

*Tributes to H P Blavatsky, the  
great noetic radiance of our epoch.*



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# Madame Blavatsky interviewed.

By Charles Johnston.

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[This is an account written by Charles Johnston concerning his conversation with H.P. Blavatsky <H.P.B.> when he met her for the first time in London, in the Spring of 1887, soon after her arrival from Ostende. Even though this text is not from Blavatsky's own pen, it is published here as it contains a great many points of teaching, and bears obvious marks of authenticity. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

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I understand, Socrates. It is because you say that you always have a divine sign. So he is prosecuting you for introducing new things into religion. And he is going into court knowing that such matters are easily misrepresented to the multitude, and consequently meaning to slander you there.

— PLATO

**F**IRST MET DEAR OLD "H.P.B.," as she made all her friends call her, in the spring of 1887. Some of her disciples had taken a pretty house in Norwood, where the huge glass nave and twin towers of the Crystal Palace glint above a labyrinth of streets and terraces. London was at its grimy best. The squares and gardens were scented with grape-clusters of lilac, and yellow rain of laburnums under soft green leaves. The eternal smoke-pall was thinned to a grey veil shining in the afternoon sun, with the great Westminster Towers and a thousand spires and chimneys piercing through. Every house had its smoke-wreath, trailing away to the east.

H.P.B. was just finishing her day's work, so I passed a half-hour upstairs with her volunteer secretary, a disciple who served her with boundless devotion, giving up everything for her cause, and fighting her battles bravely, to be stormed at in return, unremittingly for seven years. I had known him two years before, in the days of Mohini Chatterji, the velvet-robed Brahman with glossy tresses and dusky face and big luminous eyes. So we talked of [393] old times, and of H.P.B.'s great book, *The Secret Doctrine*, and he read me resonant stanzas about Universal Cosmic Night, when Time was not; about the Luminous Sons of Manvantaric Dawn; and the Armies of the Voice; about the Water Men Terrible and Bad, and the Black Magicians of Lost Atlantis; about the Sons of Will and Yoga and the Ring Pass-Not; about the Great Day Be-With-Us, when all shall be perfected into one, re-uniting "thyself and others, myself and thee."

So the half-hour passed, and I went downstairs to see the Old Lady. She was in her writing-room, just rising from her desk, and clad in one of those dark blue dressing-gowns she loved. My first impression was of her rippled hair as she turned, then her marvellously potent eyes, as she welcomed me: "My dear fellow! I am so glad to see

you! Come in and talk! You are just in time to have some tea!” And a hearty handshake.

Then a piercing call for “Louise,” and her Swiss maid appeared, to receive a voluble torrent of directions in French, and H.P.B. settled herself snugly into an armchair, comfortably near her tobacco-box, and began to make me a cigarette. The cuffs of a Jaeger suit showed round her wrists, only setting off the perfect shape and delicacy of her hands, as her deft fingers, deeply stained with nicotine, rolled the white rice-paper round Turkish tobacco. When we were comfortably alight, she told me a charming tale of Louise’s devotion. She had got away from her base of supplies somewhere, in Belgium I think, and things were rather tight for a while. A wealthy gentleman called to see the famous Russian witch, and tipped her maid munificently. As soon as he was gone, Louise appeared, blushing and apologizing: “Perhaps Madame will not be offended,” she stammered, “but I do not need money; *enfin* — *madame consentira . . .*” and she tried to transfer the *douceur* to her mistress.

Louise’s entry cut short the story, and H.P.B. turned with a quizzically humorous smile to another theme: “Of course you have read the S.P.R. Report? — The Spookical Research Society — and know that I am a Russian spy, and the champion impostor of the age?” [394]

“Yes, I read the Report. But I knew its contents already. I was at the meeting when it was first read, two years ago.”

“Well,” said H.P.B., again smiling with infinite humour, “and what impression did the frisky lambkin from Australia make upon your susceptible heart?”

“A very deep one. I decided that he must be a very good young man, who always came home to tea; and that the Lord had given him a very good conceit of himself. If he got an opinion into his head, he would plough away blandly, and contrary facts would be quite invisible. But your case was not the first on the list. They had a paper on modern witchcraft, at which another of your accusers proved that pinches and burns could be sent by thought-transference to a person miles away. It was quite gruesome, and suggested ducking-stools. Then you came on. But as far as I could see, the young Colonial had never really investigated any occult phenomena at all; he simply investigated dim and confused memories about them in the minds of indifferent witnesses. And all that Mr. Sinnett says in the *Occult World* seems to me absolutely unshaken by the whole Report. The Poet, the third of your accusers, came down among us after the meeting, and smilingly asked me what I thought of it. I answered that it was the most unfair and one-sided thing I had ever heard of, and that if I had not already been a member of your Society, I should have joined on the strength of that attack. He smiled a kind of sickly smile, and passed on.”

“I am glad you think so, my dear,” she answered in her courtly way, “for now I can offer you some tea with a good conscience.” Louise had laid a white cloth on the corner table, brought in a tray, and lit a lamp. The secretary soon joined us, receiving a tart little sermon on being unpunctual, which he was not. Then we came back to her friends, the Physical Researchers.

