's hesitation, when he had heard discussed by Madame Blavatsky the fundamental truths of Theosophy he threw aside the trammels of education, prejudice, training and the ties of locality, kindred and friendship, and in three days' time, having disposed of his clerical post and his little property, he sailed with our great leader H. P. B. to India, expecting nothing more than that he would be allowed to take part in the routine work of the new Society in India.

The history of our movement furnishes no parallel to this remarkable instance of immediate and absolute self-surrender to the call of the principles of brotherhood which appealed to our great brother.

In India work of the greatest importance fell to Mr. Leadbeater's lot. His talents and peculiar fitness for certain kinds of work at once found recognition and employment. Not only India but other countries found need of his services and it was but a short time until he had successively visited, taught and organized in most of the civilised countries of the world. His widespread popularity had grown until at the outbreak of the recent troubles, he was known everywhere as the equal co-worker of Mrs. Annie Besant. After the death of H. P. B. it was

in fact these two who, practically alone, carried the burden of teaching for the Society, Colonel Olcott's functions pertaining chiefly to government.

Through these many years Mr. Leadbeater has maintained unbroken his ability to functionate upon the higher planes and to bring back perfect records of his experiences. His many books have been accepted unquestioningly by all Theosophists throughout the world as proper and good evidence of the state of things on the other side of death and in the fields of the Great Unknown.

His observations on thought-forms and his work on the Aura of Man have placed these subjects on an enduring basis of scientific observation. And his work on the Astral Plane will stand the test of time as a scientific study and classification of the things and conditions on those levels of consciousness. His work with Mrs. Besant on the basis of Physics and Chemistry is of primary consequence to Theosophy, as will be seen in a very few years when the world of science has reached the point at which it can appreciate it. The very foundation of all human thought pertaining to the study of the Physical Plane and its conditions lies in these observations.

In all departments of activity his work has been immediately associated with that of Mrs. Besant and has been co-equal to, and parallel with, it. The recognition of this fact was never for an instant withheld until the incipency of the present difficulties, when it was discovered by his enemies that in reality H. P. B. and Mrs. Besant were the only true exponents of the Masters and that the status of Mr. Leadbeater as a recognised leader was and had been a hideous *maya* under which many of them had lived for about twenty years without knowing it!

This notion could easily have been set aside by a slight comparison of the work of the three leaders, that of H. P. B. differing in ways easily recognised from the work of the other two and the lectures and books of Mrs. Besant on topics allied to those discussed by Mr. Leadbeater frequently following his in time and giving him "credit" for his observation and thought.

This dignified gentleman, who had given the ripest of his years to unceasing activity for the Theosophical Society, was suddenly attacked by members of that body residing in America who vaguely accused him of crimes and misdemeanors of the most improbable and unnatural kind. Stampeding the officials and councillors of the American Section with the cry that the foundations of the Society would be shaken and the superstructure perhaps overthrown if the horrid matter were ever brought to public notice, they quickly carried the subject to London, where Col. Olcott was met and urged to summon the alleged offender for conference. Not suspecting that a farcical mock-trial was about to be sprung upon him, Mr. Leadbeater, with his customary courtesy, abandoned his personal plans and travelled post-haste to London, where he was confronted with the accusations with which you are familiar. Disgusted with the shallow credulity of his friends of many years, some of whom were under the deepest obligation to him, he placed his resignation in the hands of Col. Olcott to be accepted if in his judgment the interests of the organization seemed to require it. He was then requested to meet in "Committee" the Colonel and several members of the British Section called by him for advisory purposes to answer some questions on the subject. This he readily consented to do

thinking that he was to make a frank statement to friends who would aid in discovering the origin of the charges and in sifting the evidence of the lying accusations against him to the bottom.

What was his astonishment when he appeared before this Committee to find, not friends, but bitter and jealous enemies who for years had carried in their hearts the most unjust suspicions and who had whispered to one another the most loathsome accusations against him. At once they began, not a friendly conference, as he had a right to expect and did expect, for the purpose of discovering the origin of the unjust attack, but a venomous and deeply acrimonious cross-examination designed to entrap him into incriminating admissions which might be used to slay his life-long reputation for personal purity and decent living. A perusal of the stenographic report of this meeting will satisfy any unprejudiced reader of the truth of this statement. The Colonel was desirous of conducting the shameful affair in as orderly and decent a fashion as possible with no harmful effect to Mr. Leadbeater and the cause. After the shameful baiting had gone on for some time he was glad at last to conclude it by getting the "Committee" to *consent* to the acceptance of Mr. Leadbeater's resignation.

Following the meeting the inflamed passions of some of the British members frightened some of Mr. Leadbeater's friends into thinking that a criminal prosecution might follow if he remained in England. Again, as always, unselfish Mr. Leadbeater went to the Continent, hoping and believing that his withdrawal would be all that would be necessary to restore complete quiet to the affairs of the Society. He was astonished to find that this

move had the opposite effect to that which he had expected, his withdrawal being regarded as a "flight" from justice, although his act was prompted by no motives other than those associated with the most unselfish devotion to the Society's welfare.

Not for a moment since his retirement has the persecution, vilification and misrepresentation ceased. Every effort to find new "evidence" has been made by his detractors without success. The whole subject rehearsed time and again has yielded no new material to serve as a basis of vilification, and the charges remain without addition as they stood in the beginning in spite of all efforts to substantiate them by the discovery of new "facts."

The importance of the last statement cannot be overestimated, since, if the victim had been guilty of the charges which were made, evidence of wrong-doing in the many parts of the world which he visited could not possibly have been concealed. Yet so far from new "facts" having been discovered the old ones have been in several instances discredited or absolutely denied by the boys supposed to have been concerned.

Now, dispassionately considered, what would the impartial and unprejudiced man of the world, who knows its evils and the difficulties involved in combating them, think of the whole affair? He would see that the teacher of the boys submitted to his care and guardianship was confronted with the most difficult and perplexing problem, clamouring for immediate and practical solution. The Western public refuses, in its inconceivable prudery, to acknowledge the existence of this problem when every woman school teacher dealing with children knows that it

exists and that not only boys but girls of a tender age are involved in its solution. What could he do? Should he ignore the demand made upon him and leave the victims to their fate? He did not. Considering the problem one pertaining to the physical and Astral Planes, though involving associated questions of far-reaching spiritual consequence, he brought to bear upon the subject the same common-sense reasoning which medical men try to use in the solution of the questions of disease. He well knew that such habits as had been formed could not be instantly interrupted by unspiritualized boys. What more natural than that he should recommend that the practice be curbed? And who knows how many boys, taking this advice from Mr. Leadbeater, have not been gradually weaned away from their vice and brought to entire cleanliness of life?

Now it was most easy for Mr. Leadbeater, with clairvoyant vision, to see what thought-forms were hovering about certain other boys not yet addicted to this degrading practice. He could see that these thought-forms would soon discharge themselves upon their creators and victims and he could easily picture the disastrous consequences. Do not we, better than those unacquainted with the truths of Theosophy, know that the thought is pre-existent to the deed, that the act is only the precipitation of the thought on the physical plane? In advising the practice by such a boy no new thing was proposed. It was only suggested in order that the thought-forms might be discharged before their force became overwhelming and involved the victim in the commission of some act, the *karmic* consequences of which might demand many incarnations for their solution. For sexual associations involve the use or misuse

of the greatest spiritual force entrusted to undeveloped Man and *karma* engendered about associated sexual acts demands solution by both parties to the act in simultaneous physical incarnation. And every Theosophist knows that, owing to the varying lengths of extra-physical life-periods simultaneous incarnations cannot occur to undeveloped individuals in regular succession, but take place only after long cyclical intervals which must be filled with physical lives of no particular value or consequence. Hence the "crime" or "wrong" of teaching the boys the practice alluded to was no crime or wrong at all, but only the advice of a wise teacher who foresaw an almost limitless period of suffering for his charge if the solution for his difficulties usually offered by the World were adopted and relief obtained by an associated instead of by an individual and personal act.

The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical World is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer-world. Mr. Leadbeater has been the one to bear the persecution and martyrdom of its introduction. The solution of the question can only be reached by those who study it from the Theosophic standpoint, admitting the validity of our teachings in regard to thoughts and their relations to acts. Hence the service of Theosophy to the world in this respect will be of the most far-reaching consequence, extending into the remote future of the progress of Man.

No mistake was made by Mr. Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it. Nor did he make any mistake in the just estimation of the consequences of any other solution of the terrible problem which was presented to him.

If any mistake was made it was (a mistake of judgment in trusting too much to the confidence of the parents of the boys who, he thought, knew and loved him so well that they would accept his judgment on matters about which ordinary people have little or no knowledge and about which he, by the nature of his occult training, had a full comprehension.

Betrayal of confidence on the part of some parents of the boys resulted in the scandal which brought this problem to the attention of Theosophists as a preliminary to its introduction to the world. Woe to those who violated their vows in making disclosures in this case. All honor to those parents who, braving the opinion of the world, have boldly set themselves against the current of the world's prejudice and have avowed themselves and their sons under undying obligation to the great teacher who aided their sons in overcoming difficulties which without his aid would not only have been insuperable in this life, but would have led them into almost inconceivable complications in future lives.

Did the Theosophical Society come into existence to bask in tropic ease or to encounter and solve in advance of mankind the hard problems of human existence? Do Theosophists hold membership in the Society for what they can suck from its body or do they do so in order that they may help the Masters to bear the burdens of the world?

Those who have joined the Society for the first purpose have speedily left it when they saw that their ease and comfort were interfered with by membership.

Those who remain in the organization through storm and stress are those who rejoice in difficulties as offering

opportunities for the healthy exercise of their growing powers and who look for no reward except the approval of their own consciences and the certain knowledge of the smiles of the Masters Who continually lead them on from Glory to Glory.

(Sd.) WELLER VAN HOOK.

III

The will is that part of the Ego which determines the course of action to be pursued when, after a long series of incarnations and the accumulation of a multitude of experiences, a stage in evolution has been reached which enables the Ego to make permanent and final choice of its course. This stage is reached when the things of the world are seen to be of comparatively little value, when the part is recognized to be less than the whole in both quantity and value. This recognition is attained as the result of experience extending over many incarnations the fruits of which are elaborated in devachan. In devachan all facts, products of perception, are collated, compared and considered according to their mutual relations. They are set side by side in due order and their values, estimated. When this has been done the lower mental body is used by the ego to remove the unessential part from consideration leaving the essential, when it is seen that a certain something common to all the facts is left, a something wholly intangible, no longer a fact but something common to all the facts of a certain class and containing a part of every one of these facts. This something is called a concept. When this stage has been reached the lower mind has nothing further to do with the group of facts which were considered. They are set aside and a new group of facts is taken up to be treated in the same way

with the same purpose repeated—the purpose of extracting from the new group of facts a new concept.

These concepts when fully formed are no longer the products or objects of lower mental action. They are the *materics* with which the upper manas concerns itself. Upper manas cannot consider facts. It can only consider concepts.

The correspondence is then established between the physical plane and the upper mental plane, the former being the field of action of lower manas, the latter being the object of consideration by the highest part of the Ego which is Atma.

Atma, the Will, is the Determiner, the Decider, the final Arbiter of the destiny of Man. For it is Atma that in the last supreme decision determines that course of action which leads to the Path.

Now this is brought about in this way. The lower manas, after long experience in the physical world, becomes wearied with the multiplicity of facts, recognizes the higher value of concepts which are seen to be nearer to the centre of Knowledge than facts and, in this state of *vairagya*, ceases in part to engage in activity. This leaves the Ego freer than it has ever been to deal during Earth-life with the true objects of its own cognition, concepts, which are supplied to it by the upper mental body as we have just seen. The upper mental body is capable of taking cognizance of these concepts and collating them into wholes of far greater value than the individual concepts possessed and at last all concepts are aggregated and condensed into one great concept which represents the supreme product of the actions of the Ego through all the ages of its existence. This final concept of concepts is the

recognition that all facts and all concepts are but parts of a single whole, that all manifested nature and all reflections upon it are but parts of a greater unmanifested nature and of a greater mind beyond and above our finite minds. This means that the Ego recognizes that the things it has concerned itself with in all the past with which it has had to deal are but parts of a great whole with which it had never concerned itself and of which, indeed, it had been wholly ignorant.

The recognition of this concept is the greatest achievement of the Ego in all the incarnations. For its recognition alone makes possible the entrance of the Ego upon an entirely new course of action, a course directed to the discovery of the whole and of its meaning. The Ego speedily recognizes the unsatisfactory nature of its former activities and decides to occupy itself hereafter with the things which it feels and knows are related to and lead towards a recognition of the whole. It sees that the whole is God, the completed part of Nature, as manifest nature (*prakriti*) is the incomplete part. Man, then, is himself but a tiny part of this great whole and to perfect himself and attain that peace which he longs for and the need for which is an essential part of his nature he must seek the Whole—seek union with his highest Self and make himself one with It.

Now this decision is not made in all its perfection and finality at once upon its first recognition. It is at first seen but vaguely and indistinctly, but as incarnations multiply, this tremendous concept is more and more fully cognized and becomes an integral part of the *materies* of the Ego, being carried over from incarnation to incarnation, amplified, strengthened, fortified until at last it

becomes so strong that it is not possible for the forces of lower mind to dominate it. The Will asserts itself at last as supreme and the decision to follow the Path becomes the basis of the course of action.

The man who reaches this final decision to follow the Path must needs change his entire mode of life and conduct. He must choose only those activities which are in consonance with the new decision and with those things with which it is concerned.

This brings us to the need of considering what it is which leads man to make choice between various courses of action.

The lower manas is concerned with facts but it has the power to choose the facts with which it will deal. It has the power to act on facts according to their relative value for it. This distinction is made upon the basis of its own good. Those things which it finds are most useful or pleasing to it are accepted, while those things which have the opposite effect are rejected. This power of choice, continually exercised, leads at last to the rejection of vast classes of facts and to the acceptance, as beneficial or desirable, of other great masses of facts.

The recognition of this separation into classes is the incipient knowledge of good and evil. It is desire which determines this separation of facts. It is desire which determines the final decision to choose the good instead of the evil. Desire is the appanage of the Astral Realm. And it is right that the Astral World should be the seat of Man's activity through many incarnations.

The corresponding plane for the higher triad is the Buddhic. For it is while the Ego is functioning as Buddhic that he yearns for union with the Whole. He

cannot long for the Whole until he can entertain a great concept and he cannot entertain concepts, as we have seen, until he can leave the field of action which is the sphere of lower mind. Buddhi is, therefore, the plane of aspiration and corresponds very definitely with the Astral Plane.

Now the importance of these correspondences is of the highest consequence, for upon their recognition depends the intelligent study of the course pursued by the Masters with Their pupils in the development of their growing powers. They place before their pupils objects of desire with the intention of stimulating Buddhi. For when a pure desire is set in action a corresponding vibration at once affects the Buddhic body. This leads, of course, to the development and growth of Buddhi.

When They place new and hitherto unobserved groups of facts before their pupils they stimulate the upper mind to grasp the concepts supplied by the lower mind from their classification and elaboration. And when the lower mind is stimulated to determine the concepts that belong to those facts the Will (Atma) is stimulated to determine the course of action which properly belongs to the new group of concepts as viewed according to their relative importance to it.

No man can determine his course of action who has not reached a stage of development sufficiently high to enable him to functionate upon the upper mental plane. For he is, before that time, a mere automaton swayed completely by the relative value of facts for the gratification of his Astral nature. He cannot choose a higher course of action because he has no power to generalize, to rise above the iron bonds of the lower nature.

When he can determine his course by reference to the need for union with the Whole he has reached the point at which he can functionate in his casual body. Then he is in a position to enter upon the Path.

What determines his final course of action we have already seen. With the continual acceptance of a given course of action leading toward the Path there is definite progress in the development of Buddhi which is the plane corresponding to the Astral. When he reaches the stage where he definitely accepts the things of the higher life as the more desirable he decides to adapt his course of conduct to the new end in view. He places himself in contact with those whose evolution has reached a point higher than his own and by this contact he acquires opportunities to magnify his own conceptions of the desirability of the good.

No man can reach the goal who is not thus aided at this stage of evolution. For unaided, he cannot hold in view the *concept* of the Part and the Whole, he cannot maintain the *feeling* that the Whole is more desirable than the Part and he cannot determine or *will* continuously the line of action leading to a re-union of the segregated Part with The Whole.

When the man chooses the Path he receives this aid at once. He is seen by the Masters immediately. Indeed he is known to Them as one who is ready for the great concept and the great determination long before he has any knowledge of his own tendency. They provide him with opportunities to develop his powers with a view to taking the absolute and final step leading to the Path.

When the man has entered upon the Path he is sustained at the moments of supreme trial by the Masters

who recognize that his will is not strong enough to maintain his course of action. When his aspiration fails They kindle it again into flame and keep the flame brightly burning.

One does not realize the difficulties that beset the Path until he tries to follow it and all the aid he can get is gladly accepted by the earnest chela.

The final act in the drama comes when for a moment the consciousness of the man is raised into actual union. For once this union has been experienced all lower union becomes unattractive by comparison, desire gives place wholly to aspiration. Once union has been, even for a moment, experienced the supreme concept is recognized to have the most perfect validity. All doubt is set aside and the need of the Masters' support is by so much diminished. As each new spiritual experience is added the final goal—complete and permanent union—is more nearly approached until at last after centuries or millenia of conscious service on the Path all phases of experience have been passed through and with the final supreme initiation the Part merges into the Whole.

The final union enables the man to do for others below him in evolution what has been done for him. He joins the Band of Those Who, having completed Their evolution, can, without trammels, take part in the work of evolution and aid with perfect freedom in the uplifting of mankind.

What can we learn from this study? The lesson that all men are one day to tread the Path by the same series of steps—the assimilation of facts into concepts, the growth of Buddhi from the refining of desire and the development of will from the repetition of multitudes of choosing

by the lower manas. We may learn patience with our fellowman when we see him wallowing in those objects of desire that to us are no longer attractive. And we may learn the value of our own efforts in the training of those about us who are at a lower stage of evolution. The goal for all is the same. The Path is the same. The only differences are those of the particular facts upon which the lower mind acts in the formation of its concepts. Let us, therefore, renew our determination to lend all possible aid to the Masters in Their struggle with the *Maya* of separateness to the end that our fellows may the sooner achieve freedom from its domination.

The man who lends this aid hastens his own evolution in an almost inconceivable degree. For he identifies himself, as it were prematurely, with the Masters; plays their role in a minor degree and so acquires a certain claim on Nature, the Whole, a claim which is gladly recognized. Nature reflects upon him her beneficent smiles and under that influence, he flourishes and grows. A man who consciously thwarts the plans of the Masters acquires a lien of an opposite character upon the forces of Nature. They are then expended upon him not for his up-building but for the retardation of his growth. He is required to dwell for ages under conditions adverse to his development, while others more tractable are permitted to enjoy the opportunity which he missed.

Theosophists, who now have before them a complete set of facts and of guiding rules and precepts, are under a tremendous obligation to utilize their opportunities well. For if they do not they will in future incarnations encounter far greater difficulties than they have met with in former ones. They will be beset with temptations which,

in this favorable incarnation, have been removed for them by the consummation of the tremendous, aeonic plans of the Brotherhood of Adepts who have for ages planned to take advantage of this first moment of ascent upon the upward arc of evolution. The body of Theosophists is a picked body of Egoes which, having favorably responded to training in former lives, are believed by the Brothers to have before them the possibility of forming in this incarnation the supreme concept and making the supreme choice!

Theosophists who feel the validity of these remarks would do well to measure their conduct carefully, for upon their conduct toward their leaders in difficult crises and upon their view of the situation at critical moments, will depend the amount and kind of aid accorded to them *individually* by the Brothers in this and in future incarnations. Those who have aided much will deserve and receive much. Those who have impeded the efforts of their leaders will be relegated again to the rank and file of men and their places filled by those who are pressing upward from the, as yet, undifferentiated body of men. Those who aid will be rewarded according to the intensity of their desire to aid and not according to the fruit of their action. Those who interfere with evolution in its special form will be repressed by Natural Laws according to the degree of their malevolence. No man may escape the operation of the Law whether it act for or against his so-to-say premature union with the Whole.

The Brotherhood feel the need of saying these words at this time and speak to you in no uncertain terms. Let all beware how they interfere with the plans of the recognized leaders of the Theosophical Society. They are

under the immediate guidance of the Masters now more than ever before and the Masters will no longer tolerate interference with Their plans. Those who do not wish to comply with the reasonable demands of the recognized leaders of the Society would, for their own good, far better step out of the Society and leave the organization free to carry on its work. Those who remain and aid in all ways according to their opportunities will receive a reward which will be commensurate to their loyalty, fidelity and unselfish devotion.

The Masters say these things solely to safeguard the interests of their charges. They have incurred heavy obligations to Nature in choosing and leading on before the van of the army of men those who compose the Theosophical Society's membership. And They must make an accounting for all that They do. They are powerless to interfere with the ultimate working of Law. They may for the moment interfere and, as a Master has said, dam the channel, but they must reckon with the consequences of the overflow. They are amply able to care for all contingencies, but woe to those who purposely or consciously interfere with the working out of Their beneficent designs ! Those who do so will find themselves involved in difficulties in future lives which they will be able to trace to their wrong conduct in this life. Those who aid will be given opportunities in future incarnations, the magnitude and glory of which they cannot conceive.

(Sd.) WELLER VAN HOOK.

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These letters of Dr. Van Hook or rather the letters which Dr. Van Hook took down at the dictation of the Mahatma had considerable effect on the American Theosophists. The ordinary Theosophist will swallow anything if it is alleged to come from the Masters and the effect of these letters was evidenced in the vote of the American referendum. The question of electing Mr. Leadbeater as the Assistant Editor of *The Messenger*, the official organ of the American Theosophists, was referred to a referendum of American Theosophists with the result that 1,530 voted for appointing Mr. Leadbeater while only 285 voted against it. 850 did not vote. The result was a triumph for Leadbeaterism, but a storm was brewing and it burst at the annual Convention of the British section of the Theosophical Society of 1908. At that Convention a resolution was moved by Mr. Dunlop recommending the re-admission of Mr. Leadbeater to the Theosophical Society. To Mr. Dunlop's resolution an amendment was moved by Mr. Herbert Burrows and seconded by Mr. G. R. S. Mead. We had better give a full account of the debate on this amendment as the speech of Mr. Burrows in moving the amendment deals

exhaustively with the Leadbeater case. Here is the amendment.

This Convention of the British section of the Theosophical Society, while affirming its loyalty to the first object of the Society—namely, to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity—strongly protests against evoking the sentiment of brotherhood to countenance what is wrong.

Whereas Dr. Weller Van Hook, the present General Secretary of the American section and so a member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, in a recent Open Letter which he has subsequently stated to have been “dictated *verbatim* by one of the Masters,” has publicly claimed that the corrupting practices the teaching of which determined the resignation of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, are the high doctrine of Theosophy and the “precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer world” :—

This Convention declares its abhorrence of such practices, and, in view of the incalculable harm to Theosophy, and of the disgrace which this teaching must inevitably bring upon the Society, earnestly calls upon all its members, especially the President and members of the General Council, to unite in putting an end to the present scandalous state of affairs, so that the repudiation by the Society of this pernicious teaching may be unequivocal and final.

This resolution was generally supported by A. P. Sennett, C. J. Barker, J. S. Brown, Dr. C. G. Currie, H. R. Hogg, B. Keightley, W. Kingsland, W. Scott-Elliot, W. Theobald, B. G. Theobald, L. Wallace,

C. B. Wheeler, H. L. Shindler, A. P. Cattnach, Dr. A. King, Baker Hudson, W.H. Thomas, A.B. Green, J. M. Watkins, E. E. Marsden, H. E. Nichol, by the delegates of the London and Blavatsky Lodges, and by many others.

After long discussion this amendment was carried by 38 votes to 4. Twenty-two delegates declined to vote.

MR. BURROWS'S SPEECH.

In moving the amendment Herbert Burrows said :—

To-day I have to perform one of the most responsible and painful duties of my life. On behalf of the signatories and of a considerable number of other members of the British section of the Theosophical Society, I have to move the resolution which stands in my name. We move and support that resolution because we firmly believe it to be in the best interests, not only of the members of the section, but of the whole Theosophical Society throughout the world, and, what is more important still, of Theosophy itself and of the great spiritual ideas which are its root and foundation. We believe it also to be in the interests of the best and truest morality.

Contrary to my usual practice I have written all that I intend to say. It is not too much to affirm that on what we do here to-day and on the decision at which we shall arrive by our votes depends largely the future of Theosophy in this country. It is all-important, therefore, that our thoughts and our words shall be weighty and well-advised—free from heat, passion, prejudice, and rhetoric. I know that among us there are diverse views on this subject, but I am sure we shall all agree that it is so grave and far-reaching that our wisest counsels are needed and that each and all of us should give to the matter our calmest and most anxious consideration.

One or two points at the outset I wish to make clear. The whole subject is a most difficult one to discuss—difficult, because it is one of those matters which are not generally talked about, even by grown up men and women. It deals with an evil which, as is well known, is rampant in many quarters, especially in schools, both boys' and girls', but over which a veil is drawn not only by society, but also by teachers and medical men. The subject in all its aspects is more than painful to us because it deals with the conduct of one who for many years has been honoured and followed in Theosophical circles on account of the other teaching he has given. But the point that I wish to make here is that it is not *we* who are responsible for the discussion. It is not *we* who have promulgated these teachings—it is not *we* who are at the bar of Theosophical judgment—(a judgment which now bids fair to become also that of the outside world), it is not *we* who have brought about this intolerable scandal in the Theosophical Society. *We* did not initiate the matter, and we would have been only too thankful if, after Mr. Leadbeater's resignation from the Theosophical Society two years ago, the whole subject had been allowed to sink into well-merited oblivion. For those two years we have held our tongues publicly, and our tongues would have been silent still, but for the extraordinary and incalculably harmful attempts which have since been and are now being made in India, America, and here, to rehabilitate Mr. Leadbeater under the guise of brotherhood—to associate him with Theosophical work and propaganda—to allow him to pose as a teacher in Theosophical journals—to press for his re-admission (without public recantation) into the Society—to hold him up in

respect to these very practices as a moral teacher whom we are practically incapable of understanding, and, above all, to set forth to the Society and the world that these doctrines and practices are to be one of the foundations of the Theosophy of the future.

The next point I wish to make is that we have absolutely no personal animus whatever against Mr. Leadbeater. No one mourns more than we do the fact that he has placed himself in this position, and that he has, as we honestly believe, proved untrue to real Theosophical teachings. But we also believe that there is something much higher than Mr. Leadbeater, and that is Theosophy itself, and it is because we believe that his action, teaching, and practices in this respect are harmful to Theosophy, and that the advocacy by, and action of, his friends and upholders will, if continued, wreck and ruin—not Theosophy for that is impossible—but the Theosophical Society throughout the world, and will render the public propaganda of Theosophy impossible, that we move this resolution here to-day. We ask the British section of the Theosophical Society in Convention assembled to affirm clearly and unequivocally, by its voice and vote, that it will have no lot nor part in this incalculably harmful doctrine, teaching, and practice.

* And here I may say that if, as I cannot suppose, *if* the vote of the Convention should go against us, we who are proposing this resolution, speaking as we do in the name of many other members of the section, men and women, old and young, some of whom have given the best years of their lives to Theosophy and its work, are irrevocably determined that, as far as regards ourselves, the whole matter will be fought out down

to its very roots—first in the section generally, then, if necessary, in the whole Society, then, if still necessary, at the bar of outside public opinion. At all costs we are determined to do what in us lies to rid the Theosophical Society of this foul blot on its name and fame.

The difficulty which faces me here is that, as I am aware, many of you who are present to-day, including some of the delegates, are entirely ignorant of the real facts of the case, and, as we know, this ignorance is prevalent in the section at large. It was impossible to publish the facts broadcast, and you have therefore had necessarily to rely on purposely vague statements, and have thus been unable to come to any decision on the matter. Ideas, I know, have been circulated that Mr. Leadbeater's enemies (if such there be—personally I do not know of any) got up a deliberate campaign against him, backed by false accusations. We who know the real state of affairs believe that the time has now come to speak out frankly and clearly, and to give the actual facts. This I propose to do calmly and quietly, as a mere recital for the information of those who, up to now, have been ignorant of them.

The actual charge against Mr. Leadbeater was that he deliberately taught masturbation or self-abuse to boys in his care, under a pledge of secrecy and unknown to their parents. That is the literal charge. I put on one side for a moment any evidence for this charge or defence against it. Both these I will come to later. I am now giving the bare fact, which no one disputes, because no one of course denies the fact that the charge was made.

The trouble initiated in the American section, and I cannot do better than read to you some portions of a

document which was issued on May 18th, 1906, by Mr. Alexander Fullerton, the then General Secretary of that section, to its members. It is a literal recital of circumstances, and those initial circumstances have never, as far as I know, been disputed, although others have. This is the part of the circular to which I refer :

After stating how rumours, afterwards proved to have been current for years in India, Ceylon, and England, reached America, that one of our most eminent Theosophical lecturers and workers (referred to as X) had been deliberately teaching masturbation to boys in his charge, and the rumours having been verified by direct testimony from boys in the States, the narrative part of the circular thus proceeds.

"A memorial was then addressed to Mrs. Besant containing the testimony up to that date, and signed by the Heads of the Esoteric Section and the Theosophical Society in this country, a duplicate being sent to X. Mrs. Besant replied to the Head of the Esoteric Section and X replied to Mr. Fullerton. X admitted the facts and explained that he taught masturbation to boys as a protection against relations with women. Mrs. Besant utterly repudiated such doctrine and such practice, but considered X's motive as sincere. Mrs. Besant's own sincerity, of course, cannot be questioned, but the appearance of later testimony utterly demolishes her stand.

"It was very clear that teaching and practice of this kind could not be tolerated in a teacher, more especially because access to the boys had been obtained through a deceptive assertion made to the parents. The assertion was that it was the practice of X to explain to boys in his care the nature of the sex function and the danger of its

abuse, though without the slightest hint that he gave masturbation as a remedy. If this had been stated, the boys would not have been entrusted to him. The boys thus approached were from thirteen to fourteen years of age.

"No direct action has been hitherto possible by other sections because of the absence of proof, but the proof existed here from testimony and from X's own admissions, and it was felt that immediate action by the American section was obligatory. A meeting of the Executive Committee was therefore called for April 13th in the city of New York. All the members were present save the one from San Francisco, who was unable to come but telegraphed approval of the step. The Committee sat all day, and was assisted in its deliberations by representative Theosophists from Philadelphia, Boston, Toronto, and Chicago. The unanimous outcome was as follows. First, that X should be presented for trial to the Lodge whereto he belongs: second, that a special delegate should proceed as quickly as possible to England and personally see Colonel Olcott, the General Secretary of the British section, the authorities of the defendant's Lodge, and the defendant himself. This delegate, Mr. Robert A. Burnett of Chicago, sailed on April 28th, armed with much discretionary power as to the settlement of the case. It was understood that if X agreed to retire absolutely from all membership in or connection with the Theosophical Society and its work, the prosecution before his Lodge would not be pressed. Successive telegraphed reports by the delegate were that the local sympathy with him in his mission was very strong, and that Colonel Olcott had telegraphed

X to come at once from Italy to attend a meeting of the British Executive Committee on May 16th. On the evening of that day the delegate telegraphed that his mission had been wholly successful, and that X had retired utterly from all connection with the Theosophical Society. Thus a painful trial and an increased danger of publicity have happily been avoided."

The Committee of Inquiry met in London at the Grosvenor Hotel, on May 16th, 1906. Its members were Colonel Olcott (in the chair), Mr. Sinnett, Dr. Nunn, Mr. Mead, Mrs. Stead, Miss Ward, Miss Spink, Mrs. Hooper, Mr. B. Keightley, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Glass, who acted as Secretary. There were also present, Mr. Burnett, as representative of the Executive Committee of the American section, and M. Bernard, as representative of the Executive Committee of the French section.

To the fairness and impartiality of such a Committee I am quite certain no member of the Society would raise the slightest objection.

A full shorthand report of its proceedings was taken by Mr. Glass, and of the manuscript of that report there are several copies in existence. We have one here this afternoon. Mr. Leadbeater was, of course, present at the Committee and had the fullest and amplest opportunity of explaining, defending, and justifying himself. He admitted that the charge which was brought against him of teaching self-abuse to boys was true and also admitted something else which both here and in America would bring him within the pale of the criminal law.

Mr. Thomas put this question to him: "There was definite action?"

Mr. Leadbeater : " You mean touch. That might have taken place."

That of course is nothing less than indecent assault.

Mr. Leadbeater had asked Colonel Olcott what he had better do, and the Colonel told him he should resign. A few minutes before the Committee opened Mr. Leadbeater wrote a letter of resignation to Colonel Olcott to be used if necessary. At the end of the inquiry the Committee deliberated as to whether Mr. Leadbeater's resignation should be accepted or whether he should be expelled from the Theosophical Society. There was a close division of opinion, but in the end the resignation was accepted in the terms of the following resolution :—

That having considered certain charges against Mr. Leadbeater, and having listened to his explanation, the Committee recommend the acceptance by the President-Founder of his (Mr. Leadbeater's) resignation already offered in anticipation of the Committee's decision.

Now that should have been the end of this indescribably painful matter. If it had been I should not be speaking here to-day. But immediately in America, here, and in India a campaign in favour of Mr. Leadbeater was instituted which took two aspects. The first aspect was that he had not had a fair trial (as far as I know he himself has not complained of its fairness). Accusations were made of forged documents, and other matters with which I will presently deal. But to show the line which is taken by some of Mr. Leadbeater's defenders, I will quote to you what is said by one of them, Mr. Warrington, a member of the American section.

The extract is taken from what is known as the Holbrook pamphlet :

"As to the Committee's recommendation that the resignation should be accepted, my comment is that this body so far disclosed its clouded vision, and therefore its incapacity to act in consonance with the real facts, as against the more partial and obvious ones, as to take an action which is diametrically opposed to the principles on which membership in the Society rests, and practically set the destructive precedent, so far as an unofficial body could, that a member might become ineligible by reason of an opinion held which did not deny the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, a precedent which, if thoughtlessly followed, would narrow the Society down from its broad universality to the grade of a sort of intolerant sectarianism. One can but reflect that it was not Mr. Leadbeater who was on trial!"

On this I may first remark that if it were not Mr. Leadbeater who was on trial, who was it? According to Mr. Warrington, the Committee of Inquiry! And this because of "Universal Brotherhood." Now, as we affirm in our resolution, we hold strongly to the first object of the Theosophical Society, to form a "nucleus" of brotherhood, but I, for one, do not hold and never have held that because of that object any man or any woman should be thrust upon the members of the Society in the name of Brotherhood irrespective of every other consideration. Brotherhood has two sides—the clean-liver has to be considered as well as the evil-doer, and if to object to the teaching of self-abuse to boys, from however high and lofty a motive that self-abuse is professedly advocated, is to be intolerantly sectarian, then I frankly avow myself an intolerant sectarian. But of course it is not so.

I need not labour the point of documents. Mr.

Leadbeater's friends who do labour it entirely forget that the case depends on his own admissions and on the open and avowed advocacy of his teachings by his supporters. Last year at the private meeting of Convention delegates which was held previously to our public meeting, it will be remembered that one of Mr. Leadbeater's friends in a speech which I characterised as infamous, endeavoured to destroy the case against him by talking of documents and insufficient evidence. He was reminded by a delegate, who was a member of the Committee of Inquiry, that Mr. Leadbeater was judged on his own confession. And that is so. He himself has admitted the teaching and practice, notably in his letter of February 27th, 1906, to Mr. Fullerton, which I will quote *in extenso* if necessary, or if my statement is challenged by anyone, and especially did he admit it before the Committee. And some of his friends now justify and glorify that teaching. It has been prominently asserted in America that in twenty years such teaching will be the teaching of the Theosophical Society.

After all this we shall hear no more of insufficient evidence as to the nature and truth of the charges.

Here I wish to quote a most important letter by Mrs. Besant, which in itself is more than ample enough to destroy the idea that there is any doubt whatever about the actual facts, but which of course has a much wider bearing. The letter was written in 1906, to the Secretaries and Wardens of the Eastern School. It would therefore at first sight be a private document, but Mrs. Besant, in the following words, gave permission for her views to be used :

"You can use my opinion on the harm done by the teaching, publicly if need arise."

The need has arisen long ago.

But even if that were not so the letter has been openly printed and circulated. It is now a public document and as such I received it in the ordinary everyday way. I want further to say that in this whole matter there must now be nothing secret, private, or subterranean. The question is far too grave and important for that, and those—if there are any—who would advocate such secrecy are doing Theosophy an infinite harm.

