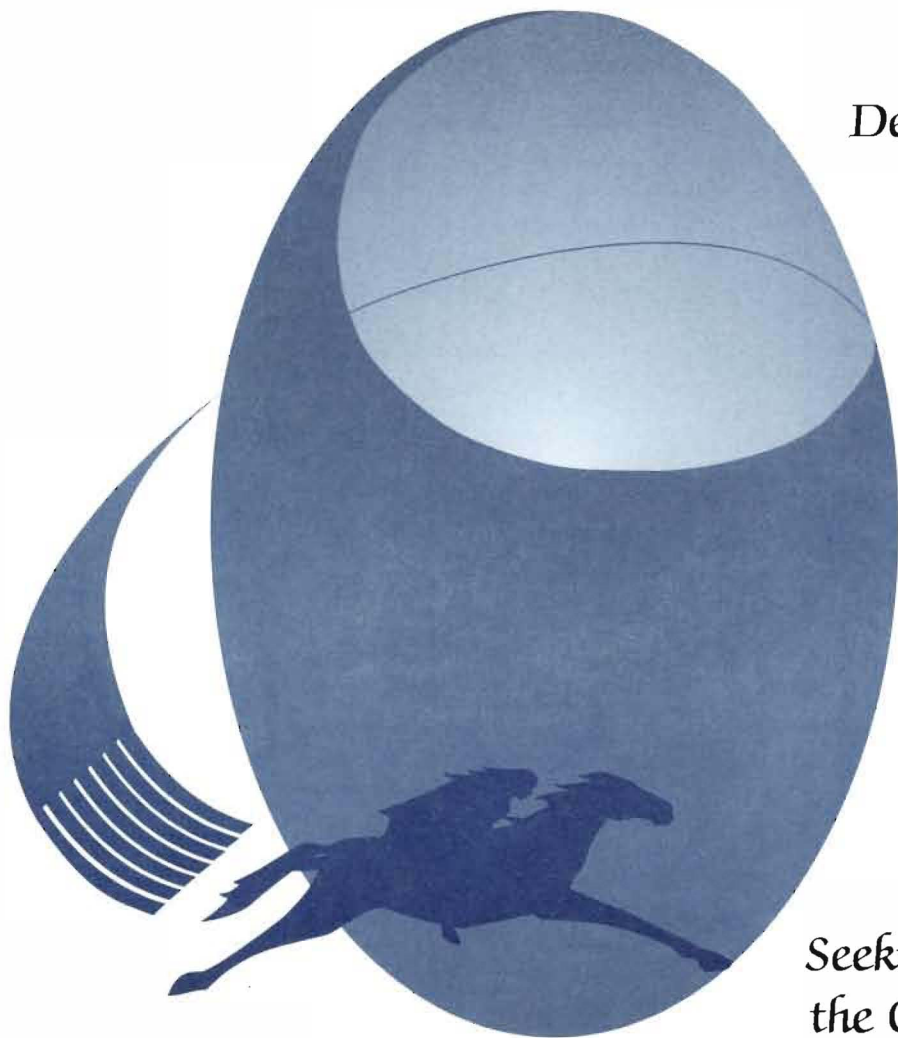


# FOHAT

Volume III, Number 3

Fall 1999



Y2K:  
Deliverance or  
Disaster

Portraits of the  
Masters - How  
Were They  
Produced?

A Look at  
Flora MacDonald  
Denison

Seeking The Book of  
the Golden Precepts  
in Kalimpong

A Vehicle for the Ancient Wisdom Tradition

*This magazine is an invitation for followers of all traditions to enter into a dialogue whose goal is Truth and whose means is Universal Brotherhood.*

#### **Another Note From Our Conference**

We are pleased to note that one of the papers delivered at our Conference “The Works and Influence of H.P. Blavatsky” and later printed in the book of the same name has found a wider audience through its reprint in *The Theosophist*. Dara Eklund’s paper “Theosophy’s Appeal For Harmony With Nature” appeared in the June 1999 issue although regretfully, without acknowledgement of source.

#### **The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky**

In the forthcoming edition of Daniel Caldwell’s book *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky* (Wheaton, Illinois, The Theosophical Publishing House), Daniel has compiled scores of primary source accounts on H.P.B.’s life, her occult phenomena, encounters with her Masters, etc. His archives and files contain hundreds of other published accounts and articles (positive and negative) on Madame Blavatsky. The Blavatsky Archives Online website plans to publish many of these documents. Visit the site at <http://sites.netscape.net/dhcblainfo/index.htm>

#### **Brookings Conference Report**

The Fifth Annual Theosophical Conference was held in Brookings, Oregon and Smith River, California on August 13-15, 1999. This gathering brought together a group of dedicated theosophists to discuss the topics “The Ancients and Science - Today” and “The Path of the Disciple.” A detailed report of the gathering is given by Wesley Amerman in the current issue of *Theosophy World* (#39).

#### **Campbell Theosophical Research Library**

The Theosophical Society in Australia reports that it “plans to produce an occasional newsletter providing information about its [The Campbell Library’s] books, journals, other research material and its activities.” Its first issue was printed March 1999. For further information contact:

The Campbell Theosophical Research Library  
4<sup>th</sup> floor 484 Kent Street Sydney NSW 2000 Australia  
Tel: (02) 9264 7056 Fax: (02) 9264 5857  
e-mail: [campbell@austheos.org.au](mailto:campbell@austheos.org.au)

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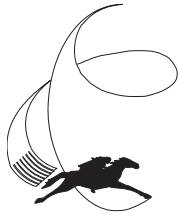
### **H.P.B. LIBRARY**

Originally the private collection of Alice Cleather, a personal pupil of HPB, the library contains early theosophical and related philosophical literature, which may be borrowed by mail.

Also the library offers for sale books written by A. Cleather and some theosophical pamphlets.

If interested, please write for catalogue to:

H.P.B. Library  
c/o Joan Sutcliffe  
284 Ellis Avenue  
Toronto ON M6S 2X2



# FOHAT

Volume III, No. 3  
Fall 1999

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## To be featured in coming issues:

*Milk - A Symbol from the Ancient Wisdom  
Tradition;*

AND MUCH MORE!

## PAST AND FUTURE: IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue we find ourselves looking to the past—as a clue to the future, at phenomena and the results thereof, for clues to finding objects in the present day, and at individuals and their contributions to the Movement. As we move into a new century and a new millennium, many of us will be looking back at where we have been in order to give us some clue as to which direction to proceed.

Dara Eklund has presented us with a timely article, “Y2K: Deliverance or Disaster”, that explores the decline of virtue that seems to precede each new millennium and how well prophecy through the ages has prepared populations as they move into their respective new ages. With this in mind, what does modern prophecy tell us and how seriously should we take it as the world approaches its most recent milestone, the year 2000? Dara gives us some ideas.

Looking back a hundred years or so, Joseph E. Ross, author of *Krotona of Old Hollywood*, looks at the “Portraits of the Brothers and How They Were Made.” This article was included as it gives us an historically complete account of the various portraits of the Masters, and the stories behind how these portraits were said to come to be. It is interesting in that it gives some very different accounts of phenomena from different periods of the Society and should give an opportunity to the discriminating occultist to determine whether any or all of the stories are plausible or not. Any phenomena ultimately begs this question. What do you think?

The question being asked in our next article is, where can we find the book from which *The Voice of the Silence* has been taken? David Reigle takes on the role of detective in his article, “Report on a Search for the Book of the Golden Precepts in Kalimpong, March 1998”. In an article that appears in the latest *Wizards Bookshelf* publication, *Blavatsky’s Secret Books: Twenty Years’ Research*, David takes on a case that began in 1950 with a Catholic priest in India, and ended full circle nearly fifty years later with a tenacious Buddhist researcher doggedly retracing the

priest’s steps. This article is a fun one that everyone should read.

Finally, we are treated to an historical account of an early Canadian Theosophist by Ted Davy. In “Dear Comrade: The Early Canadian Theosophist Flora MacDonald Denison” we are reminded that many people from all around the world were attracted to Theosophy in the early days and their stories often provide fascinating reading. Not only the reasons they were attracted to the Movement but also the impact that they had in their own respective areas of influence show many of these people were strong and capable individuals who made a mark on any organization of which they were a part. Once again Ted has made the past come alive as only he can.

This issue also reports the passing of two theosophists who gave a good deal of their lives to the society, Dora Kunz for TS in America, and Mr. Salomon Lancri for TS in France. Both will be missed by many. We also include a look at *Blavatsky’s Secret Books: Twenty Years’ Research*, and *Colonel Arthur L. Conger*, two recent publications.

From *The Theosophist*, there is a reprint entitled “A Theosophical Fable.” This fable penned by H. (possibly Franz Hartmann), looks at the society following the Hodgson Report and gives us a whimsical account of the whole episode with a warning to the society and its members. It is unfortunate when a lack of faith allows the opinions of others to destroy what has been built.

Finally, our study of *The Secret Doctrine* takes a look at two philosophical systems of thought, dualism and evolution. How are they different and perhaps more importantly, what are the implications of each? The implication might be that this entire issue may be maya and that it should immediately be transcended. You be the judge.

**Note:** Just before going to print, we learned that L. Gordon Plummer passed away on September 10th. He will be featured in *Theosophical Friends Remembered* in our next issue.

# Y2K: Deliverance or Disaster

Dara Eklund

In *Hidden Millennium, The Doomsday Fallacy*, Stephen Koke, researching the mystic Swedenborg's prophecies writes:

When we feel the ground of reality shifting beneath our feet, we may re-examine our basic values and understanding of life. People who experience earthquakes are psychologically, not just literally, shaken up. . . . In disasters like this, inner insecurities are aroused, completely out of proportion to the physical damage that is actually happening. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The author believes that such upheavals bring a turning point, an "inner reordering" in human consciousness. To Swedenborg the millennium was primarily an inner event, an experience of the mind. History is the evolution of thought, not mere technology.