“They will never do much,” said H.P.B. “They go too much on material lines, and they are far too timid. That was the secret motive that turned them against me. The young

Colonial went astray, and then the [395] bell-wethers of the flock followed in his wake, because they were afraid of raising a storm if they said our phenomena were true. Fancy what it would have meant! Why it would practically have committed Modern Science to our Mahatmas and all I have taught about the inhabitants of the occult world and their tremendous powers. They shrank at the thought of it, and so they made a scapegoat of this poor orphan and exile.” And her eyes were full of humorous pity for herself.

“It must have been something like that,” I answered, “for there is simply no backbone in the Report itself. It is the weakest thing of the kind I have ever read. There is not a shred of real evidence in it from beginning to end.”

“Do you really think so? That’s right!” cried H.P.B.; and then she turned on her secretary, and poured in a broadside of censure, telling him he was greedy, idle, untidy, unmethodical, and generally worthless. When he ventured an uneasy defence, she flared up and declared that he “was born a flapdoodle, lived a flapdoodle, and would die a flapdoodle.” He lost his grip, and not unnaturally made a yellow streak of egg across her white tablecloth.

“There!” cried H.P.B., glaring at him with withering scorn, and then turning to me for sympathy in her afflictions. That was her way, to rate her disciples in the presence of perfect strangers. It speaks volumes for her, that they loved her still.

I tried to draw a red herring across the track, — not that there were any on the table. We were limited to tea, toast and eggs.

“The funny thing about the Psychological Researchers,” I said, “is that they have proved for themselves that most of these magical powers are just what you say they are, and they seem to have bodily adopted, not to say, stolen, your teaching of the Astral Light. Take the thing that has been most made fun of: the journeys of adepts and their pupils in the astral body; you know how severe they are about poor Dāmodar and his journeys in his astral body from one part of India to another, and even from [396] India over to London. Well, they themselves have perfectly sound evidence of the very same thing. I know one of their Committee, a professor of physics, who really discovered thought-transference and made all the first experiments in it. He showed me a number of their unpublished papers, and among them was an account of just such astral journeys made quite consciously. I think the astral traveller was a young doctor, but that is a detail. The point is, that he kept a diary of his visits, and a note of them was also kept by the person he visited, and the two perfectly coincide. They have the whole thing authenticated and in print, and yet when you make the very same claim, they call you a fraud. I wonder why?”

“Partly British prejudice,” she answered; “no Englishman ever believes any good of a Russian. They think we are all liars. You know they shadowed me for months in India, as a Russian spy? I don’t understand,” she went on meditatively, yet with a severe eye on her secretary, “I don’t understand how these Englishmen can be so very sure of their superiority, and at the same time in such terror of our invading India.”

“We could easily hold our own if you did, H.P.B.,” ventured the patriotic secretary, pulling himself together, but evidently shaky yet, and avoiding her eye. She was down on him in an instant:

“Why!” she cried, “what could you do with your poor little army? I tell you, my dear, when the Russians do meet the English on the Afghan frontier, we shall crush you like fleas!”

I never saw anything so overwhelming. She rose up in her wrath like the whole Russian army of five millions on a war footing and descended on the poor Briton’s devoted head, with terrific weight. When she was roused, H.P.B. was like a torrent; she simply dominated everyone who came near her; and her immense personal force made itself felt always, even when she was sick and suffering, and with every reason to be cast down. I have never seen anything like her tremendous individual power. She was the justification of her own teaching of the [397] divinity of the will. “But H.P.B.” — hesitated the secretary. But she crushed him with a glance, and he desperately helped himself to more buttered toast only to be accused of gluttony.

Again I attempted a diversion: “There is one thing about the S.P.R. Report I want you to explain. What about the writing in the occult letters?”

“Well, what about it?” asked H.P.B., immediately interested.

“They say that you wrote them yourself, and that they bear evident marks of your handwriting and style. What do you say to that?”

“Let me explain it this way,” she answered, after a long gaze at the end of her cigarette. “Have you ever made experiments in thought-transference? If you have, you must have noticed that the person who receives the mental picture very often colours it, or even changes it slightly, with his own thought, and this where perfectly genuine transference of thought takes place. Well, it is something like that with the precipitated letters. One of our Masters, who perhaps does not know English, and of course has no English handwriting, wishes to precipitate a letter in answer to a question sent mentally to him. Let us say he is in Tibet, while I am in Madras or London. He has the answering thought in his mind, but not in English words. He has first to impress that thought on my brain, or on the brain of someone else who knows English, and then to take the word-forms that rise up in that other brain to answer the thought. Then he must form a clear mind-picture of the words in writing, also drawing on my brain, or the brain of whoever it is, for the shapes. Then either through me or some Chela with whom he is magnetically connected, he has to precipitate these word-shapes on paper, first sending the shapes into the Chela’s mind, and then driving them into the paper, using the magnetic force of the Chela to do the printing, and collecting the material, black or blue or red, as the case may be, from the astral light. As all things dissolve into the astral light, the will of the magician can draw them forth again. So he can draw forth colours of [398] pigments to mark the figure in the letter, using the magnetic force of the Chela to stamp them in, and guiding the whole by his own much greater magnetic force, a current of powerful will.”

“That sounds quite reasonable,” I answered. “Won’t you show me how it is done?”