Here is the portion of the letter to which I refer. (Mr. X is Mr. Leadbeater.):

"Mr. X appeared before the Council of the British section, representatives of the French and American sections being present and voting; Colonel Olcott in the chair. Mr. X denied none of the charges, but in answer to questions very much strengthened them, for he alleged that he had actually handled the boys himself and that he had thus dealt with boys before puberty as a prophylactic. So that the advice supposed to have been given as a last resort to rescue a boy in the grip of sexual passion, became advice putting foul ideas into the minds of boys innocent of all sex impulses; and the long intervals, the rare relief, became twenty-four hours in length—a daily habit. It was conceivable that the advice as supposed to have been given had been given with pure intent, and the presumption was so in a teacher of Theosophical morality; anything else seemed incredible. But such advice as was given, in fact such dealing with boys before sex passion had awakened, could be given with pure intent only if the giver were, on this point insane. Such local

insanity, such perversion of the sex-instinct too forcibly restrained, is not unknown to the members of the medical profession. The records of a celibate priesthood and of unwise asceticism are only too full of such cases, and their victims, on all other points good, are on the sex question practically insane. Let me here place on record my opinion that such teaching as this given to men, let alone to innocent boys, is worthy of the sternest reprobation. It distorts and perverts the sex impulse, implanted in men for the preservation of the race; it degrades the ideas of marriage, of fatherhood and motherhood, humanity's most sacred ideals; it befouls the imagination, pollutes the emotions, and undermines the health. Worst of all is that it should be taught under the name of the Divine Wisdom, being essentially 'earthly, sensual, devilish.'"

Now that letter brings me to the very heart of the second aspect of the campaign in favour of Mr. Leadbeater—in favour of his being restored to membership of the Theosophical Society as a moral teacher whose ideals, in the case we have to consider, are too lofty for common people to appreciate and understand.

Perforce, the first contention that the charges are false has had to be given up, in face of his own admissions and those of his friends. It is now contended that his teaching to boys of self-abuse was given from pure, holy, Theosophical standpoints and from the loftiest motives. I do not know where there is the slightest proof of that, it is only an assertion, but I will take that argument for the sake of hypothesis. It is said that some of the boys at any rate were in the grip of evil (although what evil is not stated) and that Mr. Leadbeater gave them this teaching

in order to rescue them from something which is not defined, and those who oppose him are threatened that with regard to these boys the veil of "merciful silence" may be lifted. We await the lifting of that veil not only with a legitimate curiosity, but with perfect confidence and equanimity. Is it conceivable that these boys were so morally depraved that self-abuse was the only thing which could be taught them as cure by a high and lofty Theosophical teacher? Will any father in this audience dare to stand up and assert that if he discovered that his own boy was sexually depraved he would thereupon recommend to him further sexual abuse as a remedy? The contention is an insult to intelligence and morality. Rather would he, by complete changes in mental surroundings, proper physical training, careful diet, change of scene, and above all, wise moral teaching, try to wean his son from everything sexual, by turning all his thoughts in an entirely opposite direction. And here he would be in exact consonance with every high medical authority and every teacher who has had the training of boys. But if we take the other side of the case it becomes infinitely worse.

Take it that most of the boys were innocent, and there is no proof whatever that they were not. In his letter of February 27th, 1906, Mr. Leadbeater distinctly advocates the teaching of self-abuse to such boys *before* "the danger of entanglement with women or bad boys later on." (I use his own exact words.) So we have the terrible fact of these innocent boys being taught self-abuse, unknown to their parents, under a pledge of secrecy and because the teaching was Theosophy, by a Theosophical teacher who is claimed as a seer and an

Initiate, under whose charge their boys were. Well may Mrs. Besant say that "such advice as was given, in fact such dealing with boys before sex passion had awakened, could be given with pure intent only if the giver were on this point insane"—and well, indeed, may she go on to say that "worst of all is that it should be taught under the name of the Divine Wisdom, being 'earthly, sensual, devilish.'" Those members of the Theosophical Society, men and women, on whose behalf I am speaking to-day, are entirely at one with Mrs. Besant in this wise pronouncement, and we repudiate, unequivocally and absolutely, the immoral idea that any scintilla of Theosophical training for the young (or for the adult) should be given on the lines of sexuality in any shape or form. ●

I may say here, by way of parenthesis, that if once admitted this teaching will inevitably affect both sexes. All teachers who have any knowledge of the question know perfectly well that in girls' boarding schools the subject is of very grave importance. Once admit that self-abuse is to be the cure for any sexual abnormality, or that it may be used for training, and a vista is opened which is nothing less than sexual demoralisation of both sexes.

So far, I believe, I shall have carried with me all right-thinking people as far as regards the general aspects of the question. I now come to the grave and enormously important aspect of the subject as it more immediately affects us as members of the Theosophical Society.

That gravity and importance is clearly set forth in the second and third paragraphs of our resolution. It would at first sight seem incredible that inside the

Theosophical Society such a resolution should have had to be framed, but unfortunately the facts are of such a nature as to leave no doubt and no alternative. The bare facts are that Mr. Leadbeater's friends and upholders are not only vehemently asserting that in teaching what we rightly call these "corrupting practices" he was actuated by the highest moral motives, and that he taught them in the name of Theosophy—the Divine Wisdom—but that "the introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical world is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer-world."

Dr. Weller Van Hook is the General Secretary of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. He is a comparatively young member of the Society, but was elected American Secretary last year in succession to Mr. Fullerton, who with others was displaced because of his opposition to Mr. Leadbeater. As American General Secretary Dr. Van Hook is also *ex-officio* a member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, which is the ruling body of the whole Society. He is, therefore, one of the highest officials of the Theosophical Society.

Now here we have the really appalling fact that I stated, that this high official declares that masturbation, self-abuse, as taught and practised with boys by Mr. Leadbeater, is actual high Theosophical teaching, and more, that the Theosophical Society is the pioneer through which such teaching is presently to filter into the outer world. That there may be no mistake about this I will quote to you his exact words.

There was circulated in the American section two months ago what is known as the Holbrook pamphlet, which consists of "Open Letters," including one from

Dr. Van Hook, and there are two subsequent addenda, also by him. I have them here. I am informed that some portions of these documents have been circulated here to some members of the British section by Mr. Leadbeater's English friends.

These are Dr. Van Hook's words :

" Now it was most easy for Mr. Leadbeater with clairvoyant vision to see what thought-forms were hovering about certain other boys not addicted to this degrading practice. He could see that these thought-forms would soon discharge themselves upon their creators and victims and he could easily picture the disastrous consequences. Do not we, better than those unacquainted with the truths of Theosophy, know that the thought is pre-existent to the deed, that the act is only the precipitation of the thought on the physical plane? In advising the practice by such a boy, no new thing was proposed. It was only suggested in order that the thought-forms might be discharged before their force became overwhelming and involved the victim in the commission of some act, the karmic consequences of which might demand many incarnations for their solution. For sexual associations involve the use or misuse of the greatest spiritual force entrusted to undeveloped Man and karma engendered about associated sexual acts demands solution by both parties to the act in simultaneous physical incarnation. And every Theosophist knows that, owing to the varying lengths of extra-physical life-periods, simultaneous incarnations cannot occur to undeveloped individuals in regular succession, but take place only after long cyclical intervals which must be filled with physical lives of no particular value or

consequence. Hence the "crime" or "wrong" of teaching the boys the practice alluded to was no crime or wrong at all, but only the advice of a wise teacher who foresaw an almost limitless period of suffering for his charge if the solution for his difficulties usually offered by the World, were adopted and relief obtained by an associated instead of by an individual and personal act.

"The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical World is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer World. Mr. Leadbeater has been the one to bear the persecution and martyrdom of its introduction. The solution of the question can only be reached by those who study it from the Theosophic standpoint, admitting the validity of our teachings in regard to thoughts and their relations to acts. Hence the service of Theosophy to the world in this respect will be of the most far-reaching consequence, extending into the remote future of the progress of Man.

"No mistake was made by Mr. Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it. Nor did he make any mistake in the just estimation of the consequences of any other solution of the terrible problem which was presented to him."

I believe it is asserted here in England (not in America, where they know better), asserted by those of Mr. Leadbeater's friends who are now driven to see the *impasse* into which they have been led, that those words do not refer to Mr. Leadbeater's practices. But English words are not mere counters to be juggled with at will, and you are not infants who cannot appreciate what language means. I leave those words to you, and ask you

to fully realise what their promulgation by one of the ruling body of the Theosophical Society really means in relation to the Theosophical Society, to Theosophy, to its public propaganda, and to the world at large. I ask you to picture to yourselves the position of Theosophical lecturers when faced on a public platform with these words and the whole of their attendant circumstances, as inevitably they will be faced. In thinking that you will begin to realise the terrible position in which every member of the Theosophical Society is now placed. For this is certain, that pushed to their logical conclusion, and they are being so pushed by Mr. Leadbeater's friends, his teaching must inevitably become one of the bases of Theosophical doctrine and propaganda, and further, in common fairness to intending members, especially young people, it will have to be clearly and publicly stated what this new base of Theosophical teaching really is and what it means. The day for secrecy and subterranean methods is gone for ever. On that we are fully and irrevocably determined.

But Dr. Van Hook has done something else ; he has made an audacious and scandalous attempt to associate Mrs. Besant with all this and to tie her body and soul to Mr. Leadbeater. In the opening sentence of his Open Letter he says : " It must be clearly seen by all that the defence of Mr. Charles W. Leadbeater is closely associated with, and indeed involves, the defence of Mrs. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society," and in the same letter he further says : " It must have been seen by all that it is Mrs. Besant's desire to stand or fall with Charles W. Leadbeater." I need not comment on this audacious statement, except to say that you now know what this so-called " defence" of Mr. Leadbeater really means—and

to ask you to realise that Dr. Van Hook, the General Secretary of the American Section, a member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, this defender of the teaching of self-abuse, is striving with might and main to involve Mrs. Besant, the President of the Society in this wretched controversy, and to drag her into this foul masturbation abyss.

But further, Dr. Weller Van Hook, in a letter to Dr. Moore, of which we have a certified copy, declares that these letters of his were dictated to him *verbatim* by one of the Masters! Realise what that still more audacious statement means, and you will again realise the danger the Theosophical Society is in and the miserably parlous state into which it is now attempted to place it.

In a letter from Colonel Olcott to Mr. Leadbeater of January 12th, 1907, the Colonel says: "The Masters have told both Annie and myself that your teaching young boys to relieve themselves is wrong."

Now we have Dr. Van Hook's defence of the teaching and practice of self-abuse dictated *verbatim* by one of the Masters! Words fail me. I appeal to those of you who have heard from H. P. B., from Mr. Sinnett, from Annie Besant, and from others of the lofty planes of pure morality on which the Masters dwell, to realise what this last scandalous assertion means and to make up your minds that the last vestige of this foul teaching which audaciously calls in the Masters to its aid, must absolutely disappear from the Theosophical Society.

But we are told that this teaching is given from the purest and loftiest motives. To that I can only say that I, and those in whose name I speak, absolutely decline to accept any such morality—Theosophical or otherwise—as.

this. Better that the world should blunder along in its old halting way than that the teaching of the Divine Wisdom should be befouled by the doctrine that the way to escape from the lusts of the flesh is by the path of self-abuse.

But we are further told in the Holbrook pamphlet, that Mr. Leadbeater (and this in preparation of his once more becoming a teacher among us) is "an Initiate of the Great White Lodge," that he "holds a commission from the Great Spiritual Teachers of the race and bears their message into the outer worlds." Of that I know nothing and I take it that those who talk like this know nothing either. Initiates do not proclaim themselves to the world. But if I do not know that, I am at least certain of this—that the teaching of self-abuse to young boys is not part of the commission and the message of the Great Spiritual Teachers of the race. If it were so then I say here deliberately to you, my fellow Theosophists, that those Spiritual Teachers are but frauds and the Theosophy which is founded on their teaching is a lie. But, of course, we know it is not so. But it is further asserted that Mr. Leadbeater is exceptionally pure and stainless, that he is too much above the littleness of our human nature to care to clear himself from the unjust and untrue accusations that are made against him. Again I do not know. It may be so. I have said nothing to-day against Mr. Leadbeater's moral character. He may, for aught I know, be on a plane of morality to which neither I nor you can lift our dazzled eyes. I have simply given you a recital of plain facts with their consequences, and am asking you to affirm by your vote that whatever empyrean morality may be, those facts and their consequences are fatal to the real

physical and spiritual progress and evolution of mankind, and that the man or men who teach them, do so against the best interests of Theosophy and of humanity at large.

But, it is said, Mr. Leadbeater has promised to abstain from again teaching these particular doctrines, and therefore he is again to become a teacher in our Theosophical periodicals, especially in those devoted to the training of children! for instance, the *Lotus Journal*, here. I meet that fairly and squarely by saying that we do not intend to be put off by that. It is not enough. That is but preparatory to his reinstatement in the Theosophical Society *without recantation*. At this moment preparations are being made in America for his reinstatement without a word, not only as to his recantation, but even as to his promising to abstain. I have here the original letter which is doing this. It is from Mr. Martin, one of Mr. Leadbeater's supporters and a member of the American Section, and it has been sent round to the American Branch Secretaries. Mr. Martin says :

April 28th, 1908.

Miss Lilian Kelting,
Secretary, Hyde Park, T. S.

Dear Miss Kelting,—Will you kindly advise your Theosophical Society of the fact of my intention to offer a resolution at Convention to the effect that Mrs. Besant be requested to invite Mr. Leadbeater to rejoin the Society?

Yours fraternally,

(Sd.) F. E. MARTIN,

Member, Kans. City, T.S.

Now I ask you to remember that in April, 1907, the Council of the Blavatsky Lodge sent a telegram to Mrs. Besant in these words: "Would you as President permit

X's (Leadbeater's) re-admission?" To that Mrs. Besant wired: "If publicly repudiates teaching, two years after repudiation on large majority request of whole Society would reinstate, otherwise not." Mr. Leadbeater has *not* repudiated, he has *not* recanted. In a letter to Mrs. Besant published in the *Theosophist* of February this year, but written last year, he says :

"You ask me to write a formal letter which you can show, if necessary, to say what is my present position in regard to the advice which I gave some time ago to certain boys. I need hardly say that I adhere to the promise I gave you in February of last year (that was February, 1906) that I would not repeat that advice as I defer to your opinion that it is dangerous. I recognise as fully as you do that it would be so if promiscuously given and I had never dreamt of so giving it."

Now see what that means. Mr. Leadbeater neither regrets nor recants—he shelters himself behind Mrs. Besant's opinion. He defers to her opinion that his teaching is dangerous, but—and this is the point—according to him it is only dangerous when given promiscuously. Again, I repeat, this is a most lamentably insufficient declaration. This teaching is dangerous and hateful if given at all, even more so if given secretly. That is our position and from it, as Theosophists, we do not intend to recede. Mr. Leadbeater's American supporters are logical and boldly and openly adopt the teaching and recommend it as high Theosophy.

I may further say with reference to this reinstatement that in August, 1906, Mrs. Besant wrote as follows from India to America :

"Any proposal to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater in the membership of the Theosophical Society would be ruinous to the Society. I would be indignantly repudiated here and in Europe and I am sure in Australia and New Zealand, if the facts were known. If such a proposal were carried in America—I do not believe it possible—I should move on the Theosophical Society Council, the supreme authority, that the application of membership should be rejected. But I am sure that Mr. Leadbeater would not apply."

But unfortunately we have the fact that in India America, and here, Mr. Leadbeater, without recantation is being slowly but surely re-adopted. Here, as I have said, he is to contribute to the *Lotus Journal*, while in America you have heard of Mr. Martin's letter what is contemplated, and he has been appointed official editor of correspondence in their sectional organ, the *Theosophic Messenger*. It is a remarkable and significant fact that one of the first questions was on the best way of teaching Theosophy to children! To show how the virus (for there is no other word) is spreading in America I may say that this appointment was made by referendum in the American section; 2,380 members were entitled to vote, 850 did not vote, 1,245 were in favour of Mr. Leadbeater's appointment, and 285 against. The effect of the whole matter has been that in America there has been a loss to the Section of between 400 and 500 members, while here, as we all know, we have lost a number of old and valuable members, including two ex-General Secretaries of the section and one ex-acting Secretary. In America again, some of the oldest officials, including Mr. Fullerton the close friend of H. P. B., have been dismissed because

of their opposition to Mr. Leadbeater's teaching. Such are some of the outward effects, but serious as they are, they are of course in no way comparable with the inner consequences.

The extreme, nay overwhelming importance of this matter to the Theosophical Society, its members, and generally to Theosophy has compelled me to trouble the Convention at this length, but the subject is one which cannot in any way be scamped or lightly passed over. As I said at the beginning the question has to be discussed and thrashed out down to its very roots and a definite decision come to one way or the other, I believe that now that the facts are known only one decision is possible. Nothing will make me think, till I see it in actual facts, that your fathers and mothers who are here to-day, decent Englishmen and women as you are, would for a single moment dream of supporting in any way whatever this foul teaching which we attack and condemn—would dream of letting it go forth to the world that the Theosophy you hold dear must contain within its borders the degrading doctrine that any part whatever of the training of the young shall consist of self-abuse. The contention that this self-abuse is only dangerous when taught promiscuously must be killed—absolutely and entirely—and the foul thing banished from our midst.

And so in the last part of our resolution we ask you to assist in that task, to assist by your votes to-day and by your future action in your Lodges in pressing home upon the President of the Theosophical Society, on its General Council, and generally on members everywhere that what the British section de-

mands, and has a right to demand, is a clear, definite, unequivocal, official public repudiation by the Society as a whole of this self-abuse doctrine, teaching and practice, and a declaration that on no consideration whatever shall it be even the smallest part of Theosophical teaching, so that what we term this scandalous state of affairs may come to an end, and the Theosophical Society, cleared from this foul stain, may go forward unhampered to its great work of the spiritual regeneration of the race.

MR. MEAD'S SPEECH.

In seconding this very important amendment on which the honour and well-being of our Society depend, I have thought it wiser to put down in writing what I have to say.

It is incredible that a single vote in this Convention should be cast against the amendment, for we are voting as representatives of Lodges and not as individuals.

Though difficult to believe it may possibly be that there are one or two here who privately endorse this detestable teaching, as assuredly there are in the American section those who shamelessly force it publicly on the Society, and that, too, without protest save from a small minority; if there be such among the delegates I would remind them that they are now voting for their Lodges and not for themselves.

Fellow-members of the Theosophical Society, we are on the brink of an abyss into which the Society—to which so many of us have devoted our best thoughts and energies, will inevitably be plunged, if an imperative halt is not instantly called.

For if such monstrous statements are allowed to be made without the most emphatic repudiation, if we

permit the most sacred authority to be evoked in support of such ruinous teaching, this Society which is so dear to us, will become—and rightly become—a by-word throughout the world; all will point the finger of scorn—and of just scorn—at it; people will say—and say without any means of contradicting them: “There goes a member of that wretched Society, whose ‘Initiates’ and ‘Masters,’ forsooth, teach children self-abuse!”

Even in an association composed of out-and-out materialists and thorough-going Malthusians this corruption of children could not possibly be tolerated. What, then, has brought about this perversion of natural instinct in our ranks?

It is no new thing. Every movement of a similar nature to our own, every movement that contacts the Sacred Mysteries, has been defiled by the perversion of them. The evil dogs the steps of the good.

The reason why such a practice has for a moment met with defenders in our body, is because psychism is with some enthroned above morals. Had any member other than a widely-known psychic been detected in teaching such practices in this Society, the matter would have been settled at once with no dissentient voice; the condemnation of the teaching would have been universal.

It is, then, owing to the fact that many believe too unquestioningly in the psychic pronouncements of this or that individual, that some of our number who would not dream of putting this teaching into practice, are overawed by their belief in the “knowledge,” as they suppose, of their special psychic into giving a mental assent to what would otherwise be abomination to them.

But where will this stop? Will not practice before

long follow on the heels of theory? What of the future if this is not instantly checked?

We have history to guide us. It is all very old; and, therefore, does not so much surprise those of us who are students of history; indeed, we might almost expect it.

At all times of great spiritual revival, the foul reflection, the distortion, the perversion of the most Sacred Mysteries accompanies it; at all such times the true Mysteries have been surrounded and besmirched with the foulest of sex-crimes. For the high Mysteries have to do chiefly with the Mystery of Regeneration.

Such and far more detestable practices will, I fear, become only too widespread in the near future—but let us hope to High Heaven—outside our body and not within it.

It is, therefore, *peculiarly* imperative on the Theosophical Society, that it should assert its purity. As it values its life, as it longs to keep in the great spiritual movement of which it is a member, it should stand wholeheartedly for what is clean and pure, and show the conscious or unconscious perversion of the holiest mysteries as the deadliest of poison.

They who teach such doctrines, whether knowingly or unknowingly, are blasphemers of the Divine Mysteries of the Immaculate Conception, the bringing of oneself to spiritual birth, the Mystery of the Alone-begotten.

I, therefore, call on you all most solemnly to have no traffic, directly or indirectly, with this thing, in any shape or form, even in thought, and to let it be known by a unanimous resolution that the British Section of the Theosophical Society utterly repudiates and abhors the teaching of such practices.

If we do not do this unequivocally, no decent man or woman can be asked to join us. For, if they were, they would be asked to join under false pretences; they would be invited into an atmosphere of corrupting influences—if indeed such a tainted body could for a moment hold together and keep the knowledge of its propaganda of such debasing teaching from the public.

But this it will not be allowed to do; the subterranean propaganda of such views is at an end in our Society; it is now forced to the surface; the matter must be decided publicly. It is for this section now to decide.

LXIII.

The result of the carrying of this amendment against Mr. Leadbeater was a request from the British Section of Theosophists, in Convention assembled, to Mrs. Besant and to the General Council to put an end to the painful condition of affairs which had arisen in consequence of certain pernicious teachings ascribed to Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. Such a request at once put Mrs. Besant on her defence and on 7th September 1908 she wrote a letter to the members of the Theosophical Society which is of considerable interest. The letter is long; but it will be unfair to Mrs. Besant not to reproduce it here *in extenso*. Here is the letter.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE T. S.

AN appeal has been made to the General Council and to myself, by the British Section in Convention assembled,

to take action to put an end to the painful conditions of affairs which has arisen in consequence of certain pernicious teaching ascribed to Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. The General Council does not meet until December next, and will then take such action as it may deem right. The appeal to myself I answer, after such delay as has been imposed on me by the fact that I was in the Antipodes, on the Society's business, when the appeal was made, and could not complete my reply until I had verified certain data by reference to documents not then within my reach.

My wish is to lift the present controversy out of the turmoil of passion in which all sense of proportion has been lost, and to submit the whole case to the judgment of the Theosophical Society, free from the exaggerations and misunderstandings which have surrounded it. I recognise fully that those who denounce Mr. Leadbeater are inspired, for the most part, by an intense desire to protect the purity of public morals and the good name of the Society, and are therefore worthy of respect. I ask them to believe that others may have an equal love of purity and of the Society's good name, while not accepting their view of Mr. Leadbeater's advice, and while considering that they have been misled by exaggerated and distorted statements, as I was myself. I even ask them whether they seriously think that I, after nearly twenty years of unstinted labor for the Society, and of a life more ascetic than lax, am likely to be indifferent either to purity or to the Society's good name? I ask them to give credit to others for good intent, as they claim good intent for themselves.

From the occult standpoint, the duality of sex represents the fundamental duality of the universe, and in the individual human being the duality once existed as it still

exists in the universe and in some forms of vegetable and animal life. The separation of humanity into two sexes, in each of which one sex predominates and the other is rudimentary, is but a temporary device for the better development of complimentary qualities, difficult of simultaneous evolution in the same person. The separation being thus necessary, but the presence of both sex-elements being essential to reproduction, the sex instinct, drawing the separated halves together, became a necessary factor in the preservation of the race. To subserve this purpose is its natural function, and any other use of it is unnatural and harmful. In the animal kingdom it has never gone astray from its due utility. In the human, owing to the activity of mind, with vividness of memory and of anticipation, it has become abnormally developed, and its true function has become subsidiary. It should serve to draw one man and one woman together, for the creation of pure bodies fit for incoming souls, and thus aid in cementing an enduring union of two lives complementary to each other, a union also needed for the nurture and protection of the young ones within a settled home during their years of helplessness. But by unbridled indulgence, both within and without marriage, it has developed into an overmastering passion, which seeks merely for gratification; its one rightful use, its *only* natural and legitimate function, is forgotten; the great creative power is prostituted to be an agent of pleasure, and this has brought an inevitable nemesis. Society is honeycombed with diseases which, directly and indirectly, spring from the general abuse of the creative function; by an extraordinary reversal of facts, continence is regarded as unnatural instead of natural, and the demand

of the sex instinct for constant gratification is looked on as normal instead of as an abnormality evolved by habitual excess. Doctors know the suffering and the misery wrought under marriage sanction by unbridled incontinence ; faced by the sex-passion in unmarried lads, they bid them resort to the women of the streets, and thus increase the evil heredity ; statesmen vainly try by Contagious Diseases Acts to minimise the ruin both of men and women ; solitary vice is becoming more widespread, and is the deadly peril which teachers in schools are forced continually to face, against which they ineffectually strive.

Such is the condition of humanity at the present time, and for this condition—at the root of most of the misery and crime in civilised life—Occultism has but one remedy : the restoration of the sex-function to its one proper use by the gradual raising of the standard of sex-morality, the declaration that its only legitimate use is the creative, that its abuse for sensual pleasure is immoral and unnatural, and that humanity can only be raised out of its present sensuality by self-control. This view is not likely to be acceptable in a Society hereditarily self-indulgent, but occult morality is higher and sterner than that of the world. Also it cares for realities not conventions, and regards unbridled indulgence within marriage as degrading both to mind and body, although, because monogamous, somewhat less ruinous to both than outside the marriage union.

Hence, Occultism condemns " neo-Malthusian practices," as tending to strengthen sex-passion ; see my "Theosophy and the Law of Population," 1891, it condemns the medical advice to young men to yield to their " natural passion"; it condemns solitary vice as only less

harmful than prostitution ; all these things are degrading, unmanly, unwomanly. It exhorts man to remount by self-control the steep incline down which he has slipped by self-indulgence, until he becomes continent, not incontinent, by nature. On all this Mr. Leadbeater and myself are at one.

I do not seek to impose this view on the Theosophical Society, for every member is free to form his own judgment on the sexual problem, as on any other, and mutual respect, not wild abuse, is the rightful attitude of members in face of this, the most difficult problem which confronts humanity. I speak on this as Occultist. " He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

I turn now to the accusations against Mr. Leadbeater, reminding the Society against whom these accusations are levelled. Mr. Leadbeater was a clergyman of the Church of England, and in 1885 threw up his career to enter the Theosophical Society, and to devote his ripe manhood to its service. From that date until now he has served it with unwavering fidelity, through good and evil report, has travelled all over the world to spread its teachings, has contributed to its literature some of its most valued volumes, and thousands, both inside and outside the Society, owe to him the priceless knowledge of Theosophy. During the last two and a half years, under a hurricane of attack as unexampled as his services, he has remained silent, rather than that the Society should suffer his reproach. Because he loved the Society better than his own good name, I, at his wish, have also kept silence. But now that I am appealed to, I will speak, and the more gladly because I also wronged him, believing that he had admitted certain statements as true ; I wrote : " On June 7th, I received

an account of the acceptance by Mr. Leadbeater before the Committee of the facts alleged in the evidence ;" I thus accepted on what I believed to be his own word, that which, on the word of others, I had rejected as impossible, and that which I ought to have continued to reject even coming as from himself ; both he and I have suffered by my blunder, for which I have apologised to him, to an extent which our unmerciful critics little imagine ; but it is over, and never the shadow of a cloud can come between us again.

The so-called trial of Mr. Leadbeater was a travesty of justice. He came before Judges, one of whom had declared before hand that "he ought to be shot" ; another, before hearing him, had written passionate denunciations of him, a third and fourth had accepted, on purely psychic testimony, unsupported by any evidence, the view that he was grossly immoral and a danger to the Society ; in the commonest justice, these persons ought not to have been allowed to sit in judgment. As to the "evidence" he stated at the time : "I have only just now seen anything at all of the documents, except the first letter" ; on his hasty perusal of them, he stated that some of the points "are untrue and others so distorted that they do not represent the facts ;" yet it was on these points, unsifted and unproven, declared by him to be untrue and distorted, that he was condemned, and has since been attacked.

It was also on these points that I condemned his teaching ; on the central matter I had before expressed disagreement but no condemnation.

The following statement is the one which has been so widely used against him and contains the teaching that both he and I condemn. The condemnation I hold to,

but the teaching thus condemned was never his ; part of it was repudiated by him before the Advisory Council in 1906, and the rest of it had been denied in a private letter of February 1906, since widely published. I wrote on the false information then in my hands :

“ The advice supposed to be given to rescue a boy, as a last resort, in the grip of sexual passions, became advice putting foul ideas into the minds of boys innocent of all sex impulses, and the long intervals, the rare relief became 24 hours in length, a daily habit. It was conceivable that the advice, as supposed to have been given, had been given with pure intent, and the presumption was so, in a teacher of Theosophical morality ; anything else seemed incredible. But such advice as was given in fact, such dealing with boys before sex passion had awakened, could only be given with pure intent if the giver were, on this point, insane.”

The two points on which stress is laid here, to which my condemnation applies were : (1) the fouling of “ the minds of boys innocent of all sex impulses ;” (2) the advice for daily self-indulgence. Neither of these is true, and with the falsity of these, My condemnation no longer applies to Mr. Leadbeater’s advice.

(1) In the case on which most stress has been laid, the mother begged Mr. Leadbeater to save her son from the vice into which he had already fallen ; Mr. Leadbeater found it impossible to cure the vice at once, but he induced the boy to give up his daily habit, and to lessen the frequency of the self-indulgence, gradually lengthening the intervals, that it might at last be entirely renounced. In a second case, the boy wrote to his father, expressing his intense gratitude to Mr. Leadbeater for saving him,

and adding : "They were to be continued only for a very short time. Do not call them a habit because they were never intended to be anything of the kind." Instead then of advising self-indulgence, Mr. Leadbeater sought to rescue boys addicted to it by leading them to gradual discontinuance ; could any one of us have done otherwise in such cases ? If a man is poisoned with arsenic, what is the treatment by a doctor ? he does not cut off the poison at once, for that would kill : he prescribes lessening doses till the body regains its normal state ; is the doctor to be denounced as a poisoner, because he takes the only means of saving his patient ?

Mr. Leadbeater says positively that he has never given such advice except in cases where boys were either in the grip of solitary vice, or where their auras were so charged with unclean thoughts that they were on the brink of it though before puberty. Unhappily—as is known to every teacher of children—this vice is found at a very early age, an age much below that of any boy to whom Mr. Leadbeater spoke. This statement of his—sufficient to all of us who know him—is thoroughly borne out by the fact that most of the boys who were much in his company, had never heard of any such advice being given. His usual habit was to speak to the boy of the danger of both solitary and associated vice, to advice non-stimulating diet, exercise, and the turning of thought away from subjects connected with sex—advice on these lines borne witness to by a lad who was much with him in a brave letter to the *Vahan*. This was Mr. Leadbeater's ordinary advice, as it is the advice of all of us.

(2) This Mr. Leadbeater positively denied before the Advisory Committee, and there is not a shred of

evidence to support the charge. He said : " The inter-
 lineation in writing giving a statement by the mother as
 to interval is untrue. The original interval was a week,
 and then it was lengthened to ten days, then a fortnight,
 and so on." This was the case of the boy sent by his
 mother to Mr. Leadbeater as above mentioned.

I ask the members of the Theosophical Society to
 consider whether this simple explanation is not more
 consonant with the character of the great teacher who
 has lived among them for 24 years, than the lurid picture
 of the monster of sexual vice painted by the inflamed
 fancy of a few Americans and English? It must be re-
 membered that every effort has been made to construct
 personal charges against him, without avail.

I have had in my possession for nearly two years a
 letter from one of Mr. Leadbeater's most prominent
 enemies, addressed to a boy whom Mr. Leadbeater was
 said to have corrupted, in which, with many caressing
 words, he tried to coax the boy into confessing a criminal
 offence, used a phrase stronger than that which has been
 taken, in Mr. Leadbeater's case, to imply impropriety,
 begging the boy not to show the letter to his father, and
 to destroy it when read ; the lad, utterly ignorant of what
 was suggested, took the letter to his father, and the father
 indignantly sent a copy to me. I have seen also the
 original.

It is not true that this advice was given as theosophi-
 cal or occult. On the contrary, Mr. Leadbeater has
 stated throughout that it was a purely physical matter,
 from his standpoint, and was given as a doctor gives
 advice to a patient, as a temporary expedient to
 avoid a worse danger, while lifting the boy out

of vice into purity. Mr. Leadbeater agrees with me that the advice is dangerous when scattered broadcast—as has been done by his assailants—and from the very first he volunteered the promise never to give it again; but in the few special cases in which he gave it, he thought he had safeguarded it from the obvious danger.

Much has been made of a "cipher letter." The use of the cipher arose from an old story in the *Theosophist*, repeated by Mr. Leadbeater to a few lads; they, as boys will, took up the cipher with enthusiasm, and it was subsequently sometimes used in correspondence with the boys who had been present when the story was told. In a type-written note on a fragment of paper, undated and unsigned, relating to an astral experience, a few words in cipher occur on the incriminated advice. Then follows a sentence, unconnected with the context, on which a foul construction has been placed. That the boy did not so read it is proved by a letter of his to Mr. Leadbeater—not sent, but shown to me by his mother—in which, he expresses his puzzlement as to what it meant, as he well might. There is something very suspicious about the use of this letter. It was carefully kept away from Mr. Leadbeater, though widely circulated against the wish of the father and mother, and when a copy was lately sent to him by a friend, he repudiated it in its present form, and states that he had never used the phrase with regard to any sexual act. It may go with the Coulomb and Pigott letters.

There is no doubt that the sex problem is in the air, and it may be, as Dr. Van Hook thinks, that that problem must be discussed in the Theosophical Society, as it is being discussed by sociologists, doctors and teachers outside. It

can, however, only be decently and usefully discussed by mature men and women, possessed of physiological and pathological knowledge and of experience of the darker side of life. On the moral question we are all at one ; it is the method of dealing with dangerous physiological conditions which is under debate. Personally I think—basing the view on well-known physiological facts—that as every secretory gland is readily stimulated by thought, and without stimulation does not work to excess, the occupation of the mind along healthy lines will generally avoid dangerous excess, and will preserve in the body the vital elements necessary for the continuance of youth and strength. Dr. Van Hook's medical experience is, of course enormously wider than my own, but many doctors hold the view expressed by me that nature may, in normal cases, be left to give any necessary relief. But this does not touch Mr. Leadbeater's effort to rescue boys already in the grip of sexuality by counsel often given by Catholic priests under similar circumstances, and given by himself when a priest of the English Church. Mr. Mead has lately stated, in the pages of the *Theosophical Review*, that the facts of sex should be explained to boys and girls, so as to avoid the dangers to which they are exposed by hearing the coarse talk of evil-minded servants or vicious comrades. I agree with him on this, but he will be a bold man who ventures to give such instruction, in the face of the hideous misconstruction with which Mr. Leadbeater has been met. The giving by an elder of a scientific and commonsense explanation would be incredible to a society which can only regard sex through an atmosphere of prudery or vice. In all speech thereon a vicious purpose would be taken for granted.

With regard to the preamble of the resolution condemning Dr. Van Hook, I am bound to say that it is based on a misrepresentation. Dr. Van Hook does *not* say that any "corrupting practices.....are the high doctrine of Theosophy and the 'precursor' of its introduction into the thought of the outer world"; he says that certain habits characterised a few lines lower, as "this degrading practice," "could not be instantly interrupted by unspiritualised boys. What more natural *than that he should recommend that the practice be curbed?* And who knows how many boys, taking this advice from Mr. Leadbeater, *have not been gradually weaned away from their vice and brought to entire cleanness of life?*" (Italics are mine.) He then speaks of other boys who had not yet fallen into vice, but who were surrounded by dangerous thought forms, as already mentioned above. Dr. Van Hook, after this, says that "the introduction of this question"—obviously the question of how to deal with boys addicted to vice or on the brink of it, alluded to on the preceding page as a 'problem' known to "every woman school teacher dealing with children"—"into the thought of the Theosophical world is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer world." It is a proof of the danger of introducing an important resolution without notice, and of inflaming the listeners with a garbled account of a paper which they had not read, although they were called on to vote its condemnation, that such a misrepresentation should have been imposed on the Convention.

