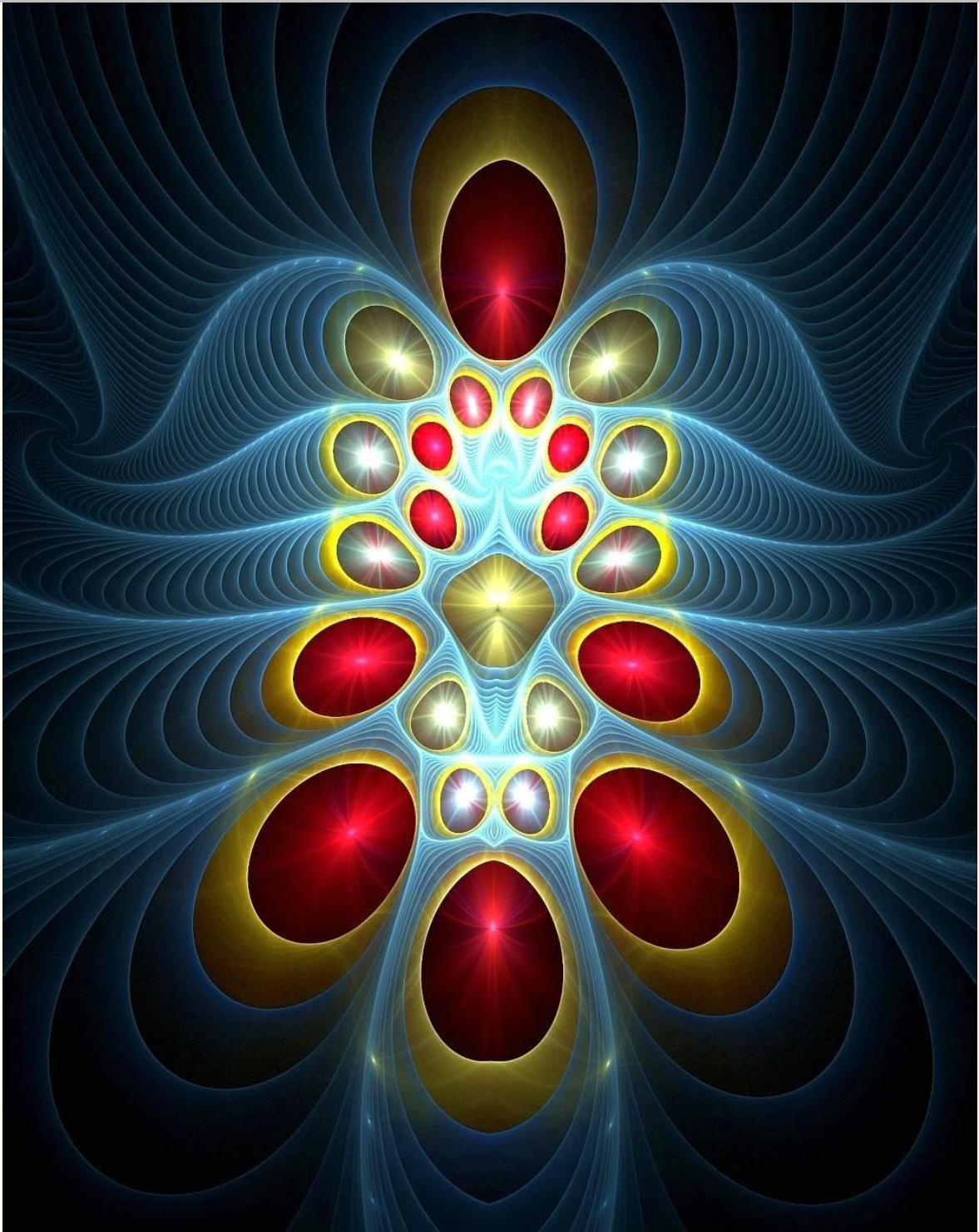


*Madame Blavatsky and
coevals on how the “Light
on the Path” was written.*



Abstract and train of thoughts¹

Use of the physical senses as a stepping-stone to spirituality is fraught with danger and disappointment.

Warning by Boris de Zirkoff.

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What is “Light on the Path”?

It is a treatise written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within Its influence.

Authored by Mabel Collins, nom de plume of Kenningale R. Cook.

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Part 1. Twenty-one rules

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Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears.

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Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness.

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Before the Voice can speak in the presence of the Masters.

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Before the Voice can speak in the presence of the Masters, it must have lost the power to wound.

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Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters, its feet must be washed in the Blood of the Heart.

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The sparkle of that precious jewel, “Light on the Path,” has been dimmed by an indelible dark stain.

Mabel Collins may have been “studying” Madame Blavatsky for a time but she never “studied under” her, as she claims to have done.

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Madame Blavatsky is the origin and fountainhead of all Esoteric Knowledge, and has the means and the necessary knowledge to teach.

First, out of the blue, Dr. Coues proudly proclaimed himself “Perpetual President of the Esoteric Theosophical Society of America.”

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¹ Illustrations on front page and page 36, by Pajokar.

He then began casting slurs upon Madame Blavatsky and upon the Section of which she is the Head, in order to destroy one through the other. 39

Supporting extracts from “Lucifer,” “Light,” and elsewhere.

Attention, Theosophists! A little more “Light on the Path” for your benefit. 43

For a woman to confess to the world that she has been deliberately deceiving it for years, simply for the pleasure of fathering the cause of a deception upon a supposed enemy, is a psychic riddle in itself. 48

A timely witness, Mrs. C.A. Passingham

The Religio-Philosophical Journal is neither religious nor philosophical. 50

Those whom god wishes to destroy, he first deprives of reason. 51

Addendum by Mr. W.Q. Judge

While the one publicly proclaimed her own untruthfulness in order to slander a hated enemy, the other jumped at the opportunity to gratify his wounded vanity at the cost of breaking the pledge and his word of honour to the Theosophical Society, which he took upon joining it. 58

Members of the Inner Group of Theosophists are pledged by a vow of silence and secrecy to their Higher Self. 60

Official Notice

Suggested reading for students.

From our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. 63

Further reading for students.

Blavatsky defends the Cause of Truth and its detractors. 65



Use of the physical senses as a stepping-stone to spirituality is fraught with danger and disappointment.¹

[Atma-Vidya or Knowledge of the Spiritual Soul] . . . is the only kind of Occultism that any theosophist who admires *Light on the Path*, and who would be wise and unselfish, ought to strive after. This little book — a true jewel — belongs to, and emanates from the same school of Indo-Aryan and Buddhist thought and learning as the teachings in *The Secret Doctrine*.

— HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY²

Warning by Boris de Zirkoff.³

The manner in which *Light on the Path* was written is told by Mabel Collins herself in the tenth chapter of her booklet called *When the Sun Moves Northward*,⁴ wherein only students with spiritual discrimination will most likely discern between symbolic statements, imaginative superstructure, and actual facts. By the end of 1886, *Light on the Path* was republished with additional Notes, which, though remarkable in themselves, are not on the same lofty level with the original rules. It was not, however, until the magazine *Lucifer* was started by H.P. Blavatsky in London, in September, 1887, that the “Comments” on *Light on the Path* began to appear in its pages, in separate instalments, all signed by the usual Triangle; they were published in the issues of September, October, November, 1887, and January, 1888. Many subsequent editions of this booklet have been published since.

At a later date, Mabel Collins told John W. Lovell that only the 42 rules had been given her in the manner described by her, and that the Notes and Comments were her own, and not dictated by anyone.⁵

Even at an early period in the work of the Movement, objections had been raised to one specific sentence in *Light on the Path*, in Rule 20 of the First Section, wherein it says:

“Seek [the way] by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own [inmost] being. Seek it by testing all experience, by utilizing the senses in order to understand the growth and meaning of individuality, and the beauty

¹ [Note to Students: Animalism and sensuality must be subdued and tamed before the inner eye can see all that is true and pure. Otherwise the aspirant will not be able to benefit from the spiritualizing influence of his higher principles. — ED. PHIL.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS) IX p. 252 & (LITERARY JOTTINGS) X p. 235

³ Compiler and Editor of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*.

⁴ London: Theos. Publ. Soc., 1912. 183 pp.; also, 1923. [Full text in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁵ Cf. John W. Lovell, “Reminiscences of Early Days of the Theosophical Society,” *The Canadian Theosophist*, Vol. X, June 1929, p. 106

and obscurity of those other divine fragments which are struggling side by side with you, and form the race to which you belong. . . .”

This was held by some to be unethical advice, even though the “Notes” published later amplify this thought and state:

“Seek it by testing all experience, and remember that when I say this I do not say, Yield to the seductions of sense in order to know it. Before you have become an occultist you may do this; but not afterwards. . . .”

Even Blavatsky herself considered the sentence first quoted as *dangerous*, and spoke of Rule 20 as one:

“ . . . whose Occult venom and close relationship to Tantrika Black Magic has never been suspected by the innocent and sincere admirers of this otherwise priceless little book, *the main body of which only* was dictated by a true Adept, and the rest added from the inner consciousness of Miss Mabel Collins. . . .”¹

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF²



¹ Letter of H.P. Blavatsky to J.R. Bridge, sometime in 1889. Cf. *The Theosophical Forum*, Point Loma, California., Vol. XXII, September 1944, pp. 419-20

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) VIII pp. 429-30

What is “Light on the Path”?

It is a treatise written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within Its influence.

Authored by Mabel Collins, nom de plume of Kenningale R. Cook.

M.C. (Mabel Collins, nom de plume of Kenningale R. Cook). *Light on the Path & Essay on Karma*. 1st ed., London: Reeves & Turner, 1885 (two parts, each consisting of 21 rules; subsequent editions contain Notes by the author); 2nd ed., London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1885; 3rd ed., Boston: Cupples, Uphma & Co, 1886. Many other editions by various publishers.

Author's Notes are placed here as footnotes; her Comments, originally published in *Lucifer*, Vol. I, 1887-88, are also included in this edition. Paragraphs in her essay on Karma and Comments upon the 42 Rules are numbered for ease of reference.

For a thorough biography of the author, by Boris de Zirkoff, see his *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) VIII pp. 424-34. Also consult the second section in this compilation, “The sparkle of that precious jewel, *Light on the Path*, has been dimmed by an indelible dark stain,” p. 34 *et. seq.* — ED. PHIL.



Part 1. Twenty-one rules

These rules are written for all disciples: Attend you to them.

Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness. Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound. Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

- 1 Kill out ambition.¹
- 2 Kill out desire of life.
- 3 Kill out desire of comfort.
- 4 Work as those work who are ambitious.

Respect life as those do who desire it. Be happy as those are who live for happiness.

Seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it. It lives fruitfully in the heart of the devoted disciple as well as in the heart of the man of desire. Only the strong can kill it out. The weak must wait for its growth, its fruition, its death. And it is a plant that lives and increases throughout the ages. It flowers when the man has accumulated unto himself innumerable existences. He who will enter upon the path of power must tear this thing out of his heart. And then the heart will bleed, and the whole life of the man seem to be utterly dissolved. This ordeal must be endured; it may come at the first step of the perilous ladder which leads to the path of life: it may not come until the last. But, O disciple, remember that it has to be endured: and fasten the energies of your soul upon the task. Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the eternal. This giant weed cannot flower there: this blot upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought.

- 5 Kill out all sense of separateness.²

¹ Ambition is the first curse: the great tempter of the man who is rising above his fellows. It is the simplest form of looking for reward. Men of intelligence and power are led away from their higher possibilities by it continually. Yet it is a necessary teacher. Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth; like death and estrangement it shows the man at last that to work for self is to work for disappointment. But though this first rule seems so simple and easy, do not quickly pass it by. For these vices of the ordinary man pass through a subtle transformation and reappear with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple. It is easy to say, I will not be ambitious: it is not so easy to say, when the Master reads my heart he will find it clean utterly. The pure artist who works for the love of his work is sometimes more firmly planted on the right road than the occultist, who fancies he has removed his interest from self, but who has in reality only enlarged the limits of experience and desire, and transferred his interest to the things which concern his larger span of life. The same principle applies to the other two seemingly simple rules. Linger over them and do not let yourself be easily deceived by your own heart. For now, at the threshold, a mistake can be corrected. But carry it on with you and it will grow and come to fruition, or else you must suffer bitterly in its destruction.

² Do not fancy you can stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man. They are yourself, though in a less degree than your friend or your master. But if you allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow up within you, by so doing you create Karma, which will bind you to that thing or person till your soul recognizes that it cannot be isolated. Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame; for you are a part of it; your Karma is inextricably interwoven with the great Karma. And before you can attain knowledge you must have passed through all places, foul and clean alike. Therefore, remember that the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow. And if you turn

- 6 Kill out desire for sensation.
- 7 Kill out the hunger for growth.
- 8 Yet stand alone and isolated, because nothing that is imbodyed, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the eternal, can aid you. Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge, and plant your foot on the first step of the ladder. Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal. But it must be the eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity, in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature.
- 9 Desire only that which is within you.
- 10 Desire only that which is beyond you.
- 11 Desire only that which is unattainable.
- 12 For within you is the light of the world — the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. It is beyond you; because when you reach it you have lost yourself. It is unattainable, because it for ever recedes. You will enter the light, but you will never touch the flame.
- 13 Desire power ardently.
- 14 Desire peace fervently.
- 15 Desire possessions above all.
- 16 But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul, that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life which is your only true self. The peace you shall desire is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb, and in which the soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoons. And that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.
- 17 Seek out the way.¹

with horror from it, when it is flung upon your shoulders, it will cling the more closely to you. The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire. Abstain because it is right to abstain — not that yourself shall be kept clean.

¹ These four words seem, perhaps, too slight to stand alone. The disciple may say, Should I study these thoughts at all did I not seek out the way? Yet do not pass on hastily. Pause and consider awhile. Is it the way you desire, or is it that there is a dim perspective in your visions of great heights to be scaled by yourself, of a great future for you to compass? Be warned. The way is to be sought for its own sake, not with regard to your feet that shall tread it.

There is a correspondence between this rule and the 17th of the 2nd series. When after ages of struggle and many victories the final battle is won, the final secret demanded, then you are prepared for a further path. When the final secret of this great lesson is told, in it is opened the mystery of the new way — a path which leads out of all human experience, and which is utterly beyond human perception or imagination. At each of these points it is needful to pause long and consider well. At each of these points it is necessary to be sure that the way is chosen for its own sake. The way and the truth come first, then follows the life.

- 18** Seek the way by retreating within.
- 19** Seek the way by advancing boldly without.
- 20** Seek it not by any one road. To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onward. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder. The vices of men become steps in the ladder, one by one, as they are surmounted. The virtues of man are steps indeed, necessary — not by any means to be dispensed with. Yet, though they create a fair atmosphere and a happy future, they are useless if they stand alone. The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and, by the force of his awakened spiritual will, recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. When he knows that for this his wonderful complex separated life exists, then, indeed, and then only, he is upon the way. Seek it by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. Seek it by testing all experience, by utilizing the senses¹ in order to understand the growth and meaning of individuality, and the beauty and obscurity of those other divine fragments which are struggling side by side with you, and form the race to which you belong. Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of nature, the laws of the supernatural: and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way. And when you have found the end its light will suddenly become the infinite light.²

¹ [Note to Students: if you have reached this point without having read de Zirkoff's warning on p. 2, please do so now before continuing. Also consult discussion by "Blavatsky and coevals on how *Light on the Path* was written" at the end of this document, for as Judge and Keightley pointed out, "This is not the first time that evil passion has used the arts of detraction and treason to check the progress of the Society and impair the influence of the Founders." — ED. PHIL.]

² Seek it by testing all experience, and remember that when I say this I do not say, Yield to the seductions of sense in order to know it. Before you have become an occultist you may do this; but not afterwards. When you have chosen and entered the path you cannot yield to these seductions without shame. Yet you can experience them without horror: can weigh, observe and test them, and wait with the patience of confidence for the hour when they shall affect you no longer. But do not condemn the man that yields; stretch out your hand to him as a brother pilgrim whose feet have become heavy with mire. Remember, O disciple, that great though the gulf may be between the good man and the sinner, it is greater between the good man and the man who has attained knowledge; it is immeasurable between the good man and the one on the threshold of divinity. Therefore be wary lest too soon you fancy yourself a thing apart from the mass. When you have found the beginning of the way the star of your soul will show its light; and by that light you will perceive how great is the darkness in which it burns. Mind, heart, brain, all are obscure and dark until the first great battle has been won. Be not appalled and terrified by this sight; keep your eyes fixed on the small light and it will grow. But let the darkness within help you to understand the helplessness of those who have seen no light, whose souls are in profound gloom. Blame them not, shrink not from them, but try to lift a little of the heavy Karma of the world; give your aid to the few strong hands that hold back the powers of darkness from obtaining complete victory. Then do you enter into a partnership of joy, which brings indeed terrible toil and profound sadness, but also a great and ever-increasing delight.

21 Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm: not till then.

It shall grow, it will shoot up, it will make branches and leaves and form buds, while the storm continues, while the battle lasts. But not till the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted — not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience — not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its higher self, can the bloom open. Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after the heavy rain, when Nature works so swiftly that one may see her action. Such a calm will come to the harassed spirit. And in the deep silence the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found. Call it by what name you will, it is a voice that speaks where there is none to speak — it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance; or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by any metaphor. But it can be felt after, looked for, and desired, even amid the raging of the storm. The silence may last a moment of time or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. It is only for an interval that Nature can be still.

