

A REPORT OF AN EXAMINATION  
INTO THE  
BLAVATSKY CORRESPONDENCE,  
PUBLISHED  
IN THE  
*CHRISTIAN COLLEGE MAGAZINE,*

BY  
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## PREFACE.

THE report which follows is based upon an entirely independent examination of the correspondence published in the September and October Numbers of the Christian College Magazine. The examination was conducted at the request of the Editor and Proprietors of the Magazine, who considered that the opinion of a person unbiassed either way, and of some judicial experience, might be of value to the public. I may mention that I had never seen any of the persons implicated, nor am I in any way connected with the Theosophical movement. My only connection with the Magazine consists in a few articles under my name having appeared in it.

I am not aware what steps the Editor of the Magazine took, in the first instance, in order to convince himself of the genuineness of the letters. My examination was conducted entirely on a system of my own. During the time of examination Mr. Patterson was absent in Bombay, and the letters were sent to the custody of a gentleman entirely unconnected with either party. I examined the papers, and wrote the report in his house. During the examination I twice visited the Head-quarters of the Theosophical Society, and I once had the opportunity of examining M. and Madame Coulomb. Had the opinion which I formed been unfavourable

to the genuineness of the letters, I should not have hesitated to publish it, since the accusation is one of a very grave nature, from which, all persons who are interested in the country and in movements, the professed object of which is a religious reform, whatever its nature, would like to see the parties implicated, relieved.

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# REPORT

ON THE

## BLAVATSKY CORRESPONDENCE.

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THIS enquiry is confined entirely to the question of the genuineness of the letters which have been published in the September and October Numbers of the Christian College Magazine as purporting to have been written by Madame Blavatsky.

The correspondence, which may be called the Patterson letters, consists of twenty letters. The originals are written on various descriptions of paper, the greater part in ink, but some are written in pencil. To some of the letters Madame Blavatsky's signature is appended in full, to others only her initials are attached, and some are unsigned, whilst two or three are signed Luna Melanconica.

It may be here mentioned that all these letters, as well as some twenty or thirty other letters, appear *prima facie* to be written in the same handwriting, a fine bold running hand, more like that of a man than of a woman.

It is, however, manifest that the mere fact of all the letters being apparently in one handwriting, would be only sufficient to raise a presumption that they were written by the same person, but would be no proof whatsoever that that person was Madame B.

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It seemed, therefore, to be absolutely necessary to take one letter to work upon as a basis, and, it having been ascertained whether or not that letter was genuine, to compare the remaining letters with it.

For this purpose, the letter dated the 1st April 1884, published on page 309 of the October Number of the Christian College Magazine, was selected. The reason of this selection was that the letter is by far the longest of any published, and it is, of course, far more difficult for a forger to maintain a simulated hand throughout a long letter than in a short one. This letter was, therefore, carefully studied, first of all in order to notice any striking characteristics in the formation of the letters; and, secondly, in order to see whether there were any occasional slips of the pen, which are so liable to occur over and over again in the spelling of words and in the formation of letters, and which, probably, would be of more frequent occurrence in a long letter than in a short one. The striking characteristics in the formation of the letters are naturally those which would be seized upon by a forger, and though the absence of them would be calculated to raise a presumption that a forgery had been committed, the presence of them would scarcely be sufficient to prove the genuineness of the document. The slips of the pen, however, and occasional inaccuracies in writing, which occur in a running hand, are far more difficult to copy, and the very fact of their having been caused by quick writing, makes it almost impossible for the copyist, whose work is naturally slower and more laborious, to completely

imitate them. The striking characteristics will be generally found in the capital letters, and the slips of the pen in the small ones.

The most striking of the capital letters in the letter from Paris are the "D," F, P, M, A, Q, C and T. In one respect, the three first and the last letter are all formed in the same way: *i. e.*, there is an up-stroke before forming the main down-stroke, thus "J" sometimes very faintly marked, but generally very prominent, thus: "J." The F and the T are especially remarkable for the boldness of the dash over them.

As regards the small letters, there is one very striking characteristic in the *d*. It is evidently always written very quickly and the up-stroke is *always* turned to left, thus *ḍ*. In this Paris letter I cannot find a single instance in which it turns to the right, thus *ḍ*. As regards the minor slips, the most important is the formation of the *a* and the *o*, and the spelling of words which end in *ez*. In the long Paris letter the *a* and the *o* are always formed by a back-stroke, the letter finishing on the left side. The consequence is that, although the circle is *generally* perfectly formed, it very often happens that a slight gap is left in the back of the letter, thus "x" or "z." This slip occurs not only in the formation of these two letters, but also sometimes in the cognate letter *g*; and on the first page is noticeable in the word Egypt. In this word both the *e* and the *g* are remarkable. On the fourth page again it occurs in the word 'vengeance,' and the *g* shows clearly a gap on the left side; on the seventh page

it occurs in the word 'argent,' and in the last lines of the letter, in the word 'signe.' This, however, is by no means the usual way of forming the letter *g* and the gap most frequently occurs on the right side. It occasionally happens that the termination *ez* is made in one stroke, so that the two letters appear more like one, and the word *assez* reads at first sight as *assy*. As regards the whole of this long letter there can be no doubt that it has been dashed off and has been written in haste. The abandon of the handwriting makes it seem most improbable that it can be a copy.