The further statement that Dr. Van Hook has said that his letter was "dictated *verbatim* by one of the Masters" suggests, though it does not say, that Dr. Van Hook

had made this statement publicly. It would, perhaps, have been fairer to point out that Dr. Vau Hook had said this privately, with a request that it should *not* be published, and that it was promptly published by the person to whom he privately wrote it. On this, as President, I follow the decision laid down by the General Council on July 7th, 1894, in the case of Mr. W. Q. Judge. Mr. Judge was charged with certain offences "with respect to the misuse of the Mahatmas' names and handwriting;" Mr. Judge contended that he, as Vice-President, could not be tried on such a matter; the Council, on the motion of Messrs. Keightley and Mead, decided that the point was well taken. The Judicial Committee on July 10th, followed this decision, and apart from the question of his office, it further declared that they could not consider a charge which involved declaration on their part as to the existence or non-existence of Mahatmas, as "it would be a violation of the spirit of neutrality and the unsectarian nature and constitution of the Society." The President-Founder further declared: "The authoritative and dogmatic value of statements as to the existence of Mahatmas, their relations with and messages to private persons, or through them to third parties, the Society or the general public, is denied; all such statements, messages or teachings are to be taken at their intrinsic value and the recipients left to form and declare, if they choose, their own opinions with respect to their genuineness; the Society, as a body, maintaining its constitutional neutrality in the premises." Until those decisions of the General Council, the Judicial Committee of 1894, and the President-Founder are annulled, I am bound by them, and cannot officially, nor can the General

Council, express any opinion on the origin of Dr. Van Hook's "Open Letter." By parity of reasoning, no Sectional Council should express any opinion on such a matter. Dr. Van Hook is perfectly free to assert publicly—though he has not done so—that the "Open Letter" was dictated *verbatim* by one of the Masters, and any other member is equally free to deny it.

This is apart from the undesirable nature of the precedent set by a Sectional Convention in its condemnation of the chief officer of another Section; every General Secretary is amenable to his own Section primarily, and this hasty setting of a dangerous precedent is another proof of the unwisdom of springing on an official body an important resolution without notice. While technically accepting this resolution as from "the British Section in Convention assembled," I cannot but know that it is only the individual opinion of thirty-eight persons, unshared in by another twenty-six. It is not the deliberate opinion of the Section.

As regards the main problem :

The Theosophical Society, as a whole, cannot be committed to any special solution of this problem, and its members must be left free. Dr. Van Hook, a medical man of high repute and for many years a university professor, has as much right to his view, without being charged with supporting solitary vice, as his assailants have a right to theirs, without being charged with favoring prostitution. Both accusations are equally foul and equally unjust, and people who fling them about are *ipso facto* disqualified from being judges. These difficult and delicate questions of sex cannot be efficiently, or even decently, discussed in open conventions, in which young

people are present. The conclusions arrived at under such conditions are inevitably those of passion, not of reason. We are all at one in condemning vicious practices, solitary or associated, and in desiring to rescue the young who have fallen into either form of vice. There is no approval of vice anywhere within the Theosophical Society ; there is therefore no need for the Society to repudiate pernicious teaching on this matter any more than to repudiate assassination. Mr. Leadbeater and myself labour as earnestly to help others to pure and noble living as do Mr. Sinnett, Mr. Mead, and their co-signatories, and there should be room enough in the Society, we all love, for us as well as for them.

Mr. Leadbeater resigned two and a half years ago in the vain attempt to save the Society from this dissension ; he does not ask to return. I am not at liberty to resign, being where I am by my Master's order, nor am I at liberty to ask him again to take his place within the Theosophical Society without a vote of the Theosophical Society. If the Theosophical Society wishes to undo the wrong done to him, it is for the Convention of each Section to ask me to invite his return, and I will rejoice to do so. Further, in every way that I can, outside official membership, I will welcome his co-operation, show him honour, and stand beside him. If the Theosophical Society disapprove of this, and if a two-thirds majority of members of the whole Theosophical Society demand my resignation because of this, I will ask my Master's permission to resign. If not, is it not time to cease from warring against chimeras, and to devote ourselves wholly to the work? The trouble is confined to a small number of American and a considerable number of British members ; can they not feel

that they have done their duty by two years and a half of protest, and not endeavor to coerce the remainder of the Society into a continual turmoil? The vast majority of you affirmed last year that you regarded me as the President chosen by the Masters to steer what They have called "our Theosophical ship." In Their name I call on all, who are loyal to Them and to Their choice, to work for Them, each in his own way, but in charity with all.

Your faithful servant,

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT,

President of the Theosophical Society.

ADYAR, 7th September 1908.

P. S.—Since the above was written, Dr. Van Hook has been re-elected as General Secretary, his Section's answer to the British attack on him. In answer to a letter from England, he has repudiated the mis-representation of his paper, and has made a statement similar to that made by me above, on pp. 9, 10. No unprejudiced person can read his paper in any other sense.

LXIV

Our readers are now in possession of the full facts of the Leadbeater case from Mrs. Besant's point of view. Let us place before our readers the case from the opposite point of view. Here it is :—

THE REPLY.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

The recent Letter of Mrs. Besant, as President of the Theosophical Society, which has been sent to all the members of this Section (and also to all the other Sections.

of the Society), purports to be her reply to an earnest appeal by the British Section in Convention assembled, to the members of the Theosophical Society, and especially to the President and members of the General Council—to unite in putting an end to the scandalous state of affairs which now exists in the Society with regard to what is known as the Leadbeater teaching, so ~~that~~ the repudiation by the Society of this pernicious teaching may be unequivocal and final.

By formal direction of the Convention (held in London, July 4 and 5, 1908), a Special Report of the resolutions and of the proceedings which led up to them (including a full statement of the facts which necessitated the appeal and the debate on the subject) was prepared by a Special Committee (whom the Convention unanimously appointed), to be issued to the members of the Section. This Committee consisted of: Miss Edith Ward, Messrs. G. R. S. Mead, Herbert Whyte, Herbert Burrows, and Mrs. Sharpe, General Secretary of the Section. An account of the proceedings of the Committee will be found in *The Vahan* of October, 1908.

This Report, which was duly prepared and passed by the whole Committee, has been suppressed by the General Secretary, who has been supported by a majority of the Executive Committee—nine to five.

The nine are: Miss Bright, Miss Green, Mrs. Larmuth, Mr. Leo, Miss Mallet, Mr. Hodgson Smith, Mr. Wedgwood, Mr. Whyte, and Mrs. Sharpe. (Mrs. Sharpe did not vote on the actual resolution supporting her action, but voted on all other resolutions in the same sense.)

The five are: Mr. Burrows, Mr. Glass, Mr. Kingsland, Mr. Mead and Miss Ward.

Against this solid majority the minority who have endeavoured to carry out the wishes of the Convention have been powerless. This policy of suppression has been vigorously maintained ; and now, more than four and a half months after the Convention, the members are still in ignorance of these important proceedings. In spite of a resolution unanimously passed at the Convention that *The Vahan*, the sectional organ, should be open to the free discussion of all matters of interest to the Section, Mrs. Sharpe refused to print even the following document :

The Report of the Debate, for which two additional sessions of the recent Convention of the British Section of the Theosophical Society were required, and which culminated in the passing of two very important Resolutions, has now been agreed to unanimously by the Special Committee appointed by the Convention to prepare it for publication.

The General Secretary, however, refuses to publish the document, and is supported in her refusal by a majority of the Executive Committee.

We, the undersigned members of the Special Committee (of five), are prepared to carry out the instructions of the General Council in Convention duly assembled.

The official means of issuing the Report, however, having been denied us, we now apply directly to the members of the Section for the necessary funds and addresses (which may be sent to any of the undersigned), in order that we may carry out the imperative duty of acquainting the section with the present grave state of affairs.

(Sd.) G. R. S. MEAD,
HERBERT BURROWS,
EDITH WARD.

It has thus been deliberately rendered impossible for the facts of the case to be placed before the members. And now with only Mrs. Besant's letter before them, the members are being urged to sign a petition for Mr. Leadbeater's reinstatement.

Even in Mrs. Besant's letter, which has gone out to the whole Society, as well as to the members of this Section, the very resolution on which she bases that reply, is not given, and it was only at the last moment that the General Secretary of this Section found herself compelled to enclose the bare text of that resolution with Mrs. Besant's letter as sent out to the Section.

Even when this opportunity arose Mrs. Sharpe has still suppressed the following two very important decisions of the Convention.

By 33 votes to 31 the Convention rejected an amendment, moved by Mrs. Sharpe, and seconded by Mr. Ernest Wood (of Manchester) :

Welcoming the President's policy of collaboration with Mr. C. W. Leadbeater in any work which he is willing to do for the Society.

This amendment was rejected on its merits before the debate on the Van Hook-Leadbeater resolution (moved as an amendment to Mr. Dunlop's resolution) took place. After the protracted debate which resulted in the carrying of this resolution, Mr. Bell (of Harrowgate) moved, and Mr. Wilkinson (of Nottingham) seconded :

That this Convention looks on the teaching given by C. W. Leadbeater to certain boys as wholly evil, and hereby expresses its judgment on this matter.

This was carried *nem con.*

The Van Hook-Leadbeater resolution was carried by

38 votes to 4 (all the latter cast by one Belgian delegate), 22 declining to vote. This resolution, moved in the form of an amendment, was as follows :

This Convention of the British Section of the Theosophical Society, while affirming its loyalty to the first Object of the Society—namely, “to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity”—strongly protests against evoking the sentiment of brotherhood to countenance what is wrong.

Whereas Dr. Weller Van Hook, the present General Secretary of the American Section, and so a member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, in a recent Open Letter, which he has subsequently stated to have been “*dictated verbatim by one of the Masters*,” has publicly claimed that the corrupting practices, the teaching of which determined the resignation of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, are the high doctrine of Theosophy and the “precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer world.”:—

This Convention declares its abhorrence of such practices, and in view of the incalculable harm to Theosophy, and of the disgrace which this teaching must inevitably bring upon the Society, earnestly calls upon all its members, especially the President and members of the General Council, to unite in putting an end to the present scandalous state of affairs, so that the repudiation by the Society of this pernicious teaching may be unequivocal and final.

Moved by Herbert Burrows ; seconded by G. R. S. Mead ; supported by A. P. Sinnett, C. J. Barker, J. S. Brown, Dr. C. G. Currie, H. R. Hogg, B. Keightley, W. Kingsland, W. Scott-Elliot, W. Theobald, B. G. Theobald

L. Wallace, C. B. Wheeler, H. L. Shindler, A. P. Catanach, Dr. A. King, Baker Hudson, W. H. Thomas, A. B. Green, J. M. Watkins, E. E. Marsden, H. E. Nichol, by the delegates of the London and Blavatsky Lodges, and by many others.

Immediately after the vote was taken Miss Dupuis, of the H. P. B. Lodge, read the following declaration, in which the majority of the representatives who had declined to vote joined by standing with her :

We cannot vote for this amendment as it is worded. We will not vote against it as it involves so much. We stand and hereby proclaim that we utterly condemn the practices alluded to, but refuse to condemn any individual.

Reply to the President's Letter.

This serious and earnest appeal to safeguard the good name of the Society and to assist in preserving Theosophy from harm, the President now rejects with all her strength. Mrs. Besant's reply takes the form of special pleading in defence of Mr. Leadbeater ; she withdraws her former unequivocal condemnation of his teaching and substitutes for it equivocal phrases ; humbly apologises to him ; and finally invites the Society to vote for Mr. Leadbeater's triumphant reinstatement without further guarantee.

The *change in Mrs. Besant's attitude is amazing*, but still more astonishing is her forgetfulness of her emphatic pledges given to the Society at the time of her election to the Presidency.

The President's Pledges.

In April, 1907, in answer to a telegram from the Council of the Blavatsky Lodge in these words : " Would

you as President permit X's [Mr. Leadbeater's] re-admission?"—Mrs. Besant replied :

If publicly repudiates teaching, two years after repudiation, on large majority request of whole Society would reinstate ; otherwise not.

What Mrs. Besant meant by repudiation," and what, we have all understood her to mean, is quite clear from her public letter to the members of the British Section, dated March 24, 1907.

As regards his [Mr. L.'s] readmission to the Society—I do not know that he wishes readmission—I shall continue to oppose it, as I have hitherto done, until he says publicly that the teaching is *wrong* [Italics Mrs. Besant's] not only that he will refrain from it, as he promised to do in February, 1906 and also before the Advisory Board in London.

At the Convention of the American Section, 1906, Mrs. Kate Buffington Davis read the following from a letter of Mrs. Besant's, dated from Benares, August 9, 1906:—

Any proposal to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater in the membership of the T. S. would be ruinous to the Society. It would be indignantly repudiated here and in Europe, and I am sure in Australia and New Zealand, if the facts were known. If such a proposal were carried in America—I do not believe it possible—I should move on the T. S. Council, the supreme authority, that the application of membership should be rejected. But I am sure that Mr. Leadbeater would not apply.

Why Mrs. Besant italicises the word "*wrong*" in the last quotation but one, is quite evident to all who remember her exceedingly strong, unequivocal, and repeated

acceptance of the phenomenal pronouncements published by the late President-Founder just prior to his decease.

In his Presidential Address at the Adyar Anniversary meeting, December 29, 1906 (see *General Report*, p 3), referring to the Leadbeater case, and to the specific question as to whether Mr. Leadbeater's teaching was right or wrong, Col. Olcott stated :

So when Mahatma M. came to me last Friday night I asked Him the question, and He replied "wrong."

In a letter to Mr. Leadbeater, dated January 12, 1907, Colonel Olcott writes on his death-bed :

Both Mahatma M. and Mahatma K. H. assured me you did well to resign ; that it was right to call a Council to advise upon the matter, and that I did right in accepting your resignation ; but They said we were wrong in allowing the matter to be made public for your sake and the good of the Society. They said you should have stated in your resignation that you resigned because you had offended the standard of ideals of the majority of the members of the Society by giving out certain teachings which were considered objectionable. . . . They have told both Annie and myself that your teaching young boys to . . . is wrong.

In Colonel Olcott's report of one of the Adyar "interviews," dated January 11, 1907, in reply to a leading question, the answer reported is :

No, we cannot tell you this, for that concerns himself alone, *but it is* different when he teaches things to others that will harm.

And in answer to another question :

Write and ask him, it is not for us to say. We do, however, *affirm that these teachings are wrong.*

Moreover, in her pamphlet on *The Testing of the Theosophical Society* (one of her Election addresses), Mrs. Besant writes in reference to Col. Olcott's "Conversation with the Mahatmas."

I may add that the "Conversation" in no way suggests Mr. Leadbeater's reinstatement, and that we at Adyar could not read that into it, as we were told at the same time that the Master, in answer to a suggestion to that effect, has sternly refused his approval.

We do not cite these utterances as authoritative for ourselves, nor do we pause to criticise them, we simply place them on record to show why Mrs. Besant emphasized the word "*wrong*."

On this point at least we thought we were all agreed on ordinary grounds of morality, whether we accepted or rejected the authority of the phenomenal answers reported by Colonel Olcott. The thing was unquestionably wrong *under any circumstances*.

• "Mahatmic" Contradictions.

In May, however, of this year, Dr. Van Hook, the General Secretary of the American Section, and as such a member of the General Council of the Society, in Open Letters to his Section, declared that Mr. Leadbeater's teaching on the point was right in every respect.

No mistake was made by Mr. Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it.

It was at the same time widely circulated privately, on his own declaration, that these Letters were not really his, but "dictated *verbatim* by one of the Masters." These astounding statements obtained the widest credence, and

the result was that Mr. Leadbeater was invited to take the post of editor of part of the official organ of the American Section, by a large majority referendum vote.

In face of this, many of the members of the British Section could no longer remain silent; they were bound to protest, and call attention to the very grave danger that threatened the Society, and in which it is now actually involved.

These "Mahatmic" pronouncements, however, were not the ground of that protest; it may be left to those who believe in their authenticity to reconcile their glaring contradictions. No decision on such manifest incongruities was asked for, and therefore Mrs. Besant's argument as to official ruling, is quite beside the point.

The Logical Consequence of Dr. Van Hook's Contention.

What was strongly objected to and most energetically protested against was the public declaration by a responsible officer of the General Council that Mr. Leadbeater's teaching is right. If Mr. Leadbeater's teaching is right, and he made no mistake in any way whatever as Dr. Van Hook (or his "Master," if he prefers it) contends, why should not Mr. Leadbeater continue such teachings, as they have proved, according to Dr. Van Hook, of the greatest value; and by a parity of reasoning, why should not any pupil of Mr. Leadbeater's or anyone else in the Society who wishes to follow in his footsteps do the same?

Against this hideous prospect we protested and do protest. If Mr. Leadbeater's teaching is right then it should be followed. That is the only logical position. Mr. Lead-

beater himself says it would be "dangerous" only "if promiscuously given"; he as an Occultist *knows* when it should be given, he claims. It is not really dangerous for him to give it; and he simply bows to Mrs. Besant's "opinion that it is dangerous." Mr. Leadbeater is consistent in this, that he has never recanted; he has defended this teaching in the face of everything. What conclusion is likely to be drawn from this by those who believe that Mr. Leadbeater is a high adept? Simply that he *knows* on this subject; and has only promised not to do it again because of prudish convention, ignorant "hysterical" uproar, and "insane prejudices." He is the "martyr" Occultist persecuted for his knowledge! What results? That his pupils will think as he thinks; that they will do as he has done. Why not, if he was and is right?

This view, that Mr. Leadbeater is right, is already being adopted far and wide in the Society at this moment. In what way does Mrs. Besant's letter help us to stem the tide?

Mrs. Besant's Contradictions.

Mrs. Besant's view emphasised to a final utterance for those who accept her authority ("I speak as Occultist. 'He that is able to receive it, let him receive it'") leaves the door wide open for Mr. Leadbeater's teaching. But at the expense of what contradiction! Mr. Leadbeater has taught it, and refuses to repudiate the teaching; yet he is said by Mrs. Besant at the same time to be "at one" with her in condemning it as being "degrading, unmanly, unwomanly" while he himself declares that it is "dangerous" only "if promiscuously given" (*The Theosophist*, Feb., 1908), and Mrs. Besant herself

elsewhere in her letter expresses only disagreement and withdraws condemnation.

But H. P. B. did not equivocate on the subject—and she, we suppose, could speak with as much authority on Occultism as Mr. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant. (She characterised it to me as “the sin against the Holy Ghost”—G. R. S. M.)

Mrs. Besant has now entirely changed her former view on the subject, for in a letter of June 9, 1906, she writes of her first impression on hearing the charges in February :

This was the first time I had heard of such a method of meeting the sexual difficulty, *let alone of Mr. Leadbeater's recommendation of it*. I had always regarded self-abuse as one of the lowest forms of vice, a thing universally reprobated by decent people. To me it was not arguable. But I have since heard that it is sometimes practised and recommended by ascetics, otherwise good men, for the sake of preserving chastity—as though self-abuse did not destroy chastity as much as prostitution, and in an even more degrading way !

But Mrs. Besant now asserts that “Occultism” “condemns solitary vice as only less harmful than prostitution.” To us it still remains “not arguable,” and to this we make no exception, either on the ground of the lesser of two evils, or on the perverted ground of doing evil that good may come ; and therefore we protest and appeal to all who love the good name of the Society, to pronounce unmistakably on this subject, and to resist the triumphant reinstatement into the Society as an injured “martyr” of the man who has brought all this sorrow and suffering upon

us. In a Society like ours, just because of the deference his many pupils, adherents, and admirers pay to Mr. Leadbeater's assertions, his obstinate insistence that his teaching is right, is the most potent means of erecting it into a generally recognised Theosophical doctrine of the first importance. This is proved by the fact that Dr. Weller Van Hook in one of his Open Letters appeals to the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, as expounded by Mr. Leadbeater especially to suit his teaching, in justification of it. The boy's statements also that it was taught as "Theosophical" formed the basis of one of the charges.

This pernicious teaching is not merely "ascribed" to Mr. Leadbeater, as Mrs. Besant says in her opening words, it is fully and freely confessed by him and strenuously defended. In what way this teaching, which Mrs. Besant now refuses to condemn, when taught by Mr. Leadbeater, can make for "purity" and for "the Society's good name" is beyond us.

The Documents.

Mrs. Besant writes, quoting a previous letter of hers (the "Simla Letter"):

On June 7th (1906) I received an account of the acceptance by Mr. Leadbeater before the Committee of the facts alleged in the evidence.

As this might give the unknowing reader the impression that Mrs. Besant had not had previously before her any of the "facts alleged in the evidence," or any knowledge of the "acceptance by Mr. Leadbeater" of them, I make it clear we recite the facts.

In February, 1906, Mrs. Besant herself was the first to receive the charges and original evidence on which they were based, from America, drawn up and laid before her by the two chief officials of the Section (in their private capacity), and also by the two chief officers of the E. S. there, in a letter dated January 25.

Mr. Leadbeater, to whom also a copy had been forwarded, was then with Mrs. Besant at Benares. After consultation with her, Mr. Leadbeater wrote a letter of confession and excuse (dated February 27) to the then American General Secretary ; and Mrs. Besant also sent a letter to the chief officer of the E. S. in which she repeated Mr. Leadbeater's excuses, but expressed disagreement with his teaching ; in view of Mr. Leadbeater's promise to abstain from this teaching in future, however, she did not favour the "searching investigation" demanded, and said she saw no reason why he should be withdrawn from activity.

So far all had been kept as silent as possible. Mr. Leadbeater's letter and Mrs. Besant's reply being entirely unsatisfactory, the Executive Committee of the American Section then felt themselves compelled to lay the whole matter officially before Colonel Olcott, the President-Founder of the Society, who promptly called together an Advisory Committee consisting of the then Executive Committee of the British Section, to which Section Mr. Leadbeater belonged. The members of this Committee were Mr. Sinnett, Dr. Nunn, Mr. Mead, Mrs. Stead, Miss Ward, Miss Spink, Mrs. Hooper, Mr. Bertram Keightley, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Glass. There were also present Mr. Burnett, as representative and delegate of the

Executive Committee of the American Section, and M. Bernard, the representative of the Executive Committee of the French Section.

The documents submitted by the American Executive consisted of : (1) The charges and evidence already laid before Mrs. Besant ; (2) *Mr. Leadbeater's letter of confession and excuse.* ; (3) rebuttal statements of the boys to some of the statements made by Mr. Leadbeater in his letter ; and (4) corroborative evidence and testimony in two further cases obtained after sending to Mrs. Besant the first evidence on which the charges were brought.

The original charges, based on the evidence of two boys, were :

First : That he is teaching young boys given into his care habits of self-abuse and demoralizing personal practices.

Second : That he does this with deliberate intent and under the guise of occult training or with the promise of the increase of physical manhood.

Third : That he has demanded, at least in one case, promises of the utmost secrecy.

It was with regard to the rebuttal evidence (3) and the further corroborative evidence (4) that Mr. Leadbeater said at the beginning of the inquiry, as quoted by Mrs. Besant

I have only just now seen anything at all of the documents, except the first letter.

This "first letter" is the first lengthy document

containing the charges and evidence laid before Mrs. Besant in February.

Below, in parallel columns, will be found Mrs. Besant's version of what took place, together with the full text of the Minutes from which she is supposed to be quoting :

MRS. BESANT'S LETTER

As to the "evidence," he stated at the time: "I have only just now seen anything at all of the documents, except the first letter"; on his hasty perusal of them, he stated that some of the points "are untrue and others so distorted that they do not represent the facts"; yet it was on these points, unsifted and unproven, declared by him to be untrue and distorted, that he was condemned, and has since been attacked.

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD.

I have only just now seen anything at all of the documents except that first letter. There have been other supposed rebuttals and other documents which I had only seen to-day, and while there are a number of points I should challenge as inaccurate, *yet all these are minor points and do not affect the great question.* It is simply that there are points of so-called rebuttal which are untrue and others so distorted that they do not represent the facts of the case *but these do not affect the central points.*

It will be seen that the important qualifying phrases italicised by us are omitted by Mrs. Besant.

This was Mr. Leadbeater's statement at the beginning of the inquiry, before he was questioned and had to make some damaging further admissions.

Mrs. Besant's statement that it was on the points in

the second batch of documents only that "he was condemned and has since been attacked" is not the fact.

The Committee unanimously advised Col. Olcott to accept Mr. Leadbeater's resignation, which was written only just before it met, because of his own confession in the first place, and because to their amazement he still persisted in defending his teaching, and made even further admissions.

At that time in the Society we are unanimous that it was wrong. Mr. Leadbeater's teaching had not yet been introduced into the "thought of the Theosophical world."

Denunciation of the Committee.

To weaken this unanimous advice Mrs. Besant now denounces some of the members of the Committee as unfit to advise Colonel Olcott, with whom the ultimate decision rested and whose impartiality Mr. Leadbeater freely acknowledged at the end of the inquiry.

In reply to the late President-Founder's question: "I should like to ask Mr. Leadbeater if he thinks I have acted impartially?"—Mr. Leadbeater replied: "Absolutely." (See Minutes.)

Mrs. Besant, nevertheless, declares that "the so-called trial of Mr. Leadbeater was a travesty of justice" and so asperses the memory of the late President-Founder.

Mr. Leadbeater was not tried judicially; the nature of the Committee was twice laid down by Colonel Olcott as follows:

(a) Of course you know the executive power vested in me. You are here to advise me and to hear

what Mr. Leadbeater has to say, and to act according to your judgment after hearing him.

(b) We should not keep in anything, but have frank disclosure. You are not sitting judicially, but to advise me what to do.

Mr. Leadbeater was given every opportunity to explain his position and justify his conduct ; unless, of course, questioning him on the evidence is to be considered unfair and a " travesty of justice."

To show the baselessness of Mrs. Besant's denunciation, it may be stated that the apparently most telling point she tries to make—the shooting story—seems to have arisen from a rumour we heard at the time, that if the matter became public, and Mr. Leadbeater were to return to America, it was likely that a relative of one of the boys might " go for him with a shot-gun." (E. W. ; G. R. S. M.) As to psychic influence, though this is quite news to the two of us who sat on the Committee, we may be permitted to remark that it is hardly consistent of Mrs. Besant to denounce belief in psychic testimony as a disqualification.

The unanimous opinion of the Committee was that such teaching should not be given under any circumstances, whatever, not even to depraved boys, much less therefore to boys who had no knowledge of such practices. The only real difference of opinion among the members of the Committee was as to whether they should advise expulsion or acceptance of resignation only, as commensurate with the offence, after Mr. Leadbeater's further admissions. They finally took the more lenient course. The unanimous decision of the Committee was given in the following resolution :

That having considered certain charges against Mr. Leadbeater, and having listened to his explanations, this Committee recommend the acceptance by the President-Founder of his resignation already offered in anticipation of the Committee's decision.

Mrs. Besant now expressly withdraws the condemnation of Mr. Leadbeater's advice which she had put on record in her very important letter of June 1906, on the ground that the "information" on which she had based it was false." Its falsity is alleged on two points.

First Point of Alleged "Falsity."

(1) With regard to the first (the "fouling" of the mind), it is sufficient to quote Mrs. Besant's own words of condemnation, in parallel columns with Mr. Leadbeater's own admissions before the Advisory Committee.

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Mr. THOMAS : Your reply as to scarcely recollecting suggests that there were so many cases. I should like to know whether in any case . . . there was definite action ?

Mr. LEADBEATER : You mean touch ? That might have taken place.

* * *

Mr. MEAD : I want to ask whether this advice was given on appeal or not ?

Mr. LEADBEATER : Sometimes without, sometimes with. I advised it at times as a prophylactic.

MRS. BESANT'S LETTER OF JUNE 9, 1906.

He [Mr. Leadbeater] denied none of the charges, but in answer to questions, very much strengthened them, for he, alleged that he had actually handled the boys himself, and that he had thus dealt with boys before puberty "as a prophylactic." So that the advice which was supposed to be given to rescue a boy, as a last resort, in the grip of sexual passion, became advice putting foul ideas into the minds of boys innocent of all sex-impulses.

Still further than this, Mrs. Besant condemned Mr. Leadbeater's teaching in all respects.

M. BERNARD : Since Mr. Leadbeater was teaching these boys to help them in case of need, considering that men may be in the same difficulty, has he taught this to any grown-up men? Has he taught the same thing in the same personal way to grown-up men as to children?

Mr. LEADBEATER : I believe that at least on two occasions in my life I have given that advice to young men as better than the one generally adopted.

Col. OLCOTT : Since you came into the Society?

Mr. LEADBEATER : I think not, but one case might have been. You are probably not aware that one at least of the great church organisations for young men deals with the matter in the same manner [!]

MRS. BESANT IN THE SAME LETTER AS ABOVE.

Let me here place on record my opinion that such teaching as this given to men, let alone innocent boys, is worthy of the sternest reprobation. It distorts and perverts the sex-instinct, implanted in men for the preservation of the race; it degrades the ideas of marriage, fatherhood, and motherhood, humanity's most sacred ideals; it befouls the imagination, pollutes the emotions, and undermines the health.

It will thus be seen that Mrs. Besant's original condemnation," was based not on "false information, but on her own interpretation of Mr. Leadbeater's admissions.

That the reason for giving the "advice" was sometimes other than that professed, may be seen from the fact that, in his letter of confession, Mr. Leadbeater admitted that he had told one of the boys "that physical growth is

frequently promoted by the setting in motion of these currents, but that they need regulation." The boy's evidence on this point ("the promise of the increase of physical manhood") formed the basis of one of the charges. The cipher letter further corroborates this evidence.

In the face of the opinion she placed "on record" in 1907, Mrs. Besant now denies that there was any "fouling" of the "imagination" even of the "minds of boys innocent of all sex-impulses." Yet she admits it was taught not only to boys not yet addicted to the practice, but also to one or two "before what is called the age of puberty."

The plea of justification now urged for this extraordinary change of opinion is that "certain symptoms had already shown themselves either on the physical plane or in the aura."

The giving of this teaching then even to children Mrs. Besant now refuses to condemn in Mr. Leadbeater's case; and thus opens the way for any psychic in the Society to justify the teaching of it on his bare assertion that he has seen this or that "symptom" in a child's aura.

All such excuses and subterfuges we emphatically reject, for the practice under any circumstance can never lessen lust but only enhance it.

Second Point of Alleged "Falsity"

(2) The second point, on the "falsity" of which Mrs. Besant withdraws her condemnation, is the question of frequency. Here Mr. Leadbeater's denial, quoted by Mrs. Besant and the testimony of the mother of boy No. 3 as to the "original interval" are in direct conflict.

In the letter to the boy, the genuineness of which Mr. Leadbeater acknowledges, he writes:

There may be this much reason in what he [the Doctor] says, that while you are not quite well we should spend no force that can be avoided. You will remember that when we met in——I suggested longer intervals until you were completely recovered.

It is to be noted that this suggestion" was made because the boy was ill. The "original" interval to which the mother refers was advised prior to this meeting.

The most striking point in Mrs. Besant's plea is her appeal for "utter confidence" in Mr. Leadbeater's statements and denials; frequently she says with regard to evidence "it is not true that . . .," when this simply means "Mr. Leadbeater says it is not true," Mr. Leadbeater is always to be believed no matter what the testimony against him of the boys and mothers (or even of his own letters) may be, for Mrs. Besant has "utter confidence in his candour."

But one of the main points against Mr. Leadbeater is that he taught these practices without the knowledge of the parents and bound the boys to secrecy, as has been fully admitted by himself. Mrs. Besant writes, in her Simla letter of June 9, 1906:

Nothing can excuse giving to young boys instructions on sexual matters to be kept from their parents, the rightful protectors of their children.

Why, then, if Mr. Leadbeater is so candid with Mrs. Besant, did he not breathe a word to her of his teaching before he was detected? For in the same letter Mrs. Besant writes:

This was the first time I had heard of such a method of meeting the sexual difficulty, let alone Mr. Leadbeater's recommendation of it. I had always regarded self-abuse

as one of the lowest forms of vice, and a thing universally reprobated by decent people. To me it was not arguable.

Now we are not labouring this point as to precisely "daily" practice, but Mrs. Besant knows, as we know, that the cipher letter says, "twice a week is permissible," preceded and followed by words that make it impossible to put a curative construction upon the "advice." How then does Mrs. Besant deal with this most important document, which unfortunately, came into the hands of the American Executive only a day before the meeting of the Advisory Committee in London, too late to be included in the evidence? No contemptuous words can brush aside this document.

The Cipher Letter.

The "fragment of paper" is sufficient to accommodate not a note only but a letter of 229 words, beginning with "My own darling boy," and ending with "Thousand kisses darling" (in cipher). It is true that the first half of this letter refers to a psychic experience, but the second, of equal length, begins with the words "Turning to other matters," and these matters are sexual; it is in the latter part that the cipher sentences occur, and it is in the body of the cipher, towards the end, that the sentence referred to by Mrs. Besant ("glad sensation is so pleasant") is found.

If, as Mrs. Besant says the boy replied to the letter (though his reply was not sent), the letter can hardly be a forgery to "go with the Coulomb and Pigott letters." If the boy himself did not understand the sentence in the sense implied, as Mrs. Besant says—the mother (in a covering letter addressed to one of the members of the

investigating Committee in America) says she so understands it, and makes it an additional ground of complaint. As the letter stands it is impossible to read the sentence otherwise than as applying to its immediate context. It could not apply to the psychic experience, for that was not of a pleasant nature.

Mrs. Besant, however, says that Mr. Leadbeater states he does not "recognise it [the letter] in its present form." Who then has changed the "form" of the letter—the boy or the mother? And if so, what possible purpose could be served thereby? Will Mr. Leadbeater *himself* venture to assert that the letter or any part of it is a forgery?

But even if the sentence in question were entirely eliminated, there is that in the rest of the letter which calls for the most searching inquiry, and its genuineness is further corroborated by the identity of its very peculiar phrasing with that of the other letter [in evidence which Mr. Leadbeater has acknowledged as his.

It is, therefore, impossible to join Mrs. Besant in letting it "go with the Coulomb and Pigott letters."

As to this document we agree with Miss Ward in her recent circular that :

If it is genuine it settles for us [me] the whole question of Mr. Leadbeater's attitude ; if it is not genuine it is a piece of inconceivable wickedness, which leaves Mr. Leadbeater grossly wronged and of which the perpetrator should, by every code of honour and justice, be unveiled and punished.

Mr. Leadbeater, however, in a reply to a letter from Miss Ward, refuses absolutely to have anything to do with the impartial board of investigation which she has proposed,

and characterises any attempt at such investigation as "gross impertinence" and our condemnations of his teaching as "insane prejudices." Mrs. Besant herself also refuses to entertain the idea of any such unbiassed investigation.

So much, then, for the two main points of "false information" on the ground of which Mrs. Besant withdraws her condemnation of Mr. Leadbeater's "advice."

Dr. Van Hook's "Repudiation"

The fundamental difference between us and Dr. Van Hook is that what he calls the "advice of a wise teacher," and regards as of such inestimable value, we characterise as "corrupting practices," and it is against this teaching in any shape or form as being theosophical, occult (in a good sense), or moral that we protest.

Mrs. Besant says that "Dr. Van Hook has repudiated the misrepresentation of his paper" made in the preamble to the resolution passed at our last Convention, and contends that his statements in this Open Letter to which we take exception refer only to the discussion of the general sex problem with regard to children and not to Mr. Leadbeater's "solution" of it.

It is remarkable that Dr. Van Hook himself has nowhere published this "repudiation," but from a copy of a letter written by him to Mr. Whyte, which Mrs. Besant has had printed in *Theosophy in India* (Sept., 1908), we find that Dr. Van Hook expressly states that "in the Letters published over his [my] signature" the "general problem" has not been dealt with, but only the "specific question" of Mr. Leadbeater's "solution" of it.

We may here point out that it is not the fact that the Convention had before it only a "garbled account," as Mrs. Besant says of Dr. Van Hook's utterances; every sentence that could be used to persuade the Convention that Dr. Van Hook did not mean what he wrote, was insisted on by Dr. Van Hook's and Mr. Leadbeater's supporters; his paragraphs were read repeatedly in full, and the sentences Mrs. Besant quotes were especially insisted on.

In his Open Letter Dr. Van Hook speaks of nothing else but Mr. Leadbeater's teaching and method and "solution" of the problem. And if the following paragraphs in it do not refer to Mr. Leadbeater's "solution," to his "system," to the blessing he is conferring by it, then to what on earth do they refer? Dr. Van Hook's "repudiation" of his own plain meaning simply makes nonsense of his whole contention. Dr. Van Hook (or, if he prefers it, his "Master") writes:

Hence the "crime" or "wrong" of teaching the boys the practice alluded to was no crime or wrong at all, but only the advice of a wise teacher who foresaw an almost limitless period of suffering for his charge if the solution for his difficulties usually offered by the World were adopted and relief obtained by an associated, instead of by an individual and personal, act.

The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical World is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer-World. Mr. Leadbeater has been the one to bear the persecution and martyrdom of its introduction. The solution of the question can only be reached by those who study it from the Theosophic standpoint, admitting the validity of our

teachings in regard to thoughts and their relations to acts. Hence the service of Theosophy to the world in this respect will be of the most far-reaching consequence, extending into the remote future of the progress of man.

No mistake was mad by Mr. Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it. Nor did he make any mistake in the just estimation of the consequences of any other solution of the terrible problem which was presented to him.