These written above are the first of the rules which are written on the walls of the Hall of Learning. Those that ask shall have. Those that desire to read shall read. Those who desire to learn shall learn.¹

Peace be with you.

¹ The opening of the bloom is the glorious moment when perception awakes: with it comes confidence, knowledge, certainty. The pause of the soul is the moment of wonder, and the next moment of satisfaction, that is the silence.

Know, O disciple, that those who have passed through the silence, and felt its peace and retained its strength, they long that you shall pass through it also. Therefore, in the Hall of Learning, when he is capable of entering there, the disciple will always find his master.

Those that ask shall have. But though the ordinary man asks perpetually, his voice is not heard. For he asks with his mind only; and the voice of the mind is only heard on that plane on which the mind acts. Therefore, not until the first twenty-one rules are past do I say those that ask shall have.

To read, in the occult sense, is to read with the eyes of the spirit. To ask is to feel the hunger within — the yearning of spiritual aspiration. To be able to read means having obtained the power in a small degree of gratifying that hunger. When the disciple is ready to learn, then he is accepted, acknowledged, recognized. It must be so, for he has lit his lamp, and it cannot be hidden. But to learn is impossible until the first great battle has been won. The mind may recognize truth, but the spirit cannot receive it. Once having passed through the storm and attained the peace, it is then always possible to learn, even though the disciple waver, hesitate, and turn aside. The voice of the silence remains within him, and though he leave the path utterly, yet one day it will resound and rend him asunder and separate his passions from his divine possibilities. Then with pain and desperate cries from the deserted lower self he will return.

Therefore I say, Peace be with you. My peace I give unto you can only be said by the Master to the beloved disciples who are as himself. There are some even among those who are ignorant of the Eastern wisdom to whom this can be said, and to whom it can daily be said with more completeness.

Regard the three truths. They are equal.

Part 2.

Twenty-one rules

Out of the silence that is peace a resonant voice shall arise. And this voice will say, It is not well; thou hast reaped, now thou must sow. And knowing this voice to be the silence itself thou wilt obey.

Thou who art now a disciple, able to stand, able to hear, able to see, able to speak, who hast conquered desire and attained to self-knowledge, who hast seen thy soul in its bloom and recognized it, and heard the voice of the silence, go thou to the Hall of Learning and read what is written there for thee.¹

- 1 Stand aside in the coming battle, and though thou fightest be not thou the warrior.
- 2 Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee.
- 3 Take his orders for battle and obey them.
- 4 Obey him not as though he were a general, but as though he were thyself, and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires; for he is thyself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself. Look for him, else in the fever and hurry of the fight thou mayest pass him; and he will not know thee unless thou knowest him. If thy cry meet his listening ear, then will he fight in thee and fill the dull void within. And if this is so, then canst thou go through the fight cool and unwearied, standing aside and letting him battle for thee. Then it will be impossible for thee to strike one blow amiss. But if thou look not for him, if thou pass him by, then there is no safeguard for thee. Thy brain will reel, thy heart grow uncertain, and in the dust of the battlefield thy sight and senses will fail, and thou wilt not know thy friends from thy enemies.

He is thyself, yet thou art but finite and liable to error. He is eternal and is sure. He is eternal truth. When once he has entered thee and become thy warrior, he will never utterly desert thee, and at the day of the great peace he will become one with thee.

- 5 Listen to the song of life.²

¹ To be able to stand is to have confidence; to be able to hear is to have opened the doors of the soul; to be able to see is to have attained perception; to be able to speak is to have attained the power of helping others; to have conquered desire is to have learned how to use and control the self; to have attained to self-knowledge is to have retreated to the inner fortress from whence the personal man can be viewed with impartiality; to have seen thy soul in its bloom is to have obtained a momentary glimpse in thyself of the transfiguration which shall eventually make thee more than man; to recognize is to achieve the great task of gazing upon the blazing light without dropping the eyes and not falling back in terror, as though before some ghastly phantom. This happens to some, and so when the victory is all but won it is lost; to hear the voice of the silence is to understand that from within comes the only true guidance; to go to the Hall of Learning is to enter the state in which learning becomes possible. Then will many words be written there for thee, and written in fiery letters for thee easily to read. For when the disciple is ready the Master is ready also.

² Look for it and listen to it first in your own heart. At first you may say it is not there; when I search I find only discord. Look deeper. If again you are disappointed, pause and look deeper again. There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced — but it is there. At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope, and love. He that chooses evil refuses to look within himself, shuts his ears to the melody of his heart, as he blinds his eyes to the light of his soul. He does this

- 6 Store in your memory the melody you hear.
- 7 Learn from it the lesson of harmony.
- 8 You can stand upright now, firm as a rock amid the turmoil, obeying the warrior who is thyself and thy king. Unconcerned in the battle save to do his bidding, having no longer any care as to the result of the battle, for one thing only is important, that the warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat — standing thus, cool and awakened, use the hearing you have acquired by pain and by the destruction of pain. Only fragments of the great song come to your ears while yet you are but man. But if you listen to it, remember it faithfully, so that none which has reached you is lost, and endeavour to learn from it the meaning of the mystery which surrounds you. In time you will need no teacher. For as the individual has voice, so has that in which the individual exists. Life itself has speech and is never silent. And its utterance is not, as you that are deaf may suppose, a cry: it is a song. Learn from it that you are part of the harmony; learn from it to obey the laws of the harmony.
- 9 Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you.
- 10 Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men.¹
- 11 Regard most earnestly your own heart.
- 12 For through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes.
- 13 Study the hearts of men, that you may know what is that world in which you live and of which you will to be a part. Regard the constantly changing and moving life which surrounds you, for it is formed by the hearts of men; and as you learn to understand their constitution and meaning, you will by degrees be able to read the larger word of life.

Speech comes only with knowledge. Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech.²

because he finds it easier to live in desires. But underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality. Find them, and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it, however he blind himself to the fact and build up for himself a phantasmal outer form of horror. In that sense it is that I say to you — All those beings among whom you struggle on are fragments of the Divine. And so deceptive is the illusion in which you live, that it is hard to guess where you will first detect the sweet voice in the hearts of others. But know that it is certainly within yourself. Look for it there, and once having heard it, you will more readily recognize it around you.

¹ From an absolutely impersonal point of view, otherwise your sight is collared. Therefore impersonality must first be understood.

Intelligence is impartial: no man is your enemy: no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers. Your enemy becomes a mystery that must be solved, even though it take ages: for man must be understood. Your friend becomes a part of yourself, an extension of yourself, a riddle hard to read. Only one thing is more difficult to know — your own heart. Not until the bonds of personality are loosed, can that profound mystery of self begin to be seen. Not till you stand aside from it will it in any way reveal itself to your understanding. Then, and not till then, can you grasp and guide it. Then, and not till then, can you use all its powers, and devote them to a worthy service.

² It is impossible to help others till you have obtained some certainty of your own. When you have learned the first 21 rules and have entered the Hall of Learning with your powers developed and sense unchained, then you will find there is a fount within you from which speech will arise.

After the 13th rule I can add no words to what is already written. →

- 14** Having obtained the use of the inner senses, having conquered the desires of the outer senses, having conquered the desires of the individual soul, and having obtained knowledge, prepare now, O disciple, to enter upon the way in reality. The path is found: make yourself ready to tread it.
- 15** Inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold for you. The development of your inner senses will enable you to do this.
- 16** Inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you. The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.
- 17** Inquire of the inmost, the one, of its final secret which it holds for you through the ages.

The great and difficult victory, the conquering of the desires of the individual soul, is a work of ages; therefore expect not to obtain its reward until ages of experience have been accumulated. When the time of learning this seven-teenth rule is reached, man is on the threshold of becoming more than man.

- 18** The knowledge which is now yours is only yours because your soul has become one with all pure souls and with the inmost. It is a trust vested in you by the Most High. Betray it, misuse your knowledge, or neglect it, and it is possible even now for you to fall from the high estate you have attained. Great ones fall back, even from the threshold, unable to sustain the weight of their responsibility, unable to pass on. Therefore look forward always with awe and trembling to this moment, and be prepared for the battle.
- 19** It is written that for him who is on the threshold of divinity no law can be framed, no guide can exist. Yet to enlighten the disciple, the final struggle may be thus expressed:
- Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence.
- 20** Listen only to the voice which is soundless.
- 21** Look only on that which is invisible alike to the inner and the outer sense.

Peace be with you.

My peace I give unto you. △

These notes are written only for those to whom I give my peace; those who can read what I have written with the inner as well as the outer sense.

Essay on Karma by the Author

- 1 Consider with me that the individual existence is a rope which stretches from the infinite to the infinite and has no end and no commencement, neither is it capable of being broken. This rope is formed of innumerable fine threads, which, lying closely together, form its thickness. These threads are colourless, are perfect in their qualities of straightness, strength, and levelness. This rope, passing as it does through all places, suffers strange accidents. Very often a thread is caught and becomes attached, or perhaps is only violently pulled away from its even way. Then for a great time it is disordered, and it disorders the whole. Sometimes one is stained with dirt or with colour, and not only does the stain run on further than the spot of contact, but it discolours other of the threads. And remember that the threads are living — are like electric wires, more, are like quivering nerves. How far, then, must the stain, the drag awry, be communicated! But eventually the long strands, the living threads which in their unbroken continuity form the individual, pass out of the shadow into the shine. Then the threads are no longer colourless, but golden; once more they lie together, level. Once more harmony is established between them; and from that harmony within the greater harmony is perceived.
- 2 This illustration presents but a small portion — a single side of the truth: it is less than a fragment. Yet, dwell on it; by its aid you may be led to perceive more. What it is necessary first to understand is, not that the future is arbitrarily formed by any separate acts of the present, but that the whole of the future is in unbroken continuity with the present as the present is with the past. On one plane, from one point of view, the illustration of the rope is correct.
- 3 It is said that a little attention to occultism produces great Karmic results. That is because it is impossible to give any attention to occultism without making a definite choice between what are familiarly called good and evil. The first step in occultism brings the student to the tree of knowledge. He must pluck and eat; he must choose. No longer is he capable of the indecision of ignorance. He goes on, either on the good or on the evil path. And to step definitely and knowingly even but one step on either path produces great Karmic results. The mass of men walk waveringly, uncertain as to the goal they aim at; their standard of life is indefinite; consequently their Karma operates in a confused manner. But when once the threshold of knowledge is reached, the confusion begins to lessen, and consequently the Karmic results increase enormously, because all are acting in the same direction on all the different planes: for the occultist cannot be half-hearted, nor can he return when he has passed the threshold. These things are as impossible as that the man should become the child again. The individuality has approached the state of responsibility by reason of growth; it cannot recede from it.
- 4 He who would escape from the bondage of Karma must raise his individuality out of the shadow into the shine; must so elevate his existence that these threads do not come in contact with soiling substances, do not become so attached as to be pulled awry. He simply lifts himself out of the region in which Karma operates. He does not leave the existence which he is experiencing because of that. The ground

may be rough and dirty, or full of rich flowers whose pollen stains, and of sweet substances that cling and become attachments — but overhead there is always the free sky. He who desires to be Karmaless must look to the air for a home; and after that to the ether. He who desires to form good Karma will meet with many confusions, and in the effort to sow rich seed for his own harvesting may plant a thousand weeds, and among them the giant. Desire to sow no seed for your own harvesting; desire only to sow that seed the fruit of which shall feed the world. You are a part of the world; in giving it food you feed yourself. Yet in even this thought there lurks a great danger which starts forward and faces the disciple, who has for long thought himself working for good, while in his inmost soul he has perceived only evil; that is, he has thought himself to be intending great benefit to the world while all the time he has unconsciously embraced the thought of Karma, and the great benefit he works for is for himself. A man may refuse to allow himself to think of reward. But in that very refusal is seen the fact that reward is desired. And it is useless for the disciple to strive to learn by means of checking himself. The soul must be unfettered, the desires free. But until they are fixed only on that state wherein there is neither reward nor punishment, good nor evil, it is in vain that he endeavours. He may seem to make great progress, but some day he will come face to face with his own soul, and will recognize that when he came to the tree of knowledge he chose the bitter fruit and not the sweet; and then the veil will fall utterly, and he will give up his freedom and become a slave of desire. Therefore be warned, you who are but turning toward the life of occultism. Learn now that there is no cure for desire, no cure for the love of reward, no cure for the misery of longing, save in the fixing of the sight and hearing upon that which is invisible and soundless. Begin even now to practice it, and so a thousand serpents will be kept from your path. Live in the eternal.

- 5 The operations of the actual laws of Karma are not to be studied until the disciple has reached the point at which they no longer affect himself. The initiate has a right to demand the secrets of nature and to know the rules which govern human life. He obtains this right by having escaped from the limits of nature and by having freed himself from the rules which govern human life. He has become a recognized portion of the divine element, and is no longer affected by that which is temporary. He then obtains a knowledge of the laws which govern temporary conditions. Therefore you who desire to understand the laws of Karma, attempt first to free yourself from these laws; and this can only be done by fixing your attention on that which is unaffected by those laws.

Comments by the Author

Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears.

- 1 It should be very clearly remembered by all readers of this volume that it is a book which may appear to have some little philosophy in it, but very little sense, to those who believe it to be written in ordinary English. To the many, who read in this manner it will be — not *caviare* so much as olives strong of their salt. Be warned and read but a little in this way.
- 2 There is another way of reading, which is, indeed, the only one of any use with many authors. It is reading, not between the lines but within the words. In fact, it is deciphering a profound cipher. All alchemical works are written in the cipher of which I speak; it has been used by the great philosophers and poets of all time. It is used systematically by the adepts in life and knowledge, who, seemingly giving out their deepest wisdom, hide in the very words which frame it its actual mystery. They cannot do more. There is a law of nature which insists that a man shall read these mysteries for himself. By no other method can he obtain them. A man who desires to live must eat his food himself: this is the simple law of nature — which applies also to the higher life. A man who would live and act in it cannot be fed like a babe with a spoon; he must eat for himself.
- 3 I propose to put into new and sometimes plainer language parts of Light on the Path; but whether this effort of mine will really be any interpretation I cannot say. To a deaf and dumb man, a truth is made no more intelligible if, in order to make it so, some misguided linguist translates the words in which it is couched into every living or dead language, and shouts these different phrases in his ear. But for those who are not deaf and dumb one language is generally easier than the rest; and it is to such as these I address myself.
- 4 The very first aphorisms of Light on the Path, included under Number I. have, I know well, remained sealed as to their inner meaning to many who have otherwise followed the purpose of the book.
- 5 There are four proven and certain truths with regard to the entrance to occultism. The Gates of Gold bar that threshold; yet there are some who pass those gates and discover the sublime and illimitable beyond. In the far spaces of Time all will pass those gates. But I am one who wish that Time, the great deluder, were not so over-masterful. To those who know and love him I have no word to say; but to the others — and there are not so very few as some may fancy — to whom the passage of Time is as the stroke of a sledge-hammer, and the sense of Space like the bars of an iron cage, I will translate and re-translate until they understand fully.
- 6 The four truths written on the first page of Light on the Path, refer to the trial initiation of the would-be occultist. Until he has passed it, he cannot even reach to the latch of the gate which admits to knowledge. Knowledge is man's greatest inheritance; why, then, should he not attempt to reach it by every possible road? The laboratory is not the only ground for experiment; science, we must remember, is derived from *sciens*, present participle of *scire*, "to know," — its origin is

similar to that of the word “discern,” “to ken.” Science does not therefore deal only with matter, no, not even its subtlest and obscurest forms. Such an idea is born merely of the idle spirit of the age. Science is a word which covers all forms of knowledge. It is exceedingly interesting to hear what chemists discover, and to see them finding their way through the densities of matter to its finer forms; but there are other kinds of knowledge than this, and it is not every one who restricts his (strictly scientific) desire for knowledge to experiments which are capable of being tested by the physical senses.

- 7 Everyone who is not a dullard, or a man stupefied by some predominant vice, has guessed, or even perhaps discovered with some certainty, that there are subtle senses lying within the physical senses. There is nothing at all extraordinary in this; if we took the trouble to call Nature into the witness box we should find that everything which is perceptible to the ordinary sight, has something even more important than itself hidden within it; the microscope has opened a world to us, but within those encasements which the microscope reveals, lies a mystery which no machinery can probe.
- 8 The whole world is animated and lit, down to its most material shapes, by a world within it. This inner world is called Astral by some people, and it is as good a word as any other, though it merely means starry; but the stars, as Locke pointed out, are luminous bodies which give light of themselves. This quality is characteristic of the life which lies within matter; for those who see it, need no lamp to see it by. The word star, moreover, is derived from the Anglo-Saxon “stir-an,” to steer, to stir, to move, and undeniably it is the inner life which is master of the outer, just as a man’s brain guides the movements of his lips. So that although Astral is no very excellent word in itself, I am content to use it for my present purpose.
- 9 The whole of Light on the Path is written in an astral cipher and can therefore only be deciphered by one who reads astrally. And its teaching is chiefly directed towards the cultivation and development of the astral life. Until the first step has been taken in this development, the swift knowledge, which is called intuition with certainty, is impossible to man. And this positive and certain intuition is the only form of knowledge which enables a man to work rapidly or reach his true and high estate, within the limit of his conscious effort. To obtain knowledge by experiment is too tedious a method for those who aspire to accomplish real work; he who gets it by certain intuition, lays hands on its various forms with supreme rapidity, by fierce effort of will; as a determined workman grasps his tools, indifferent to their weight or any other difficulty which may stand in his way. He does not stay for each to be tested — he uses such as he sees are fittest.
- 10 All the rules contained in Light on the Path, are written for all disciples, but only for disciples — those who “take knowledge.” To none else but the student in this school are its laws of any use or interest.
- 11 To all who are interested seriously in Occultism, I say first — take knowledge. To him who hath shall be given. It is useless to wait for it. The womb of Time will close before you, and in later days you will remain unborn, without power. I

therefore say to those who have any hunger or thirst for knowledge, attend to these rules.