In the past much of what governed fears of the millennium had to do with a widely accepted doctrine that scripture was to be taken literally. Even Nostradamus believed in biblical prophecy. To avoid what he feared might be "nocturnal apparitions"—fantasies imposed from the nether regions, Nostradamus felt impelled to check his own visions with some outside rationale such as astronomy. He recognized that the "ability to interpret correctly does not automatically come with seership."<sup>2</sup>

An internet group for Religious Tolerance lists 91 failed end-of-the-world predictions. Obviously they didn't all occur at the close of millenniums, but at various decades from 30 CE through the current decade. As recently as January 18<sup>th</sup> an Arkansas hydraulics specialist was quoted by *Time* magazine as predicting an alignment of planets to burn up the earth in May of 1999. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Christians did not question biblical prophetic chronology, which obsessed some 100,000 followers of Baptist minister William Miller, who became known as Millerites. When dates for doomsday Judgement and a second coming of Christ failed in 1844, a conference was assembled in 1845 to solve the discrepancy. Meanwhile some Jehovah Witness followers had been disfellowed for questioning biblical chronology. The Millenarian conference led to the eventual founding of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1863. Unlike Jehovah's Witnesses the "7th-Day-ers" don't date

the Second Coming. They claim that Jesus will appear in the East. Based on prophecies of *Luke*, *Timothy* and *Matthew* the Adventists listed "signs of the times", such as calamities in the material world, increased crime in society and loss of spiritual vision in the religious world, which proved we are living in the last times.<sup>3</sup>

These sects still had faith in some miraculous destruction of the wicked and redemption of the good. Warning signs might appear in heaven, such as meteors, comets or weather phenomena wreaking havoc. Even in the year 1000, although controlling religious thought by insisting that the only connection between men and God was through its hierarchy, the Church itself did not spread the fear of destruction. It arose in the faithful masses, who dreaded that the millennium's arrival would coincide with an expected comet. Thus they were eager to donate all their valuables to the church. When the end did not occur at the expected date the Church kept their relinquished wealth.

A Theosophist observing the past cycles of history would not be surprised by the patterns of overlapping events. The masses approaching the first millennium had accretions of superstition, layers of mental habits left over from the prior 500 or more years. From early in the fifth century psychic practices and petty auguries thickened with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. G. de Purucker speaks pointedly of this 5<sup>th</sup> Century period, drawing from thoughts of the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus:

[T]he ordinary run of men of that degenerate period sought for truth and guidance in life by running to consult fortune-tellers . . . and real or pretended astrologers . . . to speculation and games of chance—to the many forms of divination, for instance. The old and in many ways highly ethical and majestic state-religion of their forefathers was nearly extinct, while the new religion . . . was steadily spreading its power and influence over the Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup>

That religion was Christianity, a hybrid religion gaining force through the Emperor Constantine, who as a former worshipper of Apollo, was impressed by his vision of a cross of light over the Sun, and adopted this symbol of Christ as his standard. Constantine

repeated the Labarum inscription “Conquered by this” on his men’s shields, going on to victory over a tyrant who had been winning by wicked, magical enchantments.<sup>5</sup> H.P.B. wrote to Dr. Hiram Corson that the symbol of the Labarum was in vogue from pre-Christian times, and that such a sign was a convenient symbol to “stimulate fervour of the hosts to whom the execution of a great design was committed.” Further she adds:

The indications are that we are about at the threshold of an epoch when a thousand mysteries shall be revealed, and it depends at least in some degree upon such very feeble mortal agencies as your pen and mine and those of other zealous workers, how soon the world shall be enlightened.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the acceptance of Christianity Marcellinus spoke disparagingly of the degeneracy of his times; how men, according to G. de Purucker:

[H]unted for truths and direction in goblets filled with water: they divined by means of a ring attached to a string, and held over the top of a goblet, and if, due to the quivering or shaking of the holding hand, the ring touched the rim of the vessel, thus making a sound, they drew weighty conclusions from certain rules of alleged interpretation.<sup>7</sup>

G. de P. compares the practices of the degenerate Roman Empire with those seeking spiritual guidance from advertisements of fortune-tellers, diviners and astrologers in our own times. Over half a century later these practices persist, now having shifted to the ever-mercurial internet or TV, while neighborhood psychics still peddle their wares, with signs over their doorways or on their front lawns.

After the first millennium there was a tremendous upheaval in the old world, especially as men freed themselves from the Church, and began to interpret scriptures for themselves and form new sects. Stephen Koke writes:

With the secularization of society, there came a loss of spiritual vision, and subsequent millenarian movements show the tendency . . . to be grounded in self-preservation, but allowing faith to drift into very literal or material interpretations of history and Scripture. . . .

Another element in secularization, particularly in Western thought, is the dominance of rational science. The burdens imposed by our time come from the trend in our culture to put the solutions to problems in some material form. If anything needs to be improved or fixed, some device or technology will do it. The soul, the essence of the imma-

terial, has had a hard time asserting its existence. . . .<sup>8</sup>

We see above the constant overlapping of the new with the old. In a *New York Times Book Review*, “The End of Enchantment”<sup>9</sup> Joseph Rykwest says that the first artist to call himself “modern” was Solsternus in 1207. He further describes the modernity movements in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries the artistic philosophical quarrel between “ancients” and “moderns” waged for decades. “Modernism” became a term of abuse, a movement alternately derided or applauded, a creature of the times.

Modernity has come to mean those at odds with authority, which always tends to upheaval or revision of thought. In *The Great Disruption. Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*,<sup>10</sup> Francis Fukuyama claims that a common factor to both crime and family breakdown is, “the rise of moral individualism . . . when individuals make . . . choices that market economics and advanced technologies enhance. . . .” In short, the lure of materialism, reinforced a hundred-fold in our day by media accessibility and advertisement. How many video learning games are sponsored, even fabricated by industries which thrive on a thirst for material goals and incentives? Fukuyama, author in 1992 of the *End of History . . .*, feels we must reinstate “hierarchical authority, honesty, reciprocity and an enlarged radius of trust under changed technological circumstances.” Do we have that trust today?

You may justly say that the intelligentsia of our era are trusting to science and technology to face the new millennium. Michael R. LeGault, a reviewer of scientific books, declared:

The millennial message would appear to be that knowledge based on experience has won out over knowledge based on doctrine . . . this knowledge is a record of both our intellectual and moral progress. And that only in rational pursuit and use of this knowledge is our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being ensured.<sup>11</sup>

Yet empirical knowledge rooted in sensory interests or desires produces a far less stable and more worrisome world. Technical advances, being opposed to natural law, often eventuate in perplexing effects. A materialistic society will oscillate between solving problems in nature and attempting to fix the damage done by the so-called solution!

***At Least There will be Warnings.***

In their undying trust in science to pull us into the next millennium, technologists expect that there will be some warnings in electronic systems, and already

the U.S. Congress is trying to pass legislation to protect small business (as well as large) in lawsuits resulting from computer failure due to Y2K dating problems. All have heard of persons gearing up for possible disaster, by building solar-powered homes, equipped with multiple fire-places and old-fashioned well-water sources.

On the CNN internet site was a recent warning about unusually massive solar flares in the first four months of the year 2000, as the Sun enters the most violent phase of its eleven-year cycle. Here is another example of a smaller cycle overlapping a larger one. The CNN headline read: "Ferocious solar storm to herald millennium", followed by the subtitle: "Astronomers fear widespread disruptions." Shall we rejoice that Nature can still inspire awe in men, or be humbled that despite Earth's technology "Astronomers say they're . . . worried about an angry sun." Do the following words seem any more reassuring than what a town crier might have announced in the year 999 A.D.?

Massive bursts of energy from the sun could mean celebrating the new millennium in the dark, with dead cellular phones. Ships and planes relying on satellites for navigation might have to haul out old-fashioned maps.

The article states that the coronal ejections can equal the disruptive force of a million 100 megaton hydrogen bombs; enough to create phantom commands capable of spinning satellites out of their orbits. Electromagnetic energy can send huge surging waves, shorting power lines, circuits and destroying equipment. A government satellite is supposed to detect bursts of solar energy and send an hour's notice, according to JoAnn Joselyn of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Perhaps we are supposed to be comforted by this assurance, which seems to savor more of the drama of movies like "Armageddon".

Joselyn proclaims:

The explosion in technology is intersecting with an extremely disturbed space environment. . . . There is much higher risk now because we depend more on technology that is vulnerable.<sup>12</sup>

### ***New Millennium Resolutions.***

The close of the Mystery Schools brought about a cycle of vigorous mental activity, when a great diversity of beliefs was experienced, like our own, which G. de Purucker figures to be the component of an age in transition. After the flower of the Greco-Roman world under Octavian, things went downhill into the Dark Ages, not a period of stability and high ideals of state. Such times can breed confusion, a sense of

separateness. But can they not also stir heroic qualities to tide us over to a less dark period in the history of men? The Buddhists state that we are lucky to be in an age when even the Buddha's name and teachings are still known. We might resolve to keep these courageous qualities and compassionate teachings alive for the next Millennium.

How can we foster the qualities of exalted men (those fine flowers of evolution), which might call back those "Chosen Ones of the Ages"? One way would be to live more in harmony with Nature, as do those Servants of the Law—the Adepts—who know the great cycles of her operation. In his lecture at the Temple of Peace, delivered on Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1929, G. de P. was asked: "Why do they not eradicate the evils that afflict man, warn him against disasters, or avert them?" He replied that they continually do warn us, as far as we let them:

Now and again . . . they send forth from among their own number someone to teach men, to carry a new message of Wisdom and knowledge of Nature's secrets into the world. They have done this through the ages, warning, warning, teaching, encouraging, consoling, constantly saying: Come up higher; come to us.<sup>13</sup>

At times like ours it may seem that we look to lesser men, or to nature herself for the warnings. In the face of genetic engineering, animal experimentation, biological and technological warfare, we hear a growing wave of protest amidst people of the day. Has technology carried us too far in the wrong direction? Do we really still have the moral stamina needed to progress? Do we not usurp earth's resources, regardless of daily evidence of a breakdown in our globe's fragile ecosystems? In search for the comfort of mankind we have neglected the betterment of spirit-kind, the conscious evolving life in all the Kingdoms of Nature!

At times there are very few protestors to defend natural law. Some are farmers, who abhor commercially designed terminator seeds to limit their crops; others are scientists who warn of the 50% decrease in human sperm due to chemical effects on genes; or environmentalists who plead for creatures both great and small.

To inspire our resolutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century there **are** still heroes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and the Dalai Lama. We also have some encouraging words of Krishna to gear us for the future eras of change:

I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue

. . . continued on page 68

# Portraits of the Brothers and How They Were Made

Joseph E. Ross

Readers familiar with the early history of the Theosophical Society will know that besides the two founders, H.P. Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott, there were two other founders—the Mahatmas Morya and Koot Hoomi (Kuthumi) often referred to simply as the Master M. and K.H. respectively. These two Mahatmas were part of a larger Brotherhood, called sometimes the Occult Hierarchy or the Great White Lodge. Many of the Elder Brothers lived in isolated regions of the Himalayan Mountains.

