

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO

AN OPEN LETTER

TO

MADAME BLAVATSKY

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

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*It is worth considering what element your Quack specially works in : the element of Wonder ! The Genuine, be he artist or artisan, works in the finitude of the Known; the Quack in the infinitude of the Unknown.—CARLYLE.*

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## THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MADAME BLAVATSKY.

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MADAM,—In addressing this open letter to you I am writing for the public rather than for yourself. I have no expectation, and certainly no desire, of influencing you in the slightest degree. You are personally a stranger to me, your orbit is far removed from mine, and I should never have felt any interest in your movements or teachings had it not been for the conversion to Theosophy of a lady for whose character I entertain the highest respect. Mrs. Besant's change of position was a phenomenon to which I could not remain indifferent. I had occasion to criticise her new opinions, and in doing so I was obliged to notice you. Mrs. Besant eulogised your personal character in glowing language. With that, however, I did not concern myself; I was unable to perceive its connexion with the truth or falsity of theosophic principles. But you were also credited, at least by implication, with the possession of extraordinary powers, which ordinary men and women would regard as miraculous. It was more than hinted that you were the connecting link between the humble devotees of Theosophy in the benighted West and the Wise Men of the East who deliver their supernal oracles in the unexplored regions of Thibet. Such statements were open to criticism, and I dealt with them in my reply to Mrs. Besant. My remarks were brief and pointed; the space I devoted to you being simply proportionate to the part you played in Mrs. Besant's apology. What I had to say was not very complimentary, and I am not surprised at your annoyance. But I *am* surprised at your being stung into replying. It is more than I dared

to hope. I was afraid you would follow your wise old plan of letting the storm blow until it spent itself and was forgotten; but, instead of this, you have given me an opportunity of writing at greater length on what is now an interesting subject.

Your pamphlet betrays a dreadful ill temper. This is a fact of which I do not complain. A cross disputant generally gives himself away, and his sarcasms are apt to raise a smile of pity. It was not with anger that I read your observation that "The *Freethinker* has shown its *foot*, and henceforth it cannot fail to be recognised by its hoof." This delicate *badinage* is a revelation of the sweetness and light which prevail in the upper circles of esoteric philosophy. It shows what exquisite powers of wit are wielded by the Chelas and adepts who have cultivated their spirits on the heights of being, and breathed the pure air of theosophic perfection.

You tell your readers, madam, that I am a "slanderer," that I am guilty of "false and malicious accusations as brutal as they are uncalled for," that I have "abused and denounced you," that I have "flung handfuls of mud" at you, that I have circulated "lies which have never been proven, and on which no evidence is adduced," and that I have made free with your "private life and personality."

I reply that I have done nothing of the kind. I have made no accusations against you; I have not said a single word about your private life.

With regard to the latter charge, I defy you to produce a single proof. What are the facts? Mrs. Besant described you, in her *Star* article, as "the most remarkable woman of her time," as one who had "left home and country, social position and wealth, to spend her life and marvellous abilities" in spreading Theosophy. Now this is a public utterance, open to public criticism; and as one of the public, I ventured to ask the simple and modest questions—"What is Mde. Blavatsky's home, what is her country, what was her social position, and what is the extent of her wealth?" Certainly I have no claim to have these questions answered, but when your praise is sounded

so lustily, I have a right to ask them. Instead of replying, you fly into a passion, and cry "impertinent!" Would it not be wiser to restrain the enthusiasm of your friends? If they drag your "personality" into the discussion, you ought not to be surprised at its being canvassed. Am I to understand that you are willing to profit by their eulogies, but resentful at any request for information?

You decline to answer my "impertinent question," and refer me with a regal air to the Indian Political Department and the Russian Embassy. No doubt both of them have a pretty full *dossier* on Mde. Blavatsky, but I have no intention of consulting them. They are not likely to entrust me with their secrets, which may be important if you visit India again. I notice, however, that you supply the public with information through circuitous channels. You are too discreet to write your own biography; you assign that mission to your friends. Accordingly I find a long account of your family connections in the *Birmingham Gazette*, from the pen of Mrs. Besant. It is a subject on which that lady has no personal knowledge, having only recently formed your acquaintance. Still, I have no reason to doubt her statement. I learn that you are the widow of a Russian Councillor of State, that you belong to the "highly placed family" of the Von Hahns, and that your "means" are your own, drawn from your father. This is very interesting, but the extent of your "means" is not indicated. Mde. Coulomb says you told her, in 1880, that the whole of your income was derived from a sum of money left to you by your father, which did not yield you more than a hundred rupees a month. Of course poverty is no crime, as wealth is no virtue; and intrinsically it is indifferent whether you are an aristocrat or a plebeian, or rich or poor. But while you are enlightening the world, through the agency of your friends, you may as well be precise; and when they parade your sacrifices it is absurd to quarrel with a natural curiosity.