- 12 They are none of my handicraft or invention. They are merely the phrasing of laws in super-nature, the putting into words truths as absolute in their own sphere, as those laws which govern the conduct of the earth and its atmosphere.
- 13 The senses spoken of in these four statements are the astral, or inner senses.
- 14 No man desires to see that light which illumines the spaceless soul until pain and sorrow and despair have driven him away from the life of ordinary humanity. First he wears out pleasure; then he wears out pain — till, at last, his eyes become incapable of tears.
- 15 This is a truism, although I know perfectly well that it will meet with a vehement denial from many who are in sympathy with thoughts which spring from the inner life. To see with the astral sense of sight is a form of activity which it is difficult for us to understand immediately. The scientist knows very well what a miracle is achieved by each child that is born into the world, when it first conquers its eyesight and compels it to obey its brain. An equal miracle is performed with each sense certainly, but this ordering of sight is perhaps the most stupendous effort. Yet the child does it almost unconsciously, by force of the powerful heredity of habit. No one now is aware that he has ever done it at all; just as we cannot recollect the individual movements which enabled us to walk up a hill a year ago. This arises from the fact that we move and live and have our being in matter. Our knowledge of it has become intuitive.
- 16 With our astral life it is very much otherwise. For long ages past, man has paid very little attention to it — so little, that he has practically lost the use of his senses. It is true, that in every civilization the star arises, and man confesses, with more or less of folly and confusion, that he knows himself to be. But most often he denies it, and in being a materialist becomes that strange thing, a being which cannot see its own light, a thing of life which will not live, an astral animal which has eyes, and ears, and speech, and power, yet will use none of these gifts. This is the case, and the habit of ignorance has become so confirmed, that now none will see with the inner vision till agony has made the physical eyes not only unseeing, but without tears — the moisture of life. To be incapable of tears is to have faced and conquered the simple human nature, and to have attained an equilibrium which cannot be shaken by personal emotions. It does not imply any hardness of heart, or any indifference. It does not imply the exhaustion of sorrow, when the suffering soul seems powerless to suffer acutely any longer; it does not mean the deadness of old age, when emotion is becoming dull because the strings which vibrate to it are wearing out. None of these conditions are fit for a disciple, and if any one of them exist in him it must be overcome before the path can be entered upon. Hardness of heart belongs to the selfish man, the egotist, to whom the gate is for ever closed. Indifference belongs to the fool and the false philosopher; those whose lukewarmness makes them mere puppets, not strong enough to face the realities of existence. When pain or sorrow has worn out the keenness of suffering, the result is a lethargy not unlike that which accompanies old age, as

it is usually experienced by men and women. Such a condition makes the entrance to the path impossible, because the first step is one of difficulty and needs a strong man, full of psychic and physical vigour, to attempt it.

- 17** It is a truth, that, as Edgar Allan Poe said, the eyes are the windows for the soul, the windows of that haunted palace in which it dwells. This is the very nearest interpretation into ordinary language of the meaning of the text. If grief, dismay, disappointment or pleasure, can shake the soul so that it loses its fixed hold on the calm spirit which inspires it, and the moisture of life breaks forth, drowning knowledge in sensation, then all is blurred, the windows are darkened, the light is useless. This is as literal a fact as that if a man, at the edge of a precipice, loses his nerve through some sudden emotion he will certainly fall. The poise of the body, the balance, must be preserved, not only in dangerous places, but even on the level ground, and with all the assistance Nature gives us by the law of gravitation. So it is with the soul, it is the link between the outer body and the starry spirit beyond; the divine spark dwells in the still place where no convulsion of Nature can shake the air; this is so always. But the soul may lose its hold on that, its knowledge of it, even though these two are part of one whole; and it is by emotion, by sensation, that this hold is loosed. To suffer either pleasure or pain, causes a vivid vibration which is, to the consciousness of man, life. Now this sensibility does not lessen when the disciple enters upon his training; it increases. It is the first test of his strength; he must suffer, must enjoy or endure, more keenly than other men, while yet he has taken on him a duty which does not exist for other men, that of not allowing his suffering to shake him from his fixed purpose. He has, in fact, at the first step to take himself steadily in hand and put the bit into his own mouth; no one else can do it for him.
- 18** The first four aphorisms of Light on the Path, refer entirely to astral development. This development must be accomplished to a certain extent — that is to say it must be fully entered upon — before the remainder of the book is really intelligible except to the intellect; in fact, before it can be read as a practical, not a metaphysical treatise.
- 19** In one of the great mystic Brotherhoods, there are four ceremonies, that take place early in the year, which practically illustrate and elucidate these aphorisms. They are ceremonies in which only novices take part, for they are simply services of the threshold. But it will show how serious a thing it is to become a disciple, when it is understood that these are all ceremonies of sacrifice. The first one is this of which I have been speaking. The keenest enjoyment, the bitterest pain, the anguish of loss and despair, are brought to bear on the trembling soul, which has not yet found light in the darkness, which is helpless as a blind man is, and until these shocks can be endured without loss of equilibrium the astral senses must remain sealed. This is the merciful law. The “medium,” or “spiritualist,” who rushes into the psychic world without preparation, is a law-breaker, a breaker of the laws of super-nature. Those who break Nature’s laws lose their physical health; those who break the laws of the inner life, lose their psychic health. “Mediums” become mad, suicides, miserable creatures devoid of moral sense; and often end as unbelievers, doubters even of that which their own eyes have seen.

The disciple is compelled to become his own master before he adventures on this perilous path, and attempts to face those beings who live and work in the astral world, and whom we call masters, because of their great knowledge and their ability to control not only themselves but the forces around them.

- 20** The condition of the soul when it lives for the life of sensation as distinguished from that of knowledge, is vibratory or oscillating, as distinguished from fixed. That is the nearest literal representation of the fact; but it is only literal to the intellect, not to the intuition. For this part of man's consciousness a different vocabulary is needed. The idea of "fixed" might perhaps be transposed into that of "at home." In sensation no permanent home can be found, because change is the law of this vibratory existence. That fact is the first one which must be learned by the disciple. It is useless to pause and weep for a scene in a kaleidoscope which has passed.
- 21** It is a very well-known fact, one with which Bulwer Lytton dealt with great power, that an intolerable sadness is the very first experience of the neophyte in Occultism. A sense of blankness falls upon him which makes the world a waste, and life a vain exertion. This follows his first serious contemplation of the abstract. In gazing, or even in attempting to gaze, on the ineffable mystery of his own higher nature, he himself causes the initial trial to fall on him. The oscillation between pleasure and pain ceases for — perhaps an instant of time; but that is enough to have cut him loose from his fast moorings in the world of sensation. He has experienced, however briefly, the greater life; and he goes on with ordinary existence weighted by a sense of unreality, of blank, of horrid negation. This was the nightmare which visited Bulwer Lytton's neophyte in Zanon; and even Zanon himself, who had learned great truths, and been entrusted with great powers, had not actually passed the threshold where fear and hope, despair and joy seem at one moment absolute realities, at the next mere forms of fancy.
- 22** This initial trial is often brought on us by life itself. For life is after all, the great teacher. We return to study it, after we have acquired power over it, just as the master in chemistry learns more in the laboratory than his pupil does. There are persons so near the door of knowledge that life itself prepares them for it, and no individual hand has to invoke the hideous guardian of the entrance. These must naturally be keen and powerful organizations, capable of the most vivid pleasure; then pain comes and fills its great duty. The most intense forms of suffering fall on such a nature, till at last it arouses from its stupor of consciousness, and by the force of its internal vitality steps over the threshold into a place of peace. Then the vibration of life loses its power of tyranny. The sensitive nature must suffer still; but the soul has freed itself and stands aloof, guiding the life towards its greatness. Those who are the subjects of Time, and go slowly through all his spaces, live on through a long-drawn series of sensations, and suffer a constant mingling of pleasure and of pain. They do not dare to take the snake of self in a steady grasp and conquer it, so becoming divine; but prefer to go on fretting through divers experiences, suffering blows from the opposing forces.
- 23** When one of these subjects of Time decides to enter on the path of Occultism, it is this which is his first task. If life has not taught it to him, if he is not strong

enough to teach himself, and if he has power enough to demand the help of a master, then this fearful trial, depicted in Zaroni, is put upon him. The oscillation in which he lives, is for an instant stilled; and he has to survive the shock of facing what seems to him at first sight as the abyss of nothingness. Not till he has learned to dwell in this abyss, and has found its peace, is it possible for his eyes to have become incapable of tears.

Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness.

- 1 The first four rules of *Light on the Path* are, undoubtedly, curious though the statement may seem, the most important in the whole book, save one only. Why they are so important is that they contain the vital law, the very creative essence of the astral man. And it is only in the astral (or self-illuminated) consciousness that the rules which follow them have any living meaning. Once attain to the use of the astral senses and it becomes a matter of course that one commences to use them; and the later rules are but guidance in their use. When I speak like this I mean, naturally, that the first four rules are the ones which are of importance and interest to those who read them in print upon a page. When they are engraved on a man's heart and on his life, unmistakably then the other rules become not merely interesting, or extraordinary, metaphysical statements, but actual facts in life which have to be grasped and experienced.
- 2 The four rules stand written in the great chamber of every actual lodge of a living Brotherhood. Whether the man is about to sell his soul to the devil, like Faust; whether he is to be worsted in the battle, like Hamlet; or whether he is to pass on within the precincts; in any case these words are for him. The man can choose between virtue and vice, but not until he is a man; a babe or a wild animal cannot so choose. Thus with the disciple, he must first become a disciple before he can even see the paths to choose between. This effort of creating himself as a disciple, the re-birth, he must do for himself without any teacher. Until the four rules are learned no teacher can be of any use to him; and that is why "the Masters" are referred to in the way they are. No real masters, whether adepts in power, in love, or in blackness, can affect a man till these four rules are passed.
- 3 Tears, as I have said, may be called the moisture of life. The soul must have laid aside the emotions of humanity, must have secured a balance which cannot be shaken by misfortune, before its eyes can open upon the super-human world.
- 4 The voice of the Masters is always in the world; but only those hear it whose ears are no longer receptive of the sounds which affect the personal life. Laughter no longer lightens the heart, anger may no longer enrage it, tender words bring it no balm. For that within, to which the ears are as an outer gateway, is an unshaken place of peace in itself which no person can disturb.
- 5 As the eyes are the windows of the soul, so are the ears its gateways or doors. Through them comes knowledge of the confusion of the world. The great ones who have conquered life, who have become more than disciples, stand at peace and undisturbed amid the vibration and kaleidoscopic movement of humanity. They hold within themselves a certain knowledge, as well as a perfect peace; and thus they are not roused or excited by the partial and erroneous fragments of infor-

mation which are brought to their ears by the changing voices of those around them. When I speak of knowledge, I mean intuitive knowledge. This certain information can never be obtained by hard work, or by experiment; for these methods are only applicable to matter, and matter is in itself a perfectly uncertain substance, continually affected by change. The most absolute and universal laws of natural and physical life, as understood by the scientist, will pass away when the life of this universe has passed away, and only its soul is left in the silence. What then will be the value of the knowledge of its laws acquired by industry and observation? I pray that no reader or critic will imagine that by what I have said I intend to depreciate or disparage acquired knowledge, or the work of scientists. On the contrary, I hold that scientific men are the pioneers of modern thought. The days of literature and of art, when poets and sculptors saw the divine light, and put it into their own great language — these days lie buried in the long past with the ante-Phidian sculptors and the pre-Homeric poets. The mysteries no longer rule the world of thought and beauty; human life is the governing power, not that which lies beyond it. But the scientific workers are progressing, not so much by their own will as by sheer force of circumstances, towards the far line which divides things interpretable from things uninterpretable. Every fresh discovery drives them a step onward. Therefore do I very highly esteem the knowledge obtained by work and experiment.

- 6 But intuitive knowledge is an entirely different thing. It is not acquired in any way, but is, so to speak, a faculty of the soul; not the animal soul, that which becomes a ghost after death, when lust or liking or the memory of ill deeds holds it to the neighbourhood of human beings, but the divine soul which animates all the external forms of the individualized being.
- 7 This is, of course, a faculty which indwells in that soul, which is inherent. The would-be disciple has to arouse himself to the consciousness of it by a fierce and resolute and indomitable effort of will. I use the word indomitable for a special reason. Only he who is untameable, who cannot be dominated, who knows he has to play the lord over men, over facts, over all things save his own divinity, can arouse this faculty. "With faith all things are possible." The sceptical laugh at faith and pride themselves on its absence from their own minds. The truth is that faith is a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things. For it is the covenant or engagement between man's divine part and his lesser self.
- 8 The use of this engine is quite necessary in order to obtain intuitive knowledge; for unless a man believes such knowledge exists within himself how can he claim and use it?
- 9 Without it he is more helpless than any driftwood or wreckage on the great tides of the ocean. They are cast hither and thither indeed; so may a man be by the chances of fortune. But such adventures are purely external and of very small account. A slave may be dragged through the streets in chains, and yet retain the quiet soul of a philosopher, as was well seen in the person of Epictetus. A man may have every worldly prize in his possession, and stand absolute master of his personal fate, to all appearance, and yet he knows no peace, no certainty, be-

cause he is shaken within himself by every tide of thought that he touches on. And these changing tides do not merely sweep the man bodily hither and thither like driftwood on the water; that would be nothing. They enter into the gateways of his soul, and wash over that soul and make it blind and blank and void of all permanent intelligence, so that passing impressions affect it.

- 10** To make my meaning plainer I will use an illustration. Take an author at his writing, a painter at his canvas, a composer listening to the melodies that dawn upon his glad imagination; let any one of these workers pass his daily hours by a wide window looking on a busy street. The power of the animating life blinds sight and hearing alike, and the great traffic of the city goes by like nothing but a passing pageant. But a man whose mind is empty, whose day is objectless, sitting at that same window, notes the passers-by and remembers the faces that chance to please or interest him. So it is with the mind in its relation to eternal truth. If it no longer transmits its fluctuations, its partial knowledge, its unreliable information to the soul, then in the inner place of peace already found when the first rule has been learned — in that inner place there leaps into flame the light of actual knowledge. Then the ears begin to hear. Very dimly, very faintly at first. And, indeed, so faint and tender are these first indications of the commencement of true actual life, that they are sometimes pushed aside as mere fancies, mere imaginings.
- 11** But before these are capable of becoming more than mere imaginings, the abyss of nothingness has to be faced in another form. The utter silence which can only come by closing the ears to all transitory sounds comes as a more appalling horror than even the formless emptiness of space. Our only mental conception of blank space is, I think, when reduced to its barest element of thought, that of black darkness. This is a great physical terror to most persons, and when regarded as an eternal and unchangeable fact, must mean to the mind the idea of annihilation rather than anything else. But it is the obliteration of one sense only; and the sound of a voice may come and bring comfort even in the profoundest darkness. The disciple, having found his way into this blackness, which is the fearful abyss, must then so shut the gates of his soul that no comforter can enter there nor any enemy. And it is in making this second effort that the fact of pain and pleasure being but one sensation becomes recognizable by those who have before been unable to perceive it. For when the solitude of silence is reached the soul hungers so fiercely and passionately for some sensation on which to rest, that a painful one would be as keenly welcomed as a pleasant one. When this consciousness is reached the courageous man by seizing and retaining it, may destroy the “sensitiveness” at once. When the ear no longer discriminates between that which is pleasant or that which is painful, it will no longer be affected by the voices of others. And then it is safe and possible to open the doors of the soul.
- 12** “Sight” is the first effort, and the easiest, because it is accomplished partly by an intellectual effort. The intellect can conquer the heart, as is well known in ordinary life. Therefore, this preliminary step still lies within the dominion of matter. But the second step allows of no such assistance, nor of any material aid whatever. Of course, I mean by material aid the action of the brain, or emotions, or hu-

man soul. In compelling the ears to listen only to the eternal silence, the being we call man becomes something which is no longer man. A very superficial survey of the thousand and one influences which are brought to bear on us by others will show that this must be so. A disciple will fulfil all the duties of his manhood; but he will fulfil them according to his own sense of right, and not according to that of any person or body of persons. This is a very evident result of following the creed of knowledge instead of any of the blind creeds.