A number of portraits were made of the Mahatmas M. and K.H. as well as others of the Brotherhood. Franz Hartmann, Katherine Tingley, Manly P. Hall, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, David Anrias (Brian Ross) and others have published photographic reproductions of some of these portraits in books. Some may be seen displayed in New-Age shops, or printed in their publications. References are also made in theosophical literature to the portraits.

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we are told, the Brotherhood discussed among themselves the possibility of bringing forth to the public a little more of the occult truths, hitherto preserved in secrecy, in the hopes of giving impetus to more brotherly feeling and understanding among the races of mankind. Many of the Brotherhood doubted that the time was propitious, seeing the great selfishness of the majority of humanity. However, the two Mahatmas M. and K.H. were given permission to try. They therefore chose as Their agent, H.P.B. [Helena Petrovna Blavatsky], a pupil of the Mahatma M., and brought her into contact with Col. Olcott at a spiritualist gathering.

The two of them, with several others, soon organized the Theosophical Society in 1875, and during the formative years, H.P.B. began the first of her major literary works, *Isis Unveiled*. In addition, during that time she demonstrated to Olcott and selected friends certain occult phenomena, such as the materialization of handkerchiefs, sugar tongs, rings, etc., and the precipitation<sup>1</sup> of writings and pictures.

Olcott admits, writing twenty years later, that he cannot recall the first phenomenon done by H.P.B. However, he describes, as possibly the first, an occurrence during a visit of Signor B., an Italian artist.<sup>2</sup> Signor B. went, opened one of the French doors,

made some beckoning passes, and a pure white butterfly came in and flew about the ceiling. H.P.B. laughed and said, "I can also do it." She went to the window, made similar passes, and a second white butterfly fluttered in, played with the first one, and presently both flew into a corner and disappeared.

Gradually, H.P.B. revealed to Olcott her knowledge of the Eastern adepts and Their powers. She also did many phenomena demonstrating her control over the occult forces of nature. Soon Olcott came into personal correspondence with the Masters. It would be noteworthy to reprint what is said in *The "K. H." Letters to C. W. Leadbeater* with a commentary by C. Jinarajadasa:

[D]rawing attention to the fact that the Adepts have never called themselves "Masters" but simply "Brothers". Naturally enough, when the communications began between Messrs. A.P. Sinnett and A.O. Hume and the Adepts, the word Master was applied to them, perhaps because both H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott used that word. But the Great Ones are not teachers, whose primary task is to give instruction in philosophy and to explain the problem of Liberation. They have made clear to us that their task is that of helping to diminish human misery, and that they concern themselves primarily with the millions of mankind *en masse*. Indeed one difficulty which arose between the European Theosophists and the Masters in 1880-4 was due to the fact that the former seemed constitutionally unable to realize that the Masters are not teachers to perform occult phenomena to convince a skeptical Western world, but the purest of philanthropists whose tireless work is to "lift a little of the heavy karma of the world".<sup>3</sup>

## How the Portraits came about:

One evening in autumn of 1876, H.P.B. and Olcott were working on *Isis Unveiled*. She precipitated a picture of the aura of an acquaintance to demonstrate a point to Olcott. Olcott had expressed a wish to have a portrait of his revered teacher, the Master Morya, but H.P.B. was not permitted to procure it for him herself, though she promised it in due time. A few days later, Monsieur

Harrisse, their artistic French friend, was visiting them. H.P.B. whispered to Olcott that she would try to get him to draw the Master's portrait if Olcott would supply the materials. Olcott described what happened:

I went to a shop close by and purchased a sheet of suitable paper and black and white crayons. The shopkeeper did up the parcel, handed it to me across the counter, took the *half-dollar coin* I gave him, and I left the shop. On reaching home I unrolled my parcel and, as I finished doing it, the sum of half a dollar, *in two silver pieces of a quarter-dollar each* dropped on the floor! The Master, it will be seen, meant to give me his portrait without cost to myself. Harrisse was then asked by H.P.B. to draw us the head of a Hindu chieftain, as he should conceive one might look. He said he had no clear idea in his mind to go upon, and wanted to sketch us something else; but to gratify my importunity went to drawing a Hindu head. H.P.B. motioned me to remain quiet at the other side of the room, and herself went and sat down near the artist and quietly smoked. From time to time she went softly behind him as if to watch the progress of his work, but did not speak until it was finished, say an hour later. I thankfully received it, had it framed, and hung it in my little bed-room. But a strange thing had happened. After we gave the picture a last glance as it lay before the artist, and while H.P.B. was taking it from him and handing it to me, the cryptograph signature of my Guru came upon the paper; thus affixing, as it were, his imprimatur upon, and largely enhancing the value of his gift. But at that time I did not know if it resembled the Guru or not, as I had not yet seen him. When I did, later on, I found it a true likeness and, moreover, was presented by him with the turban which the amateur artist had drawn in the picture as his head-covering. Here was a genuine case of thought-transference, the transfer of the likeness of an absent person to the brain-consciousness of a perfect stranger.<sup>4</sup>

Colonel Olcott also received letters from the Master K.H. and from the Master Serapis, an Egyptian Brother.

Patience, good friend, work[s] miracle[s]. Patience severe teacher[s] themselves will soften. I thank Mr. Olcott for the benevolent honour done my unsuccessful face. [Signature in Script].<sup>5</sup>

C. Jinarajadasa's foreword to that letter written states:

The short letter which follows is not in the narrow and pointed script of the Master Serapis. The script is round and large. It will be seen that the language is defective. On the other hand, the letter evidently refers to a picture of the Master Serapis which is among these early letters. It is painted on thin paper, and its size is 3½ by 2⅝ inches. It is drawn in pencil, and painted with a brush in a brown which is now faded. The background is blue. The picture shows an ascetic face, somewhat resembling Cardinal Manning's [reprinted in 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. as Cardinal Newman's] with brown flowing hair and short rounded beard. The Master wears a triangular jewel, within it a radiating sun surmounted by a cross, and at the apex of the triangle a crown and stars.<sup>6</sup>

It was not until 1947 that David Anrias (Brian Ross) published his book *Through the Eyes of the Masters*, with portraits that C. Jinarajadasa wrote a private letter to the E.S.T. American Division:

The name of this gentleman is Mr. Brian Ross. He lived in Adyar two years and was at the time a member of the Esoteric School. He was supported in his expenses by Dr. Besant, and she used his artistic ability for drawing various illustrations for the journals she was directing. He had been an aviator in the last war but was invalided out of the army after a bad accident. I am told that he is an excellent astrologer. As he had no means of his own, and Dr. Besant and other friends had to support him, they finally arranged to pay his return passage to England. Mr. Ross, of course, has seen the pictures at Adyar of the Masters. Evidently he is a psychic and so draws his information along that line. As the general public has no criterion of judging whether the pictures do resemble the Masters or not, the best plan is to consider them as an artistic production which may or may not have some resemblance to the originals.

In December 1878, H.P.B. and Olcott sailed to India where Olcott's lectures and H.P.B.'s marvelous conversational skills and phenomenal displays attracted both Indian and British residents. Two Englishmen, A.P. Sinnett and A.O. Hume, were drawn into their circle and became extremely desirous of maintaining a correspondence with the Mahatmas. This was effected from 1880 to 1884 through H.P.B. and other pupils of the Mahatmas.<sup>7</sup> Letters written to the Masters were dematerialized out of closed drawers, for example, and responses from the Mahatmas dropped from the ceiling, appeared on the mantel, in closed cabinets and various places. After considerable correspondence, Sinnett, and very likely others

in the privileged circle wished to see a portrait of the Masters.

A letter to Sinnett received autumn 1882 describes cryptically (to us, because we do not have Sinnett's letter to which this is a reply) the circumstances in which H.P.B. attempted to produce a likeness of the Mahatma K.H. She was assisted by a Tibetan pupil, Djual Khool (sometimes Gjual Kul), or D.K. The first attempt "was a failure, he [D.K.] says 'with the eyebrow like a leech,' and it was finished only during the evening. . . . And it was he again G.K. 'great artist' who had to make away with the 'leech' and to correct cap and features, and who made it 'look like Master' . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Another letter received August 1882 refers to a second attempt by D. Khool to make a portrait phenomenally for another gentleman, Colonel Chesney. K.H. called it "*an act of occultism*—the likeness of your humble servant the best of the two productions of D. Khool."<sup>9</sup> And a third portrait by D. K. is mentioned in a letter from the Mahatma K.H., who says, "the picture was ready three minutes after I had consented to it, and D.K. seemed enormously proud of it. He says—and he is right, I think, that this likeness is the best of the three."<sup>10</sup>

The portrait by HARRISSE was done by painting the impression of the subject transmitted telepathically into him by H.P.B. The portraits done by D.K. were precipitations. Now we come to a third procedure. In this case, the artist is painting from his own vision of the subject, a subtle difference from the method used in the HARRISSE portrait. The occasion is described by Laura C. Langford Holloway, a promising but untrained clairvoyant in whom the Masters had taken an interest.

A young German artist, Hermann Schmiechen, residing in London in 1884 was to paint portraits of the Mahatmas M. and K.H. H.P.B. was in London at the time. She received instructions from her Master, M.: "Take her [Mrs. Holloway] with you to Schmiechen and tell her *to see*. Yes, she is good and pure and chela-like; only terribly flabby in kindness of heart. Say to Schmiechen that he will be helped. I myself will guide his hands with brush for K's portrait."<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Holloway's account follows:

[A]t the appointed time, a number of Theosophists gathered at his studio. Chief among Mr. Schmiechen's guests at that first sitting was H.P.B. who occupied a seat facing a platform on which was his easel. Near him on the platform sat several persons, all of them women, with one exception. About the room were grouped a number of well-known people, all equally interested in the attempt to be made by Mr. Schmiechen. The most

clearly defined memory of that gathering, always in the mind of the writer, is the picture of Madame Blavatsky placidly smoking cigarettes in her easy chair and two women on the platform who were smoking also. She had "ordered" one of these women to make a cigarette and smoke it, and the order was obeyed though with great hesitation, for it was a first attempt and even the mild Egyptian tobacco used was expected to produce nausea. H.P.B. promised that no such result would follow, and encouraged by Mrs. Sinnett, who was also smoking, the cigarette was lighted. The result was a curious quieting of nerves, and, soon all interest was lost in the group of people about the room, and only the easel and the hand of the artist absorbed her attention.