This is the full extent of my inquisitiveness as to your "private life," and how does it justify your indignation? I made no charges; I did not even

make a statement ; I simply asked a question, which was provoked by the zeal of your admirers. I never concerned myself for a moment with your domestic affairs, how you live, what you eat and drink, and whose society you frequent. I have nothing to do with such matters, and I am as little of a Paul Pry as any man on this planet. I am known, more or less intimately, by hundreds of people, who are the judges of my taste in this direction.

If I know myself, too, I would not do any person an injustice, not even the prophetic of Theosophy. I hasten, therefore, to withdraw a word I used, and the only one I see reason to regret. I said that twenty years ago you were "practising as a spiritist 'mejum' in America." Now *practising* is the wrong word ; it conveys more than I intended. I should have written *operating*, or some such word. I did not mean that you were living by your mediumship, and I frankly apologise for the inadvertency. My object was to show that you were a Spiritualist, and a medium, long before you were a Theosophist, and this you are unable to deny. It is proved by your letter to *Human Nature* in April 1872, it is proved by Colonel Olcott's *People from the Other World*, and corroborated by Mde. Coulomb. This lady says the Cairo *séances* came to grief because the devotees found the apparatus with which they had been deluded, especially the "long glove stuffed with cotton," which represented "the materialised hand and arm of some spirit."

I am defied to "prove beyond doubt or cavil that Mde. Blavatsky has ever *asked* for or *received* any reward whatever, of a material nature, during her fifteen years of voluntary labor." As I have never *asserted* anything of the kind, I do not feel called upon to prove it. I am not in a position to say Aye or No. Every reader of Mde. Coulomb's pamphlet will be able to judge for himself in some respects, especially if he looks carefully at two interesting letters (pp. 81, 85) by Colonel Olcott, and another on the very next page by Mde. Blavatsky herself. "Reward" does not always take the shape of direct payment. Besides, it seems to me that "the lady doth protest too much."

There is really no harm in living by the cause to which you devote your life. Mrs. Besant herself has done it, and is still doing it so far as Freethought is concerned. The indispensable condition is that it be done honestly and above-board. On the other hand, too much protestation is apt to breed suspicion.

Your cash transactions, madam, were not called in question in my pamphlet. They did not so much as form the subject of an allusion. Why then are you so vehemently indignant on the matter? And why is so scrupulous a lady so very *unscrupulous* in her quotations. You represent me as saying that "denunciation of landlords, capitalists, and all privileged persons, is silly screaming against 'eternal justice.'" I did indeed write the words, but I did not father them. I said they were true, in my opinion, *if*—mark the *if*—*if* Mrs. Besant's doctrine of Karma were sound, *if* each man "reaps exactly as he has sown," *if* each Ego goes into "such physical and mental environment as it deserves." I was asking Mrs. Besant to reconcile Karma with Socialism. You know this, yet you place me before your readers as a person who cites "eternal justice"—in which I do not believe—as the friend of landlordism and privilege.

Again, you tell your readers that I described my friend Mr. Wheeler as a profound scholar whom Mrs. Besant "can never hope to emulate." What I said in my pamphlet was that "it would take Mrs. Besant many years of close study to rival" his "knowledge of Brahminism and Buddhism, as well as of general 'occult' literature." I also said in the *Free-thinker* that he knew "more about Buddhism and Oriental thought generally than Mrs. Besant is ever likely to learn." I am writing nearly three hundred miles from home, and the file of my paper is not before me, but I unhesitatingly deny having written that Mr. Wheeler was a "profound scholar" whom Mrs. Besant "can never hope to emulate," notwithstanding your printing the words as a quotation. Mrs. Besant knows a great deal, but not in this particular direction, whereas Mr. Wheeler has studied Oriental literature for more than twenty years.

