

The Fate of the Occultist



From Madame Blavatsky to the Editor of *The World*, New York, May 6th, 1877.¹

SINCE THE FIRST MONTH OF MY ARRIVAL IN AMERICA I began, for reasons mysterious but perhaps intelligible, to provoke hatred among those who pretend to be on good terms with me, if not the best of friends. Slanderous reports, vile insinuations, innuendo, have rained about me. For more than three years I have kept silent, although the least of the offenses attributed to me was calculated to excite the loathing of a person of my disposition. I have rid myself of a number of these retailers of slander, but finding that I was actually suffering in the estimation of friends whose good opinion I valued, I adopted a policy of seclusion. For two years my world has been in my apartments, and for an average of at least seventeen hours a day I have sat at my desk with my books and manuscripts as my companions. During this time many highly valued acquaintances have been formed with ladies and gentlemen who have sought me out without expecting me to return their visits. I am an old woman, and I feel the need of fresh air as well as anyone, but my disgust for the lying, slanderous world that we find outside of “heathen” countries has been such that in seven months I believe I have been out but three times.

But no retreat is secure against the anonymous slanderer who uses the United States mail. Letters have been received by my trusted friends containing the foulest aspersions upon myself. At various times I have been charged with:

- Drunkenness;
- Forgery;
- Being a Russian spy;
- With being an anti-Russian spy;
- With being no Russian at all, but a French adventuress;
- Of having been in jail for theft;
- Of being the mistress of a Polish count in Union Square;
- With murdering seven husbands;
- With bigamy;
- Of being the mistress of Colonel Olcott;
- Also of an acrobat.

Other things might be mentioned, but decency forbids.

¹ From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, I pp. 247-48. [Also published in the *New York Sun*, under the title “Various Slanders Refuted,” as appears from H.P. Blavatsky’s *Scrapbook*, Vol. IV, p. 61. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]