Strange to relate that though the amateur smoker considered herself an onlooker it was her voice which uttered the word "beginner," and the artist quickly began outlining a head. Soon the eyes of everyone present were upon him as he worked with extreme rapidity. While quiet reigned in the studio and all were eagerly interested in Mr. Schmiechen's work, the amateur smoker on the platform saw the figure of a man outline itself beside the easel and, while the artist with head bent over his work continued his outlining, it stood by him without a sign or motion. She leaned over to her friend and whispered: "It is the Master K.H.; he is being sketched. He is standing near Mr. Schmiechen."

"Describe his looks and dress," called out H.P.B. And while those in the room were wondering over Madame Blavatsky's exclamation, the woman addressed said: "He is about Mohini's height; slight of build; wonderful face full of light and animation; flowing curly black hair, over which is worn a soft cap. He is a symphony in greys and blues. His dress is that of a Hindu—though it is far finer and richer than any I have ever seen before—and there is fur trimming about his costume. It is his picture that is being made, and he himself is guiding the work."

. . . H.P.B.'s heavy voice arose to admonish the artist, one of her remarks remaining distinctly in memory. It was this: "Be careful, Schmiechen: do not make the face too round; lengthen the outline, and take note of the long distance between the nose and the ears." She sat where *she could not see the easel, nor know what was on it*. . . .

The painting of the portrait of the Master "M" followed the completion of the picture; both were approved by H.P.B., and the two

paintings became celebrated among Theosophists the world over.<sup>12</sup>

Olcott relates how the services of Schmiechen were obtained, that he (Olcott) had instituted a friendly competition between several artists to try an experiment. The portrait by HARRISSE was in profile, drawn by an amateur, not an occultist, and though the likeness was there, it did not show the soul-splendor of the Master. He says:

Naturally, I wanted to get a better portrait if possible, and bethought me to try whether my sympathetic artistic colleagues in London could get clearer, more life-like, spiritual glimpses of his divine face. Upon broaching the subject, the five—three professionals and two amateurs—whom I addressed, very kindly and willingly consented, and I lent each in turn the photographic copy of the original crayon sketch that I had with me. The results were very instructive. One had got the right idea of his complexion, another of his profile, and a third, my respected friend Mme. De Steiger, of the luminous aura that shimmers about his head. But neither of the five was, on the whole, a better likeness than the New York sketch by Monsieur HARRISSE. Before this competition was finished, Herr Hermann Schmiechen, a very well-known German portrait-painter, domiciled in London, joined the Society and, to my great delight, at once agreed to have the inspirational test tried with him. The photograph was handed him with no suggestion as to how the subject should be treated. He began work on 19<sup>th</sup> June and finished it on the 9<sup>th</sup> July. Meanwhile I visited his studio four times alone and once with H.P.B., and was enchanted with the gradual development of the mental image which had been vividly impressed upon his brain, and which resulted in as perfect a portrait of my Guru as he could have painted from life. Unlike the others, who all copied the profile idea of HARRISSE, Schmiechen gave the face in full front view, and poured into the eyes such a flood of life and sense of the indwelling soul as to fairly startle the spectator. It was as clear a work of genius and proof of the fact of thought-transference as I can imagine. In the picture he has got all—the face, complexion, size, shape and expression of eyes, natural pose of head, shining aura, and majestic character. It hangs in the Picture Annexe of the Adyar Library that I had built for it and the companion portrait which Schmiechen painted of our other chief Guru. . . .<sup>13</sup>

Boris de Zirkoff questions Mrs. Holloway's vision of the figure standing near the artist. In a letter of February 25, 1951 to Mrs. Helen Harris, de Zirkoff says: "This account is very factual in many respects, but in regard to this particular point, it seems as if Mrs. Holloway got somehow or other confused, because it is quite probable that it was Master M. instead who was present. This would appear rather clearly from a letter of M. to H.P.B. . . 'Say to Schmiechen that he will be helped. I myself will guide his hands with brush for K's portrait'. . . and ' . . while the others are the productions of chelas, the last one was painted with M.'s hand on the artist's head, and often on his arm — K.H.'"<sup>14</sup>

One cannot dogmatize as to which view is correct in the case of the Schmiechen painting. Since we do not know what actually happened, we might speculate that they could possibly both be true. Perhaps M.'s mayavirupa (illusionary form) was standing beside the artist to guide him and a figure of K.H. was there also to be sensed by the artist. As Mrs. Holloway was an untrained clairvoyant perhaps she saw only the one figure of K.H.

De Zirkoff continues in the same letter that Olcott installed the two portraits in the Adyar Library, but that he later received an order from his Master not to allow public display of the two pictures. They were then placed in a room of the Esoteric Section above the library.

Schmiechen himself made one copy of each portrait. One is believed to be in possession of the heirs of Arthur Gebhard-L'Estrange, and another at the Theosophical Society Headquarters in Pasadena, California. Rukmini Devi Arundale told the author during a personal interview during the Spring of 1978, "There is an original oil painting by H.P.B. of Master Morya which was given by her to Mr. Watkins who was a very devoted theosophist in London. Today the painting is with Mr. Watkins' son. It is a very rare painting," she says, "because it is the only profile picture of Master Morya that she knows of." The author has seen a copy of it in Rukmini's archives, and has a photocopy of it in his files.

We come now to the fourth method of producing a portrait of the Mahatma. In 1897, among the workers who lived at the English Theosophical Headquarters in London were C. Jinarajadasa (C.J.), C.W. Leadbeater (C.W.L.) and a young boy, Basil Hodgson-Smith. C.W.L. informed C.J. that the Master K.H. wished C.J. and Basil each to have a miniature portrait of him. Mrs. Isabella Varley was an established portrait painter who had exhibited at the Royal Academy, and who along with her husband had recently joined the Theosophical Society. While her body was asleep, she was helped to materialize in the

Master's living room where he sat for the portrait. Night after night, she went in her astral body to do the paintings. Two ivory ovals, paints and brushes were also materialized.

The miniatures were phenomenally transported from Tibet to London as recounted by C.J.<sup>15</sup> One evening C.W.L. returned to the Headquarters with Annie Besant after one of her lectures. Basil was asleep in his room when C.W.L. looked in and noticed something white between Basil's hand and his cheek. It was something wrapped in white tissue. C.W.L. cautiously removed the packet without disturbing the sleeping boy and took it to show Mrs. Besant. It was indeed the miniature. C.W.L. was then uneasy that Basil might have awakened, so he again went to Basil's room to return the painting. This time he saw on the mantelpiece another miniature—the one intended for C.J. Both miniatures were covered with oval glass and the ivory and glass bound together. Mrs. Besant had two oval silver cases made so that the paintings would be protected from the atmosphere.

An enlarged copy of C.J.'s miniature was later made by Miss Florence Fuller, an Australian artist living at Adyar.

The author was living with Rukmini during the spring of 1978 at the Adyar Theosophical Society when she showed him two different lockets she had in her possession at that time. One locket with a large gold chain had an oval ivory painting of the Master Jesus inside. It was about 2½ inches (5¼ centimeters) in length, and 2 inches in breadth. Rukmini said "that it was materialized and handed to Dr. Besant in her room by the Master Jesus, and at the time, Dr. Besant did not know who He was. Because she was so anti-Christian and due to the fact that the Christians had tortured people so much, and she had been hurt in her youth by them she developed a dislike for the Catholic Church for many lives. She was told to wear it, and around 1901, she felt the inspiration to write *Esoteric Christianity*. Later in Dr. Besant's life, she was very ill and called me to her room one afternoon. She took my hand, and I thought she was magnetizing my hand, but she handed me the locket, and told me to always keep and protect it. The painting in the Shrine room was described by C.W.L. from the locket, and then painted by an artist, [who] could have been Miss Fuller." The author has a photocopy of the locket in his files.

The second locket she showed the author was the one she was wearing around her neck at the time. As she handed the locket to me, she said, "This locket was given to me by Henry Hotchener after Marie Hotchener's death. The locket was given to her by

Col. Olcott at his death, and inside were two painted portraits of Master K.H. and Master Morya. One day I dropped the locket and the portrait of Master K.H. broke into many pieces.

"However, in the locket were the hairs of four Masters, Master Morya, Master the Prince, Master K.H. and Master Serapis. I do not believe there is anyone in the history of the Society who has such a collection of hairs from the Masters. They would be shocked if they heard this. It really should be kept in a shrine room, not a museum, nor by any one person. . . ."

Rukmini wanted Radha [Burnier] to put these lockets with many other valuable possessions in the shrine room, but Radha reports that she never did receive them after her death in 1986. Again, like the Cagliostro Jewel, no doubt they are highly magnetized objects. What is certain, and what is important is that the lockets are a historical landmark and belong in the archives of the Theosophical Society.

It was not until around 1918 another sketch appeared of the Lord Maitreya. Mrs. Besant received from Mr. Schrenpf a picture he had made from the picture of the Lord Maitreya, and she was surprised at receiving it and inquired why he made the picture without authorization.

A. P. Warrington wrote in a letter to C. Jinarajadasa:

This picture was made from one which Bishop Wedgwood brought with him to America from Australia, and which he was showing quite publicly in the Church here, without observations or restrictions of any kind. As a work of photographic art it seemed to be rather a failure and to give unpleasant impressions. Bishop Wedgwood himself suggested where certain changes might be made. I then concluded that Schrenpf might successfully try to carry them out. He was given the order, but I say quite frankly his success was very poor, for he surely has made the face look weaker.<sup>16</sup>

### Methods of Producing Portraits

Thought transference is now so established a fact, at least among parapsychologists, that no explanation need be given in the case of Harrise's portrait and Schmiechen's portraits. The former received his impression from H.P.B., and the latter from the Master M.