- 13** To obtain the pure silence necessary for the disciple, the heart and emotions, the brain and its intellectualisms, have to be put aside. Both are but mechanisms, which will perish with the span of man's life. It is the essence beyond, that which is the motive power, and makes man live, that is now compelled to rouse itself and act. Now is the greatest hour of danger. In the first trial men go mad with fear; of this first trial Bulwer Lytton wrote. No novelist has followed to the second trial, though some of the poets have. Its subtlety and great danger lies in the fact that in the measure of a man's strength is the measure of his chance of passing beyond it or coping with it at all. If he has power enough to awaken that unaccustomed part of himself, the supreme essence, then has the power to lift the gates of gold, then is he the true alchemist, in possession of the elixir of life.
- 14** It is at this point of experience that the occultist becomes separated from all other men and enters on to a life which is his own; on to the path of individual accomplishment instead of mere obedience to the genii which rule our earth. This raising of himself into an individual power does in reality identify him with the nobler forces of life and make him one with them. For they stand beyond the powers of this earth and the laws of this universe. Here lies man's only hope of success in the great effort; to leap right away from his present standpoint to his next and at once become an intrinsic part of the divine power as he has been an intrinsic part of the intellectual power, of the great nature to which he belongs. He stands always in advance of himself, if such a contradiction can be understood. It is the men who adhere to this position, who believe in their innate power of progress, and that of the whole race, who are the elder brothers, the pioneers. Each man has to accomplish the great leap for himself and without aid; yet it is something of a staff to lean on to know that others have gone on that road. It is possible that they have been lost in the abyss; no matter, they have had the courage to enter it. Why I say that it is possible they have been lost in the abyss is because of this fact, that one who has passed through is unrecognizable until the other and altogether new condition is attained by both. It is unnecessary to enter upon the subject of what that condition is at present.
- 15** I only say this, that in the early state in which man is entering upon the silence he loses knowledge of his friends, of his lovers, of all who have been near and dear to him; and also loses sight of his teachers and of those who have preceded him on his way. I explain this because scarce one passes through without bitter complaint. Could but the mind grasp beforehand that the silence must be complete, surely this complaint need not arise as a hindrance on the path. Your teacher, or your predecessor may hold your hand in his, and give you the utmost sympathy the human heart is capable of. But when the silence and the darkness

comes, you lose all knowledge of him; you are alone and he cannot help you, not because his power is gone, but because you have invoked your great enemy.

- 16 By your great enemy, I mean yourself. If you have the power to face your own soul in the darkness and silence, you will have conquered the physical or animal self which dwells in sensation only.
- 17 This statement, I feel, will appear involved; but in reality it is quite simple. Man, when he has reached his fruition, and civilization is at its height, stands between two fires. Could he but claim his great inheritance, the encumbrance of the mere animal life would fall away from him without difficulty. But he does not do this, and so the races of men flower and then droop and die and decay off the face of the earth, however splendid the bloom may have been. And it is left to the individual to make this great effort; to refuse to be terrified by his greater nature, to refuse to be drawn back by his lesser or more material self. Every individual who accomplishes this is a redeemer of the race. He may not blazon forth his deeds, he may dwell in secret and silence; but it is a fact that he forms a link between man and his divine part; between the known and the unknown; between the stir of the market place and the stillness of the snow-capped Himalayas. He has not to go about among men in order to form this link; in the astral he *is* that link, and this fact makes him a being of another order from the rest of mankind. Even so early on the road towards knowledge, when he has but taken the second step, he finds his footing more certain, and becomes conscious that he is a recognized part of a whole.
- 18 This is one of the contradictions in life which occur so constantly that they afford fuel to the fiction writer. The occultist finds them become much more marked as he endeavours to live the life he has chosen. As he retreats within himself and becomes self-dependent, he finds himself more definitely becoming part of a great tide of definite thought and feeling. When he has learned the first lesson, conquered the hunger of the heart, and refused to live on the love of others, he finds himself more capable of inspiring love. As he flings life away it comes to him in a new form and with a new meaning. The world has always been a place with many contradictions in it, to the man; when he becomes a disciple he finds life is describable as a series of paradoxes. This is a fact in nature, and the reason for it is intelligible enough. Man's soul "dwells like a star apart," even that of the vilest among us; while his consciousness is under the law of vibratory and sensuous life. This alone is enough to cause those complications of character which are the material for the novelist; every man is a mystery, to friend and enemy alike, and to himself. His motives are often undiscoverable, and he cannot probe to them or know why he does this or that. The disciple's effort is that of awakening consciousness in this starry part of himself, where his power and divinity lie sleeping. As this consciousness becomes awakened, the contradictions in the man himself become more marked than ever; and so do the paradoxes which he lives through. For, of course man creates his own life; and "adventures are to the adventurous" is one of those wise proverbs which are drawn from actual fact, and cover the whole area of human experience.

- 19 Pressure on the divine part of man re-acts upon the animal part. As the silent soul awakes it makes the ordinary life of the man more purposeful, more vital, more real, and responsible. To keep to the two instances already mentioned, the occultist who has withdrawn into his own citadel has found his strength; immediately he becomes aware of the demands of duty upon him. He does not obtain his strength by his own right, but because he is a part of the whole; and as soon as he is safe from the vibration of life and can stand unshaken, the outer world cries out to him to come and labour in it. So with the heart. When it no longer wishes to take, it is called upon to give abundantly.
- 20 *Light on the Path* has been called a book of paradoxes, and very justly; what else could it be, when it deals with the actual personal experience of the disciple?
- 21 To have acquired the astral senses of sight and hearing; or in other words to have attained perception and opened the doors of the soul, are gigantic tasks and may take the sacrifice of many successive incarnations. And yet, when the will has reached its strength, the whole miracle may be worked in a second of time. Then is the disciple the servant of Time no longer.
- 22 These two first steps are negative; that is to say they imply retreat from a present condition of things rather than advance towards another. The two next are active, implying the advance into another state of being.

Before the Voice can speak in the presence of the Masters.

- 1 Speech is the power of communication; the moment of entrance into active life is marked by its attainment.
- 2 And now, before I go any further, let me explain a little the way in which the rules written down in *Light on the Path* are arranged. The first seven of those which are numbered are sub-divisions of the two first unnumbered rules, those with which I have dealt in the two preceding papers. The numbered rules were simply an effort of mine to make the unnumbered ones more intelligible. "Eight" to "fifteen" of these numbered rules belong to this unnumbered rule which is now my text.
- 3 As I have said, these rules are written for all disciples, but for none else; they are not of interest to any other persons. Therefore I trust no one else will trouble to read these papers any further. The first two rules, which include the whole of that part of the effort which necessitates the use of the surgeon's knife, I will enlarge upon further if I am asked to do so. But the disciple is expected to deal with the snake, his lower self, unaided; to suppress his human passions and emotions by the force of his own will. He can only demand assistance of a master when this is accomplished, or at all events, partially so. Otherwise the gates and windows of his soul are blurred, and blinded, and darkened, and no knowledge can come to him. I am not, in these papers, purposing to tell a man how to deal with his own soul; I am simply giving, to the disciple, knowledge. That I am not writing, even now, so that all who run may read, is owing to the fact that super-nature prevents this by its own immutable laws.
- 4 The four rules which I have written down for those in the West who wish to study them, are as I have said, written in the ante-chamber of every living Brotherhood;

I may add more, in the ante-chamber of every living or dead Brotherhood, or Order yet to be formed. When I speak of a Brotherhood or an Order, I do not mean an arbitrary constitution made by scholiasts and intellectualists; I mean an actual fact in super-nature, a stage of development towards the absolute God or Good. During this development the disciple encounters harmony, pure knowledge, pure truth, in different degrees, and, as he enters these degrees, he finds himself becoming part of what might be roughly described as a layer of human consciousness. He encounters his equals, men of his own self-less character, and with them his association becomes permanent and indissoluble, because founded on a vital likeness of nature. To them he becomes pledged by such vows as need no utterance or framework in ordinary words. This is one aspect of what I mean by a Brotherhood.

- 5 If the first rules are conquered, the disciple finds himself standing at the threshold. Then if his will is sufficiently resolute his power speech comes; a two-fold power. For, as he advances now, he finds himself entering into a state of blossoming, where every bud that opens throws out its several rays or petals. If he is to exercise his new gift, he must use it in its two-fold character. He finds in himself the power to speak in the presence of the masters; in other words, he has the right to demand contact with the divinest element of that state of consciousness into which he has entered. But he finds himself compelled, by the nature of his position, to act in two ways at the same time. He cannot send his voice up to the heights where sit the gods till he has penetrated to the deep places where their light shines not at all. He has come within the grip of an iron law. If he demands to become a neophyte, he at once becomes a servant. Yet his service is sublime, if only from the character of those who share it. For the masters are also servants; they serve and claim their reward afterwards. Part of their service is to let their knowledge touch him; his first act of service is to give some of that knowledge to those who are not yet fit to stand where he stands. This is no arbitrary decision, made by any master or teacher or any such person, however divine. It is a law of that life which the disciple has entered upon.
- 6 Therefore was it written in the inner doorway of the lodges of the old Egyptian Brotherhood, "The labourer is worthy of his hire."
- 7 "Ask and ye shall have," sounds like something too easy and simple to be credible. But the disciple cannot "ask" in the mystic sense in which the word is used in this scripture until he has attained the power of helping others.
- 8 Why is this? Has the statement too dogmatic a sound?
- 9 Is it too dogmatic to say that a man must have foothold before he can spring? The position is the same. If help is given, if work is done, then there is an actual claim — not what we call a personal claim of payment, but the claim of co-nature. The divine give, they demand that you also shall give before you can be of their kin.
- 10 This law is discovered as soon as the disciple endeavours to speak. For speech is a gift which comes only to the disciple of power and knowledge. The spiritualist enters the psychic-astral world, but he does not find there any certain speech, unless he at once claims it and continues to do so. If he is interested in "phenom-

ena,” or the mere circumstance and accident of astral life, then he enters no direct ray of thought or purpose, he merely exists and amuses himself in the astral life as he has existed and amused himself in the physical life. Certainly there are one or two simple lessons which the psychic-astral can teach him, just as there are simple lessons which material and intellectual life teach him. And these lessons have to be learned; the man who proposes to enter upon the life of the disciple without having learned the early and simple lessons must always suffer from his ignorance. They are vital, and have to be studied in a vital manner; experienced through and through, over and over again, so that each part of the nature has been penetrated by them.

- 11 To return. In claiming the power of speech, as it is called, the Neophyte cries out to the Great One who stands foremost in the ray of knowledge on which he has entered, to give him guidance. When he does this, his voice is hurled back by the power he has approached, and echoes down to the deep recesses of human ignorance. In some confused and blurred manner the news that there is knowledge and a beneficent power which teaches is carried to as many men as will listen to it. No disciple can cross the threshold without communicating this news, and placing it on record in some fashion or other.
- 12 He stands horror-struck at the imperfect and unprepared manner in which he has done this; and then comes the desire to do it well, and with the desire thus to help others comes the power. For it is a pure desire, this which comes upon him; he can gain no credit, no glory, no personal reward by fulfilling it. And therefore he obtains the power to fulfil it.
- 13 The history of the whole past, so far as we can trace it, shows very plainly that there is neither credit, glory, nor reward to be gained by this first task which is given to the Neophyte. Mystics have always been sneered at, and seers disbelieved; those who have had the added power of intellect have left for posterity their written record, which to most men appears unmeaning and visionary, even when the authors have the advantage of speaking from a far-off past. The disciple who undertakes the task, secretly hoping for fame or success, to appear as a teacher and apostle before the world, fails even before his task is attempted, and his hidden hypocrisy poisons his own soul, and the souls of those he touches. He is secretly worshiping himself, and this idolatrous practice must bring its own reward.
- 14 The disciple who has the power of entrance, and is strong enough to pass each barrier, will, when the divine message comes to his spirit, forget himself utterly in the new consciousness which falls on him. If this lofty contact can really rouse him, he becomes as one of the divine in his desire to give rather than to take, in his wish to help rather than be helped, in his resolution to feed the hungry rather than take manna from Heaven himself. His nature is transformed, and the selfishness which prompts men's actions in ordinary life suddenly deserts him.

**Before the Voice can speak in the presence of the Masters,
it must have lost the power to wound.**

- 1 Those who give a merely passing and superficial attention to the subject of occultism — and their name is Legion — constantly inquire why, if adepts in life exist, they do not appear in the world and show their power. That the chief body of these wise ones should be understood to dwell beyond the fastnesses of the Himalayas, appears to be a sufficient proof that they are only figures of straw. Otherwise, why place them so far off?
- 2 Unfortunately, Nature has done this and not personal choice or arrangement. There are certain spots on the earth where the advance of “civilization” is unfelt, and the nineteenth century fever is kept at bay. In these favoured places there is always time, always opportunity, for the realities of life; they are not crowded out by the doings of an inchoate, money-loving, pleasure seeking society. While there are adepts upon the earth, the earth must preserve to them places of seclusion. This is a fact in nature which is only an external expression of a profound fact in super-nature.
- 3 The demand of the neophyte remains unheard until the voice in which it is uttered has lost the power to wound. This is because the divine-astral life¹ is a place in which order reigns, just as it does in natural life. There is, of course, always the centre and the circumference as there is in nature. Close to the central heart of life, on any plane, there is knowledge, there order reigns completely; and chaos makes dim and confused the outer margin of the circle. In fact, life in every form bears a more or less strong resemblance to a philosophic school. There are always the devotees of knowledge who forget their own lives in their pursuit of it; there are always the flippant crowd who come and go — of such, Epictetus said that it was as easy to teach them philosophy as to eat custard with a fork. The same state exists in the super-astral life; and the adept has an even deeper and more profound seclusion there in which to dwell. This place of retreat is so safe, so sheltered, that no sound which has discord in it can reach his ears. Why should this be, will be asked at once, if he is a being of such great powers as those say who believe in his existence? The answer seems very apparent. He serves humanity and identifies himself with the whole world; he is ready to make vicarious sacrifice for it at any moment — *by living not by dying for it*. Why should he not die for it? Because he is part of the great whole, and one of the most valuable parts of it. Because he lives under laws of order which he does not desire to break. His life is not his own, but that of the forces which work behind him. He is the flower of humanity, the bloom which contains the divine seed. He is, in his own person, a treasure of the universal nature, which is guarded and made safe in order that the fruition shall be perfected. It is only at definite periods of the world’s history that he is allowed to go among the herd of men as their redeemer. But for those who have the power to separate themselves from this herd he is always at hand. And for those who are strong enough to conquer the vices of the personal human

¹ Of course every occultist knows by reading Éliphas Lévi and other authors that the “astral” plane is a plane of unequalled forces, and that a state of confusion necessarily prevails. But this does not apply to the “divine astral” plane, which is a plane where wisdom, and therefore order, prevails.

nature, as set forth in these four rules, he is consciously at hand, easily recognized, ready to answer.

- 4 But this conquering of self implies a destruction of qualities which most men regard as not only indestructible but desirable. The “power to wound” includes much that men value, not only in themselves, but in others. The instinct of self-defence and of self-preservation is part of it; the idea that one has any right or rights, either as citizen, or man, or individual, the pleasant consciousness of self-respect and of virtue. These are hard sayings to many; yet they are true. For these words that I am writing now, and those which I have written on this subject, are not in any sense my own. They are drawn from the traditions of the lodge of the Great Brotherhood, which was once the secret splendour of Egypt. The rules written in its ante-chamber were the same as those now written in the ante-chamber of existing schools. Through all time the wise men have lived apart from the mass. And even when some temporary purpose or object induces one of them to come into the midst of human life, his seclusion and safety is preserved as completely as ever. It is part of his inheritance, part of his position, he has an actual title to it, and can no more put it aside than the Duke of Westminster can say he does not choose to be the Duke of Westminster. In the various great cities of the world an adept lives for a while from time to time, or perhaps only passes through; but all are occasionally aided by the actual power and presence of one of these men. Here in London, as in Paris and St. Petersburg, there are men high in development. But they are only known as mystics by those who have the power to recognize; the power given by the conquering of self. Otherwise how could they exist, even for an hour, in such a mental and psychic atmosphere as is created by the confusion and disorder of a city? Unless protected and made safe their own growth would be interfered with, their work injured. And the neophyte may meet an adept in the flesh, may live in the same house with him, and yet be unable to recognize him, and unable to make his own voice heard by him. For no nearness in space, no closeness of relations, no daily intimacy, can do away with the inexorable laws which give the adept his seclusion. No voice penetrates to his inner hearing till it has become a divine voice, a voice which gives no utterance to the cries of self. Any lesser appeal would be as useless, as much a waste of energy and power, as for mere children who are learning their alphabet to be taught it by a professor of philology. Until a man has become, in heart and spirit, a disciple, he has no existence for those who are teachers of disciples. And he becomes this by one method only — the surrender of his personal humanity.
- 5 For the voice to have lost the power to wound, a man must have reached that point where he sees himself only as one of the vast multitudes that live; one of the sands washed hither and thither by the sea of vibratory existence. It is said that every grain of sand in the ocean bed does, in its turn, get washed up on to the shore and lie for a moment in the sunshine. So with human beings, they are driven hither and thither by a great force, and each, in his turn, finds the sunrays on him. When a man is able to regard his own life as part of a whole like this he will no longer struggle in order to obtain anything for himself. This is the surrender of personal rights. The ordinary man expects, not to take equal fortunes with the rest of the world, but in some points, about which he cares, to fare better than

the others. The disciple does not expect this. Therefore, though he be, like Epictetus, a chained slave, he has no word to say about it. He knows that the wheel of life turns ceaselessly. Burne Jones has shown it in his marvellous picture — the wheel turns, and on it are bound the rich and the poor, the great and the small — each has his moment of good fortune when the wheel brings him uppermost — the King rises and falls, the poet is *feted* and forgotten, the slave is happy and afterwards discarded. Each in his turn is crushed as the wheel turns on. The disciple knows that this is so, and though it is his duty to make the utmost of the life that is his, he neither complains of it nor is elated by it, nor does he complain against the better fortune of others. All alike, as he well knows, are but learning a lesson; and he smiles at the socialist and the reformer who endeavour by sheer force to re-arrange circumstances which arise out of the forces of human nature itself. This is but kicking against the pricks; a waste of life and energy.