“You would have to be clairvoyant,” she answered, in a perfectly direct and matter-of-fact way, “in order to see and guide the currents. But this is the point: Suppose the letter precipitated through me; it would naturally show some traces of my expressions, and even of my writing; but all the same, it would be a perfectly genuine occult phenomenon, and a real message from that Mahatma. Besides, when all is said and

done, they exaggerate the likeness of the writings. And experts are not infallible. We have had experts who were just as positive that I could not possibly have written those letters, and just as good experts, too. But the Report says nothing about them. And then there are letters, in just the same handwriting, precipitated when I was thousands of miles away. Dr. Hartmann received more than one at Adyar, Madras, when I was in London; I could hardly have written that."

"They would simply say Dr. Hartmann was the fraud, in that case."

"Certainly," cried H.P.B., growing angry now; "we are all frauds and liars, and the lambkin from Australia is the only true man. My dear, it is too much. It is insolent!" And then she laughed at her own warmth, a broad, good-natured Homeric laugh, as hers always was, and finally said:

"But you have seen some of the occult letters? What do you say?"

"Yes," I replied; "Mr. Sinnett showed me about a ream of them; the whole series that the *Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism* are based on. Some of them are in red, either ink or pencil, but far more are in blue. I thought it was pencil at first, and I tried to smudge it with my thumb; but it would not smudge." [399] "Of course not!" she smiled; "the colour is driven into the surface of the paper. But what about the writings?"

"I am coming to that. There were two: the blue writing, and the red; they were totally different from each other, and both were quite unlike yours. I have spent a good deal of time studying the relation of handwriting to character, and the two characters were quite clearly marked. The blue was evidently a man of very gentle and even character, but of tremendously strong will; logical, easy-going, and taking endless pains to make his meaning clear. It was altogether the handwriting of a cultivated and very sympathetic man."

"Which I am not," said H.P.B., with a smile; "that is Mahatma Koothoomi; he is a Kashmiri Brahman by birth, you know, and has travelled a good deal in Europe. He is the author of the *Occult World* letters, and gave Mr. Sinnett most of the material of *Esoteric Buddhism*. But you have read all about it."

"Yes, I remember he says you shriek across space with a voice like Sarasvati's peacock. Hardly the sort of thing you would say of yourself."

"Of course not," she said; "I know I am a nightingale. But what about the other writing?"

"The red? Oh that is wholly different. It is fierce, impetuous, dominant, strong; it comes in volcanic outbursts, while the other is like Niagara Falls. One is fire, and the other is the ocean. They are wholly different, and both quite unlike yours. But the second has more resemblance to yours than the first."

"This is my Master," she said, "whom we call Mahatma Morya. I have his picture here."

And she showed me a small panel in oils. If ever I saw genuine awe and reverence in a human face, it was in hers, when she spoke of her Master. He was a Rajput by birth, she said, one of the old warrior race of the Indian desert, the finest and hand-

somest nation in the world. Her Master was a giant, six feet eight, and splendidly built; a superb type of manly beauty. Even in the picture, there is a marvellous power and fascination; [400] the force, the fierceness even, of the face; the dark, glowing eyes, which stare you out of countenance; the clear-cut features of bronze, the raven hair and beard — all spoke of a tremendous individuality, a very Zeus in the prime of manhood and strength. I asked her something about his age. She answered:

“My dear, I cannot tell you exactly, for I do not know. But this I will tell you. I met him first when I was twenty, — in 1851. He was in the very prime of manhood then. I am an old woman now, but he has not aged a day. He is still in the prime of manhood. That is all I can say. You may draw your own conclusions.”

“Have the Mahatmas discovered the elixir of life?”

“That is no fable,” said H.P.B. seriously. “It is only the veil hiding a real occult process, warding off age and dissolution for periods which would seem fabulous” so I will not mention them. The secret is this: for every man, there is a climacteric, when he must draw near to death; if he has squandered his life-powers, there is no escape for him; but if he has lived according to the law, he may pass through and so continue in the same body almost indefinitely.”

Then she told me something about other Masters and adepts she had known, — for she made a difference, as though the adepts were the captains of the occult world, and the Masters were the generals. She had known adepts of many races, from Northern and Southern India, Tibet, Persia, China, Egypt; of various European nations, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, English; of certain races in South America, where she said there was a Lodge of adepts.

“It is the tradition of this which the Spanish Conquistadores found,” she said, “the golden city of Manoa or El Dorado. The race is allied to the ancient Egyptians, and the adepts have still preserved the secret of their dwelling-place inviolable. There are certain members of the Lodges who pass from centre to centre, keeping the lines of connection between them unbroken. But they are always connected in other ways.”

“In their astral bodies?” [401]

“Yes,” she answered, “and in other ways still higher. They have a common life and power. As they rise in spirituality, they rise above difference of race, to our common humanity. The series is unbroken.”

“Adepts are a necessity in nature and in supernature. They are the links between men and the gods; these ‘gods’ being the souls of great adepts and Masters of bygone races and ages, and so on, up to the threshold of Nirvana. The continuity is unbroken.”

“What do they do?”

“You would hardly understand, unless you were an adept. But they keep alive the spiritual life of mankind.”

“What does it feel like, to go sailing about in your astral body? I sometimes dream I am flying, and I am always in the same position; almost lying on my back, and going feet foremost. Is it anything like that?”

“That is not what I feel,” she said; “I feel exactly like a cork rising to the top of water, you understand. The relief is immense. I am only alive then. And then I go to the Master.”

“Come back to what you were saying. I ought not to have interrupted you. How do the adepts guide the souls of men?”