Further, you say that I censure, "Mde. Blavatsky's arrogance" for "assuming to know more of these religions and occultism than does Mr. Mazzini Wheeler." Sheer invention, madam; the birth of your own fertile brain! I did refer to your "arrogance," but only in connexion with your attitude towards Darwin and Haeckel, whom you presumed to instruct in evolution; one of whom you described as "idiotic," and both of whom you styled "the intellectual and moral murderers of future generations." I am aware that you are extensively read in useless literature. You have a prodigious knowledge of occult authors. You have made a wonderful collection of the maggots of the human brain. There is hardly a superstition which is not wholly or partially sanctioned in your four portly volumes. Your heap of rubbish is colossal. Mr. Wheeler himself looks upon it with amazement. But after all, to borrow a phrase from Charles Lamb, you have only gathered the rotten part of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

I will now consider what I did say of you in my pamphlet. It is not true that I called you "a thorough-paced adventuress." I applied that phrase to the writer of the letters to Mde. Coulomb, which I honestly said you had "repudiated as forgeries." I as honestly said, however, that Mde. Blavatsky "does not vindicate herself in the law courts, and the letters certainly came from a more fertile brain than Mde. Coulomb's."

What is your reply to this? You scream at Mde. Coulomb as a "Judas," you protest against "insults and slanders," and you declare that they were "invented" by the "goldy Christian missionaries" who "bribed Mde. Coulomb" and then "cheated her out of her well-earned blood-money."

Admirable! madam. Your courage is superb. It is worthy of Cagliostro himself when caught in the toils. But, alas, your answer will not bear examination. You have overdone your part. If Mde. Coulomb was bribed by the missionaries she might have dishonestly put her name to forged documents in India; but, if she was cheated of her blood-money,

why should she allow the pamphlet to be republished in England? If her motive was purely mercenary, and she was without any other feeling, why should she encourage the persons who have cheated her of the price of her treachery? Vengeance is sweet, and the lower the nature the sweeter it is. The more, therefore, you represent Mde. Coulomb as mean and avaricious, the more incredible is her silence. If she rounded on you, with no case, why, with a splendid case, does she not round on the missionaries? On the other hand, is it conceivable that the missionaries would invent the slanders, forge the correspondence, and then, by withholding the "blood-money," put themselves at the mercy of a disappointed and exasperated woman?

There is one letter, ostensibly yours, madam, which the missionaries *could* not have "invented," and from which I take a striking extract. You are represented as writing to Mde. Coulomb, from Poona, in October, 1883:—

"Now, dear, let us change the subject. Whether *something* succeeds or not, I must try. Jacob Sassoon, the happy proprietor of a crore of rupees, with whose family I dined last night, is anxious to become a Theosophist. He is ready to give 10,000 rupees, to buy and repair the headquarters, he said to Colonel (Ezekiel, his cousin, arranged all this) if only he saw a little phenomenon, got the assurance that the *Mahatmas* could hear what was said, or gave him some *other sign of their existence* (?!!). Well, this letter will reach you by the 26th (Friday); will you go up to the shrine and ask K. H. (or Christofolo) to send me a telegram that would reach me about 4 or 5 in the afternoon, same day, worded thus:

"Your conversation with Mr. Jacob Sassoon reached Master just now. Were the latter even to satisfy him, still the doubter would hardly find the moral courage to connect himself with the society. "RAMALINGA DEB.

"If this reaches me on the 26th, even in the evening, it will still produce a tremendous impression. Address, care of N. Kandalawala, Judge, Poona. JE FERAI LE RESTE. Cela coutera quatre ou cinq roupies. *Cela ne fait rien.* [I will do the rest. It will cost four or five rupees. That is of no consequence.] "Yours truly, " (Signed) H. P. B."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Some Account of my Intercourse with Mde. Blavatsky from 1872 to 1884.* By Madame Coulomb. London: Elliot Stock.



Mde. Coulomb affirms that she sent the desired telegram, as from Koot Hoomi, a great Mahatma far away in Thibet; and I have been told that "the fish was landed." You shelter yourself behind a general repudiation. This is a plea of Not Guilty, but it is no evidence for the defence. There is apparently a strong corroboration of Mde. Coulomb's story. Mr. Richard Hodgson, who went out to investigate your occult phenomena on the spot for the Society for Psychological Research, reported as follows:—

"The envelope which Madame Coulomb shows as belonging to this letter bears the postmarks Poona, October 24th Madras, October 26th; 2nd delivery, Adyar, October 26th; (as to which Madame Blavatsky has written in the margin of my copy of Madame Coulomb's pamphlet: 'Cannot the cover have contained another letter? Funny evidence!'). Madame Coulomb also shows in connexion with this letter an official receipt for a telegram sent in the name of Ramalinga Deb from the St. Thomé office, at Madras, to Madame Blavatsky at Poona, on October 26th, which contained the same number of words as the above."<sup>2</sup>

I do not stand sponsor for the authenticity of your reputed letters to Mde. Coulomb. I have my impressions, of course; but, for all I know, you may have an overwhelming defence. When you offer it I will listen with the deepest attention. Meanwhile I must say that screaming "Judas!" is not evidence. These accusations of imposture are deliberate and circumstantial. If they were made against me, and I were guilty, I would hold my tongue. If I were innocent, I would refute them point by point, or vindicate my character before a legal tribunal.