- 6 In realizing this a man surrenders his imagined individual rights, of whatever sort. That takes away one keen sting which is common to all ordinary men.
- 7 When the disciple has fully recognized that the very thought of individual rights is only the outcome of the venomous quality in himself, that it is the hiss of the snake of self which poisons with its sting his own life and the lives of those about him, then he is ready to take part in a yearly ceremony which is open to all neophytes who are prepared for it. All weapons of defence and offense are given up; all weapons of mind and heart, and brain, and spirit. Never again can another man be regarded as a person who can be criticized or condemned; never again can the neophyte raise his voice in self-defence or excuse. From that ceremony he returns into the world as helpless, as unprotected, as a new-born child. That, indeed, is what he is. He has begun to be born again on to the higher plane of life, that breezy and well-lit plateau from whence the eyes see intelligently and regard the world with a new insight.
- 8 I have said, a little way back, that after parting with the sense of individual rights, the disciple must part also with the sense of self-respect and of virtue. This may sound a terrible doctrine, yet all occultists know well that it is not a doctrine, but a fact. He who thinks himself holier than another, he who has any pride in his own exemption from vice or folly, he who believes himself wise, or in any way superior to his fellow men, is incapable of discipleship. A man must become as a little child before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven.
- 9 Virtue and wisdom are sublime things; but if they create pride and a consciousness of separateness from the rest of humanity in the mind of a man, then they are only the snakes of self re-appearing in a finer form. At any moment he may put on his grosser shape and sting as fiercely as when he inspired the actions of a murderer who kills for gain or hatred, or a politician who sacrifices the mass for his own or his party's interests.
- 10 In fact, to have lost the power to wound, implies that the snake is not only scotched, but killed. When it is merely stupefied or lulled to sleep it awakes again and the disciple uses his knowledge and his power for his own ends, and is a pupil of the many masters of the black art, for the road to destruction is very broad

and easy, and the way can be found blindfold. That it is the way to destruction is evident, for when a man begins to live for self he narrows his horizon steadily till at last the fierce driving inwards leaves him but the space of a pin's-head to dwell in. We have all seen this phenomenon occur in ordinary life. A man who becomes selfish isolates himself, grows less interesting and less agreeable to others. The sight is an awful one, and people shrink from a very selfish person at last, as from a beast of prey. How much more awful is it when it occurs on the more advanced plane of life, with the added powers of knowledge, and through the greater sweep of successive incarnations!

- 11 Therefore I say, pause and think well upon the threshold. For if the demand of the neophyte is made without the complete purification, it will not penetrate the seclusion of the divine adept, but will evoke the terrible forces which attend upon the black side of our human nature.

**Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters,
its feet must be washed in the Blood of the Heart.**

- 1 The word soul, as used here, means the divine soul, or "starry spirit."
- 2 "To be able to stand is to have confidence"; and to have confidence means that the disciple is sure of himself, that he has surrendered his emotions, his very self, even his humanity; that he is incapable of fear and unconscious of pain; that his whole consciousness is cantered in the divine life, which is expressed symbolically by the term "the Masters"; that he has neither eyes, nor ears, nor speech, nor power, save in and for the divine ray on which his highest sense has touched. Then is he fearless, free from suffering, free from anxiety or dismay; his soul stands without shrinking or desire of postponement, in the full blaze of the divine light which penetrates through and through his being. Then he has come into his inheritance and can claim his kinship with the teachers of men; he is upright, he has raised his head, he breathes the same air that they do.
- 3 But before it is in any way possible for him to do this, the feet of the soul must be washed in the blood of the heart.
- 4 The sacrifice, or surrender of the heart of man, and its emotions, is the first of the rules; it involves the "attaining of an equilibrium which cannot be shaken by personal emotion." This is done by the stoic philosopher; he, too, stands aside and looks equably upon his own sufferings, as well as on those of others.
- 5 In the same way that "tears" in the language of occultists expresses the soul of emotion, not its material appearance, so blood expresses, not that blood which is an essential of physical life, but the vital creative principle in man's nature, which drives him into human life in order to experience pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow. When he has let the blood flow from the heart he stands before the Masters as a pure spirit which no longer wishes to incarnate for the sake of emotion and experience. Through great cycles of time successive incarnations in gross matter may yet be his lot; but he no longer desires them, the crude wish to live has departed from him. When he takes upon him man's form in the flesh he does it in the pursuit of a divine object, to accomplish the work of "the Masters," and for no

other end. He looks neither for pleasure nor pain, asks for no heaven, and fears no hell; yet he has entered upon a great inheritance which is not so much a compensation for these things surrendered, as a state which simply blots out the memory of them. He lives now not in the world, but with it; his horizon has extended itself to the width of the whole universe.



The sparkle of that precious jewel, “Light on the Path,” has been dimmed by an indelible dark stain.

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To the Editor of *Light*.

Sir,

The letter of Dr. E. Coues, republished from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*,¹ in your issue of June 1st, puts an end to my hesitations. Out of respect for old associations and memories, and pity for those who (I must charitably suppose), acting under psychic aberrations, have chosen to declare themselves over their own signatures — deceivers, I had intended to leave Dr. Coues’ new and imprudent attack on me unnoticed. But I can do so no more since this double production has appeared in your columns, and will be read and rejoiced over by hundreds of our enemies. “Truth can do no harm,” as you say, especially when, as in this reply, the truth is supported by irrefutable dates — ugly customers to deal with! And now you shall hear “the other side.”

Mabel Collins may have been “studying” Madame Blavatsky for a time but she never “studied under” her, as she claims to have done.

I begin by quoting from Dr. Coues’ letter. Speaking of *Light on the Path*, supposed to have been dictated to “Mrs. Collins” by Koot Hoomi, he explains:

I liked the little book so much that I wrote Mrs. Collins a letter, praising it and asking her about its real source. She promptly replied, in her own handwriting, to the effect that *Light on the Path* was inspired or dictated from the source above indicated. This was *about four years ago, since which time* nothing passed between Mrs. Collins and myself until yesterday.

This is explicit enough. Now to facts.

I came to London, via Paris, about August 1884; went to Elberfeld, returning in October; and finally left for India on November 11th of the same year. It was only shortly before my departure that I met Mrs. Cook (Miss [285] Collins). I saw her barely half a dozen times, and never alone. She may have been “studying” me at that time, but she never “studied under” me, as she claims to have done. When I met her she had

¹ [Prominent American Spiritualistic weekly founded in 1865 in Chicago. Its founder and publisher, Stevens J. Jones, was murdered in 1877. His son-in-law, Col. J.C. Bundy, assumed charge. Successive editors were M.E. Bundy, B.F. Underwood, and T.G. Newan. In the 1890s the Journal moved to San Francisco and a new series (vols. 34-42) began. The publication of this long-running periodical ceased on April 22nd, 1905. It was superseded briefly by *The Mountain Pine* (1906–1908). — *Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*]

just completed the *Idyll of the White Lotus*, which, as she stated to Colonel Olcott, had been dictated to her by some “mysterious person.” Guided by her description, we both recognized an old friend of ours, a Greek, and no Mahatma, though an Adept; further developments proving we were right. This fact, acknowledged by Mrs. Cook in her dedication of the *Idyll*, sets aside the idea that the work was either inspired or dictated by Koot Hoomi or any other Mahatma.

Now about *Light on the Path*. When I left for India in November, 1884, this work was not in existence. The little book was published in the beginning of 1885, at a time when I was at Adyar and dangerously ill. In March I was hurried away from Madras by the doctors, brought to Naples, thence to Germany, and finally to Ostend. I came to London only on May 1st, 1887. Thus I had not set eyes on “Miss Mabel Collins” (or Mrs. Cook) from November 1884, to May 1887, nor did I have any correspondence with her. I heard of the existence and saw *Light on the Path* for the first time in the summer of 1886 when Mr. Arthur Gebhard gave a copy to me after his return from America.

Now, collating the facts before us, we find the following result. On the one hand Dr. E. Coues states that he wrote to Miss Mabel Collins about the authorship of *Light on the Path*, “about four years ago,” and received “promptly” a reply to the effect that she had received it “from one of the Masters who guide Madame Blavatsky.” On the other hand, since Dr. Coues could not have inquired about a work before it was published, his letter to “Miss Mabel Collins,” and her “prompt reply,” must have been written after March 1885, at a time when I was away from England. And yet, *mirabile dictu*,¹ Miss Mabel Collins “took the letter” to me, and “wrote the answer” at my “dictation”! It would be interesting to know whether she took the letter to me at Madras, Naples, Würzburg, or Ostend; for in the fact of Dr. Coues’ statement that he received her answer “about four years ago,” it could not have been after my arrival [286] in England in May 1887. But our perplexities are not yet at an end.

Through the Gates of Gold — the third, and, when contrasted with *Light on the Path*, rather weak Theosophical production — was written also during my absence from England. I saw it, and heard of it first of all, about a month before coming to London, i.e., in March or April 1887. Mr. Finch and Mr. B. Keightley came to visit me at Ostend, and the former gentleman brought with him a copy of this new work, from which the latter read some chapters to us. On the page facing the Prologue, Miss Mabel Collins speaks of a “mysterious stranger” who entered her study and told her of the *Gates of Gold*. This person, she has repeatedly confessed, was the same that gave to her the *Idyll* and *Light on the Path* as many witnesses can affirm, and yet now the “mysterious stranger” has become metamorphosed by her into “the walls of a place [she] used to visit spiritually”! And Mrs. Cook-Collins has “never received proof of the existence of any Master”! Is then this “mysterious stranger” also a product of my “fertile imagination”; and the lines which speak of him, written by Mrs. Cook herself, are these of my “dictation” I wonder? Really I am curious to know how far I am concerned in the production of these three works, produced at times and under conditions which set aside the possibility of my “dictation” of them!

¹ [Latin phrase meaning wonderful to relate, referring to something surprising]

And now I appeal to every Theosophist acquainted with the truth to corroborate my assertions. Colonel Olcott will be here in July, and we shall see what he says. Meanwhile, Mrs. Collins-Cook is at liberty to invent something else, rather more probable; only I am afraid that after her confession in her letter to Dr. Coues (who, for his own purposes, *tries* to believe her) she will have some difficulty in gaining credence. I need notice nothing further. *False in one, false in all.*

The lustre of that priceless little jewel, *Light on the Path*, is henceforth dimmed by a great black stain that nothing can wash out.

London, June 1st, 1889

H.P. BLAVATSKY



Madame Blavatsky is the origin and fountainhead of all Esoteric Knowledge, and has the means and the necessary knowledge to teach.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TO ALL THEOSOPHISTS, "THE ESOTERIC SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY" AND ITS ENEMIES) XI pp. 306-30.

[This text was published as a separate pamphlet of 16 pages, dated London, June 21st, 1889; the type and format are identical with those of the magazine *Lucifer*. Only a couple of copies of this pamphlet are known to exist, and they are in private hands. The present reprint has been reproduced from one of them. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

THIS IS NEITHER A PRIVATE NOR A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT, and thus will not be productive of treachery. The undersigned — save a few occult truths which she is pledged not to reveal — has no secrets, no desire to create mysteries, and is willing to let the whole world see her private and inner life. She fears nothing, and is ready to face every enemy and slanderer of hers, and bids him or her, to do his worst. She has nothing to dread *from truth*.

As it has now become evident that our most dangerous enemies are *within* not *without* the Theosophical Society, it is time to put an end to this.

Nor is it less evident that Professor Elliott Coues, though the President of the Gnostic Branch of the T.S., calling himself a Theosophist — yet seeks by all means, fair or foul, to upset the "Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society," — the only legitimate and legal Occult Body in the Society — by trying to discredit the "Head" of that Section, the undersigned. It is useless for the present to explain *why* Dr. Coues does it, though his motives are quite plain to many and especially to the writer of this. Theosophical charity in the heart of every *true* Theosophist must urge him to eschew reprisals and never to return evil for evil, so long as truth damaging to his enemies can be withheld without danger [307] to the cause. *Full* explanation is, therefore, postponed. I will speak only of his last letter to me further on, which will perhaps explain such a sudden persecution of me by Dr. Coues, who professed friendship in all his letters *up to a few days before the Convention of the T.S. (American Section) in Chicago*.

Meanwhile the following is offered by the undersigned to the consideration of all the Members of the T.S. whom it may concern.

For years past, H.P. Blavatsky has been urged to give esoteric instructions to Theosophists anxious to study the occult sciences, till at last, yielding to the persistent entreaties she consented to do so. "The Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society" was formed under the orders of the President-Founder, in October 1888, in London, and duly announced in *Lucifer*. As said therein, the formation of a body of esoteric students was "organised on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the *real* Founders of the T.S."

Now this Section, while entailing upon H.P. Blavatsky, as all its members know, much additional labour and an immense weight of responsibility, is not of the smallest advantage or benefit to herself in any way whatever. On the contrary, its formation has become from the first the pretext for new persecutions and slanders against her. She therefore feels it right that a clear alternative should be placed be-

fore the Members of the *Esoteric Section*, as well as such other persons as may be affected: Either H.P. Blavatsky *does* possess “Knowledge” and *can* teach what many earnestly desire to learn, or she *cannot*.

- In the first case, those who desire her teaching must have confidence in her and believe that she has something to teach, otherwise why should they come to her to be taught at all?
- In the second, if anyone has doubts, let him leave the ESOTERIC SECTION if already a member, or abstain from joining it if he is not.

As already said, H.P. Blavatsky gaining nothing but an increase of labour and responsibility with every new member who joins, the benefit is all on their side; and far from conferring a favour, those who place themselves under her teaching are rather the recipients of one from her. [308] To help earnest and well-meaning Theosophists, H.P. Blavatsky is ever ready; and she will work for them and the Society, as long as she has life left in her. But she has no desire to force her teachings upon outsiders, and thereby to desecrate the sacred science by giving it out to those who through recent slanders may have lost faith in her; or again, such — if any exist — as are ready to betray their pledge and word of honour by forming secret understandings with our enemies.

First, out of the blue, Dr. Coues proudly proclaimed himself “Perpetual President of the Esoteric Theosophical Society of America.”

These facts are the more important, since Prof. Elliott Coues, though he never belonged in any capacity to the ESOTERIC SECTION of the T.S.¹ yet proclaims himself “*Perpetual President of the Esoteric Theosophical Society of America*,” of which no one connected with the General Council of the T.S., in India, or the Founders know anything. And it is this unwarranted claim, probably, that led some member of the “Esoteric Section of the T.S.,” under the direction of the undersigned, to mistake Professor Coues for a member thereof, and then to give him or Colonel Bundy, of the *R.-P. J.*, of Chicago,² a document emanating from the Council of the E.S. Though of no importance whatever and containing only some advice which might have been given out publicly, yet, since the document was marked “Esoteric Section,” the member who gave it to an outsider, from whatever motive, has *broken his pledge* and been untrue to his “sacred word of honour.”

It is also Dr. Coues, probably, who furnished to the *R.-P. J.* for publication the copy of the *Rules and Pledge* of the E.S. which had been sent to him, although they are marked *private and confidential*. It is not that these papers were ever intended to be kept secret, since they are sent to *every member* of the T.S. who applies, and the *Journal* has only rendered us service by making them so widely known; but that any *gentleman* should publish papers marked *private and confidential* is an act best left to the world to characterise as it deserves.

¹ [Theosophical Society]

² [The *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, American spiritualistic weekly founded in 1865 in Chicago by Stevens J. Jones.]

He then began casting slurs upon Madame Blavatsky and upon the Section of which she is the Head, in order to destroy one through the other.

- 1 The only Esoteric Section or body which exists in the Theosophical Society is the one duly authorised and [309] recognised by the President-Founder, Colonel H.S. Olcott; and
- 2 That Professor Elliott Coues has *self-constituted* himself “perpetual President” of an Esoteric body.¹
- 3 Professor Coues shows himself desirous of casting a slur both upon H.P. Blavatsky personally, and upon the Section of which she is the Head, in order to destroy one through the other. Therefore, the following alternative is now laid plainly and *publicly* before all the members of the “Esoteric Section of the T.S.”

Do you still desire to be taught by H.P. Blavatsky, as to whose occult “knowledge” the *Instructions* already in your hands are some evidence? Or do you prefer to follow Prof. Elliott Coues — whose knowledge of biology, ornithology, etc., makes of him a very eminent scientist, but whose knowledge of Occultism five years ago, when he was in Europe, amounted to *nil*?

The question is thus put in a nutshell. Do you want to study ancient Occultism, or modern Hypnotism; esoteric philosophy — whose doctrines may be traced thousands of years back, throughout Eastern literature — or, the “working hypotheses” of modern Psychic Researchers?


This choice is now no longer based on the query: “Do the Mahatmas exist,” or are they, as very *theosophically* put by Dr. Coues, simply a HOAX of H.P. Blavatsky. The questions, whether the teachers are an *actuality* or an ideal, and H.P. Blavatsky a truthful woman, or an old fraud, a vixen endowed with every vice, retire in view of the plain alternative into the background, or, at any rate, to a secondary plane; nor will the above-named personage stoop to debate the mooted problem. The really important fact to ascertain is simply whether H.P. Blavatsky *is*, or *is not*, possessed of the occult knowledge, whose source was hitherto attributed to the teaching of the MASTERS. The answer is [310] easy and self-evident. If the TEACHERS whom she claims to know, do not exist, then every bit of philosophy from the earliest *Esoteric Buddhism*, down to the latest *Secret Doctrine*, in short, every tenet of the Occult Sciences taught and learnt in the T.S., *comes from her*; this, whether she has *invented it all*, or acquired the knowledge by some mysterious means. Turn it whichever way you will, the fact remains the same for the Theosophists — she is the origin, the *fountainhead*, of all the esoteric knowledge they have learned or may learn. Whether she be the *source*, or only the modest *channel*, as claimed by her, H.P. Blavatsky *has the means and the necessary knowledge to teach*.