The method of precipitation, as utilized in the three portraits produced by Djual Khool, needs further comment. H.P.B. says precipitation, whether of writ-

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# Report on a Search for the Book of the Golden Precepts in Kalimpong, March 1998\*

David Reigle

A couple years ago, Ken Small gave me some intriguing information he had come across in his research on Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*. A Catholic priest from India said that he, with the help of a Tibetan Lama, had compared the original (apparently Tibetan) of *The Voice of the Silence*, the "Book of the Golden Precepts," with Blavatsky's English translation, in the town of Kalimpong (north India) around 1950. The statement is found in his book, *Cosmic Ecumenism via Hindu-Buddhist Catholicism: An Autobiography of an Indian Dominican Monk*, by Anthony Elenjmittam (Alias Bhikshu Ishabodh Anand), Bombay: Aquinas Publications, [1983], p.270:

In my return to Kalimpong I stayed in the Tibetan monastery, taking part in their choral office and learning various branches of Mahayana and Tantrism. It was in that monastery that I first read with Lama Ping the *Voice of Silence*, the Book of Golden Precepts, with the English translation by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. With the help of the Tibetan Lama I could compare the English translation made by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky with the original, taking notes from the interpretation given by the Lama.

He apparently thought well enough of Blavatsky's translation to then publish an edition of *The Voice of Silence* in Bombay, India.

Naturally, Ken and I were extremely interested in locating this original Tibetan text. So hoping Elenjmittam was still alive, Ken wrote to him asking about this text. Ken was pleasantly surprised to get a reply. But unfortunately, Elenjmittam said that it had happened too long ago, and that he did not remember what text it was. That, then, was as far as this enquiry could be taken from Elenjmittam's end. And so it rested. In early 1998, however, I got the chance to go to India, so I determined to go to Kalimpong and investigate it from Lama Ping's end.

There are at present three Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Kalimpong. I thought I might find out something at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery, which is affiliated with the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, so I tried to go there first. However, I was

instead mistakenly directed to a prominently located Tibetan monastery on a high hill overlooking much of Kalimpong. This, called "Zong Dog Palri Phobrang Monastery," and affiliated with the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, was built fairly recently. Since it was built long after 1950, it was unlikely to hold the information I was seeking. So after enjoying the panoramic view of the surroundings from this multi-storied building, I proceeded onward in my search.

My next try did bring me to the monastery I first tried to go to. It is called "Tharpa Choling Monastery," and according to a photograph I saw there it was founded in 1922. A city brochure says it was constructed in 1937, apparently referring to the currently existing structure. The large main building was being extensively renovated at the time I was there, so the library was then stored in a warehouse-type building. I was kindly allowed to see the library anyway, and noted that it has three old blockprint sets of the Kangyur, and one new reprint set of the Tengyur. I asked if anyone knew of Lama Ping, explaining what had happened around 1950, but no one had heard of him. The monastery currently has about thirty monks. The monks I asked kindly went and got a monk who had been there since before 1950, but he, too, had not heard of Lama Ping. So it seemed that I would find nothing of Lama Ping in Kalimpong. Though I had little hope left of finding anything, for the sake of completeness I went to the third monastery.

The oldest monastery in Kalimpong, called "Tongsa Gompa," is said to have been built around 1692. Also called "Bhutan Monastery," it was built by the Bhutanese, so followed the state religion of Bhutan, the Dugpa Kagyu. Dugpa, or Drukpa (*'brug-pa*), is a subschool of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism. At the end of my visit I found out that this monastery recently became a Nyingma monastery rather than a Dugpa Kagyu monastery, but I have no details. When I arrived, the monks were assembled in the main hall, eating a meal I presumed, since I was let in. So I walked over and asked the younger Tibetan monk sitting next to the head Lama, apparently his translator, my question about Lama Ping. They were in fact in the middle of some activity, but he politely

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\* Excerpt from *Blavatsky's Secret Books*. [See Review, page 65.]

# DEAR COMRADE

## The Early Canadian Theosophist Flora MacDonald Denison

Ted G. Davy

Six weeks before her death on May 23, 1921, Flora MacDonald Denison lectured at the Toronto Theosophical Society on the Theosophy of Walt Whitman. Several contemporary members could also have done justice to the subject, but all would have acknowledged Mrs. Denison as Canada's leading Whitmanite. The title of her talk, "Who Am I?" posed a typical Whitman question. Perhaps she had in mind his "Who are you, my dear comrade?" as he confronted the dead and wounded casualties in a Civil War camp.<sup>1</sup> She was a first-rate speaker and it was fitting that on this, probably her final appearance on any platform, she would be discoursing among her colleagues and friends — "comrades" all. She herself embodied the ideal behind her beloved poet's concept of the "perfect comrade." In her day, the word had none of its later political associations but was understood in the sense of "an associate in friendship."

Exactly when Flora contacted Theosophy is not known. But all that is known about her shows she lived her life in the spirit of Theosophy. In an obituary in *The Canadian Theosophist*<sup>2</sup> Albert E.S. Smythe noted she had long been a member and described "Mrs. Denison's appreciation of the freedom of the Theosophical Society, the absence of dogma or labels of any kind from its constitution, and her resolution to join a body which placed Brotherhood alone as its standard of membership."<sup>3</sup> Her interest in "unexplained laws of Nature" together with her enthusiasm for Walt Whitman would sooner rather than later have led her to meet the several early Toronto Theosophists who shared these interests.

Flora MacDonald Merrill was born in Confederation Year, 1867, into a Scottish immigrant family that had settled in a small community in Southern Ontario. She was the fifth of eight children and grew up with few material advantages. Her wastrel father, a dreamer, had seen to that. Why her middle name? The 18<sup>th</sup> century Scottish hero Flora MacDonald has inspired many families in clan MacDonald to name a daughter after her. Other families of Scottish descent, like the Merrills, have also honoured the name. Like her illustrious namesake, the Flora MacDonald of the Merrill family also possessed heroic tendencies, though of a different nature. Hers was a remarkable life, and it is regrettable she is little remembered today. She was an extraordinarily determined and effective fighter for the causes she

believed in, and in her mere 54 years, Flora achieved success in several capacities. Indeed, one of her few relative failures was her 1892 marriage to Howard Denison. This short-lived union, however, produced a son whom she named Merrill after the family. Merrill Denison was also multi-talented in his own right. Trained as an architect, he was among the best Canadian playwrights of his generation, and also made his mark as a biographer-historian and writer for radio.

Flora's career began at 15 when she started out as a teacher in a log school-house in Elziver Township, North Hastings County, Ontario.<sup>4</sup> Incredible as it may seem today, in those times hers was a not uncommon appointment for bright students as young as she. But soon leaving teaching behind her, she took commercial courses and became a city office worker. At that time, women secretaries could only expect to earn the princely sum of five – at best six – dollars a week, yet even this was better than a rural schoolteacher's salary. But to Flora this was just a stepping stone. Among her many talents, she was an expert seamstress, an accomplished *modiste*, and supplemented her income this way. She evidently felt capable of anything she set her mind to: in 1898, despite no previous experience in management, she persuaded a large Toronto department store to appoint her as manager of its new custom-tailoring division for women's clothing.<sup>5</sup>

Seven years later she quit the store after time clocks were installed. "She refused to punch in, on the grounds that the new-fangled system fostered class distinction."<sup>6</sup> To say the least, class and "caste" were irritants to Flora. In her poem "The Woman With the Needle" she deplored "... that cursed ['ism] of caste."<sup>7</sup>

In this connection, it is perhaps fair to say that in the following years she sought equality for women not only for economic fairness but also to break down the gender class distinction which she called "barriers of caste".<sup>8</sup> In a speech, she is reported as saying:

When I use the word 'caste', I do so advisedly, because it is comprehensive and far reaching enough to include the thousand and one evils of state, of church and of social conditions generally.<sup>9</sup>

On leaving the department store, she then set up her own business as a ladies' costumer. It is not known how profitable was this venture but evidently it was sufficient to allow her to devote considerable time and money to other interests. This in itself was a rare achievement: at the turn of the century, although a few women were slowly making their mark in the professions, notably medicine, fewer still were establishing their own businesses. Flora was one of the more successful ones.

By the early 1900s her other interests included feminism, women's dress reform, animal welfare, spiritualism, theosophy and the poetry of Walt Whitman. High on Flora's agenda was the cause of women's suffrage. In Canada, the first steps towards this important goal had been taken in the late 19th century by a handful of professional women, among whom were early Canadian Theosophists Dr. Emily Stowe (1831-1903) and her daughter Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen (1857-1943).<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it was they who in the early 1900s inspired Flora to take up the torch they had lit.

The dreadful conditions suffered by the poor women who toiled in the clothing industry, together with her own gender based difficulties in running a business were among the factors which led her to realize that the first step towards erasing this ugly aspect of the social environment was to win for women the right to vote. Flora thereupon set out to obtain that right. She revitalized the Canadian suffrage movement by pouring her considerable energy and talents into Dr. Stowe's Dominion Women's Emancipation Association, which in 1907 changed its name to the Canadian Suffrage Association. After Dr. Stowe-Gullen resigned, Flora took over the Presidency in 1911 and held that office until 1914. From very early on she was a high profile spokesperson for the movement both in Canada and abroad: she represented her country in international conventions in Copenhagen (1906) and Budapest (1913).<sup>11</sup>

She was a most effective lobbyist, well equipped to meet the challenge. Not least, she was a gifted orator in an age when public speaking was an effective propaganda tool. Also, as early as 1898 her byline appeared in the Toronto weekly magazine *Saturday Night*; and about ten years later she was contributing a regular column in Sunday editions of the *Toronto World* newspaper.<sup>12</sup> Through these media (plus, it is assumed, well written briefs) she became a formidable second generation suffrage advocate.

Less militant than her counterparts in other countries, she was reasonable in pressing her cause. For example, answering a correspondent in her *Toronto World* column, she wrote:

The suffrage movement is not to separate the sexes, but to join them in a better comradeship than they can possibly know separated as they are by political barriers.<sup>13</sup>

Comradeship again: the ideal was never far from her goal or the word from her vocabulary.

Flora was firmly committed to the goal of emancipation, and her voluntary activities must have given her much personal satisfaction. She and her Canadian colleagues could have sensed victory even before World War I. Already during the war, some Canadian provinces recognized the right of women to vote; however, it was not until 1918 that the right was won federally.

So much for that side of Flora's career, which needs a book to do it justice. Her other interests were pursued with equal vigour.