It is idle, madam, to ask me why I do not prosecute the Christian Evidence agents for their "shameful accusations of gross profligacy launched against the immaculate editor of the *Freethinker*." Such accusations are loose innuendoes, not open charges. They are made against me in common with Mrs. Besant and every other Freethought leader. And they are made in the streets, in such circumstances that the law of

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<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*, December, 1885, p. 211.

libel cannot reach them. I have heard for instance, that I have run away with some one's wife. Well, I can afford to smile at such nonsense. All the same, however, it may deceive the ignorant and unwary, and I would prosecute the slanderers if they would only put their libels in black on white. You urge that a Christian jury would be prejudiced. Very likely. But that has not prevented Mr. Bradlaugh from prosecuting his libellers. In any case, one's own friends, and the impartial public, would have the facts before them, and be able to form their own judgment.

You appear to forget an important point of your case. My "profligacy" would not affect the truth of Free-thought, but your "imposture" would seriously affect the truth of Theosophy. The *facts* on which Free-thought is based are quite independent of my character; but what becomes of the wonderful Mahatmas if the lady who is the authority for their very existence is found concocting their messages?

I now turn to the Report of the Society for Psychological Research, with regard to which you write very inaccurately. You allege that in 1885 the Society accused you of being a Russian spy. This is absolutely false. The Society published Mr. Hodgson's careful, elaborate, and extremely able Report on your Indian wonders, but did not endorse his speculations as to your motives. It was Mr. Hodgson, and Mr. Hodgson only, who suggested a political motive for your Eastern adventures. He found a rumor current in India that you were a Russian spy, but he put it aside as "unworthy." Subsequently, however, a singular piece of your handwriting fell into his possession, breathing a strong hatred of the British, looking forward to "the approaching act of the Eastern drama" which was to be "the last and the decisive one," and declaring that those who sat idle while the great preparations were going on were traitors to their "country and their Czar." You explained to Mr. Hodgson that it was probably a portion of a translation you had made from a Russian work. "Be this as it may," Mr. Hodgson says, "I cannot profess myself, after my personal experiences of Madame Blavatsky, to feel much doubt that her

real object has been the furtherance of Russian interests."

Mr. Hodgson went out to India on behalf of the Society to investigate your marvels on the spot. The Society is on the hunt for occult phenomena, and anxious to find them. Mr. Hodgson himself was far from indisposed to discover something; whatever prepossessions he had were "distinctly in favor of occultism and Mde. Blavatsky." But after three months' close investigation he was obliged to conclude that "the phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society were part of a huge fraudulent system worked by Mde. Blavatsky with the assistance of the Coulombs and several other confederates, and that not a single genuine phenomenon could be found among them all."

The Psychical Society had for its president Professor Balfour Stewart, Professor Sidgwick was among the vice-presidents, Mr. F. W. H. Myers was a member of the Committee with Professor Sidgwick, and among the honorary members I see the names of Professor Crookes, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Ruskin, Dr. A. R. Wallace, and Lord Tennyson. When this is known, madam, it will be futile on your part to ask Englishmen to regard the Society as a band of libellous blackguards, whose Report would only be believed by a "fool."

The Committee of the Psychical Society received from Mr. Hodgson a selection of your reputed letters to Mde. Coulomb, with some letters undoubtedly written by you. These "were submitted to the well-known expert in handwriting, Mr. Netherclift, and also to Mr. Sims, of the British Museum. These gentlemen came independently to the conclusion that the letters were written by Mde. Blavatsky."

After carefully weighing all the evidence, the Committee arrived at the following conclusions:—

(1) "That of the letters put forward by Mde. Coulomb, all those, at least, which the Committee have had the opportunity of themselves examining, and of submitting to the judgment of experts, are undoubtedly written by Mde. Blavatsky, and suffice to prove that she has been engaged in a long-continued combination with other persons to produce by ordinary means

a series of apparent marvels for the support of the Theosophic movement.