When I visited the Head-quarters of the Theosophical Society on Saturday, the 28th September, together with the Revds. Messrs. Patterson, Alexander and Padfield, we were shown by Dr. Hartmann the following documents, which, he admitted, had been written by Madame Blavatsky:—

- (1) A letter to General Morgan.
- (2) A portion (upper portion) of a letter of four sides written from Paris.
- (3) Three pages of MS. which had evidently been prepared for the Press.
- (4) A letter purporting to bear the signature of Dr. Hartmann (declared by him to be a forgery) with an endorsement on the back, said to have been written by a Mahatma. The time at my disposal was not very considerable, as we did not stop there more than an hour, and my examination was, therefore, chiefly confined to the peculiarities already pointed out. The result of it was that, as regards the striking

peculiarities in the capital letters, they were all to be found in the admitted documents. The D, P, T, F, M and C, were almost *fac similes* of those in the Paris letter, already examined. I could not find a Q, probably because this letter seldom occurs as an English capital, whereas it is frequent as a French one. As regards the formation of the *a* and the *o*, I noticed that in each one of these documents, except the Hartmann letter, the same peculiarity occasionally occurred, *i.e.*, although generally the *a* and *o* were completely formed, it happened every now and then that there was a gap on the left side. The word Egypt I only found once in one of the MS. papers; and here again I noticed that the whole word was exactly similar to the "Egypt," which occurs on the first page of the Paris letter. There was the same marked peculiarity about the *e*, and the *g* had the same gap behind. I was not able to find any word ending in *ez*, since all these papers were in English. The general appearance of the handwriting of these papers was exactly similar to that of the long Paris letter. They were in the same swift bold hand, with scarcely a check or a pause. The papers prepared for the Press, however, contained numerous corrections and erasures, and had evidently been most carefully revised. In the documents purporting to be correspondence on the other hand, erasures are very rare. The letter to General Morgan appeared to me to be exactly the same, as regards handwriting as the letter, the genuineness of which he questions. The paper was not the same, but there was the same bold running hand, the ink was the same, the capital letters presented the same marked characteristics,



and the same peculiarity was to be found in the *a* and the *o*. As regards the portion of the letter from Paris, it was written on the same kind of paper as that on which the long letter is written. The paper bears the same printed address in one corner, "Editor's Office of the Theosophist," and in the other (right hand corner) "Adyar (Madras)—1884." The letter was written in the same purple ink and bore the same address in Paris. In this letter, all the peculiarities noticed in the long Paris letter were to be found, with the exception of the word Egypt, which I do not remember, or a word ending in *ez*. There was also no capital Q.

Almost all these coincidences were pointed out by me to Mr. Judge, who was present, and that gentleman then said to me, that he considered the long Paris letter we had brought with us "to be probably genuine," or words to that effect.

The impression made upon my mind was that the papers shown to us by Dr. Hartmann, which he admitted to have been written by Madame B., were written by the same person who wrote the long Paris letter, so often alluded to. This latter letter, therefore, must have been written by Madame Blavatsky, and as it is clearly a letter, which before it was despatched was shown to Colonel Olcott, or read over to him, it will serve as a reliable test for the remaining letters which are in Mr. Patterson's possession. This long letter, it will be observed, contains no admission of trickery; it is partly defiant and partly imploring in its tone. If, however, this letter is genuine, and the remainder of the letters

will stand the test of comparison, they too must be taken to be genuine.

Before, however, leaving the subject of the letters shown to us by Dr. Hartmann, it is necessary to allude to the one which bears his name, but which he says is a forgery. The handwriting of this letter bears only a very faint resemblance to that of Dr. Hartmann. The letters are written in an up-and-down style, and are by no means dissimilar to those of the anonymous and pseudonymous letters which one so frequently receives in this country. In fact, the difference between the handwriting of this document and that of Dr. Hartmann is so striking that one of two suppositions is at once forced upon the mind:—

(1) Either the person who wrote this letter had never seen, or had no opportunities of copying, Dr. Hartmann's handwriting;

(2) or else the person writing it *intended* that the receiver should at once detect the forgery.

The only instance in which any resemblance to Dr. Hartmann's writing is to be found is in the formation of the capital H. This, however, is very laboured and very forced.

In examining this letter, which I did very carefully, I was, however, at once struck by two peculiarities. Although evidently written in a feigned hand, there was a remarkable boldness in the dash over a capital T, and an angular peculiarity about a capital A, which reminded me at once of similar letters to be found in Madame B.'s acknowledged writings.

More than this it would be impossible to say. They were not exactly the same, but they differed in their formation from the formation of all other letters in the body of the document itself, and they attracted my attention at once, so much so that I immediately pointed them out.