“In many ways, but chiefly by teaching their souls direct, in the spiritual world. But that is difficult for you to understand. This is quite intelligible, though. At certain regular periods, they try to give the world at large a right understanding of spiritual things. One of their number comes forth to teach the masses, and is handed down to tradition as the Founder of a religion. Krishna was such a Master; so was Zoroaster; so were Buddha and Shankara Acharya, the great sage of Southern India. So also was the Nazarene. He went forth against the counsel of the rest, to give to the masses before the time, moved by a great pity, and enthusiasm for humanity; he was warned that the time was unfavourable, but nevertheless he elected to go, and so was put to death at the instigation of the priests.”

“Have the adepts any secret records of his life?” [402]

“They must have,” she answered; “for they have records of the lives of all Initiates. Once I was in a great cave-temple in the Himalaya mountains, with my Master,” and she looked at the picture of the splendid Rajput; “there were many statues of adepts there; pointing to one of them, he said: ‘This is he whom you call Jesus. We count him to be one of the greatest among us.’”

“But that is not the only work of the adepts. At much shorter periods, they send forth a messenger to try to teach the world. Such a period comes in the last quarter of each century, and the Theosophical Society represents their work for this epoch.”

“How does it benefit mankind?”

“How does it benefit you to know the laws of life? Does it not help you to escape sickness and death? Well, there is a soul-sickness, and a soul-death. Only the true teaching of Life can cure them. The dogmatic churches, with their hell and damnation, their metal heaven and their fire and brimstone, have made it almost impossible for thinking people to believe in the immortality of the soul. And if they do not believe in a life after death, then they have no life after death. That is the law.”

“How can what people believe possibly affect them? Either it is or it isn’t, whatever they may believe.”

“Their belief affects them in this way. Their life after death is made by their aspirations and spiritual development unfolding in the spiritual world. According to the growth of each, so is his life after death. It is the complement of his life here. All unsatisfied spiritual longings, all desires for higher life, all aspirations and dreams of noble things, come to flower in the spiritual life, and the soul has its day, for life on earth is its night. But if you have no aspirations, no higher longings, no beliefs in any life after death, then there is nothing for your spiritual life to be made up of; your soul is a blank.”

“What becomes of you then?”

“You reincarnate immediately, almost without an interval, and without regaining consciousness in the other world.” [403]

“Suppose, on the other hand, you do believe in heaven, say the orthodox El Dorado?”

“Your fate after death is this. You have first to pass through what we call Kama Loka, the world of desire, the borderland, in which the soul is purged of the dross of animal life; of all its passions and evil desires. These gradually work themselves out, and having no fresh fuel to keep them burning, they slowly exhaust themselves. Then the soul rises to what we call Devachan, the state which is distorted in the orthodox teaching of heaven. Each soul makes its own Devachan, and sees around it those whom it most loved on earth, enjoying happiness in their company. If you believed in the orthodox heaven, you see the golden city and the gates of pearl; if you believed in Shiva’s paradise, you find yourself in the midst of many-armed gods; the Red-man sees the happy hunting grounds, and the philosopher enters into the free life of the soul. In all cases, your spirit gathers new strength for a fresh incarnation.”

“Must you come back? Is there no escape?”

“If your material desires are unexhausted at death, you must. Desires are forces, and we believe in the conservation of force. You must reap the seed of your own sowing, and reap it where it was sown. Your new life will be the exact result of your deeds in your preceding life. No one can escape the punishment of his sins, any more than he can escape the reward of his virtues. That is the law of Karma. You must go on being reborn till you reach Nirvana.”

“Well, it seems to me that all that is more or less contained in the orthodox beliefs, only a good deal distorted.”

“Yes,” she answered; “that is just it. The orthodoxies do contain the truth, but their followers do not understand it; they put forth teachings which no intelligent man can accept, and so we are all drifting into atheism and materialism. But when we Theosophists show them how to interpret their teachings, it will be quite different. Then they will see how much truth they had, without knowing it. The stories in *Genesis*, for instance, are all [404] symbols of real truths; and the account of the Creation there, and of Adam and Eve, has far more real truth than Darwinism, once you understand it. But that can only be done by Theosophy.”

“How would you, as a Theosophist, set about it?”

“Well,” she answered, “in two ways: first, by giving out the truth, as it is taught today in the occult schools, and then by the comparative method; by setting people to study the Aryan and other Eastern scriptures, where they will find the other halves of so many things that have proved stumbling-blocks in the Bible.”

“For instance?”

“Take that very teaching of heaven and hell and purgatory. The sacred books of India light up the whole of it, and make it a thoroughly philosophic and credible teaching. But you must study the Oriental religions before you can fully understand what I say. Remember that in the Old Testament there is absolutely no teaching of the immortality of the soul, while in the New Testament it is inextricably confused with the

resurrection of the body. But the *Upanishads* have the real occult and spiritual doctrine.”

“Well, I can thoroughly understand and sympathize with that; and to put forth any such teaching at a time like this, when we are all drifting into materialism, would seem a big enough work for any school of adepts and Masters. I can see how the teaching of rebirth would make life far more unselfish and humane, and therefore far happier. What else do you teach, as Theosophists?”

“Well, Sir! I am being cross-examined this evening, it would seem,” she answered with a smile, and rolled me another cigarette, making herself one also, and lighting up with evident relish. “We teach something very old, and yet which needs to be taught. We teach universal brotherhood.”

