III.

The Genuineness of the Work.

A question that would naturally strike anyone, not wholly one-pointed towards the inherent merits or demerits of the book, but also interested in side-questions as to its authorship, with regard to a work purporting to have been taken down to dictation from alleged memory under such extraordinary conditions as those described above, would be: "Is the work genuine? Is the man telling the truth when he says he learnt it off by rote in such and such circumstances? Or is it only another of those forgeries with which the history of literature is studded?"

The easiest and most satisfactory proof of its *genuineness would, clearly, have been an old and* independent manuscript. Such a manuscript Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja has not been able to supply; and for this inability he advances reasons which, from his standpoint, and in view of the conditions under which he obtained access to the work, are not wholly unintelligible or invalid. He, a blind man, could never himself make use of a manuscript and never tried to acquire one, and the Paṇḍiṭ or Paṇḍiṭs who had copies would not part with them.

The independent search, made by some of my friends, as mentioned before, in the places

mentioned by Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja, has so far proved unsuccessful.

All this, however, is quite in keeping with the habit, well known to be strongly prevalent in India, of concealing old and rare manuscripts; and the absence of this first and highest degree of proof does not therefore necessarily stamp the dictated *Praṇava-Vāḍa* as a forgery.

The proof that would have been satisfactory in the next degree could have been supplied by a good test of memory. If I know a thing by heart I can repeat it not once only but a hundred times. If, then, Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja could repeat a second time what he had dictated once, it would at least be clear that the matter was mnemonic. For the instance is not easily found of a man talented enough to dictate four to six thousand syllables of his own extempore composition, at a single sitting, without a single break, and as fast as a fast writer could take them down, and also to go *on impressing those syllables so fully on his* memory as to be able to reproduce them exactly at will later on. If Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja *were* such an exception, then also he would be a prodigy, a genius, the like of whom the world has not often seen before; perhaps though even otherwise, on any other theory whatever, his performances are wonderful enough!

But Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja during all the years

that he was known to Paṇḍiṭ Parmeshrī Ḍās, and has been known to me, has never repeated a second time what he dictated and got reduced to writing once. He has never flatly declined to do so either; but he has always evaded any request of this kind. "I am not feeling well enough, just now. I am tired. I shall do so some other time, when I am better," etc. When requested to declare definitely and frankly whether he never would, or whether he had taken any vow not to so repeat what he had dictated, he has always said: "I will satisfy you and do what you wish some other time," etc. That other time has yet to come.

In other matters also, as for instance the producing of manuscripts which he admitted were in his family house and in his possession, or otherwise under his control, he has often made contradictory statements which have given rise to a presumption of some peculiarity in his nature, such as neuropaths and intellectual *lusus naturæ* often suffer from, especially when they are also labouring under the sad privation of sight.

Taking these facts together, with (1) the obscure, abstruse, and even sometimes uncouth nature of many portions of what has been taken down from him, and with (2) the facts that the Samskṛṭ which flows so uninterruptedly from his lips is frequently ungrammatical, as judged

by the standards of Pāṇini, and that the sentences are often incomplete and wanting in *prima facie* connexion with each other, the result has been that many impatient friends who came to "bless" have gone away "cursing". They have hastily decided that the man was a "humbug" pure and simple, that his utterances were the merest gabble, that whatever portions of them happened to be intelligible were nothing else than pickings from the brains of his friends made during conversation on theosophical and philosophical subjects, and that all his talk about a vast old world of literature buried away in the homes of private families was mere mystification, and even downright deception.

Are these friends right? It is impossible to convince them that they are not, if they are not willing to take into account any other than the two tests mentioned. But a third test remains to be applied; and really it is the only important and satisfactory one to apply in such cases. None of these friends spent more than two or three hours altogether in trying and deciding the case of Ḍhanarāja; some perhaps only as many minutes. What have *they* got to say who have had the patience to spend hundreds, even thousands, of hours in weighing *internal evidence*, the intrinsic merits of the dictated material?

Perhaps I shall not be judged guilty of an improper presumption if I say that I can speak with a certain amount of confidence about the *Praṇava-Vāḍa*. In reducing it to writing, in reading it back to Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja, in reading it over and over again, in writing out marginal notes, in summarising, paraphrasing and translating it into English, and finally taking this summary through the press, I have spent many thousands of hours distributed over a period of nearly ten years, beginning with the 31st of August 1900 and ending with the publication of these volumes. And at the end of all this labour my firm conviction is that it is a work which—with all its shortcomings of obscurity of sense and language, of redundances and verbosities, on the one hand, and excessive compressions on the other, and of a mannerism that is apt to tire a modern reader—is unrivalled in the whole mass of *extant* Samskṛṭ literature, and, so far as I am aware through the medium of the English language, in any other philosophical literature also, for profound and all-comprehending metaphysic, for penetrating insight into and luminous solution of the deepest and darkest problems of all life, for incessant proof into and of the breakless interconnexion of all the infinite details of the World-process, for holding up the highest ideals of the fortunes and functions of human evolution, and

finally for a suggestiveness that opens up endless vistas of possible knowledge before the straining eyes of the thinking reader. The only other work *extant* which has the same characteristics of comprehensive helpfulness is *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky. And that and this supplement each other and make one whole, as metaphysic and science, as abstract and concrete, as principles and details. But the history of the writing of that work, and of its sister-work, *Isis Unveiled*, is even more 'mysterious' and 'suspicious' from the standpoint of the reader who is wholly out of touch with the psychic phenomena of the realm of the superphysical, than this. (See Col. H. S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, Vols. i. and iii., and *The Secret Doctrine* itself, Vol. i., *Introductory* pp. xxiii, xxiv, *et seq.*)