If any mistake was made it was a mistake of judgment in trusting too much to the confidence of the parents of the boys who, he thought, knew and loved him so well that they would accept his judgment on matters about which ordinary people have little or no knowledge and about which he, by the nature of his occult training, had a full comprehension.

Betrayal of confidence on the part of some parents of the boys resulted in the scandal which brought this problem to the attention of Theosophists as a preliminary to its introduction to the world. Woe to those who violated their vows in making disclosures in this case. All honor to those parents who, braving the opinion of the World, have boldly set themselves against the current of the World's prejudice and have avowed themselves and their sons under undying obligation to the great teacher who aided their sons in overcoming difficulties which without his aid would not only have been insuperable in this life but would have led them into almost inconceivable complications in future lives.

If this does not mean the introduction into the thought of the Theosophical Society, and thus into the thought of the outer world, of Mr. Leadbeater's "solution" of the

problem, what can it possibly mean? Mr. Leadbeater's "martyrdom" is not because of his introducing the general sex problem with regard to young people; that has been introduced into the thought of the world for many many centuries. It is because of his "solution" of it that Dr. Van Hook calls on us to exalt Mr. Leadbeater to the highest pinnacle of honour, for he gives "all honour" to the parents who entrust their children to Mr. Leadbeater to receive such teaching, and who avow their undying obligation for this high favour!

Against the introduction of this "solution" of the sex problem into the "thought of the Theosophical world" and against Dr. Van Hook's glorification of it, we protest with all our energy; we characterise the teaching of it in any case as a "corrupting practise" and "wholly evil," no matter who gives it, not excepting occultists and psychics; and we call for the public repudiation of it by the man who has confessed to teaching it practically, before he is invited to return in triumph as a "wise teacher" to the Theosophical Society.

The Main Issue Evaded

As to the main issue, then, Mrs. Besant evades it when she says:

Theosophical Society, as a whole, cannot be committed to any special solution of this [the sex] problem, and its members must be left free.

This we have not asked; what we *do* ask our fellow-members to do, is to condemn one special and corrupting practice as a solution of the problem. Advice to break off gradually this corrupting habit when once it had been contracted, is not the ground of our protest. It is the

teaching of this thing to men who have never practised it, and to boys and children who have never heard of it even, against which we protest.

The Real Cause of the Present Discussion

Mrs. Besant says that Mr. Leadbeater: resigned two and a half years ago in the vain attempt to save the Society from this dissension.

As to a magnanimous resignation there was little choice; the wording of the unanimous resolution of the Committee shows that clearly enough.

There was, however, only one way in which Mr. Leadbeater could save the Society from dissension, as he himself said before the Advisory Committee:

Since this has come forward it would be undesirable that I should *appear before the public*. [Italics ours.]

The trouble has not been made by those who accepted Mr. Leadbeater's resignation as the natural sequence of his conduct, but by those who have persistently forced him into ever greater and greater prominence; and although he has once stated that he does not seek re-entry, he has lent himself in every way to being pushed forward publicly, and has thus aided most powerfully in keeping this scandal and this dissension alive in the Theosophical Society with ever greater and greater intensification. The Letter of the President in answer to our earnest appeal will only bring more dissension, and help the more to ventilate the unsavoury subject of Mr. Leadbeater's "solution" and methods in the Theosophical Society. Under such circumstances how can people be invited to join our ranks? It is manifestly unfair to allow outsiders to involve themselves in such a scandalous state

of affairs without warning, and that means stating the facts. Just the very people whom we desire to welcome will be kept out, and that, too, even with Mrs. Besant's letter alone before them, much more when they come to know the whole matter. What folly is this to sacrifice the welfare of the Society in the vain attempt to re-establish the public reputation of an individual who has lost it on his own confession and by his persistent refusal to repudiate his pernicious teaching and practice!

Combined Action Necessary

Already many have left because of the policy pursued by Mr. Leadbeater's supporters. In America hundreds, it is said as many as a thousand, have gone out in the last two and a half years; and here, among a number of other good members, we have lost two old General Secretaries and one former Acting General Secretary. Why, we ask, should old and valued members, or even the latest recruit, be driven out of the Society for the sake of one man, who has taught self-abuse to men, boys, and children, and refuses to repudiate his corrupting system?

Combined action being now forced upon us, we earnestly appeal to our fellow members not to resign individually, but to join us in our present protest, and register their names with us; so that if still further action is forced upon us we may take it together as a united body. We appeal not only to the members of our own Section, but also to all members of the Society who sympathise with our protest, to give us their support by also registering their names.

We would further ask our sympathisers to let our protest be known as widely as possible in the Society. For

while the President has at her disposal not only the official organisation of the whole Society but also the good services of a widespread inner order, we are dependent on unorganised effort.

True Loyalty

Finally, Mrs. Besant calls on us to be "loyal" to the Masters, and "to Their choice," and "to work for Them." Is it, we ask, loyalty to Masters to tolerate and to refuse to condemn the teaching of self-abuse?

We say that it is because of our loyalty to all the Masters of Morality who have taught the world throughout the ages that we protest, and that in so doing we work for Theosophy, and should fail in our plain duty were we not to protest. It is the best loyalty, therefore, to the Theosophical Society, and also to its elected President, no matter how "chosen," to protest, and resist the introduction of this teaching into the thought of the Theosophical world, and therewith also the reinstatement of Mr. Leadbeater in the Society without his full public repudiation of this teaching.

We cannot do better than conclude with the following words, quoted from the leaflet entitled *Occultism and Truth*, issued in 1894, at the time of the Judge crisis and signed by H. S. Olcott, A. P. Sinnett, Annie Besant, Bertram Keightley, W. Wynn Westcott, E. T. Sturdy, and C. W. Leadbeater :

A spurious Occultism dallies with truth and falsehood, and argues that deception on the illusory physical plane is consistent with purity on the loftier planes on which the Occultist has his true life; it speaks contemptuously of "mere worldly morality"—a contempt that might be

justified if it raised a higher standard, but which is out of place when the phrase is used to condone acts which the "mere worldly morality" would disdain to practise. The doctrine that the end justifies means has proved in the past fruitful of all evil; no means that are impure can bring about an end that is good, else were the Good Law a dream and Karma a mere delusion. From these errors flows an influence mischievous to the whole Theosophical Society, undermining the stern and rigid morality necessary as a foundation for Occultism of the Right-Hand Path.

(Sd.) G. R. S. MEAD,
HERBERT BURROWS,
W. KINGSLAND,
EDITH WARD.

16, Selwood Place,
Onslow Gardens,
London, S. W., Nov., 1908.

After the reproduction of these very lengthy documents which give us the case for and against Mr. Leadbeater in the most elaborate and lucid manner we will not trouble our readers with any more remarks on this aspect of the Leadbeater case. Mr. Leadbeater was readmitted into the Theosophical Society and he once more took up his residence at Adyar and started those occult investigations in collaboration with Mrs. Besant, of which we shall speak presently.

LXV

In January 1909 Mrs. Besant announced in *The Theosophist* that the General Council had decided to allow Mr. Leadbeater to return to the Society. From the witness-box in the Police Court Mrs. Besant said that there was a second enquiry into the Leadbeater case two years later than the first enquiry, when Mr. Leadbeater was found innocent. We have not before us any account of this second enquiry and therefore we are unable to say anything about the nature of that enquiry. However, it is sufficient for our present purpose to say that Mr. Leadbeater was re-admitted into the Theosophical Society. This re-admission, however, was not accomplished without considerable protest on the part of Theosophists all over the world and the resignation of many prominent Theosophists. Space at our disposal will not permit us to reproduce here all the objections raised by Theosophists against the re-admission of Mr. Leadbeater. The following circular issued by the officials of the Indian Section will give an idea as to the nature of the opposition that existed to Mr. Leadbeater's re-admission. Here are the views of the officials of the Indian Section.

" We, the undersigned officers and members of Council of the Indian Section, T. S., feel that a serious crisis has come in the history of the T. S. and that a grave danger is threatening its future in the proposal to invite Mr. Leadbeater to return to its ranks. In this connection we wish to put forward the following considerations: —

We fully recognise that the utmost latitude in all matters of opinion is the right of its members, and that the Society has no claim to exercise censorship over their conduct. But we consider that a distinction should be drawn between ordinary members and those who have occupied a prominent position in the past or who are now put forward as leaders and great teachers. For, in the latter case, their opinions, and teachings will necessarily be regarded as being endorsed by the Society as a whole. The assertion of freedom from dogma and independence of judgment will not prevent this, for the actions and attitude of majority of members carry more weight than the mere verbal expression of principles. Now it is admitted by Mr. Leadbeater's supporters that while giving rules as to living and thinking in order to lessen the tendency to certain degrading practices, he has also in certain cases advised the deliberate continuance of these practices, within certain limits and as a temporary measure. We hold that this is contrary to Scriptural teaching and to the highest standards of morality. In other cases he has himself taught these practices as a preventive measure, somewhat as a physical disease might be inoculated. We hold that this "inoculation" of a moral disease is still more opposed to the spirit of Scriptural teaching and to even the average moral standards. But Mr. Leadbeater is being held up as a "great teacher," an "Initiate" an

"Arhat," as one of the leaders of the T.S. and as a representative of the Masters, whom members are earnestly adjured not to reject ; the President herself refers to him as her fellow initiate and as a great teacher. Further, Mr. Leadbeater has never said that he considers these methods wrong ; he has, it is true, promised to discontinue them but only out of deference to the opinions of others. Under these circumstances we believe that to invite him to return to the Society will inevitably commit the Society *practically* though not *technically* to a condoning if not an actual endorsement of his methods, and that it will make it impossible to safeguard the honour and purity of the Society. For these reasons we cannot support what seems to us to be so fatal a course.

2. We also believe that it is a serious danger to any society for any one around whom notoriety and scandal have gathered, to be received as a member, and placed in a prominent position as a teacher or leader, and especially so in the case of the Theosophical Society, for which it is claimed that its moral standard is higher than the average. On account of the methods referred to above, notoriety and scandal have gathered around Mr. Leadbeater, and for this reason also we consider it highly inadvisable that he should be asked to return to the Society.

3. We have, for the sake of argument only, and because we do not wish to enter into matters of controversy accepted the view put forward by Mr. Leadbeater's supporters. But it does not seem to us to be right that the vote of the members on a matter of such serious importance should be taken without their being, as far as possible, put in possession of all the facts of the case.

We should therefore ask that before any vote in the Indian Section is taken, or accepted as final all the available information on both sides should be issued in a form accessible to all members, in order that they may be able to judge of the matter justly.

BALAKRISHNA KAUL

LILIAN EDGER

B. K. LAHERI

RAJENDRA LAL MUKERJEE

ISWARI PRASAD

P. T. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

UPENDRA LAL MAZUMDAR

SURAJ BHAN

BAVANASI BASI MUKERJEE

I am in full accord with the views here expressed.

UPENDRANATH BASU

LXVI.

Writing on this subject M. Edward Schure, General Secretary of the French Section of the Theosophical Society, wrote thus :—

Unfortunately things turned out otherwise. The primary cause of this deviation lies in the close alliance of Mrs. Besant with Mr. Leadbeater, a learned Occultist, but of an unsettled disposition and doubtful morality. After Mr. Leadbeater had been found guilty by an Advisory Committee of the T. S. Mrs. Besant publicly announced her reprobation of the educational methods with which he was charged. Her verdict of exclusion against the Theosophists who had been found to be unworthy was exceedingly severe. By an inconceivable change of front she

soon afterwards declared her intention of bringing Mr. Leadbeater into the T. S. again and she succeeded, not without some difficulty, in gaining the vote of the majority of her colleagues for this purpose. The excuses she gave for this recantation were charity and pardon. The real reason was that the President needed Mr. Leadbeater for her Occult investigations and that this collaboration appeared to her necessary to her prestige. To those who have followed her words and acts from that time onwards it is clearly manifest that Mrs. Besant has fallen under the formidable suggestive power of her dangerous collaborator and can only see, think and act under his absolute control. The personality henceforward speaking through her is no more the author of the *Ancient Wisdom*, but the questionable visionary, the skilful master of suggestion who no longer dares to show himself in London, Paris or America, but in the obscurity of a summer house at Adyar governs the T. S. through its President. The ill-omened consequence of this influence was soon to appear before the world through the affair of Alcyone and the founding of the Order of the Star in the East.

Mr. Edward Schure is right. The object of the re-instatement of Mr. Leadbeater was to secure his collaboration for Occultic and Clairvoyant investigation. It is clear, as said by Mr. Edward Schure, that Mrs. Besant had fallen under the formidable suggestive power of her dangerous collaborator, otherwise it is impossible to account for her surrender of her original position in this unaccountable manner.

However, after Mr. Leadbeater was reinstated at Adyar Clairvoyant investigation predominated in the working of the heads of the Theosophical Society. These investigations pretended to read the records of the past and to forecast the events of the future. As the result of these investigations carried on in Adyar in 1910 the two Occultist collaborators have produced a book called "Man, Whence, How and Whither." The collaborators in the foreword to the book say that "in the heat of the summer many of the students were away and we shut ourselves up so as to be uninterrupted for five evenings every week, we observed and said exactly what we saw and two members, Mrs. Van Hook and Don Fabrizio Ruspoli, were good enough to write down all we said exactly as we said it. These two sets of notes have been preserved. They are woven into the present story.....". That was how the book came to be written, and now that we find the contents of the book so delightfully moonshiny we must pick out certain gems and bring them to the notice of our readers. The book gives the life history of several individuals from their earliest days in the Moon down to the present time, and in order to

designate these individuals names have been given by which they can be recognised throughout the dramas in which they take part. We had better give some of the *dramatis personæ* here in order that our readers may recognise them in the following narratives. The following are the leading dramatic characters :—

Surya—The Lord Maitraya ;
 Mars—Mahatma M ;
 Mercury—Mahatma K. H. ;
 Alcyone—J Krishnamurthi ;
 Fides—G. S. Arundale ;
 Herakles—Annie Besant ;
 Lutetia—Charles Bradlaugh ;
 Mizar—J. Nithiananda ;
 Polaris—B. P. Wadia ;
 Celene—C. Jinarajadasa ;
 Sirius—C. W. Leadbeater ;
 Ulysses—H. S. Olcott ;
 Vajra—H. P. Blavatsky.

We are told that a large number of Egoes who were associated together in these different generations are just now in Hindu bodies, but the collaborators were unwilling to expose them to the mockery and persecution they would be likely to suffer if they were named, but all the same we can spot several of these Egoes in Brahmin

bodies. Now to proceed with the narrative, our first acquaintance with Mrs. Besant is in the early times of the Moon Chain. Here is an account of her life as given by the Clairvoyant collaborators :—

There is a hut in which dwells a Moon-man, his wife and children ; these we know in later times under the names of Mars and Mercury, the Mahaguru and Surya. A number of these monkey creatures live round the hut and give to their owners the devotion of faithful dogs ; among them we notice the future Sirius, Herakles, Alcyone and Mizar to whom we may give their future names for the purpose of recognition, though they are still non-human. Their Astral and mental bodies have grown under the play of their owners' human intelligence as those of domesticated animals now develop under our own. Sirius is devoted chiefly to Mercury, Herakles to Mars, Alcyone and Mizar are passionately attached servants of the Mahaguru and Surya. One night there is an alarm, the hut is surrounded by savages, supported by their domesticated animals, fierce and strong, resembling furry lizards and crocodiles. The faithful guardians spring up around their Masters' hut and fight desperately in its defence ; Mars comes out and drives back the assailants, using some weapon they do not possess ; but while he drives them backwards a lizard-like creature springs, darts behind him into the hut and catching up the child Surya begins to carry him away. Sirius springs at him, bears him down and throws the child to Alcyone, who carries him back into the hut, while Sirius grapples with the lizard, and after a desperate struggle kills it falling senseless

badly mangled over its body. Meanwhile a savage slips behind Mars and stabs at his back, but Herakles with one leap flings himself between his Master and the weapon and receives the blow full on his breast and falls dying. The savages are now flying in all directions and Mars feeling the fall of some creature against his back staggers and recovering himself turns. He recognises his faithful animal defender, bends over his dying servant and places his head in his lap, the poor monkey lifts his eyes full of intense devotion to his Master's face and the act of service done of passionate desire to save calls down a stream of response from the Will aspect of the Monad in a fiery rush of power, and in the very moment of dying the monkey individualises and thus he dies—a man.

LXVII.

Here we see the exact period when Mrs. Besant called Herakles through all her lives, evolves from a monkey into a man, and the transformation or evolution or whatever you may call it is brought about by the placing of the head of Herakles in the lap of Mars, otherwise called Mahátma M. We have not been able to find in the book the exact moment when Mr. Leadbeater developed from a monkey into a man. We see Herakles again in the sixth round of the Moon Chain fighting as a warrior against savages. The next that we hear of Herakles is in the fourth Root race which is about 600,000 B. C. which was 250,000 years after the first great

cataclysm which rent the continent of Atlantis. She arrived with Mars, Mercury and others. Mars was born with Surya and Mercury for his father and mother and with Herakles as his elder sister. We next meet Herakles as the wife of Mars, a General under the White Emperor at the city of the Golden Gates somewhere about 100,000 B. C. Next Herakles is met with as a young unmarried man in Egypt, the son of Sirius. Herakles is here reported to have died fighting. Then we meet Herakles again, this time the father of a big bouncing girl Psyche and a son Fides *alias* Mr. G. S. Arundale. Some generations afterwards we notice Herakles with Sirius as a wife. Herakles pays a compliment to his wife Sirius who is described as a tall, rather muscular woman, a notable housewife and very kind to her rather large family among whom we observe Alcyone, Mizar, Uranus, Selene and Neptune. It seems that in this life Herakles had brought some Tlavatli nobles as captives from a foray, and a son of these, Apis, married his niece Gemini much to the anger of the proud Aryan family that looked on this marriage as a *Mesalliance*. It appears from this that caste distinctions were already commencing. We are told that in a catastrophe about B.C. 75,025,

Egypt went under water and when the swamps became inhabitable Egypt was inhabited by a Negroid people and after these came the second Atlantian Empire with a great dynasty of divine Kings and with many of the heroes whom Greece later regarded as demi-Gods among whom was Herakles, our own Mrs. Besant. At a considerably later period the Egoes of our present Theosophical friends took part in the building of the South African Empire where we find Mars as the Monarch with his faithful Herakles as ruler of a Province under him. The name of the Province is not given but we are told that Sirius was born in Mashonaland. Probably Herakles was a ruler of Matabeleland. Next we pass on to the third sub-race, the Iranian, the period being about B. C. 30,000, and here Herakles a strong good looking young man arrives at the City of the Bridge in a caravan from Mesopotamia, his birth place. We wonder what Herakles thinks now of his old country Mesopotamia. Next we find Herakles as the son-in-law of Sirius. Even in these ancient births there were love affairs and we are told that in one birth Herakles and Alcyone fell in love with the same young woman Fides, a handsome girl with a decided nose. The

girl with the decided nose preferred Alcyone and the disconsolate Herakles decided to commit suicide. But his father Mars advised him not to be a fool. Thus the inclination to commit suicide also seems to have been brought from previous birth. In B. C. 18,875 we are told that Mars with a number of followers reached the great plains of India and there enjoyed the hospitality of his old comrade Viraj who was then ruling as King Podishpan. The King's son was married to the daughter of Mars and so an alliance was established. At that time Southern India was a large kingdom under King Huzaranda. Surya under the name of Byarsba was the High Priest of the kingdom. Surya received the visitors who are described as the high nosed strangers from the North who were certified as being well-fitted to be priests. They were accordingly made into hereditary priests and these, we are told are the ancestors of the Brahmins of Southern India. This is how South India is described as coming peacefully under the Aryan rule. Crut who succeeded Saturn died without issue and Herakles the second son of Mars was elected by the people to the vacant throne establishing an Aryan dynasty. So this is not the first time that Mrs. Besant

has been elected by the people of Southern India as their ruler. That event took place some time about 18, 875 B. C. and Mrs. Besant is now only reclaiming her former kingdom. It is not like Mrs. Besant to do things by halves. She is not likely to remain satisfied with being elected King of Southern India. She wanted to be King of Northern India as well and this is how it came to pass. In B. C. 17,455 Mars led an expedition into India. This expedition got into India and pressed on to Delhi or rather to the place where Delhi now stands. In this place they built the first city on the Imperial site. The city was named Ravipur. This Ravipur was the first Imperial City established on the site of the present Delhi. It was Mars who established the city, who very soon left it to his eldest son Herakles who was much aided by Alcyone his dearest friend. Thus we have Mrs. Besant elected King of Southern India in B. C. 18,875 and succeeding as the King of Dehli in B. C. 17,455. Her right to the Kingdom of India is thus established on incontestable evidence and a consideration of these facts will, it is hoped, diminish further opposition to Queen Annie Besant's legitimate claims. These are the events of the past. We have

also before us the prophecies of the future. The collaborators see in the future a federation of nations. They describe the existence of a hereditary monarchy in Great Britain with all real power in the hands of the king with ministers in charge of separate departments.

Parliament has disappeared from Great Britain and we see in its place a number of officials established. Nothing like Home Rule or the Scheme of the Congress and the Moslem League is found working anywhere. Probably if these investigations had been made after 1915 the prophecy for the future may have been of a different kind. But in 1910 by the help of Clairvoyance neither Mrs. Besant nor Mr. Leadbeater could see Home Rule anywhere; but these prophecies are only of secondary importance. The main outcome of the Clairvoyant investigation was the discovery that a great world Teacher was about to enter the world and the human being whose body is to be the physical vehicle for this world Teacher was already in the Theosophical Society and it fell to the task of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater to train this body for his future responsibility. The physical body that the expected world Teacher was to use belongs to

J. Krishnamurthi, the son of retired Tahsildar Narayana Iyer.

LXVIII

The preparation of the physical body occupied by the Ego Alcyone for the occupation of the coming world Teacher Lord Maitreya began, as far as we know, with an "initiation" ceremony which took place at Adyar on January 11th and 12th, 1910. According to the *Theosophist* "January witnessed at the rare conjunction of the planets noted by all astrologers the Occult birth of the young child who in due time shall be the vehicle for the blessing of the world. 2000 years have run their course since a similar gift was vouchsafed to the sorrowful star". And again in the *Theosophist* for March 1911 Mrs. Besant wrote thus:—"It (Adyar) has been held worthy by the guardians of the Society to receive and train those chosen to take part in the great work of the near future—the coming of the world Teacher. Here last January carefully guarded lay the empty body of the young disciple taken away to Tibet for his mystic initiation and hither the new initiate returned to take up again his dwelling therein to live under the guardianship of his elder

brothers until the time is ripe for the ending of their trust". Thus we find again and again in the pages of the *Theosophist* anxious expectations of the coming of the greatest Messenger from the White Lodge, the supreme Teacher, the great Rishi, the Bodhi Sattava, the Lord Maitreya, the Blessed Budha. We were told that "this supreme world Teacher is awaiting the striking of his hour and already the steeps of the Himalayas are echoing to the footsteps that tread them to descend into the world of men." We need not go into the details of the ceremony of initiation described in the *Theosophist*. At about the same time a new Order was established called the Order of the Star in the East. Many joined the Order and the certificates were presented to the members by the head of the Order, J. Krishnamurthi. Mr. G. S. Arundale thus describes what took place at the meeting where Krishnamurthi distributed the prizes to the members of the Order of the Star in the East. "The line of members began to pass up the central passage and one or two received their papers with a bow to the Head and a friendly smile from him and then came a sudden and startling change. The whole atmosphere altered and the air was

thrown into powerful pulsing vibrations of a most extraordinary force. All saw the young figure draw itself up and take an air of serene and dignified majesty, a stateliness new and strange. The approaching member involuntarily dropped on his knees bowing his head to the ground and the smile shone out radiant, compassionate and tender. What else some saw let me now tell. A great coronet of brilliant shimmering blue appeared a foot or so above the young head and from this descended funnel-wise bright streams of blue light till they touched the dark hair entering and flooding the head. The Lord Maitreya was there embodying Himself in His Chosen. Within the coronet glazed the crimson of the symbol of the Master Jesus, the Rosy Cross, and high in air well nigh from the roof blazed down a dazzling flashing star which all initiates know. Around, guarding the building within, making as it were a living wall, hung the great green Devas, a quadrangle of coruscating light and colour, glorious, ever-enriching ranks beauty and of joy." We will not trouble our readers with any lengthy quotation of such ravings. We are told that a second initiation ceremony took place in Sicily in 1912, and in the *Link* for

August 1912 it is stated "and we are now in such a time, while we are waiting for the coming of the Maitreya." Thus the physical body of Krishnamurthi was made ready for the occupation of Lord Maitreya. While the body was left in Adyar the Ego inside was taken to Tibet and after initiation returned once more to the body left behind at Adyar. We do not know what was done at Sicily. Perhaps the body was left in Sicily while the Ego went across the sea to Monte Carlo and came back. Lord Maitreya appeared in the middle of a brilliant blue light above the head of Krishnamurthi and peeped in, and he must have been satisfied that the head was empty and ready for occupation.

While all things were ready for the occupation of Krishnamurthi's body by the coming world Teacher there was a slight hitch in the shape of a law suit. Whatever the arrangement may be in the country inhabited by the great White Brotherhood, on this earth inhabited by ordinary mortals there are certain laws made by men which all have to obey. It so happened that Krishnamurthi, as he was known in Madras, was a minor and his father Narayaniah was his

natural guardian, and here is the evidence given by Mr. Narayaniah, the father of Krishnamurthi as to what he saw at Adyar. Mr. Narayaniah said that one morning he saw Nityananda standing outside Mr. Leadbeater's bungalow and he asked where Krishna was. Nitya told him that Krishna was inside. The doors of Mr. Leadbeater's room were all shut (here witness wrote on a piece of paper what he alleges that he saw after opening the door and he handed the paper to his Lordship). He said to Mr. Leadbeater "You filthy brute" and he took his boy's hand and came out. He had no talk with Mr. Leadbeater beyond the use of that expression. Somewhat similar evidence was given by Lakshman, a servant of Mrs. Besant. Lakshman said that "one morning he went to Mr. Leadbeater's bath room to fetch his towel, but was surprised to see Leadbeater and Krishnamurthi there both naked. He considered it a sinful act for Hindus to bathe completely naked and through shame he did not call Mr. Leadbeater but he went away." Of course, Mr. Narayaniah and Lakshman may have been ignorant of the Theosophical process of preparing a physical body for the occupation of a work Teacher, and what Mr. Narayaniah saw and what

Lakshman saw may only have been different stages of the preparation of Krishnamurthi's body for the world teacher to enter, but probably due to this misunderstanding Narayaniah filed a suit in the Madras High Court praying for a declaration that he was entitled to the guardianship and custody of his minor boys, "for a declaration if necessary that the defendant is not entitled or in any case is unfit to be in charge of the said boys, for an order directing the defendant to hand over the boys to the plaintiff or to such other persons as the Hon'ble Court may deem meet and for costs of the suit and for such further or other relief as the Hon'ble Court may deem meet." We need not here describe the trial. They will be found published *in extenso* in a book called "Mrs. Besant and the Alcyone Case," published by Messrs. Goodwin & Co., Mylapore, Madras.

The case ended in the plaintiff's favour both in the Original and Appellate Courts. The judgments in the case will be found published in the appendix to the book. But on a special appeal to the Privy Council the decisions of the Madras High Court were reversed on a technical point of jurisdiction. Another suit arising out of the Leadbeater case was a criminal

prosecution for defamation against the present writer and Dr. U. Rama Rao, the editor and publisher respectively of a medical journal called the *Antiseptic* for an article published in that journal entitled "Psychopathia Sexualis in a Mahatma". That article concluded with the following passage:—"We have nothing but pity for these sexual degenerates—the Mahatma K. H. and Mr. Leadbeater and the rest. They are paying the penalty for a life unphysiologically spent. That a sexual degenerate like Leadbeater should pose as a seer who could see into the future and the past, we can easily understand. We wonder if he can see far back enough to make out and tell us whether in one of his previous births he was Onan, the son of Juda and Suah and grandson of Israel. But whatever he was in his previous existence, he is at present a public danger in Madras. We trust that the members of the medical profession will do all that lies in their power to mitigate the evil effects of the teaching of the Mahatma suffering from Psychopathia Sexualis and his disgusting instrument Mr. Leabeater." The prosecution failed, but it served a useful purpose as it was instrumental in bringing before the public a

good deal of the material which we have used in this book.

The effect of the law suits was to render the Theosophical Society practically useless as an advertising medium for Mrs. Besant. This drove her to the necessity of achieving a new position by means of new activities. We are all aware of the Theosophic movement in favour of social reform. The Theosophical Society had been exceedingly reactionary on most social questions connected with the Hindu community with the one exception of early marriage. Mrs. Besant in the past had occupied herself with defending many superstitious observances of Hinduism connected with caste and family which even many Hindus had given up as hopeless to defend. But when she started the social reform movement within the Theosophical Society, she went the whole hog, and tried to capture as many followers as possible. Another movement started by Mrs. Besant was to establish a rival institution to the Young Men's Christian Association which has a magnificent building in Madras on the Esplanade Road. Mrs. Besant started a Young Men's Indian Association and since then, she has secured a fine building for this institution which is her creation. But these

were only preliminaries to her ultimate objective which was to capture the Indian politicians and enrol them as her worshippers. The same policy which she had successfully pursued in connection with Theosophy she also followed in connection with Indian politics. Mr. Lovat Fraser in his article in the *Edinburgh Review* says : "She exalted Indian spiritual ideals at the expense of Western materialism, which is not a difficult process ; and by gulling the unthinking and the credulous with stories of a golden age of India, which never existed, she managed to attract a fairly large following". The process was repeated in the region of Indian politics. She praised everything Indian and ran down everything European till the Indians stood revealed as so many martyrs suffering untold tyrannies at the hands of the British barbarians. She also told the Indians at a conference at Chittore that she being a white woman, she could say and do things which the Indians themselves could not, and as her white skin would save her, she would undertake a vigorous political agitation on behalf of the Indians. The programme suited the Madrasi Brahmin excellently. The Madrasi Brahmin is ambitious but he prefers to achieve his political ambitions

without running any risks. The idea of a white woman practically immune from the rigours of Government action, undertaking all the risks while the Brahmins reaped all the rewards, was an arrangement which suited the peculiarly selfish instincts of the Mādrasi Brahmin. It also suited Mrs. Besant. She knew that as a white woman, the risks that she ran were very little while the programme that she had sketched out opened up a magnificent avenue for self-advertisement. Thus was she launched on her political career. She constituted herself as the knight errant who was to ride abroad redressing Indian wrongs and receiving the homage and adoration of the "down trodden" Indians whom it was her special privilege to lift up to their rightful position of citizens of the British Empire. She armed herself with the necessary weapon of political warfare, a daily newspaper, and launched on that campaign which was to make Indians free and herself the uncrowned queen of India. Mrs. Besant's first big move in Indian politics was to bring about a union between the Extremists and Moderates of the National Congress, in other words she wanted the active co-operation on Mr. B. G. Tilak and his followers in her Indian political

campaign. Her first attempt in this direction failed and following this failure, we find in the columns of *New India* a threat that if the Congress still remained in a condition of masterly inactivity, it will be well for young people to take action, not in opposition to the Congress which must always be regarded as the head of political activities in India, but as supplementing its work in a field which it does not wish to occupy at present. This is practically an ultimatum to the Congress from Mrs. Besant to say that if the Congress will not take up Home Rule "I shall". Then followed in *New India* a series of articles on the resurrection of Asia and it claimed that India should be given Home Rule as a sort of defensive measure against the advance of China. These articles foreshadowed the development of China as a great military power with the consequent danger to India of a Chinese invasion. *New India* pleaded that India should be enabled to stand on her own legs in order to repel the Chinese invasion. Then, on the 3rd of August 1915, *New India* expressed the opinion that the people of India should agitate for self-government and should fight for freedom and exclaimed in a truly dramatic fashion "Who will join hands with us!"

On August 17th, 1915 *New India* proclaimed that in the reconstruction of the Empire lay the opportunity of India for freedom, and on the 21st August "A Britisher" wrote in *New India* that "the chief hinderance to the acquirement of self-Government for the motherland is not its rulers, not the Anglo-Indian press.....it is the inactivity, the terpidity, the painful indifference of the Indians themselves. One has often heard of unrest in India; but honestly, I am inclined to think it is largely a fiction, a creation of the journalistic and oratorical imagination. The plain fact appears to me to be that on this point, India is too ruinously easy-going. This tendency to remain indolently satisfied with things as they are, to drift helplessly with the stream, looks perilously like a damning proof of her unawareness, her insensitiveness to her immediate needs and *opportunities*" (italics are ours). On September 7th 1915, *New India* announced that Mrs. Besant had gone to Bombay to ascertain Sir Pherzoshah Mehta's views on the political situation as regards India and England, in other words to discuss with him the question of Home Rule, and on September 13th, she gave an interview to an Associated Press representative in Bombay when

she talked of India's right for self-Government and said that the country must be stirred in the matter and that the Congress should lead the country. If the Congress did not, Mrs. Besant said that she would take up the question herself. She continued and said that after the Congress had formulated a scheme of self-Government, which she would like to call Home Rule for India, the country will be stirred in behalf of it. On the 15th of September, she wrote on the Congress and self-Government and advised Sir S.P. Sinha, the President of the Congress of 1915 to claim *Swaraj*. There was an attack on Sir Pherozshah Mehta in which she said that that gentleman had so long dominated Bombay that it was doubtful if any one else there had the courage to lead while he himself was too ill to be depended upon. Moreover, a sick man could not be vigorous nor inclined to sketch a vigorous policy for his followers. She said that a vigorous policy was above all things wanted in the Bombay Congress of 1915 and that till then, Bombay had given no sign of preparing anything in the way of a Home Rule scheme. On September 25th 1915, the Home Rule League was born with Home Rule for India as its only object. At first it was announc-

ed that Mr. Dadabai Naoroji was the President of the League, but that venerable gentleman promptly disclaimed any connection with the newly born organisation and nothing more was heard on the subject afterwards. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta died in November 1915 and almost the last obstacle which stood in the way of the capture of the National Congress by the Home Rulers was thus removed. Home Rule activities continued under the energetic guidance of Mrs. Besant. What took place at the Bombay Congress presided over by Sir S. P. Sinha, how he checkmated the impulsive eagerness of Mrs. Besant to get the Congress committed to the Home Rule propaganda are well-known to Indian politicians. But after the Congress of 1915 with the semi-detachment of Sir S. P. Sinha from Congress activities, Mrs. Besant made more headway. With the deaths of Mr. Ghokale and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, with the partial retirement of Sir S. P. Sinha, there was hardly an old Congress leader who could stand up and fight the increasing agitation for catastrophic changes. Moderate Congress leaders like the snakes in Ireland committed political suicide to save themselves from destruction. The Congress of 1916 under an old and respectable

figurehead was captured by the Besantine clique. The increased irritation felt in certain Muhammadan quarters mainly due to certain events which were developing in the Moslem world politics, threw them into the lap of Besantine politicians and since then, we have had the spectacle of the so-called Congress and Moslem League posing as the representatives of the whole of India. Mrs. Besant who is supposed to have received a mandate from this ill-assorted combination of the Congress and Moslem League went full steam ahead. Our readers in this Presidency need not be reminded of the fury and vigour of her political activities in this Presidency in the year 1917. With the increase in the vigour of her political agitation, the courage of the Madras Government seemed to ooze out. The more diplomatic the Madras Government became, the more dramatic became the political situation created by Mrs. Besant. She seemed to expect deportation or internment, but the Madras Government moved not. On one occasion she arranged the stage for her theatrical political exit. She wrote and published her farewell address to the people of the Madras Presidency, wrote her last will and testament and stood ready for her exit from

the political stage, but the Madras Government would not let the curtain down. The situation was ludicrous. The agitation was resumed and things went on for some time longer, when to the amazement of a few and to the amusement of all, the Madras Government proceeded against Mrs. Besant under the Press Act. What an anticlimax that Press Act prosecution was! Then later on, came her internment. As a prelude to the internment, His Excellency the Governor came down from the hills and granted an interview to Mrs. Besant at Government House, Mount Road. Nothing could have been better from Mrs. Besant's point of view. The interview was exceedingly dramatic and Mrs. Besant walked out of Government House like a tragedy queen injured and oppressed by a cruelly autocratic Government. Then came the internment. We have heard that British politicians have waxed eloquent on English platforms about the cruelty of making Mrs. Besant rot in jail; while the High Priestess of Home Rule went comfortably up to the queen of hill stations, drove in her own motor car, from the railway station to her own bungalow, and there, in the company of her own political colleagues lay reclining on the hills like gods *together* nursing her grievances

against the Madras Government and posing as a martyr for all India to admire and weep over, while her followers went all over the country with as if to say "if you have tears prepare to shed them now." The interned queen held durbars at Gulistan with the Home Rule flag floating outside waving its challenge to the Madras Government to come and haul it down if they dared. Children of Israel when they were passing through the valley of misery used it as well. Mrs. Besant, when she was going through the precautionary measure of internment, used it as an advertisement and used the advertisement with such effect that the Viceroy forthwith took her as a partner in the creation of a calm political atmosphere for the special benefit of the Secretary of State. How she accomplished this task, and what sort of calm political atmosphere was the result, are matters of common knowledge. We have a shrewd suspicion that she has scored both over the Madras Government and the Government of India and that she has come out of her internment stronger than when she went in. She has succeeded in converting the Theosophical Society, which was originally a religious one, into a political one. In a letter to the Government of Madras she

said "The Theosophical Society cannot identify itself with any special creed religious, social or political, but it can and ought to stand for the sacred right of free speech, for all opinions which do not excite crime and can see that His Excellency's instinctive attack of religious liberty shows the true spirit of autocracy and hatred of all freedom. It has therefore allied itself in this struggle in *entente cordiale* with the National Congress, the Moslem League and the Home Rule League in one solid body united in resistance to autocracy and in defence of the liberty of the people and I, as President of the Theosophical Society will conclude no separate peace." Mrs. Besant has the advantage over the *Entente* Powers which are fighting in Europe. They are still trying to bring about a unity of command. Mrs. Besant by being the head of the Theosophical Society, the National Congress and the Home Rule League has already accomplished this unity of command and embodies in herself all these three bodies at war with the Government of India, now in a temporary condition of armed neutrality.