(2) "That, in particular, the Shrine at Adyar, through which letters purporting to come from Mahatmas were received, was elaborately arranged with a view to the secret insertion of letters and other objects through a sliding panel at the back, and regularly used for this purpose by Mde. Blavatsky or her agents.

(3) "That there is consequently a very strong general presumption that all the marvellous narratives put forward as evidence of the existence and occult power of the Mahatmas are to be explained as due either (a) to deliberate deception carried out by or at the instigation of Mde. Blavatsky, or (b) to spontaneous illusion, or hallucination, or unconscious misrepresentation or invention on the part of the witnesses."

You cannot pretend, madam, that the Society has been animated by prejudice or a desire to expose you. Its investigations were carried on quietly, and its Report was published in the usual way for its members.. Your injudicious friends are responsible for this extended publicity. If you are innocent, and all the evidences against you are ridiculous fabrications, you have a splendid case against the respectable firm of Trübner and Co, and the wealthy members of the Society for Psychological Research.

Now for your Mahatmas. The great Koot Hoomi's letters have been declared to be in your own handwriting. Further, they betray your very tricks of style. Mde. Blavatsky wrote "Olcott says you speak very well English," and Koot Hoomi wrote "one who understands tolerably well English." Here is a small list of their similarities of spelling :—

MDE. BLAVATSKY.

your's, her's<sup>3</sup>  
expell  
thiefs  
deceaved, beseached  
quarreling  
cooly (for "coolly")  
lizzy, lazziness  
conscienciously  
defense

KOOT HOOMI.

your's  
dispell, fulfill  
thiefs  
leasure  
quarreling  
alloted  
*in totto*  
circumstantial  
defense.

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Mde. Blavatsky makes the very same blunder "their's" in the pamphlet before me.

Koot Hoomi also spelt "skepticism," an American fashion of spelling, which you might have acquired in the land of the Stars and Stripes before your voyage to India. Finally, Koot Hoomi spelt "remarqued," a form of spelling easily fallen into by a Russian lady with a good command of French and an imperfect command of English.

It is also very singular, madam, that Koot Hoomi not only repeated your curiosities of spelling, and your very tricks of style, but actually repeated your crude scientific blunders; writing of "a bacteria," and confusing "carbonic" with "carbolic" acid. Still more singular is it, if possible, that Koot Hoomi's hand-writing is remarkably like Mde. Blavatsky's disguised, and that the experts declare his letters to be undoubtedly from your pen.

Considering that Koot Hoomi is a Wise Man of the East, possessing supernormal wisdom and supernormal powers, it is astonishing that he should write to Mr. Sinnett from Thibet, in 1880, and give as his own a long passage borrowed from a speech of Mr. H. Kiddle, an American Spiritualist, which was reported in the *Banner of Light* two months before the date of Koot Hoomi's letter. Koot Hoomi's explanation was shuffling and preposterous; and, subsequently, Mr. Kiddle was able to show that Koot Hoomi's amended letter still contained a number of unacknowledged borrowings, in addition to the passages now marked as quotations. Who can resist the conclusion of the Psychological Society's committee, that "The proof of a deliberate plagiarism, aggravated by a fictitious defence, is therefore irresistible"?

Koot Hoomi made another dreadful mistake in a letter to Mr. Hume with reference to a young man in his employment. After speaking of the young man's "inner soul-power and moral sense," the Mahatma continues:—

"I have often watched that silent yet steady progress, and on that day when he was called to take note of the contents of your letter to Mr. Sinnett, concerning our humble selves, and the *conditions* you imposed upon us—I have myself learned a

lesson. A soul is being breathed into him, a new Spirit let in, and with every day he is advancing towards a state of higher development. One fine morning the 'Soul' *will find him*; but, unlike your English mystics across the great Sea, it will be under the guidance of the true *living adept*, not under the spasmodic inspirations of his own *untutored 'Buddhi'*, known to you as the sixth principle in man."

Mr. Hume appends a note that, at the very time this was written, the good young man "was systematically cheating and swindling me by false contracts, besides directly embezzling my money." So much for the "learned spirit of human dealings" of the great Mahatma who is "able to read the hidden thoughts of others without first mesmerising them."