“Don’t let us get vague and general. Tell me exactly what you mean by that.”

“Let me take a concrete case,” she said; and glanced meditatively at her secretary, who had been listening quietly and with serious and sincere interest to all she [405] had been saying, even though he had heard much of it from her, time and again. He began to grow a little uneasy under her gaze, and she noticed it and instantly fastened upon him.

“Take the English,” she said, and looked at him with those potent blue eyes of hers, as though he in his own person must answer for the sins of his race.

“H.P.B.,” he said, rising with a sigh from the table; “I think I had really better go upstairs and go on copying out the manuscript of *The Secret Doctrine*”; and he disappeared.

“Do you think he will?” said H.P.B. with a smile of infinite good-humour. “Not he; he will cuddle into his arm-chair, smoke endless cigarettes, and read a blood and thunder novel.” She was mistaken, however. When I went upstairs to say good-bye, he was in the arm-chair, serenely smoking, it is true; but it was a detective story. He sat upon it, and said something about getting to work.

“Take the English,” she repeated. “How cruel they are! How badly they treat my poor Hindus!”

“I have always understood that they had done a good deal for India in a material way,” I objected.

“India is a well-ventilated jail,” she said; “it is true they do something in a material way, but it is always three for themselves and one for the natives. But what is the use of material benefits, if you are despised and trampled down morally all the time? If your ideals of national honour and glory are crushed in the mud, and you are made to feel all the time that you are an inferior race — a lower order of mortals — pigs, the English call them, and sincerely believe it. Well, just the reverse of that would be universal brotherhood. Do them less good materially — not that they do so very much, besides collecting the taxes regularly — and respect their feelings a little more. The English believe that the ‘inferior races’ exist only to serve the ends of the English; but we believe that they exist for themselves, and have a perfect right to be happy in their own way. No amount of material benefit can compensate for hurting

their souls and crushing out their ideals. Besides there is another side of all [406] that, which we as Theosophists always point out. There are really no 'inferior races,' for all are one in our common humanity; and as we have all had incarnations in each of these races, we ought to be more brotherly to them. They are our wards, entrusted to us; and what do we do? We invade their lands, and shoot them down in sight of their own homes; we outrage their women, and rob their goods, and then with smooth-faced hypocrisy we turn round and say we are doing it for their good. There are two bad things: hypocrisy and cruelty; but I think if I had to choose, I would prefer cruelty. But there is a just law," she went on; and her face was as stern as Nemesis; "the false tongue dooms its lie; the spoiler robs to render. 'Ye shall not come forth, until ye have paid the uttermost farthing'."

"So that is what the adepts sent you forth to teach?"

"Yes," she answered; "that and other things; — things which are very important, and will soon be far more important. There is the danger of black magic, into which all the world, and especially America, is rushing as fast as it can go. Only a wide knowledge of the real psychic and spiritual nature of man can save humanity from grave dangers."

"Witch-stories in this so-called nineteenth century, in this enlightened age?"

"Yes, Sir! Witch-stories, and in this enlightened age! What do you call it but a witch-story, that very experiment you told me of, made by my friend the Spookical Researcher? Is it not witchcraft, to transfer pinches and burns, pain and suffering, in fact, though only slight in this case, to another person at a distance? Suppose it was not as an experiment, but in dead earnest, and with dire malice and evil intent? What then? Would the victim not feel it? Could he protect himself? And would not that be witchcraft in just the sense that sent people to the stake and faggot all through the Middle Ages? Have you read the famous witchcraft trial at Salem? Yes, Sir! Witchcraft in this very enlightened age, — the darkest, most material, and un-spiritual that the world has ever seen." [407]

"Oh, but sending pinches by thought-transference can do no great harm?"

"You think not? Well, you don't know what you are talking about. That is the privilege of the young! Once the door is open for that sort of thing, where do you think it is going to be shut? It is the old tale; give the devil an inch, and he will take an ell; give him your finger, and he will presently take your whole arm. Yes, and your body, too! Do you not see the tremendous evils that lie concealed in hypnotism? Look at Charcot's experiments at the Salpêtrière! He has shown that a quite innocent person can be made to perform actions quite against his or her will; can be made to commit crimes, even, by what he calls Suggestion. And the *somnambule* will forget all about it, while the victim can never identify the real criminal. Charcot is a benevolent man, and will never use his power to do harm. But all men are not benevolent. The world is full of cruel, greedy, and lustful people, who will be eager to seize a new weapon for their ends, and who will defy detection and pass through the midst of us all unpunished.

"Yes, Sir! Witch-tales in this enlightened age! And mark my words! You will have such witch-tales as the Middle Ages never dreamt of. Whole nations will drift insen-

sibly into black magic, with good intentions, no doubt, but paving the road to hell none the less for that! Hypnotism and suggestion are great and dangerous powers, for the very reason that the victim never knows when he is being subjected to them; his will is stolen from him, and mark my words: these things may be begun with good motives, and for right purposes. But I am an old woman, and have seen much of human life in many countries. And I wish with all my heart I could believe that these powers would be used only for good! Whoever lets himself or herself be hypnotized, by anyone, good or bad, is opening a door which he will be powerless to shut; and he cannot tell who will be the next to enter! If you could foresee what I foresee, you would begin heart and soul to spread the teaching of universal brotherhood. It is the only safeguard!" [408]

"How is it going to guard people against hypnotism?"