From her writings and life work it is evident that the ideals of the first object of the Theosophical Society were echoed in Flora's personal philosophy. She would also have been well aware of the *raison d'être* of the third object. For her eldest sister, Mary Merrill (1858-1880), had been gifted with extraordinary psychic powers. Briefly, at a very early age Mary demonstrated amazing feats of intelligence, at least some of which seem unlikely to have originated in her brain. Then too, as a child she possessed certain psychokinetic powers; she was clairvoyant and a psychometer and apparently could read in the astral light. The phenomena associated with her bear a striking resemblance to those of the famous early 19th century Seeress of Prevorst. H.P. Blavatsky's description of the latter could also apply to Mary:

. . . a creature born *out of time*, a rare precocious growth, ill-adapted to the uncongenial atmosphere that surrounded her, hence a martyr ever ailing and sickly. (Original italics)<sup>14</sup>

Interestingly, Flora also concluded her sister Mary "came too soon."<sup>15</sup> Unlike the famous Seeress, however, it is not clear in every instance when associated phenomena occurred that Mary was actually in a trance state, which makes her case even more intriguing.

Mary Merrill's short life is recorded in a thinly disguised biographical novel, *Mary Melville the Psychic*, published in 1900. This strange tale was written by her sister signing herself only by her first names, Flora MacDonald. Seventy years later Canadian scholar Cyril Greenland investigated what could be ascertained of the real Mary's life and concluded:

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## Dora Kunz



A posting to *Theosophy Talk* (the Internet discussion site) on Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1999 announced that Dora van Gelder Kunz had passed on earlier that day.

Dora was well-known around the world for her theosophical activities. In an article which appeared in *The American Theosophist* [Vol.63, No.8, Aug.1975], it is noted that she was born in Java into a family which was rooted in theosophical philosophy. She was one of C.W. Leadbeater's young students and he helped her develop her clairvoyant abilities. Dora lived in Australia until 1925 at which time she went to the United States. Shortly thereafter she married Fritz Kunz. Dora and

Fritz traveled extensively, visiting branches and lecturing throughout the US. They were instrumental in founding Camp Indralaya on Orcas Island, WA and Pumpkin Hollow Farm in NY. [p.200].

Dora was involved with the medical profession and in healing work, particularly through the therapeutic touch techniques. A number of articles and books were published in which the results of her clairvoyant observations were documented. Examples are her first-person account of *The Real World of Fairies*, and her descriptions of *The Personal Aura*. Dora also served as President of T.S. in America from 1975 to 1987.

She will be long remembered for her many years of tireless involvement in theosophical activities.

Ernest E. Pelletier

## Salomon Lancri

(August 18, 1910 - July 26, 1999)



Mr. Salomon Lancri passed away during the afternoon of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1999 in a Paris hospital where he had been confined since May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Lancri was born in Mascara (Algeria). He joined the Theosophical Society in France in 1938, shortly after meeting a police commissioner who introduced him to the study of Theosophy when Mr. Lancri was just beginning his career as a magistrate. He and his wife, Rachel, moved from Oran, Algeria to France in 1962 when Algeria became independent.

Mr. Lancri is remembered as a very enthusiastic student of Theosophy. He also studied Sanskrit at the Sorbonne and served as General Secretary of T.S. in France from 1971 to 1979. For approximately twenty years, prior to 1986 at which time his eyesight failed to the point where he determined he could not continue, Mr. Lancri conducted numerous public courses on Theosophy at the Headquarters of the T.S. He discoursed on the teachings of H.P. Blavatsky, the Mahatmas and Subba Row. He also in-

structed a group of private students whom he encouraged to take over the public presentations.

Mr. Lancri will be especially remembered for two particular books he authored: *Introduction à l'étude de La Doctrine Secrète* and *Doctrines Initiatiques*.<sup>1</sup> The former title has been translated into English and Portuguese. He also penned numerous articles, book reviews, lectures and courses. He was known as a specialist among serious students of *The Secret Doctrine*, and was also very passionate about these teachings, which he described as both "highly elevated and deeply profound."<sup>2</sup>

On July 30<sup>th</sup> Mr. Lancri was cremated at the Cimetière du Père Lachaise, Paris, where family and friends gathered in silence. The next morning the family collected the ashes and drove to their country house in Brittany where, according to his last wishes, his remains were dropped into the sea.

Salomon Lancri is survived by his wife, Rachel, two children, Jean and Annie, as well as his daughter in law Monique, grandchildren, a great grandson, nieces and nephews.

Rogelle Pelletier

1. Edmonton Theosophical Society, through the invaluable assistance of Daniel Caracostea, obtained copies of these texts (signed by the author) for ETS Library. Daniel also supplied a copy of *Citations and Commentaires pour l'Étude de La Doctrine Secrète* by S. Lancri as well as a Bibliography of Mr. Lancri's writings (1952 - 1993) which Daniel compiled in December 1997.
2. "Simples Témoignages — Entretien avec Rachel et Salomon Lancri" by Michel Chapotin, *Le Lotus Bleu*, Juin/Juillet 1992, No. 6, p. 130.

# BOOK REVIEWS



*Colonel Arthur L. Conger* by Alan E. Donant, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1999, 32pp. + index. Booklet. ISBN 1-55700-139-1. Price \$5.00 U.S.

In January 1998 a lengthy article by the same name appeared in *Theosophical History, A Quarterly Journal of Research* (Vol. VII, No. 1). In early 1999 Theosophical University Press released a slightly revised version with additional material as a booklet.

Mr. Donant is National Secretary for the American Section of The Theosophical Society, Pasadena, and editor of *Theosophic Link*, its official publication. He has presented a well-written, well-researched document on the life of Colonel Conger who served as Leader of the Theosophical Society from 1945, three years following the death of G. de Purucker, until the Colonel's death in February 1951.

Colonel Conger became a member of The Theosophical Society in 1892. In this biographical essay Mr. Donant details the Colonel's early years as well as the many facets of his involvement with the Movement, as his military career allowed until he retired from

military service in 1928, and thereafter in his various official capacities.

The appearance of this booklet in March 1999 generated rather heated discussion on the Internet at the Theosophy-Talk site. There are always two sides to every story and where history is involved opposing views can sometimes be quite contentious. *Colonel Arthur L. Conger* is well referenced, providing opportunity for follow up with original sources. Accounts of events related to a rather controversial period of the Theosophical Society's history (1946) have been documented in various articles and books over the years.

*Colonel Arthur L. Conger* provides a biographical overview of a very interesting personage described variously as theosophist, humanitarian, scholar, musician and military officer. For those of us initially only vaguely aware of the details of this man's life, this essay is very informative and welcomed.

Ernest E. Pelletier

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*Blavatsky's Secret Books, Twenty Years' Research* by David Reigle and Nancy Reigle. San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1999, 192pp. Hardcover. ISBN 0-913510-76-9. Price \$15.00 U.S.

As indicated in the subtitle, *Twenty Years' Research*, the authors have compiled the results of their ongoing search to trace the original sources of H.P. Blavatsky's master works, *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of The Silence*. The book comprises fourteen articles and papers, researches accomplished through their independent and unaffiliated Eastern Tradition Research Institute (formerly the Theosophical Research Center), many of which were published through their Eastern School Press. Some have been included in symposium/conference publications of papers delivered; others have appeared in various periodicals from 1981 - 1999.

Throughout these articles and papers, the authors share their painstaking research in extant works for H.P. Blavatsky's "secret books": *The Book of Dzyan* upon which much of *The Secret Doctrine* is based, and *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, the basis of *The Voice of The Silence*.

In the first article, *Quest for the Lost Language of the Initiates*, David explains how H.P.B.'s accounts of "vast secret libraries in the safekeeping of certain occult brotherhoods" provoked his interest. To then read in the PROEM of *The Secret Doctrine* that "Extracts are given from the Chinese, Tibetan, and San-

skrit translations of the original Senzar Commentaries and Glosses on the Book of DZYZAN—these being rendered for the first time in a European language"—the search was on! To ensure they could decipher the texts when they came upon them, David and Nancy have become Sanskrit scholars. In *Blavatsky's Secret Books* they document some of the findings resulting from their years of toil. They share the fascinating gems they have uncovered along the way and the links which these have provided to the next encouraging rung on the ladder of discovery.

David and Nancy demonstrate their scholarship in their well-documented and obviously well-researched writings on (to mention a few) such topics as the Books of Kiu-te, Tibetan and Sanskrit MSS, technical terms in the Book of Dzyan, Tibetan terms in 'Cosmological Notes' regarding the Books of Kiu-te, a discussion on *The Doctrine of Svabhava or Svabhavata* and whether or not it truly represents the philosophy of *The Secret Doctrine*.

Three of the papers have a direct connection to Edmonton TS. *The Voice of The Silence: Bringing the Heart Doctrine to the West* by Nancy, and *The Secret Doctrine: Original Genesis and the Wisdom Tradition* by David were originally presented at ETS' Confer-

ence on *The Works and Influence of H.P. Blavatsky* held in Edmonton in July 1998 (these are included in the book of published papers). Response to David's description at the Conference of his excursion to India earlier that year led to the writing of *Report on a Search for the Book of the Golden Precepts in Kalimpong, March 1998* (and which is included in this issue of FOHAT).

This compilation is a great addition for researchers. While it may be considered somewhat technical by the casual reader, there is much to be gained by anyone with an interest in the sources of the Buddhist materials which have captivated the interest of the West over the last twenty to thirty years. It will definitely be of interest to theosophical students to

whom most of these papers were originally addressed.

David and Nancy are to be commended for their independent research, working on the edge of established academics, determined to be instrumental in locating these invaluable texts. They are convinced that "an original language manuscript of one of Blavatsky's secret books, that is, one of their Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese translations, will be discovered in our life-time, demonstrating the existence of a once universal, but now hidden, Wisdom Tradition" [Preface]. H.P.B. apparently indicated that if people do the necessary work some of these writings may become available. *Blavatsky's Secret Books* documents an important part of this necessary work.

Rogelle Pelletier

## A Theosophical Fable\*

Once upon a time, in a country far across the Indian Ocean, there was a society of people who wanted to hear and investigate the music of the spheres. They called their society "Harmony," but there was very little harmony among them; on the contrary, they quarrelled a great deal amongst each other, for their society was made up of men and women of different nationalities, different characters and different opinions. But to make up for this deficiency, they had in their possession a musical instrument, upon which—if it was properly tuned—the music of the spheres could be heard. This instrument however was almost constantly out of tune, and the winds from the four corners of the earth would then blow into it and it would give forth on such occasions very discordant sounds. To attune it, it was necessary that a great Genius from the upper spheres should descend and put it in order, so that the music of the spheres could be heard.

It was indeed a very queer instrument, and what is still more remarkable about it, is the fact, which will hardly be believed by *sensible* people, that if a person whose mind was very unharmonious, would come near it, it would begin to make a very disagreeable noise.