Mrs. Besant may consider with pardonable pride, that her election as President of the Indian National Congress of 1917 was a great

personal triumph for her. She entered the arena of Indian politics only in 1914, and within three years to have been able to wear the Martyr's crown, and to win the blue ribbon of native Indian politics, is a record in political progress. This crowning success of Mrs. Besant's brief Indian political career was brought about by methods hitherto foreign to the Indian National Congress. To pack the reception committee with new members whose subscriptions were paid by anonymous patrons who remained behind the screen and pulled the wires, is more the method of Tammany Hall than of the Indian National Congress. But the Congress whose Presidentship she secured by such means was only the ghost of the Indian National Congress, which by years of steady work carried on with moderation and sagacity, with a single eye for India's political advancement had at last secured recognition as the common political platform for educated India. To attain this position the Congress had, with considerable difficulty, to purge itself of disruptive elements in Indian politics. To bring back these forces of political extremism and disorder and to drive out the more sober and steady influences which have been the making of the India

National Congress was the main work of Mrs. Besant. With the ascendancy of Mrs. Besant in the control of the Indian National Congress, its national and representative character disappeared. The work that the leaders of Indian National Movement did in thirty years, Mrs. Besant has undone in three. She has successfully played the part of the "pied piper" and enticed the school boys to follow her as a tumultuous shouting crowd. The elder Indian politicians, who had hitherto exercised the function of a brake on the Indian Political Movements frightened at the possible development of political hooliganism on the part of the immature crowd and its hare-brained leader, deserted their post in the most cowardly manner. Mrs. Besant once wrote that "a woman who fought her way out of Christianity and whiggism into free thought and Radicalism absolutely alone, who gave up every old friend, male and female, rather than resign the beliefs she had struggled to in solitude, who again in embracing active socialism, has run counter to the view of her nearest male friends, such a woman may very likely go wrong but I think she may venture, without conceit, to at least claim independent judgment." Yes, the woman who cut the Theosophical Society

into two because she wanted the collaboration of an occultic mountebank, whose morality was condemned by most Theosophists; a woman who disturbed the ordered political progress of a great country because she was in a hurry in her old age to secure 'supreme political power to her worshippers in order that she might pose as the liberator of a down-trodden country, may claim independent though highly erratic judgment. The German Crown Prince when remonstrated with by the Kaiser about the heavy German losses at Verdun is reported to have replied that he was brave enough to hear the German losses with fortitude. Mrs. Besant, when her attention was drawn to the broken up home and outraged friendships claims independent judgment. A woman's whims elevated to the dignity of independence of judgment may break a loving mother's heart, may break up a happy home, may bring a world-wide society which others have built up with tact and industry to the very verge of ruin, but it is time to cry 'halt' when the political future of a great country is attempted to be sacrificed at the altar of the vanity of that woman, a vanity which seems to be insatiable. The conduct of those Indian political leaders who bartered away the

interests of their country for the flattery of an adventuress who preaches patristism to Indians while belittling the achievements of her own country and countrymen, will receive the censure of history and the condemnation of posterity. The British administrators of this country who hide their indecision under the cloak of diplomacy and have permitted the development of a dangerous revolutionary movement in this country will yet have time in their retirement in the cool atmosphere of their country, to contemplate how they fell short of the ideals established by the great British pioneers who built and consolidated the British Empire in India, and how near they were to wrecking the Empire which others, made of sterner stuff, had established. Of the woman whose public activities we have chronicled we will only say, more in sorrow than in anger, Alas ! what a noble mind was there.

APPENDIX I
REPORT OF
MEETING CALLED BY COLONEL OLCOTT.
TO DISCUSS
CERTAIN CHARGES AGAINST C.W. LEADBEATER
GROSVENOR HOTEL,
Buckingham Palace Road, S. W.,
LONDON

On Wednesday, May 16th, 1906, at 5 p.m.

(COPY).

Present :—Col. H. S. Olcott, Mr. Burnett as representative of the Executive Committee of the American Section, Mr. P. E. Bernard as representative of the Executive Committee of the French Section, and the members of the Executive Committee of the British Section, namely, Mr. Sinnett, Dr. Nunn, Mr. Mead, Mrs. Stead, Miss Ward, Miss Spink, Mrs. Hooper, Mr. Glass, Mr. Keightley and Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Leadbeater was also in attendance and present at the first part of the meeting. Col. Olcott took the chair and asked Mr. Glass to act as Secretary to the meeting.

Col. Olcott :—I have called you together to act as an advisory board in the matter before us. The matter is to

listen to charges against Mr. Leadbeater of having systematically taught boys the practice of self-abuse. You have read the documents. Among them is a partial confession of Mr. Leadbeater, and rebutting evidence. The Executive Committee of the American Section would have expelled the accused but he is not a member of their Section. They therefore appealed to the President Founder to help them and sent a representative of the section. The accused being a member of the London Lodge of the British Section, and holding the office of Presidential Delegate, and the Appeal being made by the Executive Committee of a Section it acquires an importance which prevents me from leaving the matter in its ordinary course to a Lodge. I have therefore asked the Executive Committee of the British Section to assist me. The French Congress Committee have cancelled Mr. Leadbeater's invitation to act as Vice-President of the Congress. I have asked them to send a delegate to be present. So that we may avoid the least appearance of unfair play I have asked Mr. Leadbeater to attend the meeting. I will call upon the American and French delegates to read their credentials.

Mr. Burnett then read the following :—

“ Extract from Minutes of the Executive Committee, American Section, T. S. held in N. Y. C. on April 13, 1906.”

“ Resolved that the Commissioner appointed by the Executive Committee of the American Section, T. S. in the C. W. Leadbeater case be and hereby is instructed, authorised and empowered as follows :—

First. That he go to Europe forthwith, taking with him documents containing charges and evidence against C. W. Leadbeater and personally lay them before the President-Founder and the Lodge or Lodges of the T. S.

of which the accused is a member, and ask that they be acted upon immediately; said Commissioner giving all the assistance in his power to bring the matter to a speedy and final issue.

Second: That he shall also place in the hands of the General Secretary of the British Section T. S. a copy of the said charges and evidence with accompanying documents for his information asking his aid and that of the President-Founder in bringing the matter to an early and satisfactory conclusion without unnecessary publicity, so that the good name and well-being of the T. S. movement and of the T. S. may thereby be safeguarded as far as possible.

Third: That the said Commissioner shall report progress by cable and letter from time to time to the General Secretary, and on the termination of his mission shall submit to the Executive Committee a full and final report in writing of same.

It is understood and agreed that there is nothing in the foregoing instructions to the Commissioner that will in any way interfere with his using his best judgment when, after consultation with the President-Founder, a somewhat different method of procedure should be decided upon."

(Sd.) ALEXANDER FULLERTON,

Gen. Secy.

Col. Olcott translated the following Resolutions of the Executive Committee of the French Section.

"To Dr. Th. Pascal—copy of the official report of the Meeting of the French Committee held in Paris on the 18th May.

(Sd.) PIERRE E. BERNARD,

Asst. Gen. Secy.

(1) Le Conseil d'Administration estime que, si le Dr. Pascal, Secrétaire Générale de la Section, reçoit du Colonel Olcott l'invitation officielle d'envoyer un représentant de la Section française au comité formé en vue d'examiner l'affaire C. W. L. il y a d'envoyer ce délégué (Adopté à l'unanimité).

(2) Le ou les délégués envoyés auront carte blanche. (Adopté par 5 voix Sur, 6, le comte Courmes d'étant abstenue).

(3) Sont désignés comme délégués, conjointement :—
Le Dr. Pascal, Secrétaire Génl. M. Pierre Bernard, Sec.,
G. Adjt. (Adopté à l'unanimité.)

Olcott: Of course you know that the executive power is vested in me. You are here to advise me and to hear what Mr. Leadbeater has to say, and to act according to your judgment after hearing him. A resolution should be passed calling upon me to do so, and I should follow that if there was nothing in my mind against it.

(The charges having been already in the hands of the Committee were taken as read).

Thomas :—Have the copies been compared with the originals ?

Burnett :—They have.

Thomas :—Have you the official documents ?

Olcott :—They are documents of the American Section, and we have the representative of the Section here and he certifies that they are exact copies.

Burnett :—The originals are in the American Section. I have seen all the original papers and certify that they are exact copies.

(Mr. Leadbeater was then called upon to say what he wished.)

Leadbeater :—I have already said that in my letter to Mr. Fullerton. I should also add that I regarded that letter as addressed to friends. I did not look upon it as a defence against an attack. I took the trouble to give a detailed explanation because I thought I was giving it to friends. I should also say that the original document signed by four of the leading members contained a solemn pledge that they would take the greatest care that this would not become known and that they would not allow even a hint to escape. Remember that both I and Mrs. Besant answered under that confidence and we should not expect that our answers were going to be laid before a whole Section and before the whole world. So far as I am concerned what I said is exactly all I can say, except that if I were to elaborate, I could bring more reasons for the action. Of course I am aware that the opinion of the majority is against that course. They would regard things, I look on as worse, as much less objectionable. The only point in my mind is that I should assure you that there was no evil intent. I was simply offering a solution of a serious difficulty. It is not the common solution but to my mind it is far better than the common solution, but I do not expect that you should agree with me. The point is that the Society wishes to clear itself from all connection with that view. The Society is correct in taking that ground if that is the opinion of its representatives. Therefore I took the course which was taken by other members. I placed my resignation in the hands of the President-Founder, not with any idea of confessing to evil intent but simply to relieve the Society from any supposed complicity. You may hold any views of the course which I took, but our one idea is to prevent the Society from being

injured. As to what comes to me, that is a minor matter ; my own adhesion to all the Society means is the same in any case and whether a member or not my own beliefs will remain the same, only if my resignation be accepted that shuts me out from a certain kind of Theosophical work.

Since this has come forward it would be undesirable that I should appear before the public. Therefore it seems to me that there is little more I can say. I have only just now seen anything at all of the documents except that first letter. There have been other supposed rebuttals and other documents which I had only seen to-day, and while there are a number of points I should challenge as inaccurate, yet all those are minor points and do not effect the great question. It is simply that there are points of so-called rebuttal which are untrue and others so distorted that they do not represent the facts of the case, but these do not affect the central point. They could only be adduced to show I had not spoken the truth, which is not so. I cling to what I have said to Mr. Fullerton. If wished I can discuss all the points.

Olcott :—What do you desire ?

Mead :—I think it is only right and proper that Mr. Leadbeater should face it.

Miss Ward :—Are we not here to judge upon the documents before us? It does not seem necessary to go into anything further.

Thomas :—The rebuttal evidence has to do with points in the original. It is important it should be dealt with.

Mr. Leadbeater :—With regard to Mr. Mead, I have come across no question regarding motive.

Burnett :—That is true, Mr. Leadbeater has made a statement that his resignation is in the hands of the President-Founder.

Olcott :—That is so ; I have it.

Burnett :—It would seem to me that the main question is this, that we ought to have Mr. Leadbeater's resignation read before anything else is done.

Miss Ward seconded and this was resolved. The following letter of resignation was read :—

London, May 16th, 1906.

The President-Founder
of the Theosophical Society.

Dear Colonel Olcott,

In view of recent events, and in order to save the Society from any embarrassments, I beg to place in your hands my resignation of membership.

Yours as ever,

(Sd.) C. W. Leadbeater."

Burnett :—I would like to ask, Mr. President. There is nothing in that resignation which shows the nature of the charges or the cause of resignation, and it is a question which every member will ask. Mr. Leadbeater is not an ordinary member of the T. S. He has toured the world in the interests of Theosophy and we have to meet the questions of the world, the questions of our own members, as to why this resignation. If we go into quibbling as to the exact wording of statements of fact we might go on without settling anything. If Mr. Leadbeater admit the charges to be true that settles the matter in my mind.

Olcott :—Mr. Leadbeater, you admit that it was your practice to teach certain things?

Thomas :—I should like to know if Mr. Leadbeater definitely admits the accuracy of the copy of his own letter to Mr. Fullerton and the original letter to Mrs. Besant.

Leadbeater :—To the best of my knowledge and belief. I have somewhere the draft which I drew up of the letter I sent. I am not in a position to certify but I believe it to be a true copy.

Thomas :—While I wish to fall in with the wishes of the American representative there are one or two most important points in the rebuttal evidence and it is most important, that we should be made clear on the matter.

Leadbeater :—I can deal with it shortly. (The Chairman put it to the meeting that Mr. Leadbeater should deal with it. Agreed) I find paper No. 3, called a rebuttal, begins by speaking of a counter charge. I did not make one; I am simply speaking of certain facts, and they speak of a certain "Z." That statement in the first para is in direct contradiction to what the boy told me, and seeing he told it to me at the time with a wealth of detail it is difficult to say that he was inventing. I am inclined to think that these boys have been catechised—they speak of having to press them—and my idea is that they have got more than was there. In the case of the first sentence, that disagrees with the detailed statement made to me by the boy, in speaking to me of a good deal that did happen between himself and this young man. So that there he has misrepresented matters. The same thing applies to the fourth para. marked "2nd." Of course, that is merely setting statements of the same boy against one another. I may tell you that if I had had any idea that my letter to Mr. Fullerton was to go before other people I should not have

mentioned "Z." I have enough of the old priestly idea of confession to keep back that.

Para 3, "A conversation, etc." That is practically speaking quite true. I told the mother that she had nothing more to fear. I had promises from "Z" and the boy and I thought the boy might help the young man. That is true but does not show my statement was untrue.

At the bottom of the page a quotation from Mrs. Besant's letter, "That is not true, etc." It is true that in that particular case I may not have done so. I have no recollection of this but had done it in many cases.

On top of the next page. "The interview mentioned in Mr. Leadbeater's letter to Mr. Fullerton as taking place at Convention time between Mr. Leadbeater and "Z" was strictly private." Of course it was. I can only reassert that I did mention the matter to Mr. Fullerton. Mr. Fullerton may have forgotten. It may be that all that I meant was not fully understood because the conventions prevent people speaking freely on such matters. I remember quite clearly having said to him "I think it will be all right." The young man afterwards turned out to be not very worthy in other ways besides this. I had spoken to the youngman at Mr. Fullerton's request.

The third paragraph speaks of the proposed adoption of another boy. It was not I who had proposed the adoption. It was discussed at the Convention of 1904 and had been mentioned to me before by Mr. Fullerton. I think Mrs. Denis will corroborate this. I spoke to "Z" and asked him various questions. He gave me various promises as to what he would do. It is a mistake to say that I proposed the adoption, but finding the thing in train it was no business of mine to set myself against it.

At the bottom of the page the boy is made to say, "at last you know why I hate him so." I do not know anything of this; I saw no signs of anything more than indifference. The letter was the first intimation to me of the hatred.

Then you come to the third boy. There is part of the letter which I wrote to him, and you will see that the advice given is along the lines I have been telling you, and that should be evidence that the reason I gave for speaking is the correct one. It is a matter of curiosity of course, but I was going to ask how that document was obtained as it was torn up and thrown away.

Burnett :—It was found intact in a discarded garment—in the pocket.

Leadbeater :—The interlineation in writing giving a statement by the mother as to interval is untrue. The original interval was a week, and then it was lengthened to ten days, then a fortnight, and so on.

Mead :—What does the word "still" mean in the letter. "Still, there may be this much reason in what he says, that while you are not quite well we should spend no force that can be avoided." Is he to begin again when he is well?

Leadbeater :—If he finds any accumulation he should relieve.

Mead :—Return to the beginning of the rebuttal evidence. In paragraph No. 2, with reference to the youngman "Z". The boy says "Well, this was the reason; he did not try to do this same thing, but he talked about these matters in a way I did not like and his friendship became distasteful to me." Can you throw a further light on that sentence?

Leadbeater :—I have already said what that was in the account given to me. It went much further than it is said here.

Mead :—What does “do” mean? You suggest in the case of “Z” that it was sodomy.

Leadbeater :—I do not do that.

Mead :—The boy did not do this same thing. In your case he states that it was done.

Miss Ward :—I think we need not here go into these further details.

Olcott :—We should not keep in anything, but have frank disclosure. You are not sitting judicially, but to advise me what to do.

Thomas :—Mr. Mead’s question is a most important one. It involves whether Mr. Leadbeater simply gave advice or something different.

Leadbeater :—It was not in any way something different in the sense of Mr. Mead.

Thomas .—I don’t mean that.

Leadbeater :—I don’t quite know what you mean.

Mead :—It is quite clear. When boys practice self-abuse they do it on themselves. This sentence suggests something done by you. That is the meaning of the words. I ask for an explanation of this, or if you simply deny.

Leadbeater :—I deny anything in the way that is apparently suggested but certainly not that that suggestion was made. I am not denying that in the least.

Mrs. Stead :—I wish to say that though there are women present that ought to be no restraint to the free discussion.

Olcott :—I am extremely repugnant to have this discussion, but we must treat this thing as a physiological question.

Thomas :—I am not quite satisfied with the answer. I should like to know definitely whether it was simply in the nature of advice or whether there was any action.

Leadbeater :—I want to call up quite clearly the exact incidents. I scarcely recollect. There was advice but there might be a certain amount of indicative action. That might be possible.

Mead :—The boy suggests in the most distinct way that the difference between "Z" and you was that in the case of "Z" he spoke of these things, and in your case something was done to him.

Leadbeater :—Nothing was done to him. You can't be suggesting what seems to be the obvious suggestion.

Mead :—You say the boy lies?

Leadbeater :—He has misrepresented. I don't like to accuse people of lies, but a construction has been put upon it which is not right.

Thomas :—Your reply as to scarcely recollecting suggests that there were so many cases. I would like to know whether in any case—I am not suggesting sodomy—there was definite action.

Leadbeater :—You mean touch? That might have taken place.

Mead :—The third page in the letter to Mrs Besant "With great reluctance he admitted the facts of Mr Leadbeater's immoral conduct, and in reply to the question 'when did it happen?' he said: 'the very first night' I visited him when we slept together." Why is it that on so man

occasions when boys go to Mr. Leadbeater they sleep with him ?

Leadbeater :—That depends on the accommodation.

Bernard :—That does not explain sharing baths.

Olcott :—I was told by a lady in a recent case that there were two rooms prepared but both of them slept in one bed.

Leadbeater :—What was the point of Mr. Bernard's question ? We have sometimes shared the bath. I suppose you understand that I have never thought of this sort of thing. I never thought of suspicion.

Thomas :—One paragraph of the rebuttal evidence page 2, paragraph 2. You did not deal with the case of the two boys to be left in the care of "Z" and in connection with that although you do not admit the accuracy of the boy's statement you admit that some serious things had taken place.

Leadbeater :—I have not direct evidence.

Thomas :—You inferred you believed it.

Leadbeater :—I do not say I believe it, but what the boy said to me seemed undesirable. As to leaving the boys in charge. "Z" was greatly interested in boys and the question was could I turn over the care of them to any other person ? This was one suggestion. I had had a talk with him and he had given me certain promises which were broken afterwards but I had no reason to think this.

Thomas :—In your own statement you say the boy told you of sexual matters he had entered into with "Z". What do you mean ?

Leadbeater :—Do you want me to tell you exactly what the boy said ?

Thomas :—You have mentioned it to Mr. Fullerton.

Leadbeater :—I did not go into detail.

Thomas :—Despite this, did you think he was a man with whom boys might be safely left?

Leadbeater :—Yes, when he had made promises.

Thomas :—Surely as a man you would know the extreme difficulty of keeping promises when temptation was placed in his way.

Leadbeater :—I know it is difficult, but Mr. Fullerton and I did what we could.

Thomas :—But Mr. Fullerton would not know the confession.

Leadbeater :—No, I spoke generally to Mr. Fullerton.

Olcott :—Then you were really recommending that the boy should be confided to a man of this sort?

Leadbeater :—I never recommended. I found that in the air when I came to Chicago.

Thomas :—You approved of it?

Leadbeater :—This is a different matter. The boy is not in evidence. His conditions at home were very undesirable and his mother was willing that he should be adopted by someone. Mrs. Dennis had written to me and I think also to Mr. Fullerton before the Convention. I would have been willing to adopt the boy myself but that was impossible. I think the care of "Z" who was fond of him would have been better than the life he was leading at home.

Thomas :—You admit giving the advice to more than the two boys?

Leadbeater :—You are to take it that the same advice was given to several.

Olcott :—How many? Twenty altogether?

Leadbeater :—No, not so many.

Thomas :—According to the letter of Mrs. Besant you say three or four times.

Burnett :—Never mind that. You are introducing something not in the charges.

Sinnott :—You should have some proposal to discuss.

Mead :—The second charge reads: "That he does this with deliberate intent and under the guise of occult training or with the promise of the increase of physical manhood" The evidence of these boys says nothing about applying to him for help. I want to ask whether this advice was given on appeal or not.

Leadbeater :—Sometimes without, sometimes with. I advised it at times as a Prophylactic.

Miss Ward :—I suppose from what you saw on the other planes?

Leadbeater :—From what I saw would arise.

Olcott :—That is not within our discussion.

Burnett :—It seems to me what we may infer from Mr. Leadbeater's answers that he is casting a reflection on the veracity of the boys and on their breaking faith with him I would like to say that the boys did not break faith with him until they were caught.

Keightley :—I should like Mr. Leadbeater to tell us whether in following this course he did so with Mrs. Besant's knowledge and consent before these charges were sent to India. He states in his letter that he has no secrets from Mrs. Besant and he has been in intimate relations with her. I should like him to tell us at what date Mrs. Besant was made aware and whether at that time she did not express disapproval.

Leadbeater :—Is this a right question?

Miss Ward :—I do not think that this question is right. We are asked to give our opinion on certain charges and we have Mr. Leadbeater's reply. The representative of the American Section asks us to expel him or whether we are going on with this matter.

Keightley :—I appeal to the President to rule formally on the matter.

Olcott :—Mrs. Besant has been brought into the case, and we have a letter from her to Mrs. Dennis. It seems to me that it is a matter of serious consideration whether Mr. Leadbeater did these things with a good motive and has as he says no secrets from Mrs. Besant and this might have some weight in dealing with the matter.

(Miss Ward quoted Mrs. Besant's statement of disapproval.)

Keightley :—I am asking the date of Mrs. Besant's knowledge, I think a straight answer to my question is the only possible reply.

Thomas :—I do not think it should be put but having been put I think Mr. Leadbeater, might well answer it.

Leadbeater :—If the President thinks this is right.

(Miss Spink and Mr. Sinnett did not think the question should be put.)

Sinnet :—I think that Mrs. Besant should not have been brought into the matter. No one but the governing body should have heard of it.

Mead :—I agree with Mr. Sinnet but the other procedure has been adopted.

Miss Spink :—I do not think that that is a question of motive.

Mead :—I agree with Mr. Keightley's point of view but it is a question I should not press. It does affect the

question of motive, because if the motive was good there would not have been concealment.

Olcott :—Since Mrs. Besant has repudiated the theory of Mr. Leadbeater, would it not be presumed that she had not been made acquainted with it? Is it not a matter we can judge for ourselves?

(Several members expressed approval of this).

Burnett :—The inference remains that he does not tell all of his methods to Mrs. Besant.

Olcott :—Since he did not want the boys to tell their mothers he would, I should think, shrink from telling Mrs. Besant.

Burnett :—I would like to ask Mr. Leadbeater in view of the fact that he is *compos mentis* why he did not inform the fathers, before he took any of these boys, what his practices were, that the father might have had the opportunity of consulting with the mother. It has been said to me by every mother, and mothers not in these charges, that if they had known he had taught these practices he would never have had the boys.

Leadbeater :—I don't understand all this talk about concealment. If asked about the thing I should not have hesitated in speaking.

Burnett :—The talk is because all the world condemns it but Mr. Leadbeater, so far as my knowledge is concerned.

Leadbeater :—Your knowledge does not go very far.

Burnett :—There is no treatise on physiology which supports this. I asked your friend Dr. . . . in Chicago, if he had ever seen it advised. He had never advised it and had never known it to be advised. You are flying in the

face of the whole world, and why then did you not tell the boys' parents?

Leadbeater :—I wish I had. But one does not talk of these things. I told every parent it was my practice to speak freely about sexual matters. I was asked by one of the parents to tell the boy about such things because he was not pure enough himself.

Burnett :—True, but he did not know it was to teach the boys self-abuse.

Olcott :—Mr. Bernard, on behalf of the French Committee have you anything to say?

Bernard :—Since Mr. Leadbeater was teaching these boys to help them in case of need, considering that men may be in the same difficulty, has he ever taught this to any grown-up men? Has he taught the same thing in the same personal way to grown-up men as to children?

Leadbeater :—I believe that at least on two occasions in my life I have given that advice to young men as better than the one generally adopted.

Olcott :—Since you came into the Society?

Leadbeater :—I think not, but one case might have been. You are probably not aware that one at least of the great Church organisations for young men deals with the matter in the same manner.

Mead :—Do you deliberately say this?

Leadbeater :—Yes.

Mead & Burnett :—What is its name?

Leadbeater :—I am not free to give this. I heard of the matter first through it.

Mead :—Mr. Leadbeater states then that there is an organisation of the Church of England which teaches self-abuse?

Olcott :—Is it a seminary for young priests or a school ?

Leadbeater :—It is not in a school but I must not give definite indications.

Olcott :—Is it found in the Catholic Church ?

Leadbeater :—I expect so.

Olcott :—I know that in Italy Garibaldi found many terrible things.

Mead :—This last statement of Mr. Leadbeater is one of the most extraordinary things I have ever heard. It is incredible to me that there is an organisation of the Church of England which teaches masturbation as a preventive against unchastity. I ask, what is the name of this organisation ?

Leadbeater :—I certainly should not tell.

Mead :—I understand that it is an organisation pledged to secrecy and I take it that Mr. Leadbeater received his first information from this organisation.

Leadbeater :—I suppose it would have been better if I had not mentioned it.

Mead :—I absolutely refuse to believe that this is so.

Leadbeater :—I decline to prove it in any manner.

Sinnott :—What shape do you want the advice to take, Mr. President?

Olcott :—The form of a Resolution.

Mead :—Has Mr. Leadbeater anything further to say ?

Leadbeater :—I don't know that I have more to say than I said in the beginning. I see, of course, that you disagree entirely with the method. I don't object to that, but I repudiate anything further. I have tried to tell the whole thing as freely as I could.

Olcott :—I think that there is no feeling on the part of those present that you did not have the feeling in your

mind when you gave the advice. I think that every body here knows, you will think, your motive was the one you gave.

Leadbeater :—I ought to say that of course I did not contemplate involving the Society in this doctrine or that. The Society has no connection with our belief.

Olcott :—Of course not unless some one should believe in house-breaking as a good art.

Mead :—I want to ask whether the questions and answers are complete. . . . Then Mr. Leadbeater should withdraw and leave us to deliberate. (Mr. Leadbeater withdrew and the Committee adjourned for about a quarter of an hour.)

The Committee resumed its sitting without the presence of Mr. Leadbeater.

Mead :—I propose that Mr. Leadbeater be expelled from the Society.

Keightley :—I second this.

Sinnott :—I move as an amendment that his resignation be accepted in the form given.

Miss Ward :—I second that.

Olcott :—He wants to modify it. (The Chairman read the resignation again.)

Sinnott :—I should simply say "I place in your hand my resignation," or "in view of private circumstances, etc."

Mead :—I should like to point out that we are trying to uphold the honour of the Theosophical Society. Such a document will probably have to be printed in the public press before long and it is not sufficient to guard up. Why this man had gone out of the Society will have to be known among the members. It will be in the hands of any one and it will be spread abroad.

Thomas :—We ought to face this matter in a proper way. If we simply accept this resignation we shall have to answer to our members. I think accepting the resignation is not sufficient condemnation of the practice. For the sake of the Society it would be better to take the bolder course.

(The Chairman then read an Executive notice he had drafted for publication in the "Theosophist" intimating that in consequence of charges of teaching boys self-abuse having been made and admitted, Mr. Leadbeater was no longer a member of the Society. The notice was alternative as to resignation or expulsion, waiting the advice of the Committee and the final decision of the President.)

Sinnett :—I should be sorry to see that published. It would be the end of the Theosophical Society.

Miss Ward :—Is there not a third course that the resignation be received with some condition attached to it?

Burnett :—The matter did not take official form but what would be satisfactory to the American Executive would be that the resignation should be accepted because of charges of teaching self-abuse. If we accept his resignation it must include that statement. He admits the charges and therefore it would seem to us necessary.

Mead :—You see you have had to get that out of Mr. Leadbeater. When the thing gets known it will be the greatest shock the Theosophical Society has had. We cannot lie about it. It has gone all over the place already, I don't mean to say that the Colonel should publish the announcement at once.

Glass :—Is there anything which makes it necessary to publish the Executive notice.

Miss Spink :—I think with Mr. Mead it is better to take the straight course rather than to work to keep it in.

Miss Ward :—Does it mean publishing it in the journals?

Mead :—Send the Executive notice to the General Secretaries. If you say a single word of Mr. Leadbeater not being in the Society the whole thing will go out. Your Resolution should be clear.

Sinnott :—It is better that the thing should go out in the quieter way than in an official way. The thing ought to have been kept more secret than it is.

Burnett :—It was made known by the boy Raja.

Mead :—It is out now.

Sinnott :—I do not stick to the form of the resignation. I should like to have some reference in terms of "private conditions." If he modifies these terms in any way which you approve you could take the resignation.

Olcott :—If you will give me a memorandum I will take it to him and ask him to modify it.

Sinnott :—Take my amendment. Simply accept his resignation.

Mead :—There is nothing in accepting this resignation which shows that the whole matter has been proved against him.

Miss Ward :—I did not speak in the favour of amendment but only seconded it. But I would like to say that we should remember that he is not sane on these matters and that he has for a number of years given his whole life to the movement and that a large number of people owe him help. I think if we can keep the resignation in we should.

Keightley :—We have a greater duty upon us than we owe to the individual—the duty to the movement. We stand here in the position of trustees representing the interests of the movement throughout the world. We have to face the world. The thing must come out. The stand we take must be clear and definite. I do not think that we should be doing our duty by any Resolution, should it not convey to the public our feeling in the way it ought to be conveyed. It is not with any personal feeling I speak but we should be doing wrong to the Society by accepting a resignation which simply means withdrawing from the Society. I still think our proper course is that the man who stands to the world as a teacher of Theosophy and couples that teaching with teaching of this sort should be expelled, even if we all believe it is dictated by a diseased brain.

Sinnott :—If his resignation is accepted he ceases to be a member. I would announce his resignation. The papers are not so keenly interested as to enter into the matter. We are clear from all responsibility as soon as we accept his resignation.

Mead :—May I put in a word on behalf of the mothers of these boys? This is a most terrible thing. We have some of the best women in the Society broken hearted about this. What do we do to defend them?

Sinnott :—We cannot defend them.

Bernard :—If the measure is not strong enough it will not do. Mrs. Besant said he would not do it any more but he has not given such a promise. He even said it was hardly right for him to give explanations. If my colleagues heard what I have heard they would demand his expulsion.

Thomas :—I wish I could accept his resignation, but I cannot.

Olcott :—A cable despatch has just been received which makes the case much worse than before.

Thomas :—I think he has tried to tell the truth but there is no expression of regret and he holds still that the practice is a good one.

Sinnott :—It seems to me that our remarks are based on the idea that there is something behind. We ought to act only on what is before us.

Thomas :—I cannot accept the statement that he did this in good faith. I think the whole of the evidence shows that if it was not a case of direct vice it was a case of gratifying his own prurient ideas.

Sinnott :—If we act on this idea we ought to have the text of these boys' cross-examination. We have not the means of going into that. I want to act on the papers as they stand.

Mead :—I should call for the reading of the notes where Mr. Leadbeater admitted actual deeds.

Keightley :—I believe the explanation is sexual mania. There are cases closely analogous and it makes it more necessary that the decision should be one which would absolutely clear the Society. I do not feel I should be discharging my duty to the Society if I consented to the resignation as it stands. The public will rise up and condemn the Society as a hot-bed of vice.

Mead :—It is not proposed that the Executive note is to be put on record in Public. Mr. Sinnott's idea is that you should publish at once that Mr. Leadbeater is no longer a member.

Sinnott :—I should decline to tell the cause.

Thomas :—Mr. Sinnett does not know quite what Mr. Leadbeater is to many of the members. Mr. Leadbeater is too much of a family name in the North to keep things in.

Olcott :—I think we have said enough.

Burnett :—I should like to say why I am here and support the expulsion. We are not here to persecute Mr. Leadbeater, we are here to preserve the good name of the Theosophical Society before the world and while some of us may have opinions that would differ because of our intimate relations with him, belief in his personal integrity has no bearing on the present situation. We know how the world regards this matter. It is not supported by any doctor ; therefore, we must get out of our minds any idea of personality. I have no feeling against the man who sat here to-day and uttered the most infamous things I have ever listened to, but I say that if we do not expel this man the world will rise up against the Society.

(The amendment was put and the Committee divided equally upon it, six voting for and six against it.)

Sinnett :—In taking these votes the parliamentary method is the proper one to be acted upon. The Resolution should be "That these words stand as part of the question." The Chairman is bound to give his casting vote as to whether the words stand as part of the question.

(After some slight discussion on this point, the original Resolution as to expulsion was put and the Committee divided equally upon it, six for and six against.)

Miss Ward :—Cannot we accept the resignation with some definite statement which would meet the objection? It surely can be made clear that we condemn the action or teaching.

(The President then read his proposed Executive notice again.)

Sinnott :—If this is to be a public document, the definite statement of the reason is undesirable.

Dr. Nunn :—We might alter that.

Burnett :—I suggest that we should accept the statement as drawn up by the President-Founder and that he should strike off from the paper the word "resignation" and let the word "expulsion" stand.

Olcott :—There are many things to be said for and against the course. We may adopt one fact that it is impossible to surpress the publication of this case. The question is, how are we going to minimise ?

Miss Ward :—How shall we stand with regard to our own members, some of whom will take action in defence of Mr. Leadbeater ? Shall we not run less risk of disunion in the Society if we allow it to be resignation, and therefore give no opportunity to arise of disuniting the Society ?

Olcott :—I had that same thing in the case of Judge and I wrote the notice which wiped out the American Section when I was in Spain. I am never afraid of taking bold action. I should say, let the Press do what it pleases.

Miss Ward :—May we not learn wisdom from the past troubles ?

Burnett :—We may have learnt wisdom enough from the past acts. In America the action of the Colonel left 15 per cent. of the members of the Section and how the 15 per cent. is 85 per cent. and 85 per cent. is 15 per cent. So it is the principle of right always. We want to be able to face the world when we leave this room. It is for us to advise the President-Founder as to what w

consider the right thing. We can, I think, go before the people of America, and the question will be asked and we can say why he is no longer a member: "Because when his practices were found out and confessed to, we expelled him from the Society."

Sinnott :—"We took action which led to his withdrawal from the Society" covers the ground.

Keightley :—(To the President) How would your notice read if it said resignation instead of expulsion?

(The President again read his notice with the word "Resignation".)

Sinnott :—This would not be in accord with the facts. He resigns because something has come up.

Keightley :—I am willing to meet this view so far as to substitute in the notice the form of permitting him to tender his resignation.

Mead :—That is not correct. His resignation is here.

Keightley :—Then I stick to the other point.

Burnett :—If we do not expel him we shall have to meet the matter at every convention. I am willing to consider everything which can be considered but we must go out of here with a clean record and say that we will have no association with any man who advocates such things.