"By purifying the hearts of people who would misuse it. And universal brotherhood rests upon the common soul. It is because there is one soul common to all men, that brotherhood, or even common understanding is possible. Bring men to rest on that, and they will be safe. There is a divine power in every man which is to rule his life, and which no one can influence for evil, not even the greatest magician. Let men bring their lives under its guidance, and they have nothing to fear from man or devil. And now, my dear, it is getting late, and I am getting sleepy. So I must bid you good-night!" And the Old Lady dismissed me with that grand air of hers which never left her, because it was a part of herself. She was the most perfect aristocrat I have ever known.

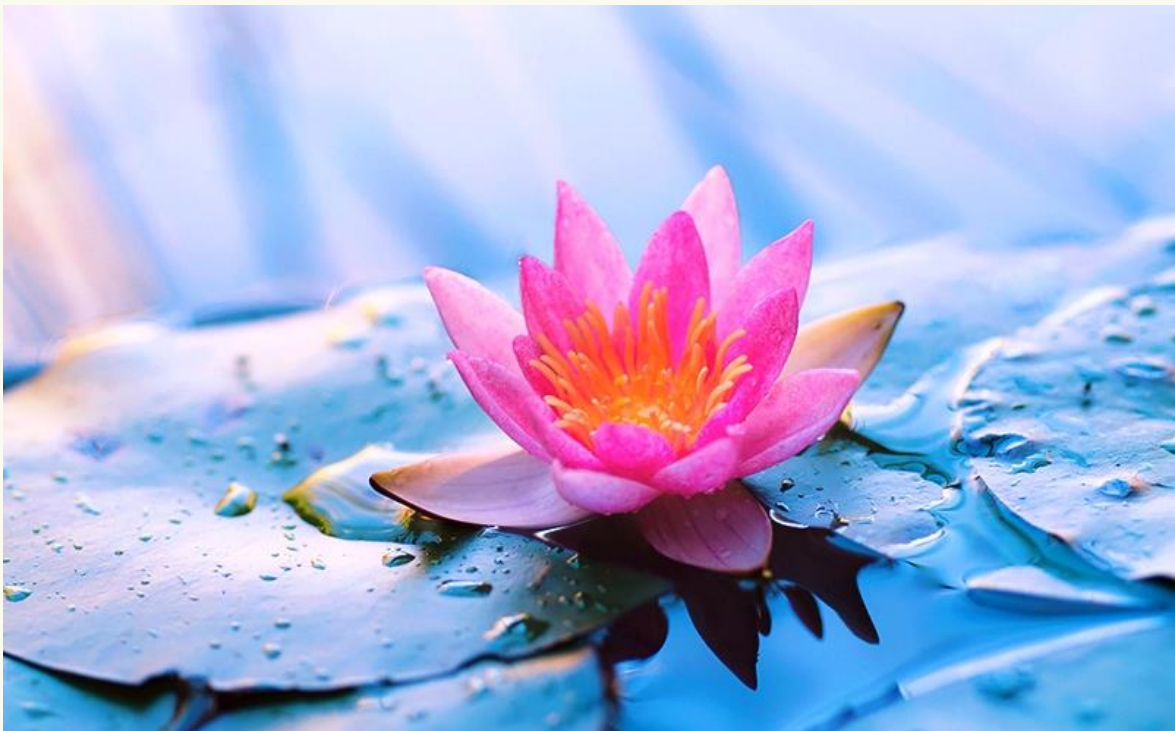
It was long after that, before we came back to the question of magical powers. In August, 1888, H.P.B. had a visit from her old chum, Colonel H.S. Olcott. He was writing, at a side table. H.P.B. was playing Patience, as she did nearly every evening, and I was sitting opposite her, watching, and now and then talking about the East, whence Colonel Olcott had just come. Then H.P.B. got tired of her card game, which would not come out, and tapped her fingers slowly on the table, half unconsciously. Then her eyes came to focus, and drawing her hand back a foot or so from the table, she continued the tapping movement in the air. The taps, however, were still perfectly audible — on the table a foot from her hand. I watched, with decided interest. Presently she had a new idea, and turning in my direction, began to send her astral taps against the back of my hand. I could both feel and hear them. It was something like taking sparks from the prime conductor of an electric machine; or, better still, perhaps, it was like spurting quicksilver through your fingers. That was the sensation. The noise was a little explosive burst. Then she changed her direction again and began to bring her taps to bear on the top of my head. They were quite audible, and, needless to say, I felt them quite distinctly. [409]

I was at the opposite side of the table, some five or six feet away, all through this little experiment in the unexplained laws of nature, and the psychical powers latent in man.

No experiment could have been more final and convincing; its very simplicity made it stand out as a new revelation. Here was a quite undoubted miracle, as miracles are generally understood, yet a miracle which came off. But at our first meeting, Mme.

Blavatsky did not even approach the subject; none the less, she conveyed the sense of the miraculous. It is hard to say exactly how, but the fact remains. There was something in her personality, her bearing, the light and power of her eyes, which spoke of a wider and deeper life, not needing lesser miracles to testify to it, because in itself miraculous. That was the greatest thing about her, and it was always there; this sense of a bigger world, of deeper powers, of unseen might; to those in harmony with her potent genius, this came as a revelation and incentive to follow the path she pointed out. To those who could not see with her eyes, who could not raise themselves in some measure to her vision, this quality came as a challenge, an irritant, a discordant and subversive force, leading them at last to an attitude of fierce hostility and denunciation.