The safe-keeping of that instrument was entrusted to the president of that society, and that president was so proud of its mysterious qualities, that he wanted to show it to everybody, and asked everybody to come and listen to the harmony of the spheres.

Now there was a society of non-musical but learned men in a country not far from here, and the president of the harmonial society went to them and told them about his mysterious instrument. They however did not believe him and said that there was no such thing as a "music of the spheres." The intrepid president however insisted that there was, and he promised, that if they would send some one to look at that instrument, he would show them how it was constructed, and he would ask the great Genius of the upper spheres to

come and play a tune—for their instruction and edification.

Consequently, the learned men of the West put their heads together and consulted with each other, and the result was that they selected a smart boy and asked him to go across the big water to look at the great Genius from the upper spheres, and to report the result of his observations to those whose heads had grown to be grey in the acquisition of scientific opinions.

The smart boy went and looked at the instrument, but when he came there it gave forth only discordant sounds, because his own soul was not in harmony with it, and the more he worked with it, the more discordant did it become. The president then took out his book of incantations and tried all kinds of conjurations to force the Genius from the upper spheres to come and play a tune for the smart boy, but the Genius would not come.

So the smart boy took his travelling bag and went home again and told his fathers in learning, that he did not see the great Genius and did not hear the music of the spheres, and the learned men struck their heads together a second time and consulted with each other, and the result was that they said the smart boy was wise and that the president of the harmonial society was—mistaken.

Now, when the members of the harmonial society heard that important decision, they became very much distressed and they went and destroyed the instrument, because they said that if they could not have an instrument upon which the music of the spheres could be heard at all times, they would rather have no instrument at all. Consequently the society dissolved and the members went their way, some of them attempted to attune their own souls to the harmony of the spheres, others believed that the great Genius had never existed; but the keeper of the instrument sat down and wept bitterly.

H.

\* Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, March 1886, pp.390-91.

# Musings From A Secret Doctrine Class

Robert Bruce MacDonald

Stanza VII, Sloka 5: The spark hangs from the flame by the finest thread of Fohat. It journeys through the Seven Worlds of Maya. It stops in the first (*Kingdom*), and is a metal and a stone; it passes into the second (*Kingdom*), and behold—a plant; the plant whirls through seven forms and becomes a sacred animal; (*the first shadow of the physical man*).

From the combined attributes of these, manu (*man*), the thinker, is formed.

Who forms him? The seven lives; and the one life. Who completes him? The fivefold Lha. And who perfects the last body? Fish, sin, and soma (*the moon*).


In his translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*,<sup>1</sup> Judge tells us: “*Prakriti*, matter or nature, is the cause of all action throughout the universe, as it is the basis by which action may take place; and herein are included all actions, whether of men, of gods, powers, or what not” (p.96). He further tells us that “*Purusha* is the aspect of the individual spirit in every human breast; it is the cause of our experiencing pain and pleasure through the connection with nature found in the body” (p.96). Powis Hault in *A Dictionary of Some Theosophical Terms*,<sup>2</sup> puts the two together with the following quotation:

[T]he whole of Nature partakes of the sentience of the Purusha and the insentience of the Prakriti. Thus every atom is an outcome of the interaction of these two, purusha and prakriti, and has a dual nature. Its evolution is the ever-progressing attempt to reflect the light that is in it in its pure fullness.—*Pra-Buddha Bharatu* (p.110)

When Blavatsky draws our attention to the matter of a dualistic system of thought versus an evolutionary system of thought in her footnote on page 256 of *The Secret Doctrine*, what, we ask, does that add to our reading of Stanza VII?

Dualism posits two separate essences underlying the manifested world, while evolution looks at one reality accounting for all of manifestation. In both the Jiva works its way through the various kingdoms learning to reflect more fully that which it is. In the early kingdoms it is aided by the forces of Nature which provide ever more developed templates as it involutes into matter through the mineral, the plant, the animal, and finally into Man. This adding on is Natural and progresses unheeded. Halfway through its journey through Man there comes a balance, a balance that can only be overcome by the self-conscious Man. Pleasure and pain become the allies of the human

soul, for it is only first through experience and then the rejection of the experienced as transient, that the human soul at last turns to the divine that underlies both spirit and matter and begins the journey home. That journey will be successful only if the soul recognizes that body is not separate from spirit. The body provides the stepping stones into more ethereal worlds. Only by fixing on our divine inner essence and transforming body into soul can this soul become the new body for further progress. Prakriti is the ally of Purusha, and to see it differently is to walk into the trap that will in the end leave the human soul behind awaiting future Manvantaras.

The body always acts according to Nature, for this is Karma. The *Gita* tells us that “Nature or *prakriti* is said to be that which operates in producing cause and effect in actions” (p.96). Past events lead to future events and once an event has passed there is little we can do to alter its corresponding future effect. Further “individual spirit or *purusha* is said to be the cause of experiencing pain and pleasure” (p.96). Through individual purusha we can experience the effects of our acts. Prakriti is possessed of the three qualities (*gunas*) and “spirit when invested with matter or *prakriti* experienceth the qualities which proceed from *prakriti*; its connection with these qualities is the cause of its rebirth in good and evil wombs” (p.96). Because of spirit we can experience pain or pleasure, and it is our connection with the painful and pleasurable that determines our Karma. If we run towards pleasure and avoid pain then we live in ignorance. The wise man possesses “a constant unwavering steadiness of heart upon the arrival of every event whether favourable or unfavourable” (p.94) for he finally knows there is only One Life and he will walk a path towards the essence of that one life, whether it be through pain or pleasure it matters not, for all else is certainly Illusion. 

1. *The Bhagavad-Gita*. William Q. Judge, trans. Los Angeles, CA: Theosophy Company, 1986.

2. Hault, Powis. *A Dictionary of Some Theosophical Terms*. Photocopied Reproduction by Edmonton Theosophical Society, 1993.

. . . **Y2K** continued from page 55

and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness.<sup>14</sup>

The implication of these words is not just that despite a descending cycle we do not contribute to this decline of virtue, but also we must not passively wait for the “lord of all existence” to establish righteous-

ness through some cyclic reappearance. The Inner self is with us all the time, reachable through our thread-soul, the Ariadne’s thread leading us through the labyrinth of our daily existence.

May our high resolves lead us onward to that Spiritual Sun, whose rays alone can burn away the material dross of the past eras, and bring enlightenment to the New. ☺

1. p. 128. Book includes foreword by David Spangler. Chrysalis Bks. 1998.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
3. *Ibid.* See pp. 37-38.
4. *The Esoteric Tradition*, Vol. I, pp. 342-43. Point Loma, California, Theosophical University Press, 1935.
5. *Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 2<sup>nd</sup> series*. New York, Christian Literature Co., 1990. See Vol. I, pp. 489- 91.
6. *Some Unpublished Letters of H.P. Blavatsky*, Compiled by E.R. Corson. See Letter Number 7 to Professor Hiram Corson; originally written in 1875 from Philadelphia, PA. Reprinted in an Online Edition by Theosophical University Press: <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/corson/cors-lt1.htm>
7. *The Esoteric Tradition*, p. 343.
8. Koke, p. 10.
9. A review of *Farewell to an Idea. Episodes from a History of Modernism*, by T.J. Clark. June 13, 1999 issue of *N.Y.T.B.R.*, p. 3.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
11. Quoted from [www.religioustolerance.org/end\\_wrld.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/end_wrld.htm)
12. [www.cnn.com/TECH/space/9906/01/solar.storms.ap/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/TECH/space/9906/01/solar.storms.ap/index.html)
13. *Questions We All Ask*. First Series, Vol.I, p.284 reprinted ed. by High Country Theosophical Study Center, Boulder, Colorado, 1992.
14. *Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter IV (p.31 Judge Recension, Los Angeles, Theosophy Company, reprint of 1986).

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. . . **Kalimpong** continued from page 61

listened and then said my question could be brought up after their activity was over. I left the main building and spoke to a person on the compound, who invited me to the tea room. I was just about to leave the monastery, thinking I would not get an answer, when the translator came into the tea room looking for me.

The translator had with him an older monk who said he knew of Lama Ping. He said that Lama Ping was not the man’s real name, but rather his real name was Lama Tinley (*phrin las*). The older monk said that when he was a child he had seen Lama Tinley and another man, presumably Anthony Elenjimitam, there at Bhutan Monastery in Kalimpong. Lama Tinley, I was given to understand, did not belong to this monastery, but was from Bhutan, and went back to Bhutan some time after meeting Elenjimitam. I was told that Lama Tinley died thirteen years ago. My informant did not know about *The*

*Voice of the Silence* or the “Book of the Golden Precepts,” nor what Tibetan book this might be. I had learned earlier that the Bhutan Monastery in Kalimpong does not have a library. My informant assumed that the Tibetan book involved must have belonged to Lama Tinley, and must have been taken back with him to Bhutan when he returned there. I did not then have the opportunity to travel to Bhutan to try and pursue this further.

Whether or not this book was in fact the original Tibetan text of the “Book of the Golden Precepts,” or was a different book on the Bodhisattva path having similar ideas, such as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, thus remains unknown. Nonetheless, even these small findings merit being recorded, for the sake of future search. I unfortunately did not ask my informant’s name, but he can be found at Bhutan Monastery in Kalimpong. My meeting with him took place there on March 5, 1998. ☺

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. . . **Portraits** continued from page 60

ing or of an image, is “the *photographic* reproduction from one’s head”.<sup>17</sup> K.H. called it a “branch of Psychic chemistry.”<sup>18</sup>

The best explanation of the process is given in a letter to Sinnett, received Dec. 10, 1880, in which K.H. describes how he precipitates a letter:

I have to *think* it over, to photograph every word and sentence carefully in my brain before it can be repeated by “precipitation.” As the fixing on chemically prepared surfaces of the images formed by the camera requires a previous arrangement within the focus of the object to be represented, for otherwise—as often found in bad photographs—the legs of the sitter might appear out of all proportion with the head, and so on, so we have to first arrange our sentences and impress every letter to appear on paper in our minds before it becomes fit to be read. For the present, it is *all* I can tell you. When science will have learned more about the mystery of the *lithophyl* (or lithobiblion) and how the impress of leaves comes originally to take place on stones, then will I be able to make you better understand the process. But you must know and remember one thing: we but follow and *servilely copy nature* in her works.<sup>19</sup>

For persons who watch the currently popular television series, “Star Trek”, the transportation of objects—and people—by molecular dissociation and recombination at a target location is no new thing. Science today has already been able to transport small items a few inches away as shown on National News. Examples in early T.S. history are well attested, such as the phenomenal recovery of Mrs. Hume’s lost brooch. At a dinner party of ten people at the Hume residence in Simla, the conversation turned to occult phenomena. In the course of this, H.P.B. asked Mrs. Hume if there was anything, she particularly wished for. Mrs. Hume said she would like a small brooch her mother had given her, which she allowed to pass out of her possession. H.P.B. told her to fix the image of the article firmly in her mind and she would try to procure it. After dinner, H.P.B. said the brooch would not be brought into the house, but they must look for it in the garden in a star-shaped flowerbed. Lanterns were obtained and the guests found the brooch in the indicated spot.<sup>20</sup>

1. Precipitation is a term invented by H.S. Olcott to best convey the method employed in producing an image or writing on suitable paper or other material by occult means. See Olcott, H.S. *Old Diary Leaves*. First Series. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Madras, Theosophical Pub. House, 1895. p. 362.