I then examined the alleged Mahatma's endorsement on the back. This is written in red pencil in a very sprawling hand, perfectly dissimilar to that of any writing as yet shown to me. I could find no distinguishing characteristics except in one respect, and that was in the formation of the letter *z*. This letter occurs a great many times in this short endorsement, and on every occasion it is found with a little curl at the top, as if added afterwards, thus : *z*. I then turned to the admitted B.'s papers, and I was able to point out many instances in which this letter had been similarly formed, *viz.*, in two strokes of the pen, the top having been added afterwards. Since then I have also found four different instances in the long Paris letter in which the top of the "*z*" has evidently been added by a second stroke.

The deductions which I make from this examination are :—

(1) That the Hartmann letter is so clumsy a forgery that its falseness would at once be apparent to any one who was acquainted with that gentleman's handwriting ;

(2) that the only two capital letters which presented marked characteristics of their own, and

which differed from the other letters, reminded me of similar letters in Madame B.'s handwriting; and

(3) that allowing for the difference there must be between a scrawl with a broad red pencil and small letters in ink, there was a similarity between the formation of the Mahatma's "r"s and some of the "r"s written by Madame Blavatsky.

It must also be noted, with reference to this subject, that this letter was received by Colonel Olcott in Paris some time about the middle of May. That gentleman put it into his box, where it remained for some time; how long does not appear. On referring to it again, Colonel Olcott found that whilst it had been in his box, the endorsement had been added. This endorsement he assumed to have been made by the "Master," and then sent the letter to Dr. Hartmann, who at once recognized the handwriting of the endorsement to be not of the "Master," but of a Mahatma, with whose writing he was acquainted. It also appears that from before 1st April up to very recently, both Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky have been residing in Paris. Another point is also worthy of notice with reference to this letter and certain other dates. Madame B. left India on the 21st February last, and, therefore, must have arrived in Paris about the 12th to 15th March. Soon after she left, dissensions appear to have broken out in the Madras Society, for on the 1st April the long letter from Paris was written, and on the 2nd April Dr. Hartmann, in his pamphlet, page 82, says that Madame B. sent him a letter in which she enclosed a "black-mailing" letter from Madame

Coulomb. This letter, dated 2nd April, would arrive in Madras about the 24th April. Now the Hartmann forgery is dated 26th April, and appears to have been sent to Colonel Olcott, who would receive it about the middle of May. On receiving it, the Colonel put it into his box, and between that time and the 10th July, the mysterious endorsement, purporting to be by the Mahatma, is found on the letter, and Colonel Olcott sends the letter back to Dr. Hartmann on the 10th July. It would have been received in Madras about the end of July or 1st August, and on the 9th August Madame Coulomb had given up all the letters, which have been published, to Mr. Patterson. It must also be noticed that the Mahatma message, published by Dr. Hartmann, in which the Coulobms are both accused, also bears the date 26th April. This message was "dropped into Damodar's room at Ootacamund." I should much like to have had an opportunity of testing the handwriting of this message.

We have now got the long Paris letter of 1st April as a basis to work upon. There seems to be no doubt about its genuineness. It contains four interpolations only, of four, eight, one and two words respectively, and only three erasures of single words. For so lengthy a letter these few corrections show with what fluency it has been written, whilst the style of the handwriting shows that it must have been written quickly. It must also be mentioned that one of the reproaches made in this letter is that Madame Coulomb had attempted to "black-mail" Madame B., (page 7 of the letter).

I will now proceed to examine the disputed letters with this long Paris letter which, in future, will be spoken of as the "Test-letter."

*Letter No. I.*—This document has been printed on page 201 of the September Number of the Christian College Magazine. It refers to the failure of a cigarette phenomenon in Bombay, and gives the plan of operations for another experiment. The letter is very hurriedly written in black ink. The capital M occurs three times, and, in two cases is exactly similar to the M in the test-letter. On the occasion where it is dissimilar, there has been an erasure since in dating the letter. S was first of all written (probably for "Sunday") and then M was substituted and "Monday" was written. The capitals T, A and D present a very great similarity to those in the test-letter. The "a" is several times (three times in the words "Captain Maitland") found with the singular gap behind; also in "named." In "moment" the o is formed in the same way; in the words "received" and "morning" the top of the r has been added by a second stroke of the pen, also in the word "cigarette" when used for the second time. This letter contains one long erasure, which has been omitted in the document as published. After the words, "I enclose an envelope with a cigarette paper in it," the letter originally ran thus: "It must be mailed from one of the stations close to Bombay, immediately so that a telegraph on Friday night could find the letter there at the Post Office, Bombay." The pen has been drawn through the whole of this passage, and the words, "No, this won't do," are written between the lines. Then there occurs an interpolation on the

fly leaf, "Is the hair still there and is cigarette still under the cover," and above this a blue pencil endorsement, "Make half a cigarette of this," and below in ink the words, "Take care of the edges." The ink writing throughout this letter shows unmistakably the general and particular characteristics of the test-letter. As regards the pencil endorsement, "Make half a cigarette of this," it is impossible to say whether it originally formed part of the letter or has been since added by some one else. It would be very unsafe to call this endorsement a genuine one, or to found an accusation upon it. As regards the body of the letter, however, and the scratched out passage, there can be no doubt about the identification of the handwriting with that of the test-letter.