It is, further, my conviction, also based on the nature of the book, that it is not a work which can have been produced independently of any connected and co-existing literature and science, like Minerva springing full-armed from the forehead of Jupiter, but is necessarily in organic articulation with a whole large mass of literature of a similar nature, and is itself only the essential and all-important typus of a vast-ranging kind of thought which is radically different in its ensouling principle from much of the things now extant. The following quotation has a special value in this reference:

". . . MSS., hitherto buried out of. . . reach. . . would again come to light, and with them the key to much of that which was hidden for ages from the popular understanding. . ." (Letter of the Master K. H., quoted in A. P. Sinnett's *The Occult World*, p. 115.)

My enthusiasm over the work is probably and naturally excessive, because of the amount of time I have spent over it, and of the personal reasons mentioned before. But after discounting all such excess, I believe that there will still be left behind for every reader a tangible residuum of justifiable appreciation. As an English friend who started with a bias against rather than for the work, remarked to me, after looking through a considerable portion of the translation in manuscript: "There is stuff in it; it should be published."

Of such merit (or otherwise) in the work, the reader can and will, of course, form his own opinion, and which is said above is only by way of general recommendation to him to read what, I earnestly believe, will be helpful to him.

But one thing remains to be mentioned in this connexion, of which the reader would ordinarily not have an opportunity of judging, and which I therefore add here as matter of personal experience. It is this: Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja, from what I have seen of him, has no more the power of creating this work out of his own

intelligence than he has of creating the solar system. He lived with me for five months. I sat in his company for many hours almost every day of these months, with one break of three weeks. And I know that he does not understand some portions of the book, which are not unintelligible to the student of theosophy.

I have often discussed the sense of passages with him, and he has often admitted that his previous explanation was wrong and mine right, after consulting (as he said) in his own memory, of course, what he called Gobhili's commentary on the *Praṇava-Vāḍa*, two or three fragments from which commentary also I have taken down from him, just for curiosity. Again I have tried to converse with him, in ordinary modern Samskṛṭ, on every day matters, and he has found it difficult, or at least given me the impression, by his halting and laboured efforts, that he found it difficult, to construct half a dozen sentences in either modern Samskṛṭ or that of the works he dictates. He has always given me the impression that while he was no doubt a more than commonly intelligent man, his intelligence was of the kind to give him a general understanding of the meaning and value of what he was dictating; not of the kind to enable him to discover and put forth the ideas and words newly himself, or even, always, to make that significance explict

to others, who could often see more in his words than he himself could do.

Also, as collateral facts in support of the view that the *Praṇava-Vāḍa* existed in Paṇḍiṭ Ḍhanarāja's memory as a completed whole, before he began dictating it to me, may be mentioned these:—Before beginning the work, I asked him what its extent was in shloka-measures, in order to calculate the total amount of time needed, and to regulate my daily routine accordingly. He unhesitatingly mentioned 16,000 shloka-measures, and my manuscript, on completion, bore out the truth of the statement. This manuscript consists of 535 pages of ruled foolscap, each page containing thirty-four lines of writing, and each line from twenty-five to thirty-two letters, or on an average twenty-eight letters, thirty-two letters making one shloka-measure. Again, from time to time, as we completed one section or chapter or part, he stated the progressive total of shloka-measures reached, and also stated beforehand the shloka-measures in the next section or chapter. All these statements have been justified by the manuscript. Moreover, when I was reading over to him the previous day's work, he frequently made small corrections, and more than once asked me, incidentally, to refer back to such and such a place, in order to verify the consistency of the correction with a previous statement in the text,

and he directed me to that previous statement by saying how far back, in approximate shloka-measures, I should refer. Also, the Author's Preface, dictated to me *after* the text of the work was completed, contains a fair and orderly table of the contents of the whole, and supplies indirectly the memory-test discussed before.

The theory that he picks the material for his 'pretended' old works out of the brains of those with whom he conversed will not stand examination. In the first place, even if he had the ability to pick others' brains of ideas, which in itself is no mean power, he had not, as said before, sufficient Samskṛṭ to clothe them. Secondly, to confine ourselves to the *Praṇāva-Vāḍa*, the book contains far more than I had ever dreamt of; while the root-ideas are the same as already existed in my mind, these ideas have been applied, in the book, to fields of knowledge to which I was quite unable to apply them. There is a large mass of details there which was never in my waking consciousness at least. Theories as to their having been present in my sub- or supra-consciousness, and Ḍhanarāja having absorbed them by telepathy, or of their being dictated by a "familiar" spirit—are all less in accordance with the well-recognised law of scientific and philosophic investigation and postulation of hypotheses, *viz.*, the Law of Parsimony, which requires that the simplest