2. *Ibid.* p. 16.

3. Jinarajadasa, C. *The “K. H. “ Letters to C W. Leadbeater*. Madras, Theosophical Pub. House, 1941, p. 21.


4. Olcott, H.S. *Ibid.* pp. 371-72.

As far as the author knows, no explanation has been given to the public of the *modus operandi* of transport of objects aside from the generality of control of elementals or of the finer forces of nature. Such knowledge is undoubtedly reserved for persons who have proven their worthiness in respect to their sincere ethical commitment to utilization of the forces only for the good of all humankind and all nature.

### Usage of a Portrait of a Brother

While the magnetized portraits of Brothers may link one with the living being represented in the portrait, or if not magnetized may inspire the observer to greater determination and effort in spiritual goals, the most valuable aid in spiritual growth must be in the concepts associated with the pictures. Not forgetting that the mere possession of a picture of the Brothers does not make one more spiritual or bring him nearer to the Brothers. Here are portraits of living men who have so perfected themselves in purity of motive that they have been entrusted with superhuman powers, control over the forces of nature, all in the interest of helping benighted mankind to more enlightenment as to the reality of his own nature and the latent powers within each human psyche.

We must also remember that these Brothers, being mature men in the 1800s, if living now at the end of the 1900s would be well over 100 years of age. Tradition has it that these unique human beings sometimes live several centuries. The object lesson in all this is that the hope of each human being is to look to the Brother within himself—his own Higher Self, which, as Emerson says, is one with the Over-soul, the Universal Self.

The brief appearance of the theosophical Brothers and their extraordinary powers have allowed both [the] Eastern and Western public a glimpse behind the mystical curtain which screens the blinding light of the countenances of advanced human beings from the weak eyes of ordinary mortals. Yet we can appreciate and revere that glimpse as presaging of the destiny of those who see the potential and are willing to work for its unfoldment. 

5. Jinarajadasa, C. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*. Second Series, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Chicago, The Theosophical Press, 1926, Letter XXI, p. 54. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Madras, Theosophical Pub. House, 1973, p. 46.
6. Jinarajadasa, C. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*. Second Series. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Chicago, The Theosophical Press, 1926, p. 53.
7. Barker, A. T., ed. *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, Rider, 1926.
8. *Ibid.* p. 184.
9. *Ibid.* p. 287.
10. *Ibid.* p. 300.
11. *The Word*, Vol.XV, p. 203, April-Sept.,1912.
12. *Ibid.* pp. 204-6.
13. Olcott, H.S. *Old Diary Leaves*. Third Series. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Madras, Theosophical Pub. House, 1904, pp. 155-57.
14. "Portraits of the Masters", *The Eclectic Theosophist*. No.118, July-August 1990, pp. 5-6.
15. Unpublished private letter, 1951. Author's archives.
16. Unpublished private letter, 1918. Author's archives.
17. Barker, A.T. *Ibid.*, p. 480.
18. *Ibid.* p. 422.
19. *Ibid.* p. 22.
20. Sinnett, A.P. *The Occult World*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1885, pp. 80-1. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. 1969, p. 71.

. . . **Flora** continued from page 63

*Mary Melville* certainly reads like fiction . . . but subsequent research leaves no doubt that *Mary Melville* is not a novel, but a work of biography. There are, at any event, strong autobiographical elements in *Mary Melville* which makes it unique in the annals of Canadian history and literature.<sup>16</sup>

Others felt the same. In 1935, Theosophist Albert E.S. Smythe wrote a retrospective account of *Mary Melville the Psychic*, giving the impression that he accepted the story as more or less factual. He noted that at the time he wrote there were still a few contemporaries of Mary Merril alive who remembered her remarkable powers.<sup>17</sup>

*Mary Melville The Psychic* is important on more than one score. Canadian historian Ramsay Cook sees it as "a record of scientific and religious controversy in late nineteenth-century Canada."<sup>18</sup> Theosophists interested in "latent powers" will find in it examples of various psychic phenomena. In this regard however, it must be said that only with reservations could the book's descriptions of phenomena be accepted by psychical researchers as reliable. After all, Flora was only 13 when the real life Mary, her sister, died; and the book was not written until 20 years after that event; therefore the story would have owed much to hearsay and inevitable fallible memory.

Writing the book was probably of cathartic benefit to the author. As a teenager, she herself had experienced a vision of her late sister, so vivid that she was ever afterwards convinced of Mary's conscious sur-

vival after death.<sup>19</sup> This either prompted or cemented an interest in spiritualism which lasted the rest of Flora's life.

An even stronger interest was the life and work of the American poet Walt Whitman. In his poetry Flora found a totally satisfying philosophy, one in which the concept of universal brotherhood is axiomatic. Typically, she promoted Whitman as none other could.


In 1916 she was active in founding the Canadian Branch of the Whitman Fellowship and was its first Vice-President. (Two other Theosophists, Albert E.S. Smythe and Henry S. Saunders were President and Secretary respectively.)<sup>20</sup> Canadian Whitmanites scoffed at the Grundyism of the times, which had manifested itself in Toronto in the banning of Whitman's book by the Public Library; and even in police raids on bookstores which stocked *Leaves of Grass*!<sup>21</sup>

Back in 1911 she had purchased a large tract of forested land about 280 km from Toronto, to the north and not far from the area where she grew up. The previous owner had named the property Bon Echo. A prominent feature of Bon Echo was a 120m high wall of granite rock 1.6 km long, which Flora affectionately named "Old Walt". In 1919 (Whitman's birth centenary) together with Horace Traubel she formally dedicated it to the poet, complete with an inscription professionally sculptured on the rock face. Curiously, her name appears in the inscription only as "Flora MacDonald", the last name being omitted just as in the authorship of her book. An-

other Whitman-inspired activity during her lifetime was the occasional publication of a magazine, *The Sunset of Bon Echo*. Every issue contained Whitman's line "The Institution of the dear love of comrades."<sup>22</sup> After his mother's death her son Merrill continued to operate Bon Echo as a retreat for Whitmanites and other nature lovers. Eventually, he deeded the property to the people of Ontario and in 1961, it was designated an Ontario Provincial Park.

Her death was unexpected, apparently due to pneumonia following an operation. One of her Theosophist/Whitmanite friends helped Merrill dispose of the physical form she no longer required. In a terse note, Roy Mitchell wrote: "Flora Macdonald Denison

died on Monday May 23, 1921 at 3 a.m. Conducted funeral service for Merrill on evening of May 24 and on May 25 went with him to the Buffalo Crematory with the body."<sup>23</sup> (A journey made necessary as there were then no facilities for cremation in Toronto.) A week later a memorial service was held by the Whitman Fellowship, many of whose members were Theosophists.

It was fitting that Albert Smythe's obituary tribute is headed "A Comrade Passes." Flora Macdonald Denison, whose legacy is interwoven in Canada's political and social fabric, would surely have been pleased with this simple description. 

1. Walt Whitman, "A Sight in Camp in the Day-Break Grey and Dim." *Leaves of Grass* 1900 edition.
2. [Albert E.S. Smythe], "A Comrade Passes" *The Canadian Theosophist* II/4 57-58 (June 1921).
3. Smythe, *op. cit.*, 58.
4. Merrill Denison, *Encyclopedia Canadiana* (1975) 251.
5. Dick MacDonald, *Mugwump Canadian: The Merrill Denison Story*, 10.
6. *Ibid.*, 11.
7. Flora Macdonald Denison, "The Woman With the Needle." *Toronto Saturday Night*, 13/2, Nov 25, 1899, p. 7.
8. Deborah Gorham, "Flora MacDonald Denison: Canadian Feminist." In Linda Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada 1880s - 1920s*, p. 55. This chapter is the most comprehensive account I have seen of Denison's efforts on behalf of social reform in Canada.
9. Quoted in Wayne Roberts, "Six New Women: A Guide to the Mental Map of Women Reformers in Toronto." *Atlantis*, 3/1 (1977) p. 154.
10. See my "Early Canadian Theosophists and Social Reform," *Fohat* 1/4 (Winter 1997) p.82.
11. Catherine L. Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*, 29.
12. Her fellow Theosophists Albert E.S. Smythe and Roy Mitchell were journalists working on the *Toronto World* at this time.
13. Flora M. Denison, "Under the Pines". *The Toronto World*, January 30, 1910.
14. H.P. Blavatsky, "Replies to an English F.T.S." *Collected Writings* V: 144. There is an interesting article on the Seeress in *The Path*, II: 330-33 (February 1888).
15. Flora MacDonald, *Mary Merrill The Psychic*, 264.
16. Cyril Greenland, "Mary Edwards Merrill 1858-1880 'The Psychic'." *Ontario History* Vol. 68, p. 81 (1976).
17. Albert E.S. Smythe, "Mary Merrill." *The Canadian Theosophist* XV/ 12 (February 1935), pp. 366-67.
18. Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*, p. 79.
19. Cook, 80. This item is based on information given by F.M.D. in B.L. Austin's compilation, *What Converted Me* [to spiritualism], a book not seen by the writer.
20. Cyril Greenland and John Robert Colombo, comps. *Walt Whitman's Canada*, 175.
21. *Ibid.*, 181.
22. *Ibid.*, 181. The quotation is from Whitman's "I Hear It Was Charged Against Me."
23. Roy Mitchell, handwritten note in the writer's possession.



# *Fohat is the Steed, Thought is the Rider*

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*It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation. . . . Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualized and attains to self – or reflective – consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life. – Secret Doctrine I, 16*

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