*Letter No. II* (printed on page 202).—This letter has been hurriedly written in black ink. The following letters show the striking characteristics of the test-letter: M—F, C and D. The gap in the *a* and the *o* occurs in "situation," "faites" and "pouvait." The top to the *r* has been added in two instances, "battre," "merveilleux." The words "agissez" and "devez" are written so as to look like agissy—devy. The whole of the original has not been reproduced in the Magazine, but the portion omitted is of an entirely private nature, and refers to the lady's state of health. The general appearance of the handwriting is that presented by the test-letter. There are no interpolations or interlineations, and the only smudge is about the words *Le Roi*.

*Letter No. III.*—The latter portion of this letter is printed on page 204 of the Magazine, and the first part on page 307 of the October Number. This letter is of importance as referring to the Sassoon incident and the Ramalinga Deb telegram. The letter is written on two sheets of grey and one sheet of pink paper, and is in ink. There are no interpolations, interlineations, and only one erasure. The general appearance of the writing is strikingly similar to that of the test-letter, allowing for difference of ink and paper. The following characteristics are found in this letter. The M occurs eleven times; in nine cases it is exactly similar to the usual M's, and in two cases it is different. The T's and F are very frequent, and are all strikingly similar to those in the test-letter, and the same may be said of the D. The gap in the *a* and *o* occurs frequently, and the added top to the *r* several times; and is especially remarkable in the words "soulard," "curse" and "crore." The letter is a mixture of French and English, and the *ez* appears like *y* in "achetez."

The letter, as published, contains a direction to Madame Coulomb to despatch a certain telegram from Madras in the name of one Ramalinga Deb. There is no date to the letter except Wednesday. Now the 24th of October 1883 was a Wednesday, and a letter sent from Poona on that day would arrive in Madras on the 26th. The envelope in which this letter was enclosed bears the post stamps of 26th October and is marked "Second delivery." The telegraph receipt is also stamped "Saint Thomé, 26th October." The receipt bears no

Proving E.  
 17.14  
 No D



name, and from a perusal of it, it would be impossible to say who was the person who sent it. There is, however, a very peculiar piece of circumstantial evidence. The person despatching the telegram, sent to the Saint Thomé Office to enquire what the cost of an urgent telegram would be, and the person who carried this message was told to say that the despatcher lived on the Mount Road. Thereupon the Signaller-in-charge wrote a note on the Departmental memorandum form addressed to Ramalinga Deb, Esq. : "Sir, there is a Telegraph Office in Mount Road, it is therefore convenient to send your message through that Office." This memorandum comes from the custody of Madame Coulomb. It is, therefore, clear that on the 26th October, Ramalinga Deb wanted to despatch an urgent telegram from Saint Thomé to Poona, and the receipt for an urgent telegram on that day, and the note addressed to Ramalinga Deb, both come from Madame Coulomb.

Together with the papers connected with this subject, I find a small scrap of paper on which the following words have been written with a purple spring pencil: "The Mahatma has heard your mortal request on behalf of his highness.\* It shall be granted provided he protects and patronizes our cause. *There is there another example of this kind of answer?*"

RAMALINGA DEVI."

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\* Madame Coulomb, whom I have examined, explains that this telegram was to have been sent to Indore. Madame Blavatsky had intended to visit the Maharajah, but the matter fell through, and, therefore, the telegram was never sent. If sent, it was to have been found on the steps of the palace. This, Madame Coulomb says, explains the meaning of the passage "Holkar fiasco."

What this refers to does not appear, but, whatever it may mean, there are some very striking peculiarities in the writing. The boldness of the 'l'; the two capital M's; and the gap in the back of the first *a* in "Mahatma"; the *a* in "has"; and the *a* in "heard," remind one immediately of certain characteristics in Madame B.'s writing; and the signature, Ramalinga Deb, is very like that contained in the body of the letter No. III. As regards the "R," the "a" and the "D," and especially the "a" and the D, these letters bear the characteristics of similar letters in the test-document.

*Letter No. IV* (printed at page 206 of the September Number of the Magazine) begins "Machère Amie." This is a very short note, simply initialled. The general appearance is similar to that of the test-letter, and the following special characteristics are to be observed: the M and the D are similar, and in "faites," "parvenir" and "miraculous," the gap in the "a" is very marked.

*Letter No. V*, is the next letter of the series, and begins, "Je crois que le mouchoir." It is written in ink on a small scrap of paper. The M, T, F and A appear to be similar, and in the words "Labour," "la," there is a gap in the "a"; in the word "vers" there is a top to the "r" added by a second stroke and the words "adressez" and "assez" look like adressy and "assy." In "loisir" there is a gap in the "o." This note is unsigned, but bears a scrawl or mark at the end.