Olcott :—Would the Committee be willing to hold an adjourned meeting to-morrow morning?

Mead :—I think we should decide now.

Sinnott :—We are divided and the responsibility rests with the President.

Olcott :—If you consider it will be parliamentary for me, I will act.

Sinnott :—I do not think the thing has been done in the right way. It should have been brought before the Colonel and he could then bring it before the Executive Council.

Olcott :—That is what has been done.

Mead :—I should say that we are regarded as divided, the term resignation or expulsion should remain in your hands. The question is what further statement has to be made and how it is to be made. I am most strongly of opinion that we must have a Resolution and give you our support. It is not fair to Colonel Olcott to leave him in doubt on this matter. Our Resolution should be clear and we should resolve that this be put on record in our archives and that a copy of it should be sent to every one of the General Secretaries of the Section to use at their discretion. Then the question is, are we going to publish anything now? If you say that Mr. Leadbeater has resigned, the thing will have to be explained.

Miss Ward :—I suggest that we accept his resignation and put on record a Resolution condemning the practice.

Mead :—The facts have to go on record and also the position of the meeting.

Sinnott :—I think the promulgation of any indecent phrases is most objectionable. I would not use any term like self-abuse or its equivalent.

Mead :—I don't advise you to publish anything. I am asking for something which can be published if necessary. I don't ask that the Resolution or Mr. Leadbeater's resignation should be published now.

Burnett :—We must allow this thing to filter through the minds of the people and get them used to it and then there will not be a furore.

Sinnott :—I am sure that we shall never agree. I object to put on record in any way which involves publication any phrases such as self-abuse. I protest against any document going out with such terms.

Olcott :—Does the Committee approve of the tentative draft I have in my hand? I put "Executive notices" in the "Theosophist." It is my custom to publish everything.

Miss Ward :—I don't think that any Church which might expel would publish the expulsion.

Sinnott :—I protest against any possibility of publication.

Burnett :—I agree that we do not publish until necessary but we must keep faith with our members. This is a question which comes up, we have a family that, should we countenance anything of this, would leave and publish the fact of their leaving.

Miss Ward :—I think something could be drafted or I would accept the Executive notice with the resignation in, if it would be for the archives of the Society and not for immediate publication.

Burnett :—If you mean by the archives that the members could see them.

Mr. Thomas suggested a fresh form of Resolution: "Charges involving moral obliquity [having been made and substantiated against Mr. Leadbeater, resolved that he be expelled from the Theosophical Society."

Miss Ward :—I should not object to it being put on record that in our opinion his actions are inconsistent with the professions of this Society and that he has accordingly resigned.

Sinnett :—I will try to go a little step further and add to the acceptance of the resignation, "Mr. Leadbeater has anticipated the request of the governing body by resigning."

Mead :—In consequence of what ?

Sinnett :—That is a thing to be worded with care.

Dr. Nunn suggested a further Resolution, and Mr. Sinnett after some conversation, drafted the following :—

"That having considered certain charges against Mr. Leadbeater and having listened to his explanations this Committee recommend the acceptance by the President-Founder of his resignation already offered in anticipation of the Committee's decision."

Mead : Is this for publication ?

Sinnett :—I think it might be published in the "Theosophist."

Mead :—I want to know when that is done what we are going to do ? We have met together and listened to certain things and a record of these doings will have to be made. We cannot suppress what has been done in this meeting.

Sinnett :—I should be guided by circumstances.

Mead :—The circumstances are that we are left to do what we like.

Sinnett :—It cannot be otherwise.

Olcott :—I am opposed to all paltering and when there is a crisis I believe in going forward boldly and meeting it. My view is that we cannot keep this back and all the publicity we can have is nothing to the reputation of having kept it back.

Burnett :—I do not ask that this should be published, but it should appear on the record.

Thomas :—I would appeal to the Colonel not to publish it now. The matter involves others besides Mr. Leadbeater. It is the boys who must be considered.

Keightley :—Unless in some public manner the Society is informed that Mr. Leadbeater is no longer a member, he will be visiting Branches and giving lectures and picking up boys, as he had done in the past. I cannot leave this room satisfied until I know that no member can be taken unawares. We cannot allow there to be any doubt that Mr. Leadbeater has ceased to be a member of the Society.

Olcott :—There was the case of Madame Blavatsky's second marriage and I deliberated a long time about the publication of it and finally concluded that the best thing was to tell the whole truth and I told the truth and it never did any harm, but it killed some malicious attacks. My idea would be to publish an Executive notice.

Mead :—I would agree to Mr. Sinnett's proposal, but I don't think it terminates our business.

Mr. Sinnett's Resolution accepting the resignation already offered was seconded by Dr. Nunn and agreed to unanimously.

Mead :—I propose that a record of all that has taken place be placed in the archives of the Society, (seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously).

Mr. Leadbeater was then called in, and the Resolution accepting his resignation was read to him by the President.

Olcott :—(To Mr. Leadbeater). There is a desire to avoid publicity. It will have to be printed in the "Theosophist."

Leadbeater :—May I make a little suggestion? You will understand that I am not thinking about myself but about the Society. Suppose I make an announcement. Many people will write to me and to other members and it will be as well that we have some stereotyped form of reply.

Olcott :—How would you suggest doing it?

Leadbeater :—I was going to ask your advice,—perhaps saying over my signature that I had resigned and that the resignation was accepted,—I don't know how to put it, but I don't want to have a fuss about it.

Olcott :—Write down your idea on paper.

Sinnett :—I don't think it would help the matter.

Mead :—There is no explanation except telling the facts.

Olcott :—A man of your prominence cannot drop out without notice. It is a terrible case.

Leadbeater :—Would nothing I put forward make things less difficult?

Sinnett :—The less said the better.

Olcott :—I should like to ask Mr. Leadbeater if he thinks I have acted impartially?

Leadbeater :—Absolutely. If we should consider later I can do anything, let me know.

Mead :—Do you mean to continue this course of teaching?

Leadbeater :—Seeing there is such a feeling on the matter by people whose views I respect, I do not.

Thomas :—I suggest that the notice go without any letter from Mr. Leadbeater, unless it is first submitted to the Committee.

The meeting was then brought to a conclusion.

We, George Robert Stowe Mead of 16 Selwood Place London S. W. and Archibald Melville Glass of 291 Camden Road, London, N., do solemnly and sincerely declare that the foregoing document is a true copy of the Official Report of the meeting presided over by the late Colonel H. S. Olcott and held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S. W., on Wednesday, May 16, 1906.

And we make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Provisions of the Statutory Declarations' Act, 1835.

(Sd.) G. R. S. MEAD,

(Sd.) A. M. GLASS.

Declared by both the above named Deponents at 28 Lincolns Inn Fields, London, W. C., this 11th December, 1912.

Before me,

(Sd.) SIGNATURE ILLEGIBLE.

A Commissioner for oath.

APPENDIX II.

JUDGMENT.

In the High Court of Judicature at Madras, Original Civil Jurisdiction, Tuesday, the 15th day of April, 1913, the following Judgment was given by the Honourable Mr. Justice Bakewell, in the case of G. Narayaniah vs. Mrs. Annie Besant.

The plaintiff had been since 1882 a member, and the defendant is President, of the Theosophical Society which has its headquarters at Adyar in the Chingleput District, near the southern boundary of the city of Madras. The plaintiff is an orthodox Hindu, Brahmin by caste and a retired Tahsildar. He has had ten children and has four sons living. In January 1908 he offered his services to the defendant, who refused them, but on 17th December, 1908, through the influence of friends, he became well-acquainted with the defendant and obtained a secretarial post under her, and in January 1909 he and his family, including his brother-in-law and wife and other dependants, took up their residence at Adyar in a building belonging to the Society which he occupied rent free. He was subsequently given additional duties, all of which he performed gratuitously. In September, 1909, he removed two of his sons, Krishnamurthi and Nityananda, from their school at Mylapore and they were taught gratuitously at Adyar by Messrs. Leadbeater, Clarke, S. V. Subramaniam and other residents there, as well as by the plaintiff. In December, 1909, the defendant came to Adyar and made

the acquaintance of these boys, who were then aged 15 and 11, respectively. Later in the same month at Benares the defendant told the plaintiff that something great and good was going to happen to Krishnamurthi, and plaintiff was not to throw any obstacles in Mr. Leadbeater's way. In January, 1910, the plaintiff returned to Adyar, and later in the same month some "initiation" took place with respect to Krishnamurthi. The plaintiff consented to this ceremony and as a member and officer of the Society and a member of an inner circle called Esoteric Section, was undoubtedly aware of the importance attached by defendant and Mr. Leadbeater to this ceremony. In February, 1910, the defendant returned to Adyar and proposed to take charge of the boys, Krishnamurthi and Nityananda, and give them an English education. There is no doubt that the plaintiff was perfectly well aware that the motive operating upon the defendant was the preceding "initiation" of Krishnamurthi and that she desired to bring up the two boys in such a manner as to develop their spiritual powers, and presumably to promulgate the peculiar tenets of the Society, but I do not think the plaintiff or the defendant herself then contemplated the development of the boy Krishnamurthi into a vehicle for the manifestation of supernatural powers or persons. The defendant herself has stated that matters developed in course of time. On the 6th March, 1910, plaintiff signed a letter (Ex. A) appointing defendant guardian of his two sons. The defendant as the head of an occult Society, professing mysterious powers, must have greatly influenced the plaintiff in the execution of the agreement (Ex. A), but it is evident that he was not helpless in her

hands for (Ex. A-1 and A-2) show that there was considerable discussion as to the terms of the agreement and plaintiff took the advice of a very eminent lawyer and ex-Judge of this Court, as to the legal effect of the document he was executing. The plaintiff was, with a large number of dependants, living rent free in the Society's premises, and his position as an office-bearer of the Society and member of an inner circle was no doubt of importance to him; and these considerations as well as the additional prestige he might obtain through his sons, and the advantage to them of an English education, would strongly influence him and are sufficient to explain his agreeing to make defendant the guardian of his sons. The evidence of the plaintiff himself does not show that there was any undue influence exercised by the defendant and I answer the 5th issue in the negative.

The plaintiff alleges that about 14th of April, 1910, that is shortly after the agreement, he witnessed the incident described in paragraph 5 of the plaint and paragraph 1 of the particulars. Matters, however, went on much the same at Adyar and Mr. Leadbeater still took part in the education of the boys. Plaintiff also alleged that in January, 1911, he was told by some residents at Adyar that Lakshman, a servant of the defendant, had seen the incident mentioned in paragraph 2 of the particulars, and that in February, 1911, he complained strongly to the defendant that the boys should not be allowed to associate any longer with Mr. Leadbeater.

In March, 1911, the defendant took the boys Benares and thence to England, and in October, 1911

they returned to Adyar and remained there until December, 1911, when Mr. Leadbeater, who had been throughout at Adyar, took them to Benares. Plaintiff alleges that some time between October and December the defendant spoke of a further ceremony for the boys, who were to be entrusted to Mr. Leadbeater, and the plaintiff objected to their being with the latter. On the 29th December, 1911, a meeting of an Inner Order of the Society, of which the boy Krishnamurthi has been made the head, took place, at which the idea of his being a "vehicle" for extraordinary powers seems to have been fully developed. On 31st December 1911 Mrs. Van Hook (D. W. 2) had a conversation with the plaintiff: she says, "I saw plaintiff looking depressed, and he said he was harassed by people with regard to his sons, and that he had sold them to the defendant, and he regarded the ceremony of 28th December, 1911, as a possible source of ridicule, and he said the boy was being put in a false position and he and his sons would be the laughing stock of India. He said "You would not believe in Leadbeater if you knew what I know." And he then accused Mr. Leadbeater of the incident described in para I of the particulars. On the same day plaintiff went to the defendant and demanded that the boy should be separated from Mr. Leadbeater and referred defendant to Mrs. Van Hook for the reason. The defendant refused plaintiff's request. Plaintiff returned to Adyar in the beginning of January, 1912, and made complaints to various persons at Adyar, and it appears from a telegram sent about 10th January, 1912, by Mr. Wadia to defendant at Benares, that he had threatened to take legal proceedings.

On the 19th January, 1912, an interview took place at Adyar between plaintiff and defendant, and several members of the Society, with respect to the custody of the plaintiff's sons. There are discrepant accounts as to what took place, but I think that it is clear from Ex. II, a note of the proceedings made at the time, that the plaintiff raised the question of the separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeater and that the defendant said that she had effected a separation and that the plaintiff thereupon agreed that the boys should go to England. Mr. Leadbeater had already left India somewhat abruptly, about 13th January, 1912, and on 26th January defendant left Adyar with the two boys for Benares and shortly afterwards took them to England. It would seem from a letter dated 7th February (Ex. LL.) addressed by defendant to plaintiff, that she had been informed by persons at Benares or Adyar that the plaintiff had been making enquiries of Lakshman, her servant, with respect to the charge against Mr. Leadbeater contained in the second para of the particulars, and by this letter she called on the plaintiff to leave Adyar and stated that she intended to keep his sons in Europe. It is in fact a declaration of war. Defendant admits that she subsequently left the plaintiff's sons with Mr. Leadbeater and other friends in Sicily, and that they went with him to Genoa and thence to England. The defendant returned to Adyar in October 1912, leaving the plaintiff's children in England, and the plaintiff at once commenced a suit in the District Court of Chingleput for an order directing the defendant to hand over his children to him. The suit was removed from that Court by an order made under Clause 13 of the Letters

Patent and has been tried by this Court in the exercise of its extraordinary original civil jurisdiction. Both parties to this suit have admitted that they have been financed in this litigation by third parties and this fact and the offer made by the plaintiff's Vakil to deposit Rs. 10,000 in Court on behalf of the minors and to procure some prominent citizens of Madras to act as their guardians shows that some question other than the welfare of the children has influenced this litigation. I have held that the matter before the Court is the welfare of the children and have refused to permit the intrusion of extraneous matters, but it is evident that there have been influences which affect the evidence given in the case. On the one hand there has been a strong animus against the defendant and her colleague, Mr. Leadbeater, and on the other hand they have been supported by disciples who can see no wrong in either of them. Moreover, many of the facts spoken to took place three years and more ago, and this must affect the evidence of the witnesses, especially as to dates.

I now proceed to consider the evidence as to the charges contained in para. 5 of the plaint and paras 1 and 2 of the particulars which form the subject of the 6th issue. It is clear that the plaintiff's children were first selected as likely subjects for training in the tenets of the Society by Mr. Leadbeater, who professes to have peculiar powers in this respect, and that it was through his influence that the defendant was induced to take an interest in them and from the first Mr. Leadbeater desired to get the children under his own control, and out of that of the plaintiff whom he regarded as an obstacle to his own purposes (See Mr. Leadbeater's letters Exs. W2, W3, and W4, dated December 1909 and Ex. Y1, dated 3rd January 1910).

Naturally after the signature of the letter of guardianship of the 6th March, 1913, Mr. Leadbeater, as the delegate of the defendant, would attempt to exercise the powers which it purported to confer upon her and naturally also the plaintiff would resent the slight to his parental authority. From his demeanour in the witness box I should say that the plaintiff is of an emotional temperament, prone to tears, and not capable of much self-control, and I can readily credit the statements of some of the defence witnesses that he showed himself a jealous and suspicious father. It must be remembered also, that the plaintiff is an orthodox Brahmin, and would be naturally suspicious that a European might lead his sons into some violation of the caste rules and would be tempted to spy upon his conduct. The only direct evidence as to the incident in para. 1 of the particulars is that of the plaintiff and Mr. Leadbeater, and the conduct of the plaintiff at the time is of the first importance. The charge made in the original plaint was of a criminal offence, and the act is stated to have occurred in or about the latter part of March, 1910, but when the plaint was ordered to be amended, this charge was abandoned, and the act now described in para. 1 of the particulars was substituted, and the date of the occurrence was given as the second week of April 1910. If the plaintiff originally believed that a disgusting crime had been committed upon his son, or even that his son's person had been treated indecently, as he now alleges, and that by a man whom he would regard as a Pariah, it is difficult to believe that he would not have gone weeping to his house with his sons and complained to his household. His brother-in-law, who lived with him, and

in whom he would naturally confide, has not been called, and plaintiff admits that he did nothing but reprimand the children and keep them from going to Mr. Leadbeater. In cross-examination he said "I only scolded the boy (elder) for being naked" and also said "This occurrence was not made known to any person at Adyar until the quarrel on the 18th of April. It did not strike me to wire to the defendant. There was no elder member whom I might complain to, to whom I could speak in confidence. I was in great distress at this time, but I did not wish to make it public and managed not to show it." I do not believe the plaintiff to be capable of this Spartan fortitude. It is admitted that there was a quarrel between the plaintiff and Mr. Leadbeater on the 18th of April and Sir Subramania Aiyar was called in to compose matters and that a telegram was despatched to the defendant in the joint names of Sir Subramania Aiyar and the plaintiff to the effect "Do not be anxious. All is right". Plaintiff made no complaint of the alleged occurrence to Sir Subramania Aiyar, who was Vice-President of the Society, and represented defendant during her absence from Adyar, and whom the plaintiff had consulted as to the legal effects of the letter of guardianship and various business matters connected with the Society. Plaintiff allowed his sons to associate with Mr. Leadbeater during the following months, and even left them in his charge during a short absence of himself and defendant from Adyar. Plaintiff explains the different dates of the occurrence given in the plaint and the particulars by saying that he had made further enquiry and fixed the latter date by reference to the Telugu New Year's Day, which would make the date about 12th April, but in his cross-examina-

tion he gives the date as 14th or 15th April, and stated it was not the 16th which his learned Vakil has argued was the correct date with reference to an expression in Mr. Leadbeater's letter on 18th April Ex. Y. 5. These changes in the nature and the date of the occurrence, and the inconsistent conduct of the plaintiff at the time, show that his evidence is not to be relied on. Mr. Leadbeater's denial of plaintiff's story is on the other hand confirmed by the public nature of the room in which the act is said to have occurred and the daily routine to which defendant's witnesses have spoken.

The second charge contained in para 2 of the particulars is of a criminal offence and the only direct evidence is that of Lakshman, defendant's servant, who at the request of both parties was called as a Court witness. The plaintiff alleged that he heard of the occurrence in January and February, 1911, from various persons at Adyar, to whom Lakshman had spoken, and that he complained to defendant on her return from Burma in February, 1911, where she had gone for January 1911 with Mr. Leadbeater, the plaintiff's sons and other persons. He stated that he complained to the defendant that the boys should not be allowed to associate with Mr. Leadbeater and that he made no enquiry of Lakshman and he does not appear to have made any complaint with respect to the present charge. In cross-examination he stated that he first heard of the occurrence in December 1911 and if this be true he allowed his sons to leave his care in the company of a man, who, he had reason to suppose had just committed a disgusting crime upon one of them. It also appears to have been satisfied with defendant's promise, made upon his complaint, that she would short

take the boys to England, and to have allowed his sons to have associated with Mr. Leadbeater until they left Adyar in the following month.

In December, 1911, when he was undoubtedly agitated by the recent developments in his elder son's training, he commissioned Mr. Bhagavan Das (P. W. 3, on Commission) to enquire into Lakshman's story. This witness states that Lakshman informed that "on opening the door he saw Mr. Leadbeater standing with a leg on a chair or sofa or some such thing and the elder boy was sitting on his knee, and both were naked". A curious enquiry and examination of Lakshman was made in March, 1912, by several of the plaintiff's witnesses examined on Commission.

The account of Lakshman's story given by Pandit Bhavani Shankar (P. W. 4, on Commission) is that "he went to the bath-room of Mrs. Besant with the object of fetching a lota. When he entered in, he saw Leadbeater and J. Krishnamurthi naked and standing behind one another. When he saw them in that state he came out and muttered, etc., it was in an evening." Dhana Krishna Biswas (P. W. 6, on Commission) gives practically the same story and states that after the institution of this suit he met Lakshman and encouraged him to speak the truth. A European woman (P. W. 5, on Commission) was also present at the enquiry, but did not understand the language used. It may be observed that this later account differs from that given by Bhagavan Das, and from Lakshman's evidence before the Court, and that the statement was not apparently reduced to writing.

On the 26th of January, 1912, Lakshman also made a statement, (Ex. L.) to Mr. Iqbal Narain Gurtu and

defendant, which omits the fact that the boy had no clothing. Lakshman's evidence is that he went to Mr. Leadbeater's bungalow, at the time of 11 (eleven) o'clock morning meal, to call him and to fetch a towel, he opened the door of the bathroom and saw Krishnamurthi and Leadbeater. Krishnamurthi's cloth was wet, it was all down. Mr. Leadbeater had a coat above his knees and nothing below, his knee was resting on a chair and Krishnamurthi was standing in front of him. Leadbeater's hand was on the boy's hair. When the witness saw nakedness he could say nothing and went back. In cross-examination by the plaintiff he said "the boy had no cloth on his body, his cloth had fallen down, he was holding it by one hand. Hindus usually don't bathe naked. It is sinful. I do not think Mr. Leadbeater was doing wrong." In cross-examination by the defendant he said "What I was shocked at was that Krishnamurthi had no his cloth on. The wet cloth was on the ground. Leadbeater was combing the boy's hair. He had on a *kartha* to the waist." Other witnesses have stated that Lakshman, in describing the occurrence to them, stated that he had seen something bad. Mr. Leadbeater denies the charge and explains it by saying that he found it necessary to cleanse the boy and that he had been with the boy in the bathroom once or twice and taught him to bathe in English fashion without clothing.

It is impossible that the plaintiff could have believed when he first heard the story that an offence had been committed, since his whole conduct is consistent with belief that the occurrence was only a violation of caste rules. He made no investigation into the story until December, 1911, when he was evidently strongly

prejudiced against Mr. Leadbeater and was determined to enforce a separation from his sons, his first complaint only related to this separation and he permitted their association afterwards, he seems to have made no such charge at the meeting of 1st January, 1912, when he raised the question of this separation, and the enquiry of the witnesses at Benares was evidently for the purposes of this suit. When the plaintiff asked Sir Subramania Aiyar as to the legal effect of the guardianship letter (Ex. A.) he was advised that if he executed it he would have waived his right as father and would not be able to revoke it at will and the Court would consider what was best for the interests of the children, and it seems to me that this opinion induced the plaintiff to search for something which would influence the Court in revoking the agreement and has caused the revival of the charges made against Mr. Leadbeater in 1906 and has in fact coloured all the evidence in this case.

I am of opinion that plaintiff's evidence is not reliable, that Lakshman's evidence has not established that an offence was committed, and that the 6th and 7th issues must be answered in the negative.

Mr. Leadbeater admitted in his evidence that he has held, and even now holds, opinions which I need only describe as certainly immoral and such as to unfit him to be the tutor of boys, and taken in conjunction with his professed power to detect the approach of impure thoughts, render him a highly dangerous associate for children. It is true that both he and defendant declared that he has promised not to express or practise those opinions, but no father should be obliged to depend upon a promise of this kind. The law upon the subject of the custody of minor children by their father has been

repeatedly declared by high authority and is perfectly clear. A father is under certain legal and moral duties to his children with respect to their maintenance, education and up-bringing, and in order that he may perform those duties is entitled to their custody, and he cannot free himself from those duties or divest himself of the corresponding rights. Any delegation of guardianship by him is accordingly revocable and an agreement to the contrary is void. A parent may be unfit to perform his duties and may thus lose his right to the custody of his child, and the Court in exercise of the prerogative of the Crown as *parens patriae* will enquire whether a father has conducted himself so that the welfare of his child demands that he should be deprived of his rights of guardianship. In support of these propositions I may refer to a recent judgment of Wallis J. in *Pollard v. Rouse* 33 Mad. 288 also to the cases in 1897, I. Q. B., 194, 1891. A. C. 382, 24, Ch. D. 317. At the settlement of issues I enquire what charges the defendant desired to make against the plaintiff, and the 9th issue as to the fitness of the plaintiff was intentionally limited to the plaintiff's knowledge of the facts in the 6th, 7th and 8th issues. I have found that the alleged acts were not committed. Since I have found that the alleged acts were not committed, there is no allegation against the fitness of the plaintiff to be the guardian of his children. He has, in my opinion, attempted to strengthen his case with lies, but that cannot be said to render him unfit. I am of opinion that the plaintiff was not aware at the date of the letter, Ex. A, that his son Krishnamurthi was to be brought up to consider himself a "vehicle" for the manifestation of supernatural powers or persons, or that his children were to be devoted to

life of poverty and celibacy, conditions naturally repugnant to an ex-Tahsildar and the father of ten children, and that in any case he is entitled to insist that this training shall not be continued and that he was also entitled to insist that his children should not be allowed to associate with a person of Mr. Leadbeater's opinions, and now that his wishes have been disregarded, he can demand that his children shall be restored to his custody. I think also that the plaintiff only consented to the removal of the children from India, and therefore from his personal supervision, on the understanding that they should not associate with the person from whom he apprehended danger. Defendant has argued that she is able to educate the plaintiff's children in a manner, and to give them a social standing, such as are beyond the plaintiff's means, and has already expended considerable sums of money upon them, but she has not provided any irrevocable endowment of the children for these purposes. It is quite clear that any expenditure which the defendant has already incurred cannot give her any right to the custody of the children. A father moreover, is the best judge of the education and training which are suited to his children, and may well think that they will be happier and better trained in their natural environment than in a foreign land and in a Society which may in the future make them strangers to their own kindred and to the Society in which they were born.

The defendant has abandoned the first two issues, but I think it is desirable that I should express an opinion upon them in case the matter should go before another Court. With regard to jurisdiction, the plaintiff's children are subjects of the King Emperor domiciled in British

India, and are only temporarily resident in England where they were taken by defendant for purposes of education. The defendant has also, in my opinion, broken the understanding by which she was allowed to take them beyond the jurisdiction. In these circumstances I am clear that this Court has jurisdiction to pass orders as to the custody of the children, and is bound to enforce such orders by all means in its power, and I have no doubt that the English Courts will assist this Court by their process. In this connection I need only refer to the cases in 4 De G. and Mac. 328. and 30 Ch. 32. The second issue does not really arise, since it is provided by Sec. 3 of the Guardian and Wards Act of 1890 that the provisions of that Act shall not affect the powers of the High Court. I am of opinion for the reasons I have given that it is necessary in the interests of the children and for their future protection that they should be declared Wards of Court, and I declare accordingly. I also direct the defendant to hand over the custody of the two boys, Krishnamurthi and Nityananda to the plaintiff on or before the 26th of May, 1913. With regard to the costs of the case, this trial has been unduly protracted and considerable expense has been caused by the charges which were made by the plaintiff and I find no to have been proved. I, therefore, direct him to pay the costs of the suit and the defendant's including the costs of the several Commissions and all costs expressly reserved.

(Sd.) J. H. B.
18-4-15.

Certified to be a true copy.
Dated this 19th day of April 1913.

G. WHITE,
Second Assistant Registrar

APPENDIX III.

On the merits, their Lordships delivered the following

JUDGMENTS :—

The Chief Justice:—I have already dealt with the question whether the learned Judge had jurisdiction to grant the relief which he has given in this suit. The question remains whether his judgment should be upheld. The more important dates are as follow :—

The defendant is the President of the Theosophical Society and the plaintiff has been a member of the Society since 1882. About the end of 1908 the plaintiff was appointed Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric Section of the Society and he and his family took up their residence at the head-quarters of the Society, Adyar, in a house which he occupied rent free. In September 1909 he removed his two minor sons, Krishnamurti and Nityananda from school, and they received gratuitous instruction at Adyar from one Mr. C. W. Leadbeater and others. The boys were then aged about 14 and 11. The defendant first became acquainted with them in December, 1909. On the 6th March, 1910, the plaintiff signed a letter (Ex. A.) by which he constituted the defendant the guardian of his minor sons. The plaintiff alleges in the particulars which he was ordered to deliver that in April, 1910, and February 1911, and on later dates he was told by certain parties that they had seen the incident mentioned in paragraph 2 of the particulars. In March 1911, the defendant, took the boys to

Benares and thence to England. In October 1911, they returned to Adyar and remained there until December 1911. Mr. Leadbeater, who had been at Adyar throughout, then took them to Benares. On the 31st December, 1911, the plaintiff informed Mrs. Van Hook at Benares of the incident described in paragraph 1 of the particulars, and on the same day the plaintiff went to the defendant and demanded that the boys should be separated from Mr. Leadbeater, and referred her to Mrs. Van Hook for the reason. The defendant refused the plaintiff's request. The plaintiff returned to Adyar at the beginning of January 1912, and made complaints to various persons. On the 19th January, 1912, there was an interview at Adyar between the plaintiff and the defendant and several members of the Society. A note of the proceedings at the interview was taken down by the defendant. The note is to the effect that the plaintiff stated he had no objection to the boys being taken to England and that the defendant said that she had separated the boys from Mr. Leadbeater. Mr. Leadbeater had left India about January 13, 1912. On January 26, 1912, the defendant left Adyar with the two boys for Benares and shortly afterwards took them to England. The boys were left with Mr. Leadbeater and others for a short time in Sicily, the defendant being in England. The boys then followed the defendant to England, Mr. Leadbeater accompanying them to Genoa. It having come to the knowledge of the defendant that the plaintiff had been making enquiries with respect to the charge against Mr. Leadbeater contained in the second paragraph of the particulars, she wrote to him a letter on February 7, 1912, (LL) in which she dismissed

him from his office of Secretary. On 11th July, 1912, the plaintiff wrote to the defendant a letter (Ex. AA. 6) in which he purported to cancel the letter Ex. A. and asked her to hand over to him his two sons. In October 1912, the defendant returned to Adyar leaving the boys in England and the plaintiff instituted this suit.

I propose, first, to state what appears to me to be the law as to the rights of a father to the control and custody of his minor children. I do not think it has been suggested that the exposition of the law relating to this matter, contained in the judgment of Vice-Chancellor *Kindersley* *In re Curtis*, is not still the law of England. It is there laid down that the Court of Chancery cannot decide upon the custody of infants simply with reference to what is most for their benefit and cannot interfere with the rights of a father, unless he so conducts himself as to render it essential to the safety and welfare of the children in some serious and important respect, either physically, intellectually or morally, that they should be removed from his custody. The Vice-Chancellor in his judgment cited the case of *In re Fynn* in which Lord Justice *Knight Bruce* made the following observations: "Of the present case I may say, that were I at liberty, as I am not, to act on the view which out of Court I should, as a private person, take of the course likely to be most beneficial for the infants, I should have no doubt whatever upon the question of interfering with the father's power. Without any hesitation—I should do so,—to what extent and in what manner I do not say. But there may and must be many cases of conduct, many cases of family differences, family difficulties and family misfortunes, in which though interposition would be for

the interest and advantage of minor children, Courts of Justice have not the means of interfering usefully, or, if they have the means, ought not to interfere." "A man may be in narrow circumstances, he may be negligent, injudicious and faulty as the father of minors; he may be a person from whom the discreet, the intelligent and the well disposed, exercising a private judgment, would wish his children to be, for their sakes and his own, removed; he may be all this without rendering himself liable to judicial interference, and in the main it is for obvious reasons well that it should be so. Before this jurisdiction can be called into action between them, the Court must be satisfied, not only that it has the means of acting safely and efficiently, but also that the father has so conducted himself, or has shown himself to be a person of such a description, or is placed in such a position, as to render it not merely better for the children, but essential to their safety or to their welfare, in some very serious and important respect, that his rights should be treated as lost or suspended—should be superseded or interfered with. If the word "essential" is too strong an expression, it is not much too strong. The defendant suggested that the law as laid down in *re Curtis* was altered by the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1886 (49 and 50 Vict. C. 27). No doubt this enactment altered the law but its provisions, as it seems to me, do not touch the general principle to which *Kindersley*, V. C., referred. The cases in which the Court have refused to deliver over a child when it has arrived at years of discretion to its father on a writ of *Habeas Corpus* are not in conflict with the rule of law that father is entitled by the law of England to the custody of his children till they attain the age of 21. In dealing

with these *Habeas Corpus* cases *Cotton, L. J.*, in his judgment in *In re Agar Ellis* (1883) says :—"But then there are cases where undoubtedly the Court declined to interfere on *Habeas Corpus* in order to hand the child over to the father or to interfere with it when it was of the age of discretion—the age of 16 in the case of girls and the age of 14 in the case of boys. For what reason is that? When an infant is so young as not to be able in the eyes of the law to exercise a discretion, then unless the infant is in the proper custody, that is to say the legal custody of the father or the guardian appointed, it is not in legal custody, and the very object of suing out a *Habeas Corpus* is to have it ascertained whether the person who is sought to be brought up is under duress or imprisonment; but no body can be placed in the position of being under duress or imprisonment if he expresses a wish to remain where he is at the time the writ is issued, that is to say, provided the person is competent to express such a wish; and, if he does, it is the duty of the law to regard it."

In *In re Agar Ellis*, the minor was a girl of over 16. In that case it was held that the Court will not interfere with the authority of the father as regards the control and education of his children until they attain the age of 21 except (1) where by his gross moral turpitude he forfeits his rights, or (2) where he has by his conduct abdicated his paternal authority, or (3) where he seeks to remove his children, being wards of Court, out of the jurisdiction without the consent of the Court. The defendant pointed out that in the *Agar Ellis* case the children were in the custody of the father when proceedings were instituted by the mother. This no doubt is so. But for the

moment I am only dealing with the principles of law which govern this question and I do not think that the fact that the children were in the custody of the father would give him greater rights than if they were not. In regard to the question of benefit of the infant, *Bowen, L.J.* in the same case, said at page 337. "Then we must regard the benefit of the infant ; but then it must be remembered that if the words "benefit of the infant " are used in any but the accurate sense it would be a fallacious test to apply to the way the Court exercises its jurisdiction over the infant by way of interference with the father. It is not the benefit to the infant as conceived by the Court, but it must be the benefit to the infant, having regard to the natural law which points out that the father knows far better as a rule what is good for his children than a Court of Justice can". . . . " Except in cases of immorality, or where he (the father) is clearly not exercising a discretion at all but a wicked or cruel caprice, or where he is endeavouring to withdraw from the protection of the Court, which is entrusted with such protection by law, the custody of the infant, as a rule, this Court does not and cannot interfere, because it cannot do so with the certainty that its doing so would not be attended with far greater injury both to the infant itself and also to general social life."... "As soon as it becomes obvious that the rights of the family are being abused to the detriment of the interest of the infant, than the father shows that he is no longer the natural guardian—that he has become an unnatural guardian—that he has perverted the ties of nature for the purpose of injustice and cruelty" When that case arrives the Court will not stay its hand ; but until that case arrives it is not mere disagreement with

the view taken by the father of his rights and the interests of his infant that can justify the Court in interfering." Mr. Simpson in his book on "Law of Infants" on page 131, (third edition), suggests that the law as laid down in *re Agar Ellis* "seems to be too narrow a statement of the law as at present administered," and the learned author refers to the judgment of *Fitz Gibbon, L. J., In re Ohara*. The strongest passage in the judgment of the Lord Justice which could be relied upon as supporting the suggestion that the judgments *in re Agar Ellis*, are too narrow a statement of the law is the following:—"It appears to me that misconduct or unmindfulness of paternal duty, or inability to provide for the welfare of the child, must be shown before the natural rights can be displaced. Where a parent is of blameless life, and is able and willing to provide for the child's material and moral necessities in the rank and position to which the child by birth belongs, *i.e.*, the rank and position of the parent—the Court is, in my opinion judicially bound to act on what is equally a law of nature and of society and to hold, in the words of Lord *Esher*, that, "The best place for a child is with its parent." Of course I do not speak of exceptional cases, where special disturbing elements exist which involve the risk of moral or material injury to the child such as the disturbance of religious convictions or of settled affections, or the endurance of hardship or destitution with a parent as contrasted with the solid advantages offered elsewhere. The Court, acting as a wise parent, is not bound to sacrifice the child's welfare to the *fetish* of parental authority by forcing it from a happy and comfortable home to share the fortunes of a parent, however innocent, who cannot keep a roof over his head or provide it with the necessaries

of life." With all respect to the learned author, to my mind there is nothing in this passage which indicates that the learned Lord Justice intended in any way to dissent from the principle laid down in *In re Agar Ellis*. In *Thomasset v. Thomasset*, Lindley L. J. said that "independently of writs of *Habeas Corpus* the Court of Chancery exercised the power of the Crown as *parens patriae* over infants and in exercise of this jurisdiction the power of the Court has always been much more extensive than that professed by Courts of Common Law under a writ of *Habeas Corpus*". The Lord Justice then refers to a case of *Todd v. Lynes* which is unreported, (see page 127 Simpson's Law of Infants) where a father obtained an order for the delivery to him of the custody of his son, a young man of 17 who had been persuaded by the defendant to leave his father and enter a monastery under the charge of the defendant. As is pointed out in *Thomasset v. Thomasset*, what the wishes of the boy were does not appear.