It is for those eager to learn to decide whether the waters of knowledge offered are good and pure enough for them. Those whose attention is directed chiefly to the mud and stones thrown *at* and *into* the said waters, are at liberty to refuse them, and are

¹ Everyone has a right to found an “Esoteric Society” — whether he has anything to teach or not — Professor Elliott Coues, as much as Professor Hiram E. Butler. But neither of them has any right to append to the name the words “of the Theosophical Society.”

earnestly asked to do so. Let them pronounce their decision and send back their papers and they will forthwith be set free.

It is therefore only for the benefit of those who desire to go on with the *Instructions* that the undersigned appends her answers, as well as the published letters of a few other witnesses in *Light* (See the issue of June the 8th). *Light on the Path* has just been made the pretext by Dr. Elliott Coues and “Miss Mabel Collins” for a new and very ugly slander against H.P. Blavatsky. Now since that priceless little treatise occupies a very prominent position in Theosophical literature, especially among those who desire to tread that *path*, it is absolutely necessary that no further misunderstanding should exist on this matter, as it was to facilitate the entrance to the said *path* that the ESOTERIC SECTION of the T.S. was founded. It is thought, therefore, necessary to make the following correspondence as widely known as possible among Theosophists, and especially among members of the ESOTERIC SECTION. The necessity of this step is much to be regretted; but the utterly baseless and unprovoked attack of Professor Coues and Miss Mabel Collins on that *Section*, and upon H.P. Blavatsky, has rendered imperative the plainest statement of facts in reply. Out of respect for old associations and still more out of the [311] general unwillingness of our best members to turn our MAGAZINE into a tub for washing dirty theosophical linen, I shrank from republishing the facts in *Lucifer*. But now, here they are *in toto*. Let the Theosophists judge for themselves.



Supporting extracts from “Lucifer,” “Light,” and elsewhere.

Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot
That it do singe yourself.

— SHAKESPEARE

He who tells a lie, is not sensible how great a task
he undertakes, for he must be forced to invent
twenty more to maintain that one.

— JONATHAN SWIFT¹

“ATTENTION, THEOSOPHISTS!”
A NEW AND GROSS SLANDER

THIS IS WHAT WE SAID IN “LUCIFER”:

Grotesque contrasts and paradoxes are the very pith of our age. We might, therefore, permitting ourselves for once to follow suit, publish under the above title certain very *untheosophical activities*. But we prefer to leave the pages of our *Lucifer* untainted with the recital of untheosophical backbiting, malicious calumnies and attempts to ruin our character. Those who would learn our answer (and that of trustworthy witnesses) to the slanders that find such a ready hospitality in a spiritual organ of America, are invited to turn to *Light* of June 1st, and June 8th, 1889.

All attacks would have been ignored and never mentioned could they without danger to the Theosophical Society, but be relegated by us to that common pit of oblivion, in which [312] crawl and hiss, struggling to come to light, all the venomous monsters bred by calumny, envy, hatred, and revenge — most of them the progeny, alas, of those who, once upon a time, took pride in calling themselves, *Theosophists* (!!)

The old truism, that they whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad, is once more vindicated. Calumnies are effective only on the condition that they should not be so readily refuted. It is easy enough to bear false witness against one who is unable to establish an undeniable *alibi*. It is as easy for a traducer to charge a person with having said or done that or the other, at a date when the accused and the accuser were both in the same country, if not in the same town. The credibility and likelihood of such accusations become, however, rather shaky if the accused party can furnish precise dates — awkward things to deal with — corroborated by numbers of persons to the effect that at the date mentioned he was 10,000 miles away, and did not even hold any correspondence with the accusing party. “One lie must be thatched with another, or truth will soon rain through,” says a proverb.

¹ [Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, London 1727, Vol. II, p. 345. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

The London *Light*, always fair to all, was forced to publish — or rather to *republish* from the Chicago *Religio-Phil. Journal* — *a very strange letter*. We may even say two letters in one, as the reader will see for himself. We call it “strange” because it is so transparent in its animus, so very *imprudent* and so easily refuted that both the writers — intellectual, and hoary with life-experience as they really are — seem to give themselves entirely away for a mere song, for the pleasure, one would almost say, of inflicting an ugly scratch, whether it reaches the person aimed at, or simply produces a commotion among the innocent and the credulous ones who believe all they read. So evident are the motives of this joint production — spite and revenge — that, were we certain that no true Theosophist would be thereby affected, we would have never gone out of our way to refute the silly invention. It seems almost undignified to even notice it, but truth had to be shown at all costs.

And this is the cutting from the *R.-P. J.* that was sent to us a few days ago, and referred to above. The reader will please notice the underlined passages.¹ [313]



¹ [Here italicised]

Attention, Theosophists!
A little more “Light on the Path” for your benefit.

[From the Editor of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*]

Sir,

In 1885 appeared a strange little book entitled: *Light on the Path*: A treatise written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within its influence. Written down by M.C., Fellow of the Theosophical Society. The author is Mabel Collins,¹ until lately one of the editors of *Lucifer*. The book is a gem of pure spirituality, and appears to me, as to many others, to symbolize much mystic truth. It has gone through numberless editions, and is used by faithful Theosophists much as orthodox sinners use their prayer-book. This happened mainly² because *Light on the Path* was supposed to have been dictated to Mrs. Collins by “Koot Hoomi,” or some other Hindu adept who held the Theosophical Society in the hollow of his masterly hand.

I liked the little book so much that I wrote Mrs. Collins a letter, praising it and asking her about its real source. She promptly replied, in her own handwriting, to the effect that *Light on the Path* was inspired or dictated from the source above indicated. *This was about four years ago; since which time nothing passed between Mrs. Collins and myself* until yesterday, when I unexpectedly received the following letter. I was not surprised at the new light it threw on the pathway of the Theosophical Society, *for late developments respecting that singular result of Madame Blavatsky’s now famous hoax* left me nothing to wonder at. I cabled Mrs. Collins yesterday for permission to use her letter at my discretion. Her cablegram from London reached me this morning, saying, “Use my letter as you please. Mabel Collins.” So here is the letter.

April 18th, 1889

34, Clarendon Road, Holland Park,
London, W.



¹ [Nom de plume of Kenningale R. Cook]

² The word “mainly” does not sound very complimentary to the author, “Mrs. Collins.” — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

[From Mabel Collins]

Dear Sir,

I feel I have a duty to write to you on a difficult and (to me) painful subject, and that I must not delay it any longer.

You will remember writing to me to ask me who was the inspirer of *Light on the Path*. If you had not been yourself acquainted with Madame Blavatsky I should despair of making you even understand my conduct. Of course I ought to have answered the letter without showing it to any one else; *but at that time I was both studying Madame Blavatsky and studying under her. I knew nothing then of the mysteries of the Theosophical Society*, and I was puzzled why you should write to me in such a way. *I took the letter to her; the result was that I wrote the answer at her dictation. I did not do this by her orders; I have never* [314] *been under her orders. But I have done one or two things because she begged and implored me to; and this I did for that reason.* So far as I can remember I wrote you that I had received *Light on the Path* from one of the Masters who guide Madame Blavatsky. I wish to ease my conscience now by saying that I wrote this from no knowledge of my own, but merely to please her; and that I now see I was very wrong in doing so. *I ought further to state that “Light on the Path” was not to my knowledge inspired by any one; but that I saw it written on the walls of a place I visit spiritually (which is described in the “Blossom and the Fruit”) — there I read it and I wrote it down. I have myself never received proof of the existence of any Master though I believe* (as always) that the mahatmic force must exist.

Yours faithfully,

MABEL COLLINS



Yes, Mabel, the “mahatmic force” does exist. It exists in every great soul like yours. There is no need of a word of mine further. It is Helena P. Blavatsky’s turn to speak next.

ELLIOTT COUES

1726 N St., Washington, D.C., May 3rd, 1889

[H.P. Blavatsky continues]

YES, ELLIOTT COUES, “it is Helena P. Blavatsky’s turn to speak” now; and she *will*. She begins by declaring that every one of the statements contained in the above double letter is *malicious and false* — from first to last. It is not her word only she gives for it. She is not *popular* enough to be believed by the outside public on *that* alone. But she will furnish dates, as aforesaid, and show the absolute *impossibility* of this new charge brought against her.

These are the accusations, and here are the answers.

① Dr. Elliott Coues states that *Light on the Path* “was supposed to have been dictated to Mrs. Collins by ‘Koot-Hoomi or some other Hindu adept,’” etc.

Answer. No Theosophist known personally to Mme. Blavatsky — or any one else probably — has ever attributed that little work to “Koot-Hoomi” or *any other Hindu Adept*. On the contrary, as we are informed by those in a position to know best, and also the immediate friends of Mrs. Mabel Cook-Collins, who saw her almost daily after its publication — its inspiration was always ascribed to quite another person, who was never “a Hindu.” This inspirer, whom “Miss Mabel Collins” described, without naming him, to [315] many of her friends and to Mme. Blavatsky herself, was undeniably recognized by the latter; but, although an old friend, she would certainly never call him her “Master.”

② Moreover, Dr. E. Coues, the President of the *Gnostic Th. Soc.*, ought to know that the “inspirer” of *Light on the Path* is not the same “great soul” on whom he (Prof. E. Coues) has fathered his No. 5 of the “Biogen Series.”¹ Has the erudite Professor of the Smithsonian Institute connected the said old work with “Koothomi’s” name to “please” H.P. Blavatsky, too; and has she also “*begged and implored*” him to do so?

It is in consequence of the alleged “inspiration” that Prof. Coues wrote, as he himself tells us, his first letter of inquiry to Mabel Collins (Mrs. Cook) FOUR YEARS AGO, “since which time,” he adds, “*nothing passed* between Mrs. Collins and myself.”

Answer. This is a very important admission, and one, that with the object in view (namely, to throw a little additional mud on “his friend,” H.P. Blavatsky) will prove an unfortunate *lapsus calami* for Dr. Coues. The facts are these.

③ The incriminated party left India after six years of sojourn in it on February 20th, 1884 and sailed for Europe. She remained in France four months, then arrived about August in London, and sailed back to India on November 11th of the same year. She remained in London three of four weeks and then went to Germany, where she had the honour of renewing her acquaintance with Professor Coues. But she never met Miss Mabel Collins at all, till a short time before her departure for India, saw her but a few times and never had even a private interview with her. When she first heard of

¹ “*Kuthumi, the true and complete Œconomy of Human Life*, based on the system of Theosophical Ethics,” by Elliott Coues. Noticing it in its issue of July, 1886 [Vol. I], *The Path* remarks:

“This is a reprint of a little volume, originally issued in 1770, but under the classical pen of Prof. Coues, who has added an introduction and the faultless typography of Estes and Lauriat, the little book is a very different affair from the earlier edition.”

Yet, perfect as it may be, what had “Koothoomi” or *Kuthumi* to do with this “reprint,” we wonder? — [ED.] H.P. Blavatsky

her, it happened as follows: Mr. Ewen, F.T.S.,¹ late of [316] India, had unearthed a story written by Miss M Collins, found it charming, as it really is, and showing it to Col. Olcott, introduced the latter to her. This novel was the *Idyll of the White Lotus*, which “Miss Mabel Collins,” told the Colonel had been written by her, either in trance or under dictation (the handwriting of the MSS., *was not hers*, certainly) by some one whom she described to him. This was *before Mme. Blavatsky ever set eyes on her*; and yet the title page of that work bears to this day the inscription:

To the *True Author*
The *Inspirer* of this work;
IT IS DEDICATED.

If she knew nothing then (when she wrote *Light on the Path*) “of the mysteries of the Theosophical Society,” as she states, then she must have forgotten them, since the *Idyll*, etc., preceded *Light on the Path*; the more so, as she wrote and finished the former *before she had ever set her eyes on “Mme. Blavatsky.”* Miss Mabel Collins adds that *Light on the Path* “*was not inspired by anyone.*” And here comes an independent witness, Mrs. Passingham, late of Cambridge, who flatly contradicts the statement. “Miss Collins” passed a day in her house in February 1885, and left early, because, as she said, she had to meet *by appointment, her inspirer*, the one who dictated to her *Light on the Path*, at 8 that evening.

(Read Mrs. Passingham’s letter, *infra*.)

How does this tally with the statement that she (Mabel Collins) had “never received proof of the existence of *any* Master” (let alone the Theosophical Masters)? Was the dedication *invented*, and a Master and “Inspirer” suggested by Mme. B. before the latter had ever seen his *amanuensis*? For that only she proclaims herself in her dedication, by speaking of the “*true author*,” who thus must be regarded *as some kind of Master*, at all events. Moreover, heaps of letters may be produced all written between 1872 and 1884, and signed △: the well-known seal of one who became *an adept* only in 1886. Did Mme. Blavatsky send to “Miss Mabel Collins” this signature, at a time when neither knew of the other’s existence? [317]

And now to *Light on the Path*.

④ Miss Mabel Collins, known in those days to us simply as Mrs. Cook, can have hardly begun it in November 1884; for, three days before Mme. Blavatsky’s departure for India (there are witnesses) she was visited by Miss M. Collins, who showed her a page or two of that which developed later into *Light on the Path*, and in which the former recognized some very familiar expressions. Thus, that which became the priceless little book, was finished and published in London *after Mme. Blavatsky’s departure for India, i.e.*, in the early part of 1885, as dozens of witnesses are ready to testify (Miss M. Collins’ friends among others). At that time, the accused party was at Adyar, lying for over three months almost on her deathbed. And now, comes the curious part of this new attempt to discredit a person in her way, and *a dangerous witness*. If she is the *sole author* of *Light on the Path*, how comes it that she, ignorant of Sanskrit and having never seen the “Golden Precepts,” could use so many sentences

¹ [Fellow of the Theosophical Society]

bodily enshrined in that *purely Occult work*? But here is something still more curious:

5 If Dr. Coues wrote his first letter of enquiry to Mrs. Mabel Cook *four years ago*, it must have been some time in the middle of 1885. For, *Light on the Path* was published, as said, early in that year, and *his letter to her could not have preceded* the publication of the book, while since then, he assures us, “*nothing passed*” between him and Mrs. Mabel Collins.

But whether late or early in 1885 or 1886, the fact remains the same. Mme. Blavatsky *was not* in England, and could not be there when Dr. Coues’ letter of enquiry was received by “Miss Mabel Collins.” For Mme. B. was sent back to Europe by her doctors in India, at the end of March 1885 and remained till May 1887 in Italy, Germany, and Ostend. No correspondence ever took place between Miss Collins and Mme. Blavatsky; nor did the latter know anything of *Light on the Path* until it was given to her as the “New Bible of the American Theosophists,” by Mr. Arthur Gebhard, in the summer of 1886. Thus turn it whatever way you like,

- Neither could “Miss Mabel Collins” be *studying* [318] Mme. B. during that period of 2½ years;
- Nor could she be “studying *under* her.”

How then could the “author” of *Light on the Path* possibly say that she “took the letter to her” and wrote “the answer at her dictation”?! The gratuitous invention is so painfully palpable that there is really no need to dwell on it any longer. There is but one explanation possible. Miss M. Collins had an *astral* dream. She found the imaginary scene between Mme. Blavatsky and herself, and heard the latter *dictating* her letter to Dr. Coues under *the walls she visits spiritually* — and now repents of it. Untrained psychic faculties contain potentially strange surprises in them; an inordinate hatred and desire of revenge lead some mediums on to dangerous pathways.

Thus, why should she repent of that which she has never done, and why, above all, should Dr. Elliott Coues — the flower of chivalry — show such an intense eagerness to proclaim his fair correspondent to the world as the wife of the Biblical *Ananias*? True, she has done many other things to disprove her own words and placed them on record before the world, these records proving still more damaging to her reputation for truthfulness. Has she also forgotten what she wrote in her work *Through the Gates of Gold*? This book again was quite unknown to Mme. Blavatsky, who first heard of it from Messrs. Finch and Keightley, who brought it to her in Ostend in March 1887, just after its publication. And this work — so inferior to *Light on the Path* or the *Idyll of the White Lotus*, that no devotee would ever think of claiming as its author a “Master” — bears on the page facing the *Prologue* the following words:

Once, as I sat alone writing, a mysterious Visitor entered my study unannounced, and stood beside me. I forgot to ask who he was or why he entered so unceremoniously, for he began to tell me of the Gates of Gold. He spoke from knowledge, and from the fire of his speech I caught faith. I have written down his words; but alas, I cannot hope that the fire shall burn as brightly in my writing as in his speech.

The fear was a just one, as one can never write from memory as well as when copying — *from walls*. The divine fire was expended in *Light on the Path* and never burned as [319] brightly since.

“Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost its power to wound. . . . Seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it.”

These are aphorisms as old as the *Book of the Golden Precepts*, from which they radiated — “on the walls” — and thence into *Light on the Path*.

For a woman to confess to the world that she has been deliberately deceiving it for years, simply for the pleasure of fathering the cause of a deception upon a supposed enemy, is a psychic riddle in itself.