As for Koot Hoomi's poor tricks—such as disintegrating and reintegrating letters, saucers, and cigarettes—they would be looked upon with contempt by any third-rate English conjuror; while his "astral appearance" to the faithful at Madras is declared by the Coulombs to have been operated by means of a dummy. With respect to your own "remarkable powers," they are probably as authentic as those of the Sheik you tell of in *Isis Unveiled*, who was absolutely bullet-proof, even at close quarters. We are informed that you are very chary of exercising your "remarkable powers," because they extend to the very life of other people; but most sensible persons, I fancy, will smile at such extravagant pretensions. Nevertheless, I do not undertake to *deny* your occult resources. I am willing to believe you can "eat a crocodile or drink up Eisel"—on production of proof.

You charge me, madam, with grossly misrepresenting Theosophy. I reply that all I have said of it is based on the writings of yourself and Mrs. Besant. I said that "Spiritism is the logical issue of this fanciful philosophy." You answer that you are not a Spiritist. I never said you were. I spoke of "the logical issue" of your teaching. But why, in any case, will you quarrel over straws? You talk of "astral appearances," and Mrs. Besant says the Ego can be separated from the body during life and "appear apart" from it. Strictly speaking, perhaps, this is not Spiritualism, as presented

by the mediums ; but I venture to include it under the general head of Spiritism.

You are good enough to remind me that my scepticism belongs only to "a fraction" of the human race. But what does that signify? Truth is not established by appealing to numbers. I have no ambition to be on the side of the majority. I desire to be on the side of Truth.

With characteristic flippancy and inaccuracy, you say that I urge the antiquity of the doctrine of re-incarnation as an objection to Theosophy. I did nothing of the kind. I gave a brief historical sketch of the doctrine from the most obvious sources, in order to give point to my wonder that Mrs. Besant should have been "struck with the charming novelty of very ancient doctrines." I need not deal, therefore, with your demolition of your own man of straw.

You seek to turn the edge of my criticism of the ethics of Theosophy by explaining away every objectionable feature. Thus the "destruction of self," and the "killing out of personal desires," are whittled down to "a control over one's animal passions." Really, madam, one would think you were writing for children. Do you imagine that grown-up people are to be cheated into regarding "control" and "destruction" as equivalent?

You say I am fighting an imaginary windmill in denouncing your doctrine of celibacy ; yet, in the very same breath you show all the exquisite urbanity of your refined nature, in asserting that my "material instincts" are aroused against celibacy, which is natural in one "who is proud to claim kinship with the gorilla." I am not aware that I have ever professed pride in *any* kinship ; on the other hand, I do not despise my lowly relatives ; and, on the whole, I would sooner claim kinship with a gorilla than with a Cagliostro.

Celibacy, you tell me, is "not enforced" in your inner circle. Very likely. You are not able to "enforce" *anything*. But is it not the rule? With respect to those who "enter on the Path," Mrs. Besant states that "if they mean to go any distance,

they must lead a celibate life." Observe the word, madam—*must!* You forget, also, what you have written yourself on the subject. I take the following passages from your own tract :—

"Even the love for wife and family—the purest as the most unselfish of human affections—is a barrier to *real* occultism . . . The aspirant has to choose absolutely between the life of the world and the life of Occultism. It is useless and vain to endeavour to unite the two, for no one can serve two masters and satisfy both. No one can serve his body and the higher Soul, and do his family duty and his universal duty, without depriving either the one or the other of its rights ; for he will either lend his ears to the "still small voice" and fail to hear the cries of his little ones, or he will listen but to the wants of the latter and remain deaf to the voice of Humanity. It would be a ceaseless, a maddening struggle for almost any married man, who would pursue *true* practical Occultism instead of its *theoretical* philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

You see, madam, I am not so "absurdly ignorant" of your writings as you allege. When you write for Theosophists you insist on celibacy ; when you write for the outer world you pooh-pooh it, and instance "a member of the 'inner circle' who has just got married to a second wife."

You conclude by bidding the "genii of Freethought" to "learn good manners first of all." Thank you, madam ; I have learnt many things from you. I have learnt that Socrates died for the rotundity of the earth, that men at one time had three eyes and four arms, that Darwinism is moonshine, and that apes are the offspring of human and animal parents. While you impart such transcendent wisdom I shall always listen with profound respect. It will cost me an effort to believe it all, but I promise you, madam, that I will believe as much as I can ; and after Mrs. Besant has developed such unexpected credulity, there is surely hope for the shrewdest Freethinker.

Yours doubtfully,

G. W. FOOTE.

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<sup>4</sup> "Theosophical Tracts," No. vii., pp. 14, 15.