In *The Queen v. Gyngall* Lord Esher, Master of the Rolls, pointed out the distinction between the Common Law jurisdiction under which the Common Law Courts used to deal with these matters by *Habeas Corpus*, (I take it that the learned judge did not mean this was the only way in which the Common Law jurisdiction could be exercised) and the Chancery jurisdiction. "At Common law", the Master of the Rolls said, "the parent had as against other persons generally an absolute right to the custody of the child unless he or she had forfeited it by certain sorts of misconduct." The Chancery jurisdiction was a parental jurisdiction "in-virtue of which the Chancery Court was put to act on behalf of the Crown as being the

guardian of all infants." I do not think that the Master of the Rolls meant to suggest that in the exercise of this jurisdiction the natural rights of the parent were not considered. All that was laid down was that a Court of Chancery could supersede the natural rights of a parent if the welfare of the infant demanded it. In *The Queen v. Gyngall* the Master of the Rolls cites with approval the passage from the judgment of *Knight Brace V. C. in re Fynn* to which I have referred. I may also refer to *in re McGrath* case in the Chancery division decided a year before ; *The Queen v. Gyngall*.

As regards the Indian cases, this High Court would seem to have acted in accordance with the principles of the decision in *In re Agar Ellis* ; see *Reade v. Krishna*, and *Pollard v. Rouse*. Certain Indian authorities were cited by the defendant. In *In the matter of Saithri*, the application was for an order in the nature of a *Habeas Corpus*. On the facts of that case the Court was not satisfied that the application by the mother was *bona-fide* the mother being a servant earning eight annas a month and having no house of her own; and was of opinion that the mother had precluded merely by her conduct for eight years from demanding that the child should be given up to her and that to do so would be most detrimental to the welfare of the child. In *Sarat Chandra Chakrabarti v. Forman* the application for the custody of the minor was made not by his father but by his brother. The report says that the father " had gone to Benares to end his days there." I am unable to assume from this, as the defendant wished us to assume, that the natural rights of the father devolved upon the elder brother. In view of what I conceive to be the law I feel considerable

doubt as to whether I should be prepared to follow the decision of the Allahabad High Court in *Bindo v. Shamla* and of this Court in *Muthuveerappa Chetty v. Ponnuswami*. In *Mookoond Lal Sing v. Mobodip Chandar Singha* the Court decided on the facts of the case that the *prima facie* right of the father was displaced. See also *In re Foshy Assam*. In the case of *re Ghulbhai and Lilbai* where it was held that the interest, well-being and happiness of the minors ought to be the paramount consideration of the Court, both the parents were dead. It was suggested by the defendant though I do not think the contention was very seriously pressed that the law of England was more favourable to the natural rights of father than the Hindu Law. I do not think this has been suggested in any of the Indian cases, and I am not prepared to accede to it. In *Muthuveerappa v. Ponnusami* the learned judges no doubt say that the texts of Hindu law do not recognise an "absolute rights of guardian in any one" but neither do the Law of England.

So far, I have dealt with the general question of the natural rights of the father. In this case, however, we have what purports to be an express delegation of the father's rights by Ex. A, the letter of the 6th March 1912 and what purports to be an express revocation of the delegation by Ex. A.A. 6, the letter of the 11th June 1912. It does not seem to be material whether the letter Ex. A is to be regarded as a waiver, or an express delegation, of the plaintiff's paternal rights. If it is to be regarded as a waiver, it does not in itself operate so as to preclude the father from re-asserting his rights. If it is to be regarded as an express delegation, I think the delegation is *prima facie* revocable though there may

circumstances which would lead a Court to hold that the delegation ought not to be revoked. In *In re Agar Ellis, Cotton* L. J. said on page 333 "the father, although not unfitted to discharge the duties of a father may have acted in such a way as to preclude himself in a particular instance from insisting on rights he would otherwise have, as where a father has allowed, in consequence of money being left to a child, the child to live with a relative and be brought up in a way not suited to its former station in life or to the means of the father. There the Court says 'You have allowed that to be done, and to alter that would be such an injury to the child that you have precluded yourself from exercising your power as a father in that particular respect,' and then the Court interferes to prevent the father from having the custody of the child, not because he is immoral or has forfeited all his rights, but because in that particular instance he has so acted as to preclude himself from insisting on what otherwise would be his right. That was the case in *Lyons v. Blenkin* which has been cited."

There can be no question in this case that the agreement of March 1910, has been acted. In *Queen v. Barnardo*, Lord Esher said that if the parent revoked the agreement before it had been acted on it would not be binding. Lord Justice Lindley, however, laid down the law in much more general terms. He said in page 314 "Notwithstanding such an agreement the parent would be the legal guardian of the child and she is incapable of binding herself not to exercise her rights as such. She could therefore, revoke the agreement at any moment, as could any other guardian in a similar case." Mr. Justice Wallis in *Pollard v. Rouse*, stated the law

in much the same way. He said on page 292, "this delegation of parental authority to the plaintiff is revocable at any time and it is the duty of the parents and guardians to revoke it if used to the detriment of the children". This question is discussed by Mr. Simpson on page 135 and Sir E. J. Trevelyan in his book on "The law of India relating to minors" on page 70. The latter states the law thus:—"A father may also lose his right to the guardianship of his children, and to the control of their education where he has permitted another person to maintain and educate them, and it will be detrimental to the interests of the children to alter the manner of their maintenance or the course of their own secular or religious education. The Court will not, when he has acquiesced for some time, permit him arbitrarily or capriciously to alter the mode of their maintenance and education, or to take them from the custody in which he has allowed them to remain." There are further observations on the subject on page 132.

As the authorities were very elaborately discussed in the course of the argument of this appeal, I have thought it necessary to refer to them at some length. I am prepared, however, to accede and apply the succinct statement of the law which is to be found in Lord Halsbury's *Laws of England*, Volume 17, page 107. "After a surrender by him, (the father) of the custody has actually taken place, he can recover the custody unless his doing so would be injurious to the interests of the child."

The defendant contended with reference to my judgment on the question of jurisdiction that in as much as jurisdiction exercised by the learned judge was equity jurisdiction given by the Letters Patent, the C

would look solely to the welfare of the infants. I cannot accede to this. I do not think that the Courts in Equity have ever professed to look solely to what appears to them to be the welfare of the infant without regard to the natural rights of the father. The judgment of the Master of the Rolls in *R. v. Gyngall* speaks of the "supercession" of the natural rights. This seems to me to involve that the natural rights must be recognised and considered.

There is one other question of law which I desire to refer to before I pass to the facts. The effect of the appointment of the father as guardian in this case, (it is the appointment of the father and not the making of the minors wards of Court, as I stated in my judgment on the question of jurisdiction, which has this effect,) was to extend the period of minority of the elder boy to the age of 21. At the time the order was made, the elder boy was nearly 18, the ordinary age of minority under the Indian law. We were referred by the defendant *In the matter of the petition of Nazirun* where it was held that an application for the certificate of guardianship under Act XL of 1858 which, if granted, would prolong the minority of the infant from 18 to 21, should not be granted when the alleged minor is admittedly on the point of attaining the age of 18, unless under particular circumstances, as where very great weakness of mind was proved, or where it was shown that there was some absolute necessity for making such order. The words "*absolute necessity*" are of too general a character to enable us to derive much assistance from this decision. The fact that a minor is nearly 18 when an order is asked for, which will have the effect of extending his minority is no doubt a matter to be taken into

consideration by any Court which is called upon to determine whether in all the circumstances of the case such an order shall be made. The defendant asks to be allowed to adduce in evidence certain affidavits made in England which she professed to rely on by way of answer to an application to commit her for contempt, which has been made to this Court. These affidavits are of course no evidence for the purpose of this appeal. The defendant did not ask for a commission to examine as witnesses the parties by whom the affidavits were made.

At the trial on the hearing of this appeal several questions were discussed which bore more or less directly on the question of the welfare of the boys. There is the question as to what has been called the deification of the elder boy. This is raised in the tenth issue. "Has the defendant stated that the elder boy is or is going to be Lord Christ or Lord Maitreya?" The finding of the learned judge was in the affirmative. There can be no question, I think, that, in the first instance the two boys were taken charge of by Mr. Leadbeater and afterwards by the defendant for educational purposes with a view to their being sent to an English university. I do not doubt that the plaintiff who had been a member of the Theosophical Society since 1882 and for some years had been Secretary of the Esoteric Section of the Society contemplated that the education should be in accordance with the views and tenets of Theosophy. The idea that the boy was to become vested with extra mundane attributes was, I think, a later development.

With regard to this, Sir Subramania Iyer with reference to the plaintiff consenting to the boys being taken to England, said, in his evidence page 334—"The gre

inducement, as I gathered, was that the boys were going to get an English University education which was beyond his (plaintiff's) power to give". In cross examination he said in page 346 "Plaintiff was induced to sign the letter only for the sake of English University education. The University education was the one thing which influenced him".

I do not think that the defendant questioned the finding of the judge that, although the plaintiff was aware when he signed the letter of the 6th March 1910 (Ex. A.) that the defendant desired to bring up the boys in such a manner as to develop their spiritual powers, neither the plaintiff nor the defendant contemplated the development of the elder boy into a "vehicle" for the manifestation of supernatural powers or persons. The defendant denied in her evidence that she had ever said that the elder boy was or was to be, the Lord Christ or the Lord Maitreya; but she admitted having said that she believed that "his body would be the vehicle" for his reincarnation. In cross examination in answer to a question—do you believe his body will be used by the Lord Maitreya, she said "I do, I admit...that; I do believe that the body will be used by Lord Maitreya some years hence." In an address by the defendant published in one of the Theosophical journals (Ex. P) we find a statement that "the body of the disciple Alcoyne (*i.e.* the elder boy) has been handed over to those who have come down with him through the ages, to be trained and made ready for a similar destiny," the destiny being the surrender of the body to Christ. The defendant met the argument that the fostering of such ideas as these in a boy of 15 or 16 years of age would necessarily be prejudicial to his moral and intellectual welfare, by the

contention that the setting before him of this ideal would necessarily have a purifying and ennobling effect. There might be something in this if what was said before him was that this destiny might be in store for him if he proved worthy of it. But I understand the defendant's evidence to be that the body of the boy had already been selected for becoming "the vehicle". In paragraph 12 of his written statement the defendant says it is true that respectable people have prostrated themselves before him. He was made the head of an Order called the Star of the East (the proceedings at one of the meetings of the Order are described in an article in a Theosophic journal, Ex. C published in February 1912) and he underwent two ceremonies of initiation as to the nature of which there is no evidence. It may be said that all this, so far from stimulating the moral and intellectual qualities of the boy might have an opposite effect. I do not profess to know how much there is in common between the tenets and beliefs of the Hindu religion and the tenets and beliefs of Theosophy. I am prepared to assume a very great deal. I am also prepared to assume that the plaintiff is a pious Hindu and that he was when he signed Ex. A, an ardent Theosophist. But there is all the difference between a man holding abstract views in a matter of this sort and being a consenting party to these views being given effect to in the person of his own son. A father may believe in the doctrine of reincarnation and may have given expression to that belief, but he may well be reluctant that the body of his own son should be the medium.

I do not think that the plaintiff when he signed Ex. A. contemplated that the boys were to be devoted to

lives of poverty and Celibacy. I do not suggest that the importance of an education [at Oxford which I doubt not was the chief inducement of the father when he consented to the boys being taken to England was ever lost sight of by the defendant, but it was I think, regarded by the defendant and by Mr. Leadbeater as subordinate to the main purpose to which the life of the elder boy was to be devoted. We find the defendant writing [to a correspondent (Ex. Q. Q.) on the 4th June 1912, "Both Mr. Leadbeater and I are quite indifferent as to Krishna (the elder boy) taking a degree. A degree is of no value to a spiritual teacher and Nitya's (the younger boy's) degree would bring no credit to us but only to his family."

I now pass to a topic which I desire to discuss as briefly as possible and that is, the connection of Mr. Leadbeater with the two boys. There can be no question that the defendant and Mr. Leadbeater were closely associated in Theosophical work and were in strong sympathy with each other. In this connection, I need only refer to Exhibits F and G. Exhibit F is an extract from an article written by Mr. Leadbeater in the Adyar Album, a work which was on sale to the public in 1911 in which he says speaking of the defendant [(page 155) "whether you understand or not you will be wise to follow her implicitly just because she knows. This is no mere supposition on my part, no flight of the imagination; I have stood beside your president in the presence of the supreme director of evolution on this globe and I know whereof I speak. Let the wise hear my words and act accordingly." In Exhibit G the defendant writing in the following year of Mr. Leadbeater in a Theosophist journal says, amongst other things, "By hard patient

work he has won rewards, perfecting each faculty on plain after plain, gaining nothing without hard work, as he has often said, but gaining surely and steadily until he stands, perhaps the most trusted of his Master's disciples, "on the threshold of divinity". The finding of the learned Judge in paragraph 4 of his judgment seems to me to be supported by the evidence. The finding is "It is clear that the plaintiff's children were first selected as likely subjects for training in the tenets of the Society by Mr. Leadbeater, who professes to have peculiar powers in this respect, and that it was through his influence that the defendant was induced to take an interest in them, and that from the first Mr. Leadbeater desired to get the children under his own control and out of that of the plaintiff whom he regarded as an obstacle to his own purposes. (See Mr. Leadbeater's letter Exs. W2, W3, W4, dated December 1909 and Ex.Y, dated 3rd January 1910)". To the letters referred to by the learned judge I may add Ex.Y5 dated 18th April 1910. I think I may fairly say that the defendant's regard for and trust in Mr. Leadbeater was unqualified except with regard to certain opinions which Mr. Leadbeater held in regard to boys. As regards these opinions, the defendant condemned them, as mischievous, and I do not doubt that the defendant implicitly believed Mr. Leadbeater's promise that he would not preach a practice which has been described as his 'unconventional' doctrines. Mr. Leadbeater's 'unconventional' views are to be found in Ex. XVI a letter written by him to a correspondent on the 27th February 1906, in Ex. H., a letter written by him to the defendant on the 30th June 1906 and in Ex.J a letter written by him to the defendant on the 11th September 1906. The defendant's

attitude in the matter is indicated in her circular letter (Ex. XIV) and in her letter to Mr. Leadbeater of the 6th August 1907 (Ex.XII), to which he replied by his letter dated the 30th August 1907 (Ex.XIII.) In cross-examination with regard to this matter, certain answers were given by Mr. Leadbeater which are to be found at p. 377, lines 12 to 29. With regard to this part of the case, the learned judge observed in paragraph 14 of his judgment, " Mr. Leadbeater admitted in his evidence that he has held and even now holds opinions which I need only describe as certainly immoral and such as to unfit him to be the tutor of boys, and taken in conjunction with his professed power to detect the approach of impure thoughts render him a highly dangerous associate for children. It is true that both he and the defendant declared that he has promised not to express or practise those opinions, but no father should be obliged to depend upon a promise of this kind". I entirely agree.

It was contended by the defendant that in this matter the plaintiff acted 'with his eyes open' and was aware of the opinions entertained by Mr. Leadbeater when he consented to the arrangement which brought his sons into close relations with him. The plaintiff had been a member of the Theosophical Society since 1882. In 1906 there was an enquiry with reference to certain complaints which were made against Mr. Leadbeater, before an advisory committee. A report was made, and Mr. Leadbeater resigned his membership of the Society. There was a subsequent investigation as the result of which Mr. Leadbeater was exonerated and he subsequently rejoined the Society. The plaintiff in examination-in-chief in speaking of a circular recommending the

readmission of Mr. Leadbeater into the Society (which I take is Ex. XIV), said that he voted for his admission because the defendant said that he was innocent and that he believed at the time because he had faith in the defendant (p. 223). He denied (247) having received the letter or ever having seen it and said that he did not know that Mr. Leadbeater had been acquitted by any Committee and that the General Council had said that he might rejoin if he wished (p. 248). He also said that he did not remember what the defendant stated in her presidential address at the Convention in 1908 and that he knew nothing about the scandals in 1906. In 1906 the plaintiff was not associated with the Esoteric Section of the Society, and although I think it extremely probable that he knew a great deal more about the charges against Mr. Leadbeater and the consequent proceedings than he was prepared to admit in the witness box, his story that he voted for his (Leadbeater's) re-admission because he (the plaintiff) had entire confidence in the defendant does not seem to be an unreasonable one. In connection with this question one of the defendant's witnesses who was examined on commission in Bombay and who says that he joined the Theosophical Society nine or ten years ago said that he knew that Mr. Leadbeater had resigned the Society, that at the Convention held at Madras a resolution was passed asking him to rejoin the Society, that he did not know anything of any inquiry into the charges against Mr. Leadbeater, that he had not seen any records in connection with that enquiry and that he knew about his resignation only at the time when the resolution for his reinstatement was passed.

Assuming that in March 1910 the plaintiff was willing 'with his eyes open' that the boys should be closely associated with Mr. Leadbeater, and signed the letter (Ex. A) knowing that they would be closely associated with him, I am not prepared to say that it was not within his rights as a parent to take up a different attitude later even if nothing had subsequently taken place which might afford ground for suspicion that the complaints made in 1906 were not without foundation.

I now pass to the specific charges of immorality brought by the plaintiff against Mr. Leadbeater. They are referred to in paragraph 5 of the plaint and are described in the particulars delivered in pursuance of the order of the learned judge. As regards the second charge I doubt whether the statements of witnesses who speak to what Lakshman told them are evidence. It seems to me that this charge really depends upon the evidence of Lakshman who was called as a Courtwitness. His evidence is to be found at page 278 of the printed papers, (a previous statement in writing as to what he said he saw is to be found in Ex. VII) and it is quite clear that his evidence is insufficient to support a charge of an unnatural offence or any act of gross indecency on the part of Mr. Leadbeater. With regard to the first charge the plaintiff's evidence, if true would establish that Mr. Leadbeater had been guilty of grossly indecent conduct in connection with the elder boy. The evidence given by the plaintiff in the examination-in-chief at the trial with regard to this is in accordance with the evidence of Mrs. Van Hook who was called by the defendant. It is also in accordance with the evidence of Mr. Baghavan Dass who was examined on commission as to what the plaintiff told him. The defendant

denied that, when she returned to Adyar in April 1910, the plaintiff told her anything about what he had seen himself. Much was said on the hearing of the appeal with regard to the alteration in the dates with reference to the charges. The evidence of the witnesses who spoke to the report made to them by Lakshman would fix the date of the incident, which is made the foundation of the charge of unnatural offence as prior to the date, when Ex. A was signed by the plaintiff. The plaintiff's case is that, although the evidence of these witnesses as to the character of Lakshman's report to them is true their evidence is untrue with regard to the date when Lakshman said he witnessed the occurrence and that the date when Lakshman said he witnessed the occurrence was subsequent to the signing of the agreement. I need not discuss this question, because, assuming the statements of these witnesses with reference to what Lakshman told them are evidence at all, which I doubt, the evidence is in my opinion altogether insufficient to establish the offence charged in paragraph 2 of the particulars. Although Mr. Leadbeater was not, and could not well be represented before us the defendant has taken upon her shoulders the burden of his defence with regard to these charges. She discharged the task of defending him with extreme zeal and with great ability. She sought to show, that in view of the changes in the alleged dates and of the variation in the character of the alleged offence, no Court of Law would hold Mr. Leadbeater guilty either of an unnatural offence or of grossly indecent conduct in connection with the elder boy. One thing she did not do. She did not place before the Court the evidence of the boy himself. But speaking for myself having regard to her strong affection for the boys which I do

not doubt and to the nature of the charges, I do not think she can be blamed for not putting the boy into the witness box. Of course I do not overlook the fact that the defendant no doubt realised that by bringing the boys to Madras she would have sacrificed the advantageous position which she holds so long as the boys remain in England. I will say nothing more with regard to this part of the case because I am not prepared to differ from the conclusion of the learned Judge that for the reasons stated in paragraphs 5 to 12 of his judgment the 6th and the 7th issues should be answered in the negative I am not, however, altogether in agreement with the view expressed by the learned judge that it was the plaintiff's knowledge that his surrender of the rights of guardianship contained in Ex. A was irrevocable which induced him to search for something which would influence the Court in revoking the agreement and so caused the revival of charges similar to those made against Mr. Leadbeater in 1906.

This brings me to the question as to how far the fact of these charges that were made by the plaintiff can be reconciled with good faith on his part and a simple-minded desire, whether mistaken or not, to do what was best for the welfare of his boys. The question as to how far the plaintiff acted in good faith is, of course, of the greatest importance with reference to the question of the boys' welfare because it is obvious that their interests would be greatly prejudiced if they were handed over to the guardianship and custody of a man prepared to make charges of this character in connection with his boys knowing them to be false. It was pointed out that as regards the second charge the evidence, even if true, would only establish indecent behaviour and this was relied on as

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showing that the charges were made wantonly and maliciously and with the knowledge they were false. It has been suggested that the plaintiff, is a tool in the hands of those who desire to injure the defendant. I may refer to the evidence of the plaintiff in pp. 239, and 272. I will assume that the plaintiff is, to some extent at any rate, being made use of by others who supply the sinews of war and who have their own ends to serve. This, in itself, is not incompatible with the plaintiff being actuated by an honest desire to do what he now conceives to be, although his views might formerly have been otherwise, for the best interests of his boys. Very great stress has been laid by the defendant upon the fact that the plaintiff made a criminal charge of a very revolting character in which his own son was involved. I am not impressed by this. If the father honestly believed that some things have happened which would justify the second charge, he was placed in a terrible predicament. If he sought to bring the man to justice he exposed himself to the accusation that he was bringing a charge against the child; if for the sake of saving the child he did nothing, he exposed himself to the accusation of allowing a terrible crime to remain unpunished. From the very nature of the offence he could not do anything without implicating the boy. The plaintiff in cross-examination said (p.245) "My accusation was against Mr. Leadbeater associating with the boys and not against the boy himself. I never said anything against my boy. My complaint was against Mr. Leadbeater."

It appears to me that there are undisputed facts which might not unreasonably have given rise to serious suspicions against Mr. Leadbeater. I do not say that his

conduct was criminal; I do not say that acts of gross indecency have been proved; but I do say that, in my judgment his behaviour in connection with these boys was unseemly and indecorous. In this matter I will take the evidence of Lakshman, the defendant's own servant, who is still in her service, and the evidence of the defendant's witnesses. According to Lakshman, he saw the elder boy and Mr. Leadbeater in the bath-room, the boy was naked and Mr. Leadbeater's coat was up to the waist and he had no pyjamas (witness apparently indicated the length of the shirt half-way down his thigh). In examination-in-chief, Mr. Leadbeater said (p. 367).

Q.—Through that time, 1909, I want you just to remember the succession of events about the bath-room. Where did the boys first bathe when you knew them?

A.—At a well in Vasantamantapam within the headquarters.

Q.—What did that lead you to do?

A.—It eventually led me to offer the use of my bath-room in place of it.

Q.—So that they bathed in your bath-room for a time?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Now, will you say please quite frankly, what changes were introduced in their bath?

A.—I introduced carbolic soap and hot water for the hair, and taught them to bathe in the ordinary English way so as to be really clean.

Q.—And that means as regards the bather?

A.—That he soaped himself all over.

Q.—Dressed or not?

A.—Quite undressed, certainly.

Q.—Were you fully dressed?

A.—I had nothing to do with it, except on two occasions when I went in and superintended.” Mrs. Van Hook said in cross-examination (p. 329) “ I know that Mr. Leadbeater took the boys into his bath-room and said that he should teach them how to bathe like gentlemen.” It seems to me that it did not come within the province of Mr. Leadbeater, a gentlemen of over 60 years of age, as tutor and spiritual advisor of these boys to superintend privately and personally their bathing arrangements.

The character of the suspicions—to put it no higher—which the plaintiff entertained against Mr. Leadbeater was such that it may well be that the plaintiff's mind was disturbed and thrown off its balance, and that he lost the power to see things and judge things in their true proportions, and to exercise a sound judgment with reference to any conclusion which he might come to. As I have said I think the plaintiff knew a great deal more about the nature of the charges brought against Mr. Leadbeater in 1906 than he was prepared to admit. This, in fact, is the defendant's case. With his knowledge of Mr. Leadbeater's history in this connection it is scarcely extraordinary that a man whose mind had possibly become a little morbid by reason of the atmosphere of mystery and mysticism and alleged extraordinary happenings in which he lived, should have dwelt on some thing which he saw objectionable and indecent though not criminal, until he became obsessed with the idea that Mr. Leadbeater's conduct in connection with these boys had been such as to warrant the charge of an unnatural offence. “ Unnatural offence ” for the purpose of the Penal Code is a technical term. In its non-technical sense it only means something contrary to nature.

One thing is clear, that although the plaintiff's feelings towards Mr. Leadbeater in 1910 were those of bitter hostility, he entertained for the defendant feelings of affection and esteem which remained unchanged till July 1912. On the 23rd January, 1912 we have a letter from him to the defendant, Exhibit AA2 in which he says (page 117) "However unkind you may make your external attitude towards me appear to be. I feel quite certain that you have inside the same love and tenderness you have been showing me during the last three years." * * * * *

"I shall cling to you as a son to a mother. Once a mother you are a mother for ever." There can be no question that the plaintiff demanded the separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeater at the end of 1911. The defendant refers to his having rushed up to her room when they were at Benares crying and sobbing, and saying that the boys must be completely separated from Mr. Leadbeater. When the defendant asked 'why' the plaintiff said he could not tell her, that he had told Mrs. Van Hook. This no doubt took place about a year and 8 months after the date when the incident referred to in paragraph 1 of the particulars according to the plaintiff took place. Having regard to the nature of the alleged incident, the fact that the defendant was a lady, and the fact that she entertained feelings of respect and affection for Mr. Leadbeater and had placed implicit confidence to him—the delay on the part of the plaintiff in making any communication in the matter to the defendant does not seem very extraordinary. His story that he preferred to tell Mrs. Van Hook who is a Doctor does not seem to be unnatural. The plaintiff seems to be a man of no particular strength of character, emotional, possibly somewhat hysterical, and swayed one

way or the other by the impulse of the moment. His temperament would seem to be reticent and retiring. The difficulty which, according to the evidence, Mrs. Taylor experienced in obtaining the data of the biographical note which she desired to publish about the elder boy shows the plaintiff was a man who did not desire to court publicity or notoriety. The final rupture with the defendant meant the sacrifice of a friendship which he evidently greatly valued, the abandonment of all advantages, which he would naturally hope for from his boys going to an English University, and possibly another scandal similar to that which appears to have shaken the Society to its foundations in 1906. In these circumstances can it be wondered at that a man would hesitate before taking a final and irrevocable step.

A point was made that even if the plaintiff could not bring himself to make a communication to the defendant he might have given information to Sir Subramania Aiyar, the Vice-President of the Society. To my mind the plaintiff's explanation seems natural. Speaking of Subramania Iyer, he said in answer to the question "Did you not know he would not tolerate such offence?"

"He was no friend of mine nor a man much known to me. I knew he had a great friendship for Mr. Leadbeater and thought him a big man." He went on to say "I was not so much acquainted with him as to know that he would help me. I told him I had a grievance against Mr. Leadbeater."

The letter written by Mr. Leadbeater to the defendant on the 18th April 1910, Ex. Y5 a few days after the date when according to the plaintiff's evidence

episode described in paragraph (1) of the particulars occurred shows the existence of feelings of strong hostility as between the plaintiff and Mr. Leadbeater. We find Mr. Leadbeater writing :—" It is good that old Narayaniah has to work hard at Besant's Gardens for on the whole it keeps him out of some of his mischief and gives him less time to brood over imaginary wrongs." I do not find the explanation given by Mr. Leadbeater, in his evidence that some quarrel about the boys' food was the immediate cause of these feelings of hostility of all concerning. It is not disputed that just at this time, the plaintiff was extremely anxious to get the boys away. In all the circumstances, of this very unusual case, I am not prepared to hold that the plaintiff's conduct in connection with the charges against Mr. Leadbeater was of such a character as in itself to show that he is unfitted to be entrusted with the care and custody of the boys or that it would be detrimental to their interest if they should be restored to him.

I will deal quite shortly with the question whether in January 1912 the defendant gave an undertaking shortly before the boys were taken to England that they should be kept apart from Mr. Leadbeater. There can be no doubt that when the plaintiff demanded that the boys should be separated from Mr. Leadbeater at the end of 1911, when the plaintiff told the defendant that he had made a communication to Mrs. Van Hook, that the defendant refused the plaintiff's request. As to what happened on January 19, 1912 shortly before the boys were taken to England when the memorandum (Exhibit XI) was made by the defendant, with the separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeater, the evidence is conflicting. The learned Judge was unable to hold that on that occasion the defend-

ant declined to give the promise that the boys should never be brought into association with Mr. Leadbeater. I am not prepared to say that the Judge was wrong. Assuming that he was, it is clear that the plaintiff attached great importance to this question of separation from Mr. Leadbeater. The memorandum says:—"Mrs. Besant said that she had met Mr. Narayaniah's wishes on both points (what the two points were is not clear) he had asked for; she had separated the boys from Mr. Leadbeater." It is also clear that, although at that time the defendant contemplated that the boys would be with Mr. Leadbeater, at any rate for a short period, she did not so inform the plaintiff. She stated that her reason for not doing so was that she did not desire the plaintiff to know where the boys were to be. For the purpose of withholding information from the father as to the whereabouts of the boys it was not necessary for her to refrain from mentioning the fact which would, in doubt, have greatly influenced the father in connection with the question of the boys going to England. As a matter of fact Mr. Leadbeater as well as the defendant was with the boys in Sicily early in February 1912, for the purpose of some initiation ceremony in connection with the elder boy.

The question whether, as things now stand, the relative advantages for the boys are on the side of their remaining where they are and continuing the course of training which has been laid out for them by the defendant on the side of their being restored to the care and custody of their father, is one of great delicacy and difficulty. regards financial considerations—and in reference to this matter I accept the statements made by the defendant on the one hand, and learned Vakil for the plaintiff on the other, adequate provision would seem to have been made

for the maintenance and further education of the boys either in India or in England. I do not believe that there is anything in the personal character of the plaintiff which disqualifies him from having the care and custody of the boys. The defendant stated that there was some misunderstanding between the Judge and herself with regard to her case as to the personal unfitness of the father and his treatment of the boys when they were in his custody. She said she did not intend by any admission she made to give up her case with regard to the personal unfitness of the plaintiff or with regard to his treatment of the boys. The only conclusion I can draw, from the form of issues and the fact that the defendant did not cross-examine the plaintiff with regard to these matters, is that at the hearing it was not part of her case that, on general grounds, the plaintiff was personally unfit to be entrusted to the care and custody of the boys. An application was put in by the defendant for leave to aduce evidence on this question, but this application was not pressed. - The plaintiff appears to be a respectable Hindu gentleman and he is a retired Government servant. He was deemed by the defendant to be fitted to fill the office of Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. At one time he was in entire sympathy with the tenets and beliefs of the Society of which the defendant is the President. There is no evidence that he is not so still. On the other hand I do not doubt that the physical training which the boys are now receiving in England is all that could be desired. I do not doubt that they have the best of tutors for the purpose of matriculating at Oxford. The defendant had stated that her intention is that the elder boy should with certain

restrictions, take part in the ordinary life of the ordinary under-graduate. If he is not to do this, if he is to lead a cloistered existence segregated from his fellows there does not seem much object in sending him to Oxford. Whether his life at Oxford would be a useful or a happy one I cannot undertake to say. As regards the younger boy it is considered desirable that he should take his degree for the purpose of competing for the Indian Civil Service. It may be that a life of celibacy which I understand to be an incident of the "initiation" that the younger boy has undergone, may not be incompatible with a successful career in the Indian Civil Service. How for a life of poverty, another incident of the "initiation" even using the word in the sense of "inner renunciation" in which the defendant has told us they are to be understood—how far this would aid or hinder a member of the Indian Civil Service, I do not feel in a position to express an opinion. In considering this question it is of course necessary to have regard to things as they stand now, not as they stood when the father purported to surrender the guardianship of his boys. One of the many difficulties which arises in this case lies in the fact that whereas the elder boy is now over 18 years of age, the younger boy is under sixteen. I do not think that in any order which we might make, we ought to distinguish between the cases of the two boys. It seems to me that, whatever is done, they ought to be allowed to remain together. With great eloquence and with great earnestness the defendant pressed upon us what she described as the miserable future which awaits the boys if they are to be restored to the custody of their father. There can be no question that the training which they are now undergoing in England would make

difficult for them to re-adapt themselves to what was at one time at any rate their natural environment. Amongst other matters dwelt upon by the defendant it was suggested that ceremonies of a degrading character would have to be undergone before the boys were to be restored to caste. I fully realise all this, although I think the defendant has overstated the difficulties which will arise if the boys are restored to the custody of their father. As regards the question of obtaining of a degree by the younger boy I should be the last to attempt to belittle the advantages of an Oxford degree, but there are Universities in India where academic distinction can be won and the Indian Civil Service is not the only career in which an Indian gentleman of character and ability may rise high in the service of the State. I do not overlook the fact that the defendant does not now insist upon her right to remain as guardian of the boys. She is willing that their care and custody should be entrusted to Mr. G. S. Arundale, a graduate of Cambridge and a former Principal of the Central Hindu College, who is in close sympathy with the defendant and her Theosophical work. We have been asked in the event of not setting aside the order of the learned Judge with regard to the guardianship of the boys, that for the order directing that the boys should be handed over to the plaintiff should be substituted on order that the defendant should be restrained from doing anything otherwise than in accordance with law to prevent the plaintiff from enforcing his rights as guardian. On the case as a whole after long and anxious consideration, I have come to the conclusion that we ought not to disturb the order of the learned Judge appointing the father the guardian of the two boys, and that we ought not to interfere with the

direction given for the handing over the boys for the purpose of making the order effective.

The appeal is dismissed with costs. The defendant will pay the costs of the memorandum of objections. The parties will pay their own costs before *Bakwell*, J.

Time within which direction is to be carried out is extended to six weeks from this date.

Oldfield, J. :—I concur fully in the conclusions of the learned Chief Justice as to the law and other matters dealt with in his judgments, and I desire to supplement the latter with reference only to certain portions of the case.

Firstly, with regard to what has been called the defecation of the elder minor, the defendant's account of what has happened and probably may happen is in my opinion insufficient. The question is merely of his immediate adoption of a high ideal, which he is to pursue (with whatever result) in the future, but firstly of his being surrounded by a body of admirers, some of whom have already, as the original written statement says, begun to prostrate themselves before him, and secondly of his being subjected at an early and impressionable age to influences, which will lead him, almost inevitably, to an exceptional view of life and an abnormal career and to disable him from forming preferences of his own. The English authorities against the father's right to insist on a change of religion or of religious environment, *Stourton v. Stourton* and *In re Newton* bear no application to the case before us, because they deal only with the minor's ordinary retention of ordinary tenets, not with his assumption of an extraordinary character, to which the votaries of Theosophy or any other religion do not ordinarily deliberately aspire.

Next, with reference to the age of the elder minor and the argument that it was too late for the learned Judge to intervene by requiring his return, the authority cited by the learned Chief Justice and obvious considerations of convenience no doubt show that strong reason is necessary to justify a change, when the normal age of majority is near. But this case was exactly one, in which such reason was available to the learned Judge because the question was of the boys' removal, not merely from one educational and social position to another, but also from an environment, which certainly before long and possibly in the few months of normal minority remaining, would determine and might arrest his intellectual and moral development irreparably. I add that I concur in thinking any separation of the minors inexpedient.

There remain only the questions of fact, relating to the two incidents alleged in the particulars and the alleged breach of the agreement between the parties. I deal with them at length in consequence of the volume and nature of the evidence, and because the learned Judge's conclusions as to those incidents seem to me incorrect and his treatment of the case as to the agreement inadequate in material respects. The consideration of the latter will involve an estimate of defendant's standard of conduct and motives which will be relevant in dealing with the evidence as to the incidents, and I therefore turn to it first.

It is common ground that the defendant was permitted to remove the minors from India in consequence of an understanding with the plaintiff. He contends that it included a condition forbidding them to associate with Leadbeater except in the defendant's presence. She denies that it did so, but it admits that, if it did so, it was

broken since she left Leadbeater and the minors together in Sicily about June or July 1912. The question is whether this condition was part of the understanding or whether, as defendant alleges, she promised only an immediate separation, expressly refusing any guarantee against the possibility of Leadbeater re-joining the minors in future.