We must close with a few more words of emphatic denial. At no time has “Miss Mabel Collins . . . *studied* under Madame Blavatsky.” The latter *has always refused to teach her, for good reasons of her own*. Mrs. Mabel Cook has sometimes attended the “Blavatsky Lodge” meetings, and had casual conversations on occult matters with her, but has never *studied* two consecutive days “under her.” Nor did Mme. B. know that Dr. Coues has ever written to Miss Collins till he told of it. In all charity we are determined to view her letter to him as — an enigma. And so must be the learned Professor’s sudden attack upon H.P. Blavatsky, another enigma to the Theosophists and the public in general, though to the attacked party it is quite clear. He speaks of *hoax*, but does not say what it is. We know of definite *hoaxes*, but prefer not to mention them at present. We have heard of Hindus committing suicide in order to bring their enemies to grief and lay a curse upon their heads. This *joint* letter is a moral suicide in its way. For a woman to confess to the world that she has been *deliberately deceiving it* for years, simply for the pleasure of fathering the cause of the deception upon a *supposed* enemy, is a psychic riddle in itself. Miss Mabel Collins, while denying the “Mahatmas,” believes, however, “that the *Mahatmic force* (whatever it may be, *apart* from the Mahatmas) must exist.” This belief Dr. Coues gravely ratifies, on the authority, we must suppose, of his own “great psychic powers”; and thus we find him assuring “Mabel” that the “Mahatmic force . . . *exists in every great Soul like yours*” [*her’s*].

May all the Heavenly Powers, actual or imaginary, preserve the World from *such* “Mahatmic force,” if it is this “force” that dictated to Miss Mabel Collins her letter to Dr. Coues, and inspired him to publish it with his *comments*. And may the poor Theosophical Society be laid into its grave rather than have *such* representatives of THEOSOPHY! [320]

History repeats itself in every age. The world had its century of Hypatias, its century of the Joans of Arc, and that of many other heroines. Our departing age, the XIXth, seems to impress itself on the tablets of the Universal History, as “the Century of the MADAME COULOMB!” . . .

H.P. BLAVATSKY

A timely witness, Mrs. C.A. Passingham

The following is a letter published in LIGHT of June the 8th, when that weekly reprinted the above insinuations from the REL.-PHIL. JOURNAL. It is a thoroughly independent evidence which, throwing a new and unexpected light on the calumny, shatters it to atoms. No better proof of the baselessness of the charges could be ever expected.

To the Editor of *Light*

Sir,

À propos of the letter from Dr. Coues relative to Mabel Collins and *Light on the Path*, the following incident may be interesting. In the early part of 1885 (I think February) Mrs. Collins visited a mutual friend at Girton, and was by her introduced to me, and spent the after noon and part of the evening at my house. She expressed a wish to leave early, as she had an “appointment” with “Hilari-on,” the author of *Light on the Path*, at 8 pm, and did not wish to be absent from her lodgings at Girton at that hour. So I sent her back in my carriage at her express request. I was informed afterwards by my friend that the writing that evening had been very successful, owing she thought to previous harmonious conditions. I may add that Mrs. Collins told me herself that the influence under which she wrote the book in question was that of a person whom she had long known, but had only lately identified as being that of an “Adept.”

C.A. PASSINGHAM

Exmouth, Devon, late of Milton, Cambridge
June 2nd, 1889

Mrs. Passingham is a lady of high standing, well known to many, and who was till now President of the Cambridge Lodge of the T.S.¹ And now what becomes of the — invention (not to call it by a worse name) that Mme. Blavatsky [321] “begged and implored” Miss Mabel Collins, to father *Light on the Path* “on one of the Masters who guide Mme. Blavatsky”? The visit of Mrs. Cook (Mabel Collins) to Mrs. Passingham was in February 1885, and Mme. Blavatsky having sailed for India three months before had certainly nothing to do with it. As already shown, the accused party hardly knew “Miss Mabel Collins” in 1884, and, had she known her, prudence alone would have never permitted Mme. B. to ask Miss M.C. to share in such an *imposture*, just at a time when the *Christian College Magazine* and Mme. Coulomb were red hot in their conspiracy of denunciation. The “hoax” with which Dr. Coues charges Mme. B. in his letter thus returns home, part and parcel, to roost with the learned President of the *Gnostic T.S.* of Washington. May it do him good!

¹ [Theosophical Society]

An American paper, the *Washington Post*, speaking of a reception given to Dr. Elliott Coues in New York says that:

The Theosophical Society and some of the most famous and cultivated people in New York will extend him and his wife a series of social courtesies and unite to honour him as a theosophist and a scientist.

No one in America could “honour” too highly a Professor of the Smithsonian Institute as “a Scientist.” But as a *Theosophist* — Heaven save the mark! The animus and spite shown in his conduct and the want of all *gentlemanly*, let alone theosophical feeling, are such as would be unhesitatingly repudiated by every Smithsonian Professor.

The Religio-Philosophical Journal is neither religious nor philosophical.

And now we have a few more words to say to a weekly in America. For years the *R.-P. Journal* assumed the monopoly of denouncing and attacking us in almost every issue, and for years we have ignored it and kept silent. But for once, a month or so ago, we raised a mild protest in *Lucifer*, simply remarking that our contemporary of Chicago repeated “unverified cackle.” At this, the *R.-P. J.*, feeling very indignant, replies:

The JOURNAL does not “repeat unverified cackle,” and unlike the Tartarian termagant has “discretion” enough not to juggle.

Don’t you “repeat unverified cackle,” dear old *Journal*? And what do you call the above “Coues-Collins” letter, and, even more, the lying Billingsgate of W. Emmette Coleman? [322] Or, perhaps, you think the name “cackle” too mild and would like to replace it with the term “malicious slander”? So be it. As to your having “discretion enough not to juggle,” no one has ever thought of accusing you of it. But you have constantly charged the same upon the “Tartarian Termagant,” and this without the slightest shadow of *real* proof. This is neither “religious” nor “philosophical.” But what is distinctly kind and beneficent to Theosophists, though hardly meant to be so, is the gratuitous advertisement of the Esoteric Section, its *Rules* and *Pledge* in the *R.-P. J.* The Editor must accept our best thanks, as his generous advertisement brought us about twenty applications to join the E.S., all dispatched within the week of its publication.

A curious prophecy was made to me, in 1879, in India, by a mystic who said that every letter in the alphabet had either a beneficent or a maleficent influence on the life and work of every man. Persons whose names began with an initial the sound of which was adverse to some other person had to be avoided by the latter. “What is the letter most adverse to me?” I enquired. He replied:

Beware of the letter C, I see three capital C’s shining ominously over your head. You have to beware of them especially for the *next ten years* and shield your Society from their influence. They are the initials of three persons who will belong to the Theosophical body, only to turn its greatest enemies.

I had forgotten the warning till 1884, when the Coulombs appeared on the stage. Are Dr. Coues and Miss Collins (Cook) preparing to close the list — I wonder?

I reprint the following correspondence from *Light* of June the 8th, omitting my own letter, which would be mere repetition of what is said above, and Mrs. Passingham's statement as already given:

Those whom god wishes to destroy, he first deprives of reason.

[From Bertram Keightley]

To the Editor of *Light*

Sir,

In reference to the letters from Professor Coues and Mabel Collins, quoted from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* in your issue of the 1st inst., I trust you will permit me to say a few words on the facts [323] in question. I knew Madame Blavatsky intimately during her stay in Europe in 1884, and since her arrival in this country in May 1887, I have resided in the same house continuously. Further, I have known Mabel Collins intimately from the date of the publication of *Light on the Path* in the early months of 1885.

① Before Madame Blavatsky's departure for India, in November 1884, she had seen Mabel Collins, at the outside, two or three times, and *Light on the Path* had only just been begun, and the book was not completed till early in 1885, when Madame Blavatsky was in India, and to my certain knowledge *no* communication took place between her and Mabel Collins after the departure of the former for India in 1884, until her arrival in England in 1887.

Now, since Professor Coues' letter to Mabel Collins *could* not have *preceded* the publication of *Light on the Path*, it is obvious that Mabel Collins' reply thereto must fall after the month of March 1885. How then, I ask, could this reply have been written "at her [Madame Blavatsky's] dictation," as asserted by Mabel Collins, seeing that Madame Blavatsky was at the time in India? Such a marvellous discrepancy between statement and fact makes one think: *quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat*.¹

② The astounding suggestion of Professor Coues that the authorship of *Light on the Path* was claimed by Mahatma Koot Hoomi is so ridiculous as to call only for the remark that no well informed person in the Theosophical Society ever heard of it before.

③ As to its real authorship, Mabel Collins constantly and consistently averred that it was "given" to her in the way she states *by the assistance of a person* whom she has described to many and in whom Colonel Olcott, entirely independently of Madame Blavatsky, recognized a Greek (not a *Hindu*) Adept *whom he had personally known in the body*.

¹ [Those whom god wishes to destroy, he first deprives of reason.]

④ As to Mabel Collins insinuation that Madame Blavatsky endeavoured to induce her to claim the authorship of *Light on the Path* for “one of the Masters who guide her (Madame Blavatsky),” it is simply ridiculous. This alone is enough to show how empty is such an insinuation even apart from the fact that, as I have stated above, *no communication* whatever passed between Madame Blavatsky and Mabel Collins between November 11th, 1884, and April 1887.

⑤ As to the fact that *Light on the Path* was “inspired” by some influence extraneous to Mabel Collins’ own brain, the dedication prefixed to *The Idyll of the White Lotus* and the second edition of *Through the Gates of Gold* are ample proof, if the authoress’ veracity is worth anything.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY



[From a student of *Light on the Path*]

To the Editor of *Light*

Sir,

In your issue of June 1st appears a copy of a communication from Professor Coues, of Washington, to the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of Chicago, drawing attention to a letter from the authoress of *Light on the Path* respecting the origin of that book.

The admissions made in that letter by Miss Collins are naturally of interest to all Theosophists who value the little treatise alluded to, and who have hitherto held the name of its authoress in high esteem.

For this latter fact there was great reason, in that she was the authoress not only of *Light on the Path*, but also of *Through the Gates of Gold* and *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, books of inestimable value to those who wished to *know themselves* from the Theosophic point of view; while a further reason lay in the belief that she was a faithful disciple and fellow-worker of Madame Blavatsky.

But in whatever position the avowal in Miss Collins’ letter may place that lady with regard to those who have hitherto looked upon her as a teacher, by its apparent intention of disowning Madame Blavatsky and of throwing discredit upon her explanation of the origin of *Light on the Path*, it will certainly appear to many that she has most strongly *confirmed that explanation*, while she has also satisfactorily answered the query which arose in everyone’s mind, “*How did the Mahatma give Mabel Collins that marvellous epitome of the mode in which Mahatmic evolution is to be attained?*”

Referring to Miss Collins’ explanation, it is at once evident that another intelligence besides her own must also have visited the place, “spiritually” or otherwise, where she saw *Light on the Path* written upon its walls, for *someone* must

have placed the words there; moreover, that intelligence had command over good modern English as well as being possessor of high practical wisdom.

We judge, therefore, that Miss Collins was simply the favoured vehicle for the communication of those particular rules of the “Hall of Learning” to the many mortals now needing and hungering for them, and while it is impossible that they could have been written up where she was permitted to observe them, otherwise than by an intelligent Being who had also visited the place, it does not at all follow that he should, or ought to, have made himself or his nature known to her. That would have been creating a basis for a personal intimacy which was not necessary and possibly not advisable.

As regards the manner in which one mind may instruct or inform another, on what may be termed the occult plane, we know at present very little, but the phenomena of psychometry and thought-transference may some day, if scientifically studied, be the means of our understanding these things better.

Hence Madame Blavatsky’s explanation has intrinsic probability for its support, in addition to the authority she herself possesses in speaking of all such matters.

As for the attempts at discredit which Professor Coues makes upon [325] certain occult facts and phenomena, it is difficult to understand how a man who pertinaciously, in public and in private, claims *for himself* the possession of occult powers, as he has done respecting the visits of his astral body to friends hundreds of miles away, and its recognition by them, can so recklessly and inconsistently throw ridicule and doubt upon occult phenomena testified to by others.

As an eminent man of science accustomed to the methods by which scientific truths are discovered, ought not Professor Coues to see that the attested production on his part of what are ordinarily termed “supernatural” phenomena most surely suggest a strong probability that there are higher and more imposing “supernatural” powers than those to which he has at present attained? The projection of one’s astral form and the projection of one’s definite thoughts, for the purpose of giving information or instruction, can only be matters of *degree of power*, though the difference between them in degree may be great and the respective degrees be characteristic of very distinct types of development.

A STUDENT OF “LIGHT ON THE PATH”



[H.P. Blavatsky continues]

J ADD THE FOLLOWING CORROBORATIVE EXTRACTS from a pamphlet issued by W.Q. Judge and widely circulated in America:¹

① Madame Blavatsky left England for India in November, 1884, and did not return to England till May 1st, 1887. *Light on the Path* was published about March, 1885. At the time of Mrs. Collins' reception of the letter which Dr. Coues wrote her in 1885, Madame Blavatsky was in India. Mrs. Collins could not, therefore, have been "studying and studying under" her, nor could she have "taken the letter" to her, nor have "written the answer at her dictation."

② Mr. William Q. Judge was in London in November, 1884, after Madame Blavatsky's departure, and returned to the States in December. Mrs. Collins was writing *Light on the Path* at the time of his visit, and he received one of the first copies about April 1st, 1885.

* * * * *

④ In dedicating *The Idyll of the White Lotus* to "The true Author, the Inspirer," Mrs. Collins made the same claim of inspiration as in the first letter to Dr. Coues, though (as will be seen from an extract below from Madame Blavatsky) Madame Blavatsky was ignorant even of the existence of the book until after Mrs. Collins avowed the inspiration to Col. Olcott. [326]

⑤ The history of *Light on the Path* was given to Dr. Keightley by Mrs. Collins herself as follows: When Madame Blavatsky was in London in 1884, Mrs. Collins had partly written *The Idyll of the White Lotus*. This story (she stated to Dr. K.) was due to inspiration from a Being whom she described to Madame Blavatsky. Madame Blavatsky said that, from the description and the tone of the thought, she believed this Being to be an old friend of her own among the Occult Brotherhood — though not "Koot Hoomi or some other Hindu Adept." Mrs. Collins further stated that, after the completion of the book, this same Being urged her to endeavour to reach a higher state of consciousness, as there was work for her to do. The effort resulted in the production of *Light on the Path*, written down in the manner which Mrs. Collins describes.

[From William Q. Judge and Archibald Keightley]

Extracts from Madame Blavatsky's letter of May 27th 1889, to a lady in America:

① "*Light on the Path* was first published in 1885, and Dr. Coues' letter to her could not have preceded the publication of the book. I returned to India in November 1884, and never saw Mabel Collins till the 1st of May 1887. Therefore it is perfectly impossible that I should have dictated, or even suggested, such a letter as Mabel Collins speaks of."

② "Before my return to India in 1884, I saw Mabel Collins barely three or four times. She then showed me the first page or two of the future *Light on the Path*, wherein I recognized some phrases which were familiar to me. Therefore I the

¹ [This pamphlet is entitled: *Light on the Path* and *Mabel Collins*. It is signed by William Quan Judge and Dr. Archibald Keightley, and contains 8 pages of text. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

more readily accepted her description of the manner in which they had been given to her. She herself certainly believed that this book was dictated to her by ‘someone’ whose appearance she described, in which statement I am sure I shall be borne out by Mr. Finch, who had the chief share in bringing about the publication of the book.”

③ “I saw the completed work for the first time in my life at Ostend, a few months before I came to London in 1887.”

④ “I emphatically and unreservedly deny Mabel Collins’ vile insinuation that I ever asked her to make any statement regarding *Light on the Path* at all, let alone any untrue statements.”

⑤ “The book (*Idyll of the White Lotus*) was begun long before I first saw her; it was unearthed by Mr. Ewen, and shown to Col. Olcott, who heard all about its inspirer before I even knew of its existence.”



From the above facts and extracts, it is clear:

- 1 That Mrs. Collins claimed an inspirer for *The Idyll of the White Lotus* before Madame Blavatsky had seen or even known of the book. [327]
- 2 That the suggestion of inspiration in the case of *Light on the Path* was not made by Madame Blavatsky to Mrs. Collins, but by Mrs. Collins to Madame Blavatsky.
- 3 That at the time Mrs. Collins alleges herself to have been “implored” by Madame Blavatsky to write to Dr. Coues a claim of inspiration, Madame Blavatsky was, and had been for months, 7,000 miles away.
- 4 That if the claim to inspiration was false, Mrs. Collins alone was responsible for the falsehood, and
- 5 That the falsehood cannot be shifted to another person by a second falsehood even more glaring and palpable.

It is not necessary for the undersigned to expand the reflections which instantly arise in any honest and clear mind upon perusal of such a story as the foregoing. The spectacle of a woman spontaneously accusing herself of a falsehood and sanctioning the utmost publicity, not in penitence or atonement, but as a means, coupled with a greater falsehood, to spite and injure a former friend, is of a sadness beyond measure. And yet one can hardly see incongruity in the added spectacle of an officer of a Society grasping at such an occasion, eagerly telegraphing across the ocean for permission to use it as widely as possible to belittle and befoul the Society and its Head, exulting in the probable confusion to the Cause to which he had professed allegiance, and finding “Mahatmic force” in the very person he had just proclaimed a liar! Before these astounding displays of moral callousness and mental short-sightedness, conscience, judgment and taste can but stand appalled.