The general appearance is similar to the handwriting in the test-letter. In this letter I notice for

the first time a dash over the  $\bar{m}$ . This is a German peculiarity; it occurs in the words "inouchaix" and "mangue."\*

*Letter No. VI*, commencing "Cher M. Coulomb," is a note in blue pencil written on a scrap of paper. The general appearance is similar to that of the handwriting in the test-letter. The C, M, T, are at once identifiable. There is a gap in the *o* of the first "vous." Only one small erasure.

The word "devez" looks "devy" and "Tachez" like "Tachy." The M on the outside of the scrap in the address is, however, not like any of M. Blavatsky's acknowledged M's.

*Letter No. VII* is a short note written on what looks like a leaf of a note book. It is in purple ink, and has been dashed off in haste. The general appearance is similar, and the usual characteristics are to be found in the D of "Demain" and the *a* in both the words "grande." Another German peculiarity in this letter is the formation of the "d" in devait; it is written "ɔ." This is a style which no one would adopt who has not at one time or other been familiar with German. On turning to the test-letter, I am struck by the frequency with which the "d" is written in this manner when used as an initial letter of a word.

*Letter No. VIII* (page 209).—For remarks on this letter, see next para.

*Letter No. IX* (page 209) beginning 'Tropo tardi' written in purple ink on ordinary note paper. It

\* In German writing when a dash is put over an 'm' or a 'n' the letter is thereby doubled. The peculiarity here is that it is used over initial letters.

Does 1876 use of m  
with dash

presents the same general appearance and the striking peculiarities in the T, D and *d*. Assez is written Assy. The E, Q and M are similar to those in the test-letter. The gap in the *o* occurs in "cupboard," and in the *a* in "maintenant" and "melanconica"; devez is written devy. I notice here, for the first time, an abbreviation of *vs* for *vous*. There is no signature to this letter. This letter refers to the message in Sanscrit, which should have been given to Mr. Ragoonatha Row. This message has been produced, or rather one, which M. Coulomb says was the message. It is written in red ink on two sheets of Chinese paper. It is enclosed in a Chinese envelope. There are several endorsements in blue pencil, one of which is initialled K. H. All these endorsements are in a similar hand, differing from that of the test-letter; but as regards particular letters, the following characteristics occur. There is a noticeable gap in the second *a* in "translation." There is a dash over the *m* in "simply," "more," and "mistranslations"; a gap in the *a* in "meanwhile." The note in which this letter is enclosed amongst the papers is No. VIII, printed at the top of page 209. This is in blue pencil, and is signed Luna Melanconica. The M, the D and C correspond with the test-letter. There is a gap in the *o* in "Pour" and "sommés," and of the *a* in "cas." The general appearance resembles that of the test-letter, and especially of other pencilled notes.

*Letter No. X.*—A note in black pencil printed on page 211 (*Ma bien chère amie*). General appearance is similar and marked peculiarities to be found

in the M, P, D, small *d* and T. There is a gap in the *a* in "placed."

*Letter No. XI.*—A portion of this letter is printed on p. 211. It is written in purple ink on ordinary paper, and is signed Luna Melanconica. This is the letter, the genuineness of which is disputed by General Morgan. On being compared with the test-letter, the following characteristics are noted. General appearance of handwriting the same as that of test-letter, though written with a different pen. In the formation of the letters, the M, C, V, D, P, Q are exactly similar to those in the test-letter. The gap in the "*a*" occurs frequently; in the second and third lines it is found three times in "cachons," "part" and "affaires," and in these two last words the top of the *r* has been added by a second stroke. The abbreviation of *vs* for *vous* occurs once. The *ez* in *manquez* reads like a *y*, as also in "suffrirez" and "tournez." This letter was compared with the one, the genuineness of which General Morgan admits, and although the latter has evidently been more carefully and slowly written, the same characteristics in the capital and other letters appear. In the disputed letter there is only one erasure and no interpolations or interlineations. In my opinion, the letter admitted by General Morgan, the letter in dispute, and the test-letter have all been written by the same person, and, when applying the different tests to the handwriting, it appears to be the same as that which is admitted to have been written by Madame Blavatsky.

*Letter No. XII.*—This is written on the back of Mrs. Carmichael's letter. The postscript only

has been printed on page 213. The general appearance of the letter agrees with that of the other letters. The "M," the O, the C, the V and the D are similar. "Sentez" appears like Senty. The R in Ramaswami is exactly like the R in the signature—Ramalinga Devi—on the piece of paper alluded to in the remarks on letter No. III, and also like the R in same name when used in the Sassoon letter. It might be thought that the fact of this endorsement being written upon a letter from Mrs. Carmichael to Madame Blavatsky, proves that the endorsement must have been written by the latter lady, but it would be dangerous to lay too much stress upon this point. If all this mass of letters is forged, it would not have been impossible for the forger to have obtained this letter from Madame B., and to have added the endorsement in order to give weight to the forgery. The fact of the endorsement being on a private letter addressed to Madame B., should not, therefore, be taken one way or another. If the other letters are forgeries, and can be proved to be such, a very great suspicion would also rest upon this one. The endorsement must stand or fall on the merits of the handwriting, and if the tests applied are sufficient to identify it with the admitted writing of Madame B., there would then seem to be a very strong presumption that Ramalinga Deb or Devi has some close connection with the writer of the letters, and that the message, which purports to be from a Mahatma, was also written by the same person.

