

My dear Fritz,

Jan. 23rd 1913.

The following is this week's news. I send it to you each week that you may be up-to-date, and may be able to deny Tingleyite lies.

S.M.

In the legal case no outward progress has been made, but several important little matters have gone as we wanted them. Mrs. Besant was advised that though the Commission was useless, it would not look well to oppose the application for it, so she contented herself with explaining that none of the witnesses mentioned could possibly know anything about the case. (The people whom they want to examine are Bhagavan Das, Upendranath Basu, Bertram Keightley, Miss Edger, Vimadalal and one or two other Hindus.) She objected to the proposed enquiry into the E.S., and persuaded the judge to limit it to certain specified questions which will do no harm. An amusing incident occurred in connexion with this, for as the lawyer was explaining how his client had been bound by the E.S. pledge of secrecy, the judge interjected: "But you are supplying the defendant with evidence, by showing that the plaintiff has broken his pledge, and is therefore not a fit guardian for his sons!"

You remember that in the original 'plaint' the old ruffian charged me with an "unnatural offence", which he himself had seen, but omitted this charge in the second edition of it. The President, however, pinned him down to his assertion, and demanded a statement of time and place. In reply he has given these details, coupled with an explanation of what he professes to have seen, which he has now (under oath, remember) watered down to a momentary indecent touch! We have now, therefore, before the Court two sworn statements of his on this important point which are absolutely irreconcilable. As it happens, we are in a position to prove irrefutably that even his modified charge is a pure invention, for two ladies were present in my room at the time when he alleges that the action took place. When the President saw his affidavit, she remarked with glee: "The Lord hath delivered mine enemy into my hand!"

Yesterday we entered upon the first stage of another of the cases—Mrs. Besant's prosecution of Dr. Nair for libel. She herself was examined, and the case was adjourned until February 6th.