It is necessary before dealing with the direct evidence to make the positions of those concerned clear. The plaintiff is a Theosophist of thirty years' standing and has been Assistant Correspondence Secretary of the Esoteric Branch at the Adyar Headquarters of the Society. His devotion to its leaders and ordinary principles may therefore be assumed. Before his retirement from Government employment on a pension of Rs. 112-8-0 per mensem he held a responsible appointment as the head of the inferior Revenue Service. There is accordingly some presumption in favour of his honesty; and in fact the only defect, which the defendant would attribute to him, is a liability to unthinking outbreaks of passion. His letters and evidence do not suggest that he is a man of any special intelligence or was in any particular degree fitted to cope with the difficult position complicated by considerations of religion and delicacy, in which he was placed. It will be material in the sequel that his profession would lead him into habits of subordination to and trust in European superiors which would naturally prevail in his subsequent relations with the defendant and Leadbeater. The defendant is the President of the Society; and two things are clear from the mass of literature, which has been exhibited, and from the evidence. Firstly though there may be a body of dissident opinion

and though the tenets of the Society may not require it, the defendant is in fact regarded, not merely as deserving the most extreme veneration, but as almost infallible by many of her supporters. Exhibit F. exemplifies this clearly; and none the less so, because the defendant in argument expressed regret that it should have been published, since in fact it was printed at the Society's press and is sold publicly. It is a notice accompanying her portrait and it ends:—"Whether you understand her or not, you will have to follow her explicitly, just because she knows..... I have stood before your President in the presence of the Supreme Director of Evolution on this globe, and I know whereof I speak." Secondly, this defendant is convinced that, if certain conditions are fulfilled, the body of the elder minor, Krishnamurthi, will be used by an expected world Teacher, a reincarnation of the Being known as the Lord Jesus or Maitreya. This is admitted, and it is not necessary to quote regarding it for this object. Leadbeater is the writer of Exhibit F. His views on one subject are correctly described in the judgment under appeal. Besant says that he is spiritually her equal. He holds the meetings of the Esoteric Branch in her absence. She was ready to accept as correct the description of him as an *arhul*, or superhuman being. In Ex. G. she said that he stood perhaps the most trusted of his Master's disciples on the threshold of divinity, though she attempted to attenuate the meaning of the last expression in argument, as having not esoteric sense. Leadbeater in evidence accepted a high degree of spiritual eminence, and it is not disputed that he shares defendant's views as to Krishnamurthi, performed his first initiation in January 1910 and assisted at the other

in June 1912. In these circumstances the plaintiff cannot be expected to support any portion of his case against these two persons with the evidence of principal witnesses, who belong to Adyar, were (consciously or unconsciously) committed to corroborate her and would adopt no higher standard than hers in order to do so.

What her standard of conduct is appears from the evidence as to the circumstances, in which the understanding above referred to was reached. Plaintiff's dissatisfaction had culminated on 28th December 1911 in consequence of the ceremony of the Order of the Star of the East, described in Ex. C. He had accordingly complained to Mrs. Van Hook, and he saw the defendant on the 31st December. It is the defendant's own account that he then claimed separation of the minors from Leadbeater. Her intention, she says, had been to fulfill engagements in England and to return in April and then to withdraw for Krishnamurthi's second initiation to the Nilgiris or Kashmere. But on or about 13th January 1912 Wadia telegraphed that a warrant was likely to be applied for against Leadbeater. It is explained that he meant an injunction against defendant; but there is no reason for supposing that she interpreted the telegram in that way. Mr. Leadbeater left for England on the 13th January, although as Biswas said uncontradicted a course of lectures by him up to the 21st has been announced. Besant explains that there had been no previous idea of his going and that she sent him to find a place for the initiation ceremony in Sicily. The plaintiff had returned to Adyar early in January, and 20th January, the day of her arrival there, she had an interview with him, at which he began by again insisting on separation from Leadbeater.

It is the result of the interview, which (as stated above) is in dispute. Firstly, it seems to me that the resulting understanding whether the plaintiff's or the defendant's account of it is correct, was reached in consequence of the defendant's concealment of a material fact. It may be doubtful how far the departure of Leadbeater was due to fear of legal proceedings or to the merely Theosophical necessity for resort to some place, in which the initiation could be effected without interference. But it is quite clear, not only, (as the defendant admits) that she did not tell the plaintiff where Leadbeater was, but that she was intentionally silent regarding him. The plaintiff says that on the 19th January she told him that she had on his account sent Leadbeater to go where he liked, and there is nothing to contradict this or make it improbable. In Ex. A.A. I on the 13th January, the date of Leadbeater's departure, she referred to the plaintiff's statement that he would be satisfied, if she took the boys to Europe and said that despite the unnecessary expense and for the sake of peace she had taken tickets for them. On this evidence two points call for notice. It would have been one thing for the plaintiff to allege that an immediate separation had been effected and that, no special or early return of Leadbeater being known as probable, she would give no undertaking for the future : but it was quite another for her to make that reservation, as she did, with the full intention that Leadbeater should re-join her party within four months and should be closely associated with it. And further in Ex. A.A., (and there is nothing to modify this in the evidence) she made a pretence of having complied with the plaintiff's wishes and taken the boys to Europe against her will when thereby she was really effecting the object

she had in mind from beginning. She may have been able to justify this conduct to herself in the light of her great enthusiasm. But, judged by ordinary standards, she deviated from common honesty.

And this is material, not merely with reference to her duty to the plaintiff and in connection with the decision as to the terms of the understanding, but also as regards the presumption in favour of her trustworthiness, on which we have been invited to act in other connections. The understanding was arrived at on the 19th January 1912 by the plaintiff and the defendant in the presence of Sir Subramania Iyer, Vice-President of the Society and three other Indian gentlemen, who either hold office or are residents at Adyar. There is on the one side the evidence of the defendant and these gentlemen that reservation as to the future was made, and on the other that of the plaintiff and the fact that Ex. XI, purporting to be a note of what was agreed on and signed by the defendant and her supporters, contains no reference to any. It has been pressed on us in argument that the learned Judge's finding for the plaintiff entails that Sir Subramania Aiyar and these gentlemen deliberately committed perjury, and therefore cannot be adopted. But it is quite unnecessary to take this extreme view. For, the question is only the result of an informal conversation, regarding which an honest mistake or failure of memory might easily occur. It may be that there was some talk of the future, as the defendant's witnesses allege. But it does not follow that any terms of the understanding dealt with it, and it is unlikely that any did so. Firstly, there is the improbability that the plaintiff, who made a concession as to association with Leadbeater in the defendant's presence, would ha

yielded further to an extent, which deprived the understanding of all practical value. For, it is admitted that there was an understanding and not an unconditional surrender. Next, it is unlikely that this reservation, the plaintiff's consent to which was as much a concession as any other term of the agreement, would not have been placed on record in Ex. XI ; and it is impossible to understand the defendant's statement that she wrote this document in order to make her position clear and took down the one point she wanted, legally. The purpose for which Ex. XI was drawn up, is not clear. For it was read to the plaintiff, and he was not asked to sign it, though according to Sir Subramania Iyer it was being written by the defendant, whilst the conversation went on. It is significant that it was signed by no one until after the plaintiff's departure. Sir Subramania Aiyar says that until the defendant read out the draft, he did not know that she was making record at all. He is clear that the document was intended only to assist the defendant's memory, not to be an accurate record, admitting that he did not consider the effect of each of its sentences. He and the other witnesses are uncertain even as to the two points mentioned in it. None of these witnesses is alleged to have taken part in the conversation except Sir Subramaniam who repeated some of the defendant's questions and obtained answers to them from the plaintiff.

The evidence in fact indicates, and it is also probable, that the defendant alone really conducted the transaction. Sir Subramaniam and others taking no independent part and in consequence of her ascendancy over them accepting (more or less consciously) her account. This does not rest merely on the general consideration as to her position

already referred to. Her letter dated the 28th February 1912 to the witness Wadia was admitted by consent in this Court. It was produced by her for another purpose. But it shows that a month later during her voyage she thought it necessary to call on him "to make a mental note" that she had made no promise to the plaintiff as to the future. This letter came before the Court accidentally. But if the defendant thought it legitimate to make such a suggestion to one of her witnesses, it is possible that she has done so in writing or orally to others on this and (it may be added) other parts of the case. Something may have been said during the conversation of the future. But in face of the omission of reference to it from Ex. XI and in view of the defects in the defendant's evidence, I must accept the learned Judge's finding that no reservation regarding it was part of the understanding and consequently the understanding was broken.

The learned Judge's discussion of the two incidents specified in the plaintiff's particulars ended only in a decision that they did not occur, and it is only by implication that he can be held to have decided that the plaintiff did not allege them honestly and in good faith. For his judgment does not deal separately with the latter point. I at once agree with his conclusion that the incidents were not established, since as regards each the direct evidence was that of one witness only and the corroboration for it was insufficient to justify an affirmative finding. But the plaintiff's good faith cannot be dealt with so shortly. Each party, however, claims a decision on it. The plaintiff maintains it on the ground for reversal of the learned Judge's order directing him to pay the defendant's costs against which he has filed his memorandum of objection.

The defendant is interested in negating it on the ground that his conduct in intentionally making cruel and unfounded charges against the elder minor will disqualify him for the guardianship. She further, if I understood her rightly, argued that the making of the allegations, even if they were sustained or if they were held not to be proved, would alone be sufficient to disqualify the plaintiff in the former event because the result might be the elder minor's prosecution and in the latter because of the pain to his feelings. But, apart from the improbability of any prosecution at the instance of either the Crown or any individual except that of Leadbeater, the principal offender, it is sufficient reason for restricting the enquiry to the question of good faith that otherwise no parent or guardian would take action except at the risk of losing the custody of his child or ward.

It had been observed that the learned Judge dealt with that question only by implication and without separating it from the question whether the incidents alleged actually occurred. It is possible to deal shortly with one matter, which influenced him, the changes at different stages, in the way in which the incidents were described. These incidents can be referred to conveniently as plaintiff's and Luxman's, since plaintiff or Luxman was the only eye-witness in each case. The three stages in question are the original and amended complaints and the particulars given by the Court's direction after issues had been framed. It should be noted that there is no question of any prejudice to the defendant, since the evidence went to establish, if anything less, not more than was alleged in the particulars the final form of plaintiff's case. It is not necessary to set out the actual variations, since they will

be clear on reference to the documents. No doubt it is remarkable that plaintiff, who had legal advice from the beginning, should have vacilated as he had done. But it does not follow that the conclusion as to his good faith must be affected. These changes in his case would, if they were due to concoction, in no way improve it. His incident had been described by him to Mrs. Van Hook (*vide* judge's notes for details) in December 1911, that is before the first plaint, and the description given there agrees with the particulars. As regards Lakshman's incident we have not plaintiff's account of the earliest information he received, that given him by various defendant's witnesses at Adyar, because (rightly or wrongly) a question to him on the point was disallowed. But we have it from Bhagavan Das examined by plaintiff on commission that Luxman's replies to his questions in December 1911 involved that Leadbeater and Krishna were seen together in suspicious and indecent circumstances, though there was nothing amounting to an attempt to commit an unnatural offence. Bhagavan Das is not one of defendant's sympathisers, but she does not suggest that he would give false evidence intentionally. The point is that throughout the trial, when actual details have been in question plaintiff has not claimed that a stronger case has been established than that to which he was committed by his own and Luxman's statement in December 1911 before his relations with defendant became strained, or his pleadings were drawn or the variations in them began. It is next material that even in cross-examination he attempted to maintain that his description of both incidents and the particulars was correct, when it must have been obvious at least to any person acquainted with the la

that such an attempt would be futile. And in these circumstances the simplest explanation and that which I accept is, not that these incidents have been intentionally described wrongly in a useless manner which could only frustrate any illegitimate object, but that plaintiff and his advisers really spoke of unnatural offences and of any attempt to commit one loosely and ignorantly. The fact that plaintiff had been a Magistrate does not make this improbable. During my own service as Sessions Judge and Magistrate, no charges of an offence of this description has come before my own Court or any Court subordinate to it ; and such charges are so rare in Madras that plaintiff may very probably have never had to apply his mind to the law relating to them.

The question of the fact is not, whether plaintiff had evidence on which he could reasonably expect to convince a Court of the truth of his charges, but whether he honestly believed when he made them that they were true. The defendant's case is that they are not true and that they may be founded on two occurrences, which took place on dates earlier than those given by plaintiff. Thus in the particulars the dates assigned for plaintiff's incident is the second week in April 1910 and in argument an attempt has been made to fix it on the 16th. In the original plaint the date was given as March 1910. Defendant would identify the incident with that happened late in 1909. Lakshman's incident is referred to in the particulars as in December 1910. The first plaint fixes it indefinitely by reference to other facts as before August 1910 and the second is even more obscure. Defendant contends for December 1909. If the question were only directly of plaintiff's good faith, I should not consider the

The original has not been produced, and there is only Leadbeater's recollection that it was sent on the 19th. It is certain only that it was not received by defendant later than that date, since she replied to it by Ex.Y6. On the 18th, Leadbeater had Ex.Y 5 referred to plaintiff as having a bad fit of his insanity "two days earlier." It is on this that plaintiff suggests the 16th as the date of his incident ; and it was only, when discovery of Ex. Y6 was given, that this date could be ascertained. Plaintiff's writing a "long and crazy letter" to the witness Wadia is also mentioned ; but Wadia cannot remember receiving it. On the 20th in Ex.Y6 Leadbeater told defendant that all was quiet again and referred to the assistance of Wadia and the Judge, Sir Subramania Iyer. On the 21st in Ex.Y8 he mentioned the recent "disturbance" and the gratitude of his superhuman guide for the help they and Clarke, another Theosophist, had given. Three Indian residents at Adyar say that plaintiff had a cart ready on the 19th morning and was about to remove his sons, when Sir Subramania Iyer was brought by Clarke and pacified him, offering to take the boys to his own house and induced him to join in a telegram to defendant, that she need not be anxious. When so much is admitted, it is easy to accept the evidence of plaintiff's witness, Subramaniam, that he and others were asked to guard the boys' room at night on the 17th or 19th, though Wadia denies this. That something of considerable gravity involving opposition to Leadbeater, took place about the 16th, is clear.

It is significant that though Leadbeater's letters to defendant are not alleged to be incomplete, they do not contain the explanation for what occurred on which

defendant mainly relies here ; nor, though defendant was asked in the telegram to take a three days' railway journey, is there anything definite as to the form, assumed by the disturbance, or as to the attempted removal. Ex Y5 refers to one of the explanations, on which defendant relies, as separately or cumulatively sufficient, plaintiff's discovery that the boys were taking milk in the morning. As Leadbeater says plaintiff had known of their doing so for some time, and it is inconceivable that this was his motive. Defendant admits that she was told nothing regarding the milk on her return. There is then the fact that Leadbeater had taken the boys to the Seven Pagodas, on a two days' excursion, starting on the 10th without plaintiff's permission. But that would not account for the strong measures taken by him or for the explanation not earlier than the 16th. The chief explanation suggested is an incident relating the boys' evening meal on the 18th, described by Leadbeater in his evidence. But this again does not explain the fit of madness referred to in Ex Y5, as having occurred on the 16th ; and, as Leadbeater describes it, it was wholly insufficient to account for what followed. In order to do so defendant thought it fair to ask this Court to assure that the boys were incited by Leadbeater to break their caste at their meal by eating improperly cooked food, a proceeding, at which plaintiff would naturally be indignant. It is astonishing that she should have done so when she had made no such suggestion before the learned Judge in evidence or otherwise, and when, as Mrs. Van Hook's evidence shows, the boys had already taken the food cooked by her. Of the witnesses, Wadia and Sitarama Sastri referred, but only generally, to the Seven Pagodas and the evening meal ; and Subbiah Chetty, who

mentioned neither, gave a different account to which I shall return. Sir Subramania Iyer said that next day plaintiff complained to him only of not being allowed to take the boys to their meal, though he also may have said that they were too much with Leadbeater. There is, of course, no doubt, that his evidence is correct; and plaintiff's failure to impart his real grievance to Sir Subramaniam requires explanation. Sir Subramania Aiyar himself said, however that from what he heard in his house he thought it was a very grave matter, but that, when he reached the spot, plaintiff had quieted down. It is possible that those on the spot induced plaintiff not to discredit them and Leadbeater, by complaining to a superior, who would have insisted on full enquiry. It is further possible that a person of plaintiff's comparatively low standing fear to speak out to a gentleman, who had officiated as Chief Justice of this Presidency, but whose impartiality he may have ignorantly suspected owing to his association with the defendant and his admitted friendship with Leadbeater since 1884.

To support the occurrence of an earlier incident which defendant suggests as the foundation for plaintiff's accusation, there is (1) the evidence of Wadia, Sitaram Sastri and Subbiah Chetti regarding his statements to them as to an occurrence on some date earlier than April 1910, and Exhibit A, the letter of guardianship; (2) defendant's own evidence of a conversation between he and plaintiff about February, 1910. As regards (1) the evidence of these witnesses is very general as to date and they took singularly little interest in the matter, no one thinking it necessary to tell Leadbeater what was being said against him. Sitarama Sastri was told

plaintiff of the incident, when it occurred. But his only action was, when consulted as an old friend regarding the draft of Ex. A, to advise him "to make Leadbeater's matter certain." He and Wadia say that they heard of the incident before Ex. A. But Subbiah Chetty, who admitted that he was told by plaintiff in April, 1910, (consistently with his case) of his having seen something nasty with Leadbeater, said once that plaintiff referred to it as on the previous night and afterwards that he referred to it as three or four months earlier. These witnesses made a point of plaintiff's having mentioned seeing the younger minor shivering in the verandah, this being consistent with a date in December. But this shivering has never been part of plaintiff's own account ; and if the reference to it had not been introduced by the witnesses intentionally, it may be due to their mistaken adoption of 'shivering' as the translation of some vernacular word in the conversations, which have probably taken place between them. It is material that the Tamil for shivering and trembling is the same. Evidence of this description from witnesses who are (as already observed) subject to defendant's influence and suggestions is useless. Defendant has relied also on the statement of plaintiff's witness, Bhagavan Das, that plaintiff told him of the incident as about two years before their conversation, which was not earlier than December, 1911. But this also is highly indefinite. So far the attempt to support any reference by plaintiff to a date earlier than Ex. A. has failed. As regards (2), the conversation with defendant herself, it can be considered after Lakshman's incident, to which also it referred has been dealt with.

As regards that incident plaintiff is, of course, at a great disadvantage, because he heard of it only at second hand sometime after its occurrence, and because the fact that Lakshman was and is defendant's servant has been good reason for plaintiff's not obtaining information from him direct. The evidence as to what he saw, which has been available to plaintiff is therefore necessarily (in the absence of the minors) that of persons, who can say what Lakshman told them, either at the time of the incident or later, that is of those who may be called conveniently the Adyar and Benares witnesses, the latter referring to a statement alleged to have been made by Lakshman in March, 1912. Something was said in argument of the admissibility of each of these classes of evidence in plaintiff's favour. The incident alleged in plaintiff's particulars was in December 1909. The Adyar witnesses, it was suggested spoke to Lakshman's previous statements only as to a different incident, one referred by them as earlier than March of that year, a date covered by Lakshman's present indefinite testimony; and it is accordingly argued that the evidence of these witnesses does corroborate any testimony by Lakshman regarding an incident which plaintiff desired to prove, and is therefore not admissible under S. 157, Indian Evidence Act. The answer as regards these witnesses is that, whether the occurrence of the incident or plaintiff's good faith information regarding it are in question, he relies, not on the date statedly given, but on his ability to show, by reference to other parts of the depositions that it was not falsely, if not, that the date really entailed by other depositions of this evidence is affirmatively consistent with the case. In the former event statements by Lakshman

an exceptional incident, which is not alleged to have been repeated and which could not have been confounded with any other, would be available; and the data given being disproved and the question of the right date at least open, corroboration of some value would remain.

The Benares witnesses spoke to no statement by Lakshman at or about the time when the incident is alleged to have taken place, and therefore their evidence would not have been admissible with reference to its occurrence. It would, however, it seems to me, have been on the same footing as that of the Adyar witnesses with reference to plaintiff's good faith, the connection in which, it is to be supposed, the learned Judge required plaintiff to enumerate these witnesses in his particulars. It is not necessary to deal further with the evidence of the Benares witnesses, because the circumstances in which Lakshman's statements are alleged to have been made to them, render it intrinsically useless. In January 1912, defendant telegraphed to her Benares agent to exclude Lakshman from her bungalow, and Lakshman came in distress to one Upendra Babu, who was at the time with the witness, Miss Edgar, and told the former what the latter afterwards understood to be the story of his incident. Again in March, 1912, he came to speak to Upendra in the presence of Miss Edgar and two other witnesses, Shanker and Biswas, on business, and again told them his story. Miss Edgar does not know the Vernacular in which Lakshman spoke. All of these persons are of the party opposed to defendant in the Theosophical Society. They made no record of what Lakshman said. In these circumstances their recollection is of insignificant value. I therefore do not detail the peculiarities of their version. They may be due to their

or Lakshman's bad memory, or to an attempt by the latter to mislead the opponent of his mistress.

It is another of plaintiff's disabilities that, when he was under examination question of his good faith appears to have been lost sight of and, presumably on that account, defendant's objection to his being asked what the Adyar witnesses told him was sustained. There is then on plaintiff's side only the evidence of Bhagavan Das, which is admissible in the same way as that of the Benares witnesses, though it must be distinguished from theirs as to credit. For his status is higher, and though he is sceptical as to recent Theosophical developments under defendant's direction, he is not openly opposed to her, and his interview with Lakshman took place in December 1911, before plaintiff had become openly hostile. Lakshman, he says, told him that in the previous year he had seen no attempt to commit, an unnatural offence, but Leadbeater and Krishnan in sufficiently indecent and suspicious circumstances. The date referred to, is, it should be noted, consistent with plaintiff's case. For further evidence, it has been pointed out, plaintiff must necessarily rely on persons, who are adherents of defendant, the Adyar witnesses already referred to in connection with his own incident and the understanding and Mr. Schwarz, Treasurer of the Society and a member of the Order of the Star of the East. All of them are accordingly in this matter also subject to defendant's influence, and such suggestion, from her of any fact of the truth of which she has persuaded herself, as one of them, Wadia actually received regarding the understanding in the letter of 28th February, 1912, already referred to. And in these circumstances it is surprising how much is available from

them in support of plaintiff's case as to the date and the facts.

It is no doubt from the case that none of the witnesses, refers to any detailed statement as to facts by Lakshman and the fact that some of them did not know his language may be material. But on the other hand it is difficult to see why Lakshman should have refused details to Wadia, who did know it and asked for them especially if the incident was of the comparatively innocent nature, which (it will be seen) defendant suggests. And it is significant that none of the others hinted at any doubt as to the correctness of his understanding of what occurred. Wadia said that in November or December, 1909, Lakshman came and told him in the presence of Subbiah that a bad thing had happened, but would give no details. As Wadia could not get them from Lakshman, he went to Schwarz, who (he understood) had also been told. Wadia explained. "I have common sense and, when he said that a bad thing happened in Mr. Leadbeater's room, I connected with it both Mr. Leadbeater and the boys." Ranga Reddy's account is very short; he does not understand Hindustani, but recognised the word "karab" (bad) and he and Subbiah, who was with him, understood that Lakshman had seen something bad of Mr. Leadbeater with the boys. He fixed the date as November or December, 1909, but gave no reason for doing so. According to Subbiah also at the same time Lakshman came and told him that the old gentlemen (Leadbeater) did a bad thing, explaining what he meant that Krishnan was without his clothes in his room. He was clear that this could not have happened after June, 1910, because he was then transferred to

another section of the Government Department in which he is employed. He admitted, however, that in the intervals between his tours he was at Adyar. It should then have been possible for him to show that he was not there at the time alleged by plaintiff for the incident by official records, but he has not done so. When plaintiff told him of his own incident in April, 1910, he told plaintiff of Lakshman's as similar to it. Schwarz regarding whose ignorance of Hindustani there is nothing in evidence, thought that Lakshman spoke to him two or three years before he gave evidence in April 1918 but finally adopted the latter figure. He deposed that Lakshman told him of questionable conduct of Leadbeater with the boys and according to Wadia described the incident to him as something sexual. I have, as far as possible, adopted the actual words of the witnesses, because it is important that the great extent, to which they corroborate plaintiff's allegation of an immoral occurrence should be understood. As to the date their statements include nothing by which they can be checked and are of small value when the independence of the deponent cannot be assumed.

It is in Lakshman's own evidence that the clear indication as to the date is to be found. He says that he told the witnesses just referred to what he had seen the day after. But their evidence contains no suggestion regarding such delay. If it took place, the fact only accentuates his opinion as to the gravity of what he saw. His account now is that Krishna was standing naked in front of Leadbeater, who was naked below his shirt, and had his knee on a chair and his hand on Krishna's head and differed only from the evidence of Bhagavan Das as to his statements.

in December, 1911, by the omission of the detail as to Leadbeater's hand. He could not give the year or month in which this happened. He also, however, said that he then thought this was a sinful action, and that it was so bad that he told Subbiah and the others. He then went on, and this is most important, " Krishna had great name and fame, and what would people think if they saw this? I thought they should not have been together in that room. I knew that Krishna was being brought up by the defendant." Now, so far as Lakshman's presence at Adyar is concerned, he was there in December of both 1909 and 1910, and plaintiff's date is not more probable than defendant's. But this statement by Lakshman fixes the incident he saw as about the latter, since it entails that it cannot have been earlier than March, 1910. It was only in the course of December, 1909, that defendant first saw the boys on her return from her tour. Leadbeater had no doubt already proposed to be responsible for their education in England. But, as he says, he merely thought that " they would be useful for any philanthropic work." There is nothing to show that Krishna's vocation was common knowledge until at least shortly before his initiation early in January. It was only in February that defendant discussed her proposal to be the guardian of the minors with plaintiff and only in March that she became guardian under Ex. A. It is therefore impossible for Lakshman to have regarded Krishna as having great fame or being brought up by defendant at the time, which she alleged, December, 1909. He must, therefore have seen what he saw, as plaintiff contends, in December 1910. This is the only important fact in his evidence or in Ex. VII, a statement giving an

account of the incident similar to that given above, except that Krishna's naked condition is not mentioned. It is very short and was made in defendant's presence on 29th January, 1912. The suggestions against its authenticity were not in my opinion established; but it added nothing to the case on either side.

I now turn to defendant's case that two innocent occurrences prior to March, 1910, are the foundation, on which plaintiff's complaints as to his own and Lakshman's incidents have been based. It is further part of her case that plaintiff spoke of those two incidents to her in February, 1910, in the course of a conversation as to her assuming the guardianship. She says that he described Lakshman's incident much as Lakshman does now, except that he did not say Leadbeater's hand was on Krishna's head and that he did not tell her what he had seen in Leadbeater's room but only that it was something nasty which he would not particularise. In the end he said it was not necessary to question Leadbeater and signed Ex. A. without further demur. Plaintiff denies such a conversation in February, 1910, but admits one after his return in April 1910. He then, he says, told her that he had seen Leadbeater doing something nasty with Krishna and that the former had a nasty sexual appetite and that she must be separated from the boys. Defendant in consequence promised that the boys should have separate bathtubs, rooms and should study in her room or verandah.

Firstly as to the conversation. If the finding is that it took place in February, 1910, the prejudice to plaintiff's case will no doubt be serious. The burden of proof of this date is on the defendant and there is no evidence except hers to set against the plaintiff's denial. S

has produced no memorandum or entry, in her diary to show that such a conversation took place in February. The plaintiff no doubt is not alleged to have insisted or any reference to Leadbeater at the time. But, whether his exact words as to Leadbeater's conduct, and I do not think there is much material difference between the defendant's version of them and his, it would have been natural for her to mention the matter to Leadbeater at once. Such mention, I should have supposed, would have been particularly admissible in view of Krishna's vocation and Leadbeater's past history, and it may be observed here that the admitted conduct not only of the defendant, but also of all the Adyar witnesses. In hearing allegations by the plaintiff and Lakshman regarding Leadbeater's relations with Krishna without taking any particular action must attract suspicion, if not censure since they all must have known of the former's expulsion from the Society and its cause. The defendant however is not alleged to have made enquiry of Leadbeater at the time or, as will be stated, until December, 1911. Lastly there is the fact that this conversation and its date were referred to first in the defendant's evidence. This is important, because in her original written statement, which was full and argumentative she referred to the plaintiff's objection to her taking over the boys, as based only on Leadbeater's growing influence over them; and in her shorter amended written statement she said that he never complained of any impropriety on the part of Leadbeater or objected to his associating with his sons. Her explanation, that she did not connect the plaintiff's admitted reference to something nasty with any impropriety or indecency is weak. Her conduct in connection with the understanding showed

that no presumption could be drawn in her favour, where the fate of the minors was in question. In the circumstances it is not possible to disregard the plaintiff's denial and find in favour of this conversation or its date on the evidence. The conversation in April 1910, which plaintiff alleges, is important in connection generally with his good faith and fitness for the guardianship, though not directly as evidence regarding the occurrence of the incidents. It may not be clear from the evidence whether it was or was not followed by a change, immediate or deferred, in the boys' bath room or the separation from Leadbeater during their studies, which plaintiff says that he obtained. The latter would probably have in any case followed on the defendant's return to Adyar to some extent. That a conversation, in which Leadbeater's connection with the boys referred to, took place is admitted by the defendant. As to its terms only her statement and the plaintiff's evidence are available and therefore no finding is possible except that it is consistent with the probability and the circumstances that the plaintiff's account is the nearer to the truth.

The defendant's explanation for the plaintiff's charges that they are founded on two innocent incidents, which actually occurred, can be dealt with shortly. She says that later she asked Leadbeater what could have given rise to these unpleasant ideas, and that, when he could suggest nothing, she asked whether he had ever washed the boys. She speaks of these enquiries as made after she heard of the plaintiff's complaint to Mrs. Van Hook and that the date is consistent with the date accepted by Leadbeater as December 1911. But there is nothing to explain why she suggested this washing as the explanation. For Mrs. Van Hook's account of what the plaintiff said to her

way indicates it and she does not refer to any other account as in her possession. Leadbeater admitted that he had twice washed Krishna in English fashion, that is naked, and had cleaned his head with carbolic soap : and this, it is urged, is really what the plaintiff and Lakshman saw. Now Mrs. Van Hook says that Leadbeater, did take the boys into his bath room and he would teach them to bathe like gentlemen, though there is nothing to identify the occasion she spoke of, with either of the two, to which Leadbeater referred. But it is rather improbable that an English gentleman, aged sixty five like Leadbeater, would himself perform and not merely supervise, this menial and unpleasant work. And it is remarkable (1) that on each of the two occasions of his doing so he should have been interrupted by a person, who misconstrued what was going on ; (2) that he should have had nothing to say in evidence of either interruption and should have apparently not noticed it. If, however, this story is not a mere afterthought, and if these washings really took place, it is still impossible to connect them with the plaintiff's and Lakshman's indignation. Manu, we have been told, forbade one man to bathe or appear naked in the presence of another ; but we have been shown no reason for believing that that like others among his prohibitions, has not lost its original sanctity, or is at the present day regarded as more than a rule of good manners and ordinary decency. The breach of such a rule would so far as I am aware and so far as we have been shown, entail no caste or religious disability and would in the case of a boy of fifteen be met appropriately by a warning or slight correction. Certainly the importance of the matter would be utterly incommensurate with the effect produced on.

Lakshman, a Sudra and not likely to be punctilious in such matters, who yet thought it necessary to give information, not only to the more important Hindus, in the compound, but also to Schwarz a European. There is the further improbability involved in his failure to inform the plaintiff, the fittest person to administer the warning above referred to, or to take the simple course of pointing out to Leadbeater that his proceedings were open to objection or asking some more important person to do so. This explanation, as a whole, in fact attracts additional suspicion to Wadia's statement that Lakshman would not particularise what he had seen, and to Lakshman's introduction into his otherwise extremely meagre evidence and statement, Ex. VII, of a reference to the position of Leadbeater's hand on Krishna's hair, a detail designed to corroborate the story that it was being cleaned :—If this part of the defendant's case is in any degree true, it is still impossible to connect it with either plaintiff's or Lakshman's incident.

That closes such detailed examination of the evidence as seems to me practicable or necessary. Other matters, no doubt, weighed with the learned Judge, the exclusion by the routine in force at Adyar of the possibility that time could be available for the incidents and the publicity of Leadbeater's room. Something also has been said here of the impossibility of the plaintiff having seen what he alleges from where he says that he was or with the light available. But all this comes to very little. The routine was spoken of as comprehensive. But it cannot be presumed that it was invariably observed with absolute or even comparative punctuality by every one. The incidents were short, and as regards one of them it was Leadbeater himself, who

the defendant's absence was responsible for strictness. Regarding the actual publicity of his room and the risk he would run at the time in question there is no definite evidence. The argument from the plaintiff's inability to see what he alleges appears to me to be available, only because insufficient attention was paid to the point at the trial. For his ability to see Leadbeater and the boy depended on exact position at or near the doorway, regarding which nothing is available or would be expected and when he maintained that, though the doors were shut, there was sufficient light, the matter was not cleared up by his being asked to reconcile the two statements, one possibility being that the doors he referred to were the wire doors, also mentioned.

There remains the argument against plaintiff's case and his good faith, that if he had had the knowledge he now alleges of both incidents it cannot be supposed that he would have allowed Leadbeater to continue to associate with his sons and would not have attempted to terminate the guardianship earlier, and in the alternative it is urged that if he acquiesced with full knowledge, he is unfit for the guardianship himself. It is no doubt possible that his consent has been in some degree foolish and weak. But I do not think that the conclusions proposed follow from what has been proved. It would have been useless earlier, as it has proved useless now, for him to make his charges against a person of Leadbeater's position with only his own evidence in support of one of them and only that of a hostile witness in support of the other. And it is to be doubted from such indications of the defendant's attitude, as this case affords, whether anything less than the formal establishment of the charges and even the order of a Court would have induced her to

abandon the minors. It was only after the process of deification of Krishna had made progress and its effect and tendency made grew clear, that material of any practical value for a repudiation of Exhibit A and an attack on the defendant became available; and it was only that process reaching the point indicated by the ceremony described in Exhibit C that the plaintiff took action by his disclosure to Mrs. Van Hook and conversation with the defendant. Before and after that he had to weigh advantages, those to be secured by acquiescence being considerable. Probably for sometime at least he was gratified by his sons' repudiation and the respect he himself enjoyed. He had also to consider the great material advantages the minors and himself from the defendant's assumption of responsibility for their future. Throughout on the occasion already referred to he had been asking for their separation from Leadbeater and he mentions others, on which he obtained what he might fairly regard as equivalent to such separation, the defendant's protection of the minors and their constant association with her, except for short periods from April 1910 until December 1911. It was such a separation, which he pressed for in January 1912 and which in qualified form he thought he had been promised. When he found that the defendant's promise had been broken in Sicily, he took action by his notice of the 1st July 1912 without I think, undue delay. His suit was brought in October. It is suggested in the judgment under appeal that his charges are merely a revival of those made in 1906 against Leadbeater in order to justify the repudiation of Exhibit A and were instigated by interested persons, who have financed him. But this takes

account of the weakness of the available evidence for those charges and the impossibility of sustaining the case until (as observed above) more was available to support it ; or the absence of evidence of any communication between the plaintiff and his financial supporter before December, 1911, when the charges were first made. It is not necessary to assume that the plaintiff is a person of particularly refined sentiment or decision of character, and it is not in my opinion difficult to conceive his acting as he did in spite of his knowledge or necessary to hold that he disqualified himself for the guardianship by doing so.

We have no doubt dealt with the case at some disadvantage since we have not had the learned Judge's opportunity of hearing and seeing the witnesses. But that is of the less moment, because they were all, except Lakshman, educated persons of mature age and some position, and inference from their demeanour would be indecisive, and because it is on the admissions of the defendant's witnesses and on admitted facts that argument has mainly proceeded. In the absence of the minors the direct evidence of each incident, which the plaintiff could adduce, was limited, and in view of the defendant's influence and proved conduct unbiassed in direct corroboration could not be looked for. Yet, in support of his own evidence as to one incident he has shown that his conduct at the time was consistent, if not necessarily with his allegations in detail, yet only with some occurrence of equal gravity. As regards the other he could not be expected to rely on the only direct evidence, that of the defendant's servant. Yet even that evidence included indications that what he saw was not merely grave but consisted inreprehensibly indecent conduct ; and those

indications were repeated more distinctly in the evidence of the unfavorable Adyar witnesses, the defendant's adherents. On the other hand the defendant's attempt to prove at other innocent occurrences on other dates before Exhibit A were the foundations, on which the plaintiff's charges were founded and her attempt to show that his subsequent conduct has been irreconcilable with his belief in the truth of those charges have failed. And, accordingly he must be held to have proved as much as the circumstances admitted of his proving and as the Court should require. So far as the materials available justify a conclusion, it is in the plaintiff's favour. He has established in my opinion that he acted on an honest belief, if not literally on the charges as they were made in the particulars, yet in a substantial foundation for them. And therefore I hold that grounds of appeal Nos. 27 and 28 have not been substantiated and that the learned Judge's order as to costs is not justified.

I would therefore concur in dismissing the appeal with costs and, allowing the memorandum of objection with costs, would modify the decree by making each party liable for his and her costs in the Court of first instance.