*Letters XIII, XIV and XV* form the last three of the batch published in the September Number of

the Magazine on page 213. The first one is written on black-edged paper, and is half English and half French. As usual, there is no date and merely a scrawl for signature. It is written in black ink. The writing is smaller and neater than that of most of the correspondence, and at first sight presents a different appearance. When, however, the letters are examined in detail, the same characteristics are found in the M, C, D and T. I remark, however, that the F in Foreign Office is different from the F as usually found, whilst on the other hand the capital O has been formed in the usual way. There is a gap in one o, but it is not of a very characteristic nature: In the word "saviez" the letters look like "saviy," and in "regulièrement" the top has been added to the r by a second stroke. I am, therefore, led to form the opinion that this letter has been written by the person who wrote the test-letter.

XIV-<sup>8</sup>  
 ✓ Letter XV is written in blue pencil on a scrap of paper. There is somewhat of a similarity in appearance to the ink writings and a considerable similarity to the other pencil notes. The M, however, is different in two instances (Marquis and Montrez) to what generally is found in the correspondence. The Q is similar, the M, and also the D, and also the small "d." There are two endorsements in ink; one is "Seal the child after reading it," and the other is "Enregistrez vos lettres s'il y trouve quelque chose, autrement non." ✓  
 ✓ The writing in both these endorsements resembles that of the test-letter. The ez is again written as y. ✓  
 ✓ On the whole, this letter, though showing in

many respects great resemblance to the test-letter, does not show enough characteristics to make the identification certain; on the other hand, there is nothing in it to justify a presumption of forgery.

This concludes the batch of letters first published. There is a mass of other letters, and in particular one which has since been received from Bombay, from other custody, and which was written before Madame Blavatsky came to India. This letter presents all the same characteristics, but as it has not been published, it need not be discussed here.\* There is also a long letter purporting to be written after a quarrel between the two ladies when an outbreak, such as lately has occurred, was feared. This letter is very similar in its tone to the long test-letter. There is also a letter from Coimbatore, referring to the writer's bodily ailments, which has not been published, and for the forgery of which there would not seem to be any object. It is, however, unnecessary to go into these. The case must stand or fall by the published letters which speak of the manner in which the messages, purporting to come from the Mahatmas, were conveyed.

The letters published, and the statements contained in the pamphlet by Dr. Hartmann, seem to justify the following conclusions:—

(1) When Madame Blavatsky left India on the

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\* Another reason for my not dwelling upon this letter is that there was no evidence before me regarding its custody. If this custody were proved from the date which the letter bears, the document itself would be very valuable corroborative evidence of the genuineness of the disputed letters. I have, of course, no reason to suspect the custody, but in the absence of any proof regarding it, I have deemed it safest not to rely upon the letter.



21st February, there was no breach between her and Madame Coulomb. Quarrels had from time to time been frequent between the two ladies, but they had been always patched up again, and, according to Dr. Hartmann's statement in his pamphlet, the parting between them on board the steamer at Bombay was a tender one. Even after dissensions broke out between Dr. Hartmann and the Coulombs, the latter appear to have made no threat of producing the letters, and, according to Madame Coulomb's statement, the first time she made any threat of the kind was at the end of April or the beginning of May, when she wrote to Madame Blavatsky and said that if the persecution she was undergoing did not cease, she would produce the letters in her possession. With reference to this point, it is of importance to study carefully the letter from Paris spoken of as the test-letter. Although this letter is full of reproaches, there does not appear to be any reference to a threatened exposure by letters. It shows that previous to April 10th, the Coulombs must have made accusations of trickery, and, indeed, Dr. Hartmann himself says that although the Coulombs spoke of trickery, they did not say that they held any letters which would compromise Madame B. (See leader in the *Theosophist*, October 1884, page 2). There would, therefore, seem to be some reason to believe the statement of Madame Coulomb, that it was not until they had been expelled from the Society that she made the threat of exposing Madame B. by publishing the letters. That Madame C. had previously made a threat of some kind appears to be certain, because Dr. Hartmann (pamphlet, page

32, foot-note) says that a letter from Madame B. to Mr. Lane Fox, dated 2nd April, contained a "black-mailing letter" from Madame C., warning Madame B. to beware of the consequences of a rupture.

(2) During the three weeks ensuing on Madame B.'s departure, dissensions broke out, and complaints were sent home to Colonel Olcott that Madame Coulomb had been speaking against the Society and against her. These complaints must have reached Madame B. before the 1st April, because her letter bears that date.