There is, however, one remark which we, as students of Theosophy and intimate friends of Madame Blavatsky, desire to make to all those who are interested in the Wisdom Religion or members of the Theosophical Society. *There is no cause for discouragement or alarm.* This is not the first time that evil passion has used the arts of detraction and treason to check the progress of the Society and impair the influence of the Founders. Preceding ones have failed. After each attack the Cause has rallied and stridden forward and upward, the enemy's hopes vanishing like his reputation. Why? Because behind the Society and its friends are the *Masters Themselves*. Their aid is ever given to those who are earnestly working for the Truth and sustaining the hands of the visible Founders. It will be so in this case. Very soon the animus of the present attack will be understood, its spirit, motives, objects, become apparent, and the very letters which to some seemed at first so damaging will, like the scorpion, die from their own sting. Honour and honesty are not dead among Theosophists nor is perception of motive, or horror of perfidy.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

ARCHIBALD KEIGHTLEY

June the 6th, 1889



Addendum by Mr. W.Q. Judge

Concerning the actual authorship of the works referred to, and concerning the varied assertions made by the reputed author, the following considerations may have weight.

① In *Lucifer*, Vol. I, No. 1, Mabel Collins in “Comments upon *Light on the Path*” said that the book has a deep underlying meaning, and he who reads it “is in fact deciphering a profound cipher”; and on p. 9,

The whole of *Light on the Path* is written in an astral cipher, and can therefore only be deciphered by one who reads astrally.

This is repeated and enforced in *Lucifer* for November 1887.

② Extract from a letter from Mabel Collins dated London, July 17th 1887, and printed in *The Path* of September, 1887.

To the Editor of the Path — As to *Light on the Path*, that is a collection of axioms which I found written on the walls of a certain place to which I obtained admittance, and I made notes of them as I saw them. But I see no feasible method of making such explanations to the public therefore at present I propose to place this preface before each of the books.

③ *Through the Gates of Gold*, by the same author, is dedicated to an unknown being who, she says, came to her room and told her the story.

④ It is well known to those who are acquainted with Mabel Collins that, previous to the writing of *Light on the Path*, she had been solely engaged in novel writing and newspaper work.

⑤ She stated to the undersigned in London, in 1888, that she knew nothing about philosophy or the laws of occultism, of Karma, or any far-reaching Theosophical doctrine.

CONSEQUENTLY,

⑥ That the books *Light on the Path*, *Idyll of the White Lotus*, and *Through the Gates of Gold* were written, according to her own claim, under the inspiration of some being or beings whom she does not know, and that the best of those contains within itself indisputable evidence that it could not have been written by her unassisted.

⑦ That even if her charge against Madame Blavatsky was true, she is now claiming to be the author of those books which, in many places and at times when Madame Blavatsky was not with her, she has declared were not her own.

⑧ It cannot fail to be plain to everyone that the explanation now offered by Prof. Coues and Mabel Collins in regard to these books is only an attempt to make the public believe that during these four years she has been pretending, at the solicitation of Madame Blavatsky, that the book was written by an Adept, whereas in 1887 she published the same explanation in *The Path*.

[H.P. Blavatsky concludes]

While the one publicly proclaimed her own untruthfulness in order to slander a hated enemy, the other jumped at the opportunity to gratify his wounded vanity at the cost of breaking the pledge and his word of honour to the Theosophical Society, which he took upon joining it.

THERE ARE BUT FEW WORDS NEEDED in addition to the above. Whatever explanation the Coues-Collins combination may put forward to cover the manifest untruthfulness of their statements,

Whether Mabel Collins' letter to Prof. Coues dates from four years or from one year ago;

Whether people believe that letter to have been dictated or inspired by H.P. Blavatsky or not;

— nothing can alter the fact that the one has publicly proclaimed her own untruthfulness in order to slander a hated enemy, while the other has jumped at the opportunity to gratify his wounded vanity at the cost of breaking the pledge and his *word of honour* to the Theosophical Society which he took upon joining it.

Why has he done it? The motive is plainly shown by a letter received by me from Dr. Coues a few days before the Convention of the American Section T.S. at Chicago. This letter was an *ultimatum* in which the Professor offered me the choice of the following alternatives: Either *to telegraph immediately to the Convention, using all my influence to have him appointed President or "Boss" of the whole T.S. in America*, or to see him *bust up* the T.S. forever. Not being easily intimidated, I replied that he might do his worst. His letter and my reply can be published, if thought proper.

[Having read both this letter from Dr. Coues and Madame Blavatsky's reply thereto, I desire to state that the above is a perfectly correct summary of their contents, though as regards Dr. Coues' letter it is too favourable to him. — *Bertram Keightley*.]

Therefore the choice lies open to every member of the Esoteric Section. If his confidence and trust in its Head has been shaken, then by all means let him leave. On returning the papers and Instructions he has received his pledge will be cancelled. But all who desire to be taught by H.P. Blavatsky and to remain members of the Esoteric Section must (if in America) communicate at once with Mr. W.Q. Judge, who will inform them of the new organisation which has been adopted for that Section. It may be well to state here, however, *that no change of any kind has been or will be made in the terms of the PLEDGE itself*, nor will any more onerous restrictions or Rules be imposed on members. [330]

Everyone can easily see that this attack is simply a repetition of the old lines of the Coulomb-Hodgson business. In fact, the analogy is most striking; but there, the slanderers had the benefit of novelty, while this one is a mere *réchauffé* at which no

intelligent man or woman will do more than shrug their shoulders. *Non bis in idem.*¹ However that may be, as it is not H.P. Blavatsky that can ever be affected by it, but only those who think that she may be of some use to them, the choice is left entirely in their hands.

Fraternally yours,

(Signed) H.P. BLAVATSKY

London, June 21st, 1889



[From The Washington *Evening Star*]

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. IV (23), July 1889, pp. 427-28. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE WORK OF THE "ESOTERIC SECTION OF THE T.S.") XI pp. 341-42.

The Washington *Evening Star* of June the 22nd 1889, contains an article full of the most ungentlemanly and false denunciations inspired by the *ex-President* of the "Gnostic Theosophical Society" (now dischartered), attacking the best Theosophists of America, the Society, and the undersigned. Speaking of Occult magnetism the traducer expresses himself as follows:

I want to emphasize the dangers there are in the knowledge of these occult powers and forces without the *moral stamina* to use that knowledge for good.

So far so good. The "Ex-President" here repeats only that, which H.P. Blavatsky — whom he accuses in print of "tricks, fraud and *deviltry*" (?), insults, [she] scorns and laughs at — was the first to teach in the T.S. and its literature. But being himself just one of those who lack "moral stamina," he adds to it the following insinuation:

Take an illustration of what I say, that recent very bad case of the Boston Theosophists [?] *so fully exposed by the press*. There is a true, real, and actual psychic force. It may be used for good or for evil. Any honest theosophical society makes a study of this force and attempts to direct it toward the improvement of mankind. But such a society works quietly and never strolls about the country, etc., etc.

Everyone knows that no "Boston Theosophists" have *ever been* "exposed by the press" neither "fully" nor partially; but only the "Esoteric" humbug of Hiram Butler and his [342] mythical adept "1,000 years old." And it is as well known that of the "Butler" Esoteric *clique*, not one has ever been a member of the T.S., however much those crows tried to parade in theosophical plumage by cribbing all they could from our books. Therefore, it becomes quite evident that the intention of the *ex-President* of the defunct Gnostic Branch of the T.S. was to maliciously identify and connect Theosophists in general with the Butlerites. He does not name Hiram Butler,² but,

¹ [i.e., not twice in the same [thing], a legal doctrine to the effect that no legal action can be instituted twice for the same cause of action, originating in Roman civil law, and equivalent to the double jeopardy doctrine found in common law jurisdictions.]

² [Hiram Erastus Butler, 1841–1916, founder of the "The Esoteric Fraternity." In 1891, he took twelve followers from Boston to Applegate, California, and settled on a 500-acre homestead overlooking the American River.]

relying upon the public ignorance, *insinuates* the identity; an action than which none baser or more cunning could be conceived. At the same time it is as evident that those whom he seeks to strike at are the “Esotericists” of the T.S. and the Head of the Section, as he repeatedly calls the “pledged” Theosophists Mme. “Blavatsky’s *dupes*.”

**Members of the Inner Group of Theosophists are pledged by a
vow of silence and secrecy to their Higher Self.**

Whether any *pledged* or *unpledged* Theosophists will resent the malicious calumny and insinuation is their own concern. My humble advice is, to show the greatest contempt for an action which dishonours but the perpetrator of such a base attack. Only in view of the term “Esoteric” and “Esotericism” having been so desecrated by the Boston Butlerites; and rendered so ridiculous by the non-existent and mythical “Esoteric Theosophical Society” of America, invented by its “Perpetual President” (“perpetual peacock,” rather as neatly rendered by a Californian lady) — our Esoteric Section had better drop its name. The Council in England has decided to call it the “Arcane” instead of the “Esoteric” Section and we hope the American Council will accede to this. It has the advantage of being a name which has not been dragged in mire and ridicule by charlatans as has the term Esoteric.

Hoping this name will be sanctioned by our President, Col. H.S. Olcott, and readily adopted by the pledged members — I remain, fraternally, etc.

(Signed) H.P. BLAVATSKY

Head of the Arcane (late Esoteric) Section of the T.S.

Fontainebleau, July 7th, 1889



There, they built an 18-room house, established a farm, and set up a printing press to publish his books, including *Esoteric*, a “magazine of practical esoteric thought.”]

Official Notice

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. V (27), November 1889, pp. 250-51. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OFFICIAL NOTICE) XII pp. 24-26.

Those who read *Light* must have seen in its issue of November 9th the following letter from Washington headed:

THE Gnostic THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

over the signature of “Elliott Coues, President, etc.” In this document the latter asks to “correct the *false* statements” made “to the effect that the above-named organization is extinct.” The writer then continues:

As its founder and President, I am fully informed on the question. The Gnostic Theosophical Society was never stronger nor more active than it is today. Its memberships and ramifications extend into nearly every State in the Union. Since October 1886, when it was formally dissolved, as an association in any way dependent upon another of similar name, and immediately reformed on an independent basis, it has steadily [25] grown . . . [etc., etc.]

The letter closes with the words:

We desire especially to accentuate the fact that we repudiate and disclaim all connection with certain persons whose names have heretofore been identified by the public with the movement commonly called “Theosophical.” [Signature follows]

As the Corresponding Secretary for life, and one of the original founders, at New York in 1875, of the Theosophical Society, whose ramifications extend into the five parts of the world — the United States being only one of the five — I hereby declare the above statements to be simply nonsensical. It is a joke, evidently. And these are our proofs and reasons:

① There can be no authentic Theosophical Society, or even a branch thereof, outside the jurisdiction of the “Parent” Society so-called, now having its Headquarters at Adyar, Madras, India. Its title, the T.S. at large not being a chartered body, may of course have hitherto been pirated, but it cannot be so now, least of all in the District of Columbia, as will be seen later.

② This applies especially to the “Gnostic” ex-Theosophical Society of Washington, D.C., for reasons which I name below.

(a) The Gnostic branch having been chartered by the President-Founder before 1886, the said *Gnostic* branch, if it wished to withdraw from our jurisdiction, had as in honour bound, to drop its title of “Theosophical”; therefore —

(b) If “formally dissolved” in October 1886 and “immediately reformed,” of which no notice was ever given to Adyar, it had to remain simply the Gnostic Society, to which title it had, and has a perfect right; but —

(c) As it is now a matter of official record that the Branch of this name was dis-chartered only in May of the present year, and its President, Dr. Elliott Coues, expelled by the American Section of the General Council of the T.S., it could

not, therefore, have remained from 1886 [26] till the Spring of 1889, an association *in any way independent* of the Parent Society. Herein is the joke.

③ As there is at the present moment at Washington, D.C., a *legally chartered* Theosophical Society (the Blavatsky T.S.) formed and *duly incorporated* in July 1889 by Prof. A. Higgins, its President, and his associates, no other Society calling itself “Theosophical” *would now be recognized by law in that District*. The “Gnostic” therefore, if it still exists, and adds to its name “Theosophical” is an *outlaw*.

And this is why the letter of the President of the “Gnostic” Society of Washington, D.C., is a practical joke on the innocence of the readers of *Light*.

H.P. BLAVATSKY,

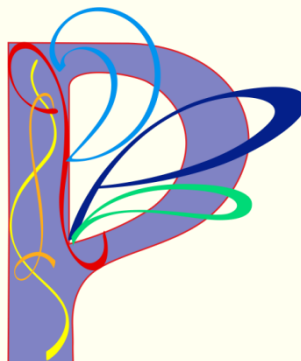
Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society.

P.S. As to the general question of his abusive attacks upon “certain persons” who are Mr. Judge, General Secretary of the American Section of the T.S. and myself, I will say this. I cannot do better than adopt the line of policy recommended by my quondam, egregiously and fulsomely flattering friend, the same Dr. E. Coues, in a letter to myself of date November 22nd, 1885, a few lines from which I will quote. It answers fully the closing (and would-be) contemptuous sentence of his letter to *Light*:

. . . You are a grand and wonderful woman, whom I admire as much as I appreciate . . . I admire your fortitude and endurance in bearing burdens enough to kill anybody but *the Blavatsky* whose like has not before been seen, nor will be ever . . . Never mind your enemies! They will get a spurious and vicarious reputation by attacking you, which you can afford to let them have, though you don’t want to confer upon them the immortality they would get by your condescending to fight them. When History comes to be written they will appear, if at all, hanging on to your skirts. Shake them off, and let them go!

[Signed] ELLIOTT COUES

and so I do. — H.P.B.



Suggested reading for students.



From our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series.

- A WORTHY LIFE IS A VIRTUOUS LIFE
- ANGELS WEEP AT THE SIGHT OF HUMAN SORROW
- CHELAS AND LAY CHELAS
- CHELASHIP RULES FROM THE KIU-TE
- COMMENTARY ON THE GAYATRI BY JUDGE
- DISCHARGING THE DUTY OF ANOTHER IS DANGEROUS
- DIVINE VS. WORLDLY LOVE
- EYE VS. HEART DOCTRINE
- HARMONY IS THE ONE LAW IN NATURE
- HEART DOCTRINE AND HIGHER ETHICS
- KRISHNA IN PARADISE
- LIGHT ON THE PATH
- LOVE IS THE HEALING POWER OF THE SUCCESSFUL PHYSICIAN
- MAHATMAS AND CHELAS
- NARADA BHAKTI SUTRA
- PROCLUS ON THE TEACHER-DISCIPLE BOND OF LOVE
- PROTREPTICS TO DEVOTIONAL LOVE IN IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA
- REAL LIFE THRILLS IN THE SEVEN BRAINS OF THE HEART
- SEPTUAGINT'S SONG OF SONGS - TR. BRENTON
- STAND READY TO ABANDON ALL YOU HAVE LEARNED WITH THE HEAD
- THAT PURE DESIRE, OF WHOM LOVE IS BORN
- THE BHAGAVAD GITA - SEVEN ESSAYS BY JUDGE
- THE BHAGAVAD GITA - TR. JUDGE
- THE DEVOTIONAL SONGS OF KABIR SAHEB
- THE LEGEND OF THE BLUE LOTUS
- THE PATH, BY REGINALD WILLOUGHBY MACHELL

HIGHER ETHICS AND DEVOTION SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- THE PERENNIAL WISDOM OF JAVIDAN KHIRAD
- THE STAR OF LOVE THRILLS THE NOBLE HEART
- THE STORY OF NARADA AND THE SUPREMACY OF BHAKTI
- THE TRANS-HIMALAYAN MAHATMAS ARE MEN LIVING ON EARTH
- THE VERY BEST OF ALL TALISMANS
- THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE - SEVEN MYSTIC SOUNDS
- THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE - TR. BLAVATSKY
- THEOLOGIA GERMANICA - TR. WINKWORTH
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE AMARANTHINE DREAM
- TOWARD THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
- TRUE PRAYER IS MENTAL UTTERANCE IN SECRET
- WARNINGS TO WOULD-BE OCCULTISTS
- WHEN THE SUN MOVES NORTHWARD



Further reading for students.



Blavatsky defends the Cause of Truth and its detractors.

- BLAVATSKY AGAINST SPIRITUALISM
- BLAVATSKY CUTS DOWN TO SIZE A CARPING CRITIC OF HETERODOXY
- BLAVATSKY ON THE KNIGHTED OXFORD SANSKRITIST WHO COULD SPEAK NO SANSKRIT
- OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
— *in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.*
- MATERIALISM, SPIRITUALISM, MONISM
- SPIRIT, SPIRITS, SPIRITUALISM
- SPIRITUALISM IS A PHILOSOPHY OF YESTERDAY
— *in our Confusing Words Series.*
- FOUL CONSPIRACIES AND BLATANT LIES LEVELLED AGAINST MADAME BLAVATSKY
- PROMETHEUS, THE LIGHT-BRINGER, HURLED DOWN TO THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH
- SPECULATIVE LUCUBRATIONS OF AN ARISTOTELEAN PHILOSOPHER
- THE RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL IS NEITHER RELIGIOUS NOR PHILOSOPHICAL
- THE SPARKLE OF “LIGHT ON THE PATH” HAS BEEN DIMMED BY A DARK STAIN
- TRUTH IS EXILED FROM THE PRESS BECAUSE IT IS NOT AS BEGUILING AS FALSEHOOD
— *in our Down to Earth Series.*
- LUCIFER IS CHRISTOS, INNER LIGHT
— *in our Secret Doctrine Third Proposition to Earth Series.*