(3) On the 1st and 2nd April, Madame B. wrote a letter to Madame Coulomb, the test-letter, and also a letter to Dr. Hartmann (quoted on page 32 of the pamphlet).

(4) These letters must have arrived in Madras on Thursday, the 24th April. *13th April 1851*

(5) On the 26th, i.e. two days afterwards, a forged letter, bearing Dr. Hartmann's name, is despatched to Colonel Olcott, and on the same day, at Ootacamund, a message from the Mahatma, accusing the Coulombs, falls into Damodar's room at Ootacamund.

(6) "At about the time when the forged letter was written, Dr. Hartmann received a letter from a friend in Europe, and when he opened it" he found an endorsement inside in the hand of the Master, saying that a letter would come to him through Damodar. This letter did come to Damodar apparently two days after the Mail reached Madras, and led to the subsequent rupture and exposure.

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\* Extract from leader in *Theosophist* (*supra*).

(7) The forged letter in Dr. Hartmann's name, after lying for some time in Colonel Olcott's desk, received an endorsement from the Master and was sent back to India about 10th July and must have arrived here on 30th July.

(8) The letters came into the hands of the Christian College Magazine on 9th August.

(9) Dr. Hartmann's pamphlet bears the date of 1st September, but does not appear to have been issued to the public until after the appearance of the September Number of the Christian College Magazine, since the postscript alludes to it.

As regards the authorship of the disputed letters, the question seems to be narrowed down to either one of two things:—

(1) Either the letters are genuine, *i.e.* written by Madame B. ;

(2) or else they are forgeries.

If they are forgeries, the only possible persons who could have written them are the Coulobms.

Now Madame Coulob's ordinary handwriting is of a very peculiar kind. It is what was known about twenty years ago as a "lady's hand." It is angular, with a variety of twirks and flourishes. It has not one single feature in common with that of the disputed correspondence. Madame Coulob's writing is that of a lady who has been somewhat imperfectly educated a great many years ago. It is essentially feminine. The disputed letters, on the other hand, are written in a bold, free running masculine hand. If, therefore, they have been forged by Madame Cou-

lomb, that lady must have been carrying on the forgeries for a very considerable time. She must have written the letters with very considerable care, so that they do not contain one single point of similarity with her ordinary writing. But at the same time the letters, even the longest, show unmistakable signs of having been written quickly and off-hand, and it seems almost a moral impossibility for a forger to have been able to write rapidly eight sides of closely written quarto paper, which, although containing several slips of a peculiar kind, contains no single slip in which she reverts to her usual hand. For Madame Coulomb to have written merely the test-letter alone, implies a feat of skill and ingenuity which is probably unparalleled in the annals of forgery.

Mr. Coulomb may at once be relieved from any suspicion. He is only imperfectly acquainted with English, and it would have been an impossibility for him to have written the letters.

It seems to me, therefore, to be as clearly proved as it is possible for anything to be proved, that neither M. or Madame Coulomb forged the disputed letters. As regards Madame Blavatsky's authorship, it must be remembered :—

(1) That all the letters show a strong similarity to her admitted handwriting, not only as regards general appearance, but also as regards especial peculiarities.

(2) The internal evidence of paper, ink, addressed envelopes, &c., leaves no doubt that the series of letters extends over a very considerable period of

time, and if they have been forged, they must have been forged at considerable intervals. Now the theory set up by Dr. Hartmann appears to be that they are recent forgeries, and have been fabricated after the final breach in May, and before they were handed over to Mr. Patterson (9th August). This I consider to be an impossibility.

(3) A very large portion of the disputed letters refer to matters entirely unconnected with any phenomena, and in no way contain admissions of a damaging character. Supposing it to have been possible for all these letters to have been forged by *Madame* Coulomb, after the quarrels in March and April, it seems exceedingly improbable that they would contain mention of such a mass of matter entirely irrelevant to the point she wished to prove, *viz.*, Madame B.'s knowledge of the falsehood of the phenomena.


As regards the letters themselves, the following deductions appear to be justified:—

(1) On a careful comparison with admitted writings of Madame Blavatsky, the letter bearing date Paris, 1st April, is undoubtedly genuine.

(2) That the Sassoon letter, the Morgan letter, and the endorsement on Mrs. Carmichael's letter, were all written by the writer of the test-letter.

(3) That all the other letters (of which there are about 40) bear a striking resemblance to the writing of the test-letter, and that all these letters have been written by the same person.

(4) That there are several points of resemblance



between the writing of Koot Homi endorsements, and the writing of the test-letter.

(5) That there is a great resemblance between the signature Ramalinga Devi, attached to the draft of the Mahatma telegram, and the words Ramalinga Deb, as written in the Sassoon letter.

(6) That two days after the Sassoon letter was sent from Bombay, one Ramalinga Deb wanted to send a telegram to Poona, and that on that day <sup>what then</sup> some one did send an urgent telegram from St. Thomé to Poona.

It has been suggested that the letters might possibly be copies of originals with the addition of incriminating passages. This theory I consider to be untenable. The swift running hand, which all these letters show, sometimes for many pages together, <sup>at the same time</sup> could not be maintained, <sup>as usual</sup> whilst the writer was copying from an original. The letters have evidently been written *currente calamo*, the thought flowing as the pen ran. The theory that incriminating passages have been added is equally untenable, for there are, comparatively speaking, scarcely any interpolations throughout the whole batch, and those which occur are of a trifling nature. <sup>what then</sup>

The only letter in which one whole passage is erased is letter No. I, and this passage, although suggesting the plan of a trick, has not been published, probably because it was abandoned <sup>as shown</sup> by the words, "No, this won't do." It has been suggested that this letter No. I is open to two constructions, and that the "seeing the cigarette at three o'clock in the morning" refers to the occult

sight which Madame B. is supposed to possess. The letter, as published, is certainly open to this construction, supposing her to possess that power, but if the erased passage is read in connection with the rest of the letter, it seems certain that super-human powers were not solely relied upon, but that the writer of the letter also, to a certain extent, depended upon human agencies.

*Postscript.*—On the 3rd of October I again went to the Adyar, accompanied by a native gentleman, a member of the Society. I explained that all that I was concerned in, was the genuineness of the letters, and I asked if I could be shown some other Mahatma messages. Several were shown to me, some purporting to have been written by Koot Hoomi, some by another Mahatma, and others by a Chela. I certainly saw three different handwritings, and I am bound to say that in none of these did I notice any of the peculiar characteristics I have mentioned in the report. Koot Hoomi's handwriting is very peculiar, upright and somewhat round. It is not a running hand. In general appearance it looked like the endorsement on the Sanscrit writing alluded to before, but, as I have said, without those characteristics which the endorsement had in common with the handwriting of the test-letter. These messages are written in pencil, and generally in red pencil, and the Mahatma's writing looked as if it had been written on a single sheet which had been placed on the cloth-binding of a book. The strokes had all that ribbed appearance which is always noticed when writing is done in this manner.

This point need be mentioned only because, when I saw Madame Coulomb, she said that this was the way that messages purporting to come from the Mahatma were written.

I was also shown two of the sliding doors and panels said to have been made by M. Coulomb after Madame Blavatsky's departure. One of these is on the outside of the so-called occult room, and the other is on the outside of the sitting room upstairs. Both of these have been made without the slightest attempt at concealment. The former is at the top of a back staircase and consists of two doors which open into a kind of book-shelf. This gives the idea of having been constructed so as to place food on the shelves inside without opening the door. The other contrivance is a sliding panel which lifts up and opens and shuts with some difficulty. It is evidently of recent construction. Certainly in its present state it would be difficult to carry out any phenomena by its means. In this case also there is no attempt at concealment. Neither of these two appliances communicate with the shrine, which is situated on the cross-wall dividing the occult room from an adjoining bed-room. I was not allowed to see the shrine.

At this interview I had the opportunity of meeting Mr. Ezekiel. I at once asked this gentleman for some explanation regarding the Sassoon letter in which his name is mentioned. Mr. Ezekiel said that even if Madame Blavatsky were to say that she had written that letter, he would reply, "Then you must have written it in an occult manner, for I was



with you on the afternoon of the '24th from 2 P.M. until 8 P.M., the time when the Mail train leaves Poona for Madras; the matter of the telegram was alluded to about 3 o'clock, and after that time until the train left I never once let you out of my eyes. This I could prove by twenty witnesses."

On referring again to the Sassoon letter (No 3), it will be seen that Mr. Ezekiel's statement, even if substantiated, does not prove that it was impossible for Madame Blavatsky to have written the letter. It is true that he says that the subject of Mr. Sassoon requiring a telegram from the Mahatma was first mentioned about 3 P.M., and that after that time he never lost sight of Madame Blavatsky; but on a reference to the letter itself, it will be seen that Madame Blavatsky says in it that they dined the evening before at Mr. Sassoon's house, and that he told the Colonel that he would like to have a telegram. It is, therefore, quite possible that the Colonel (Olcott) may have told this to Madame Blavatsky, and that the long letter may have been written and despatched before Mr. Ezekiel came at 2 P.M. on the following day.

J. D. B. GRIBBLE.

October 17, 1884.

Whilst these pages have been passing through the Press two letters have been sent to me, one in pencil and the other in ink. They both come from the custody of Mr. Wimbridge, who, it will be remembered, came from America together with Miss Bates in Madame Blavatsky's company. The writing

in both notes possesses every characteristic already pointed out in the test-letter. The M, F, D, P, a, o, r are unmistakeable. As Mr. Wimbridge and Miss Bates left the Society in consequence of a disagreement with the Coulombs, it is scarcely possible that there can be any collusion between them. A photograph of Madame Blavatsky has also been sent to me with her autograph on the back. This photograph comes from Simla, and the writing and signature are exactly the same as in the test and disputed letters. The photograph is dated October 24, 1882.

J. D. B. GRIBBLE.

October 20, 1884.

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