When the last word is said, she was greater than any of her works, more full of living power than even her marvellous writings. It was the intimate and direct sense of her genius, the strong ray and vibration of that genius itself, which worked her greatest achievements and won her greatest triumphs. Most perfect work of all, her will carried with it a sense and conviction of immortality. Her mere presence testified to the vigour of the soul.



**Note** The “meeting” which Charles Johnston mentions on page 394 was one held by the S.P.R. in London, on June 24 1885, at which Richard Hodgson read part of his Report. Johnston, in his Address at the Convention of the T.S. in America, April, 1907 (see the *Theosophical Quarterly*, New York, Vol. V, July, 1907), calls it a “fearful meeting.” — *Boris de Zirkoff*.

## By William Quan Judge.

### Interviewed by “The New York Times” on Madame Blavatsky and her Mahatmas.

First published in the *New York Times*, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889, p. 10. Republished in: Dara Eklund (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press: Vol. III, 2010; BLAVATSKY STILL LIVES, AND THEOSOPHY IS IN A FLOURISHING CONDITION; pp. 138-43.

### The very latest news from the World of Occultism.

Mr. W.Q. Judge, who is the head of the Theosophical organizations of the United States, as well as President of the local Āryan Theosophical Society of New York, and editor of the Theosophical magazine, *The Path*, has just returned from a trip to England and Germany in the interest of the organizations in which he holds such prominence. In London, of course, his principal business was with Mme. H.P. Blavatsky, who is justly considered the head of all Theosophical teaching and organization outside India and Tibet, or, as she modestly prefers to be regarded, the mouthpiece and representative of the Masters, or Mahatmas, who systematically seclude themselves somewhere in the Orient from public knowledge.

“Mme. Blavatsky,” said Mr. Judge, in a conversation since his return, “is living with the Countess Wachtmeister — widow of a Swedish Count, who was an Ambassador to the Court of St. James — in Holland Park, London, and is devoting herself to the most arduous labours in the cause of Theosophy. She scarcely ever leaves the house, and from 6:30 o’clock in the morning until evening is constantly engaged in writing articles for her magazine, *Lucifer*, or other theosophical publications, replying to correspondence, and preparing the matter for further forthcoming volumes of her gigantic work, *The Secret Doctrine*. In the evening she has many visitors of all sorts — inquirers, critics, sceptics, curiosity seekers, friends — and all are welcomed with such charming grace, friendliness, and simplicity that everyone is made to feel at home with her. By 10 o’clock generally all but intimate friends have retired, but they remain an hour or two later.

“Notwithstanding that Mme. Blavatsky is beyond the vigour of middle age and for nearly three years past has been living in defiance of the leading London physicians, who gave her up long ago as hopelessly incurable of a deadly kidney disease that was liable to kill her at any moment, she never seems weary, but is the animated leader of conversation, speaking with equal ease in English, French, Italian and Russian, or dropping into Sanskrit and Hindustani as occasion requires. Whether working or talking, she seems to be constantly rolling, lighting, and smoking cigarettes of Turkish tobacco. As for her personal appearance, she hardly seems changed at all from what she was when in this country several years ago, except that she has grown somewhat stouter perhaps.

“The characteristics that are apparent in her countenance are, in equal blending, energy and great kindness. Looking at her, one can realize readily that she is just the sort of a woman who would do what she did a dozen years ago when she was coming over here from France. She reached Havre with a first-class ticket to New York and only \$2 or \$3 over, for she never carries much money. Just as she was going aboard

the steamer, she saw a poor woman, accompanied by two little children, who was sitting on the pier weeping bitterly.

“‘Why are you crying?’ she asked.

“The woman replied that her husband had sent to her from America money to enable her and the children to join him. She had expended it all in the purchase of steerage tickets that turned out to be utterly valueless counterfeits. Where to find the swindler who had heartlessly defrauded her, she did not know, and she was quite penniless in a strange city.

“‘Come with me,’ said Mme. Blavatsky, who straightway went to the agent of the steamship company and induced him to exchange her first-class ticket for steerage tickets for herself, the poor woman and the children. Anybody who has ever crossed the ocean in the steerage among a crowd of emigrants will appreciate the magnitude of such a sacrifice to a woman of refined sensibilities, and there are few but Mme. Blavatsky who would have been capable of it.

“As I said, she has been condemned to death for three years but no fear is entertained of her dying before her mission is accomplished. Twice before, when in India, she was given up by the doctors, who on each occasion set a time limit of only a few days upon her existence, and her recoveries were looked upon as simply marvellous. At the time when she was worst and seemed likely to die on the road, she set out for Northern India, and as it was generally understood that she was going to the Mahatmas for succour, several persons who had a strong desire to see those mysterious Adepts followed and watched her. But at Darjeeling she mysteriously disappeared. She had been carried there, and it was inconceivable how she could, by herself, have slipped away, but she was gone and that was all that anybody could say about it. In three days she returned, apparently as well as she ever was. The most that anyone is told about how the transformation in her condition was effected is given by her in *The Secret Doctrine*, when she says:

For Sound generates, or rather attracts together, the elements that produce an ozone, the fabrication of which is beyond chemistry, but within the limits of Alchemy. It may even *resurrect* a man or an animal whose astral “vital body” has not been irreparably separated from the physical body by the severance of the magnetic or odic chord. *As one saved thrice from death* by that power, the writer ought to be credited with knowing personally something about it.<sup>1</sup>

“People who do not believe there is any ‘astral body’ or any ‘ozone’ of that sort may question her averment, but occultists and all who know how truthful a woman she is will believe her. That she recovered health with astounding suddenness is a fact that cannot be denied. Since she has been in London the physicians have been amazed by her living. First, they say the astounding quantity of uric acid in her blood should have killed her long ago, and if that was not enough to do it, the deadly poisons given her in enormous doses in treatment to which she has lately been subjecting herself ought to have finished her. But she seems to be getting better, and doubtless, if all

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<sup>1</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 555

else fails and her work continues to be necessary, she will be saved again as she was before.

“Mme. Blavatsky now very seldom gives any manifestation of her occult powers, except to intimate friends; but I had, while over there, several evidences that she can do things quite inexplicable by any laws of ‘exact’ science. Two years ago I lost, here in New York, a paper that was of considerable interest to me. I do not think anybody but myself knew that I had it, and I certainly mentioned to no one that I had lost it. One evening, a little over a fortnight ago, while I was sitting in Mme. Blavatsky’s parlour with Mr. B. Keightley and several other persons, I happened to think of that paper. The Madame got up, went into the next room, and returning almost immediately, handed to me a sheet of paper. I opened it and found it an exact duplicate of the paper that I had lost two years before. It was actually a facsimile copy, as I recognized at once. I thanked her, and she said:

“‘Well, I saw it in your head that you wanted it.’

“It was not a thing to astonish anyone acquainted with the laws of nature as comprehended by occultists, who understand clearly how consciousness of my thought was possible, how the reproduction of a thing once within my knowledge was necessarily facsimile, and how that reproduction could be effected by a simple act of volition on her part, but it would puzzle materialists to explain it in accordance with the facts.

“One night when I talked very late with a gentleman at a house distant from Mme. Blavatsky’s, he expressed a wish that I would, if I had an opportunity, get her views, without mentioning his name, upon a subject that was under discussion between us. The next day, when I was talking with her, the subject came up and I began offering his suggestions, when she interrupted me, saying: ‘You needn’t tell me that — I was there last night and heard you,’ and went on to repeat all that had been said. Of course it can be said that he had informed her with a view to deceiving me, but I am well assured that there was nothing of the sort, and that under certain existing circumstances that would have been practically impossible. I know that she very often reads people’s thoughts and replies to them in words.

“The silvery bell sounds in the astral current that were heard over her head by so many persons when she was here in New York, still continue to follow her, and it is beyond question to those familiar with her life and work that she is in constant receipt of the most potent aid from the Adepts, particularly her teacher, the Mahatma Morya, whose portrait hangs in her study and shows a dark and beautiful Indian face, full of sweetness, wisdom, and majesty. Of course it does not seem possible that he in Tibet instantaneously responds, either by a mental impression or a ‘precipitated’ note, to a mental interrogatory put by her in London, but it happens to be the fact that he does so all the same.

“Her most intimate friends in London are the Countess Wachtmeister, the Keightleys, Mabel Collins — who is associated with her in the literary work on *Lucifer* — and Dr. Ashton Ellis. Mr. A.P. Sinnett drops in occasionally, and notwithstanding the corrections she has felt called upon to make in her *Secret Doctrine* of some things in his *Esoteric Buddhism*, there seems to be cordial good feeling between him and Mme.

Blavatsky. The magazine *Lucifer*, I do not think is paying expenses yet. It is a very costly thing to get up, and its circulation has necessarily slow growth. But *The Secret Doctrine* has been an enormous success. Its first edition was exhausted as quickly as it came from the binders, and a second edition is already nearly all gone. Such a demand for a work so erudite, metaphysical, and in all respects overwhelming, demonstrates that those interested most deeply in Theosophy belong to the most cultured and intelligent class of society. It requires a person to have a good education to understandingly read that book. Nevertheless, abstruse, metaphysical, erudite, and brilliant as it is, almost the whole of that gigantic work has been either dictated by Mme. Blavatsky to a shorthand writer or spoken by her into a phonograph from which it has been directly reproduced with very little if any subsequent emendation or alteration. It is, in fact, just her talk, and reading it gives a good idea of her conversation on any topic on which she 'turns herself loose.' If at times she is in momentary doubt or question as to an authority or quotation, it is at once supplied to her by the Mahatmas with whom she is in constant communication.

"Theosophy is gaining ground solidly in England, and with a degree of rapidity that is surprising in view of the conservatism of English thought and feeling. There are already flourishing Theosophical Societies in London, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Cambridge, Dublin, and several other places. One was just about to be started in Glasgow when I left. And among those interesting themselves most in it are scientists, leading educators, prominent men in governmental departments, and gentlemen of fortune and education. Of course, the clergy do not take kindly to it. A religious paper in London, called *The Christian*, picked up a little description in an American paper of the decorations in one of the rooms of the office of *The Path* — which was made to appear as a Buddhist temple — and editorially expressed its horror at such a demonstration of 'paganism' in the Christian city of New York.

"Col. Olcott left London just before my arrival there. It is not at all probable now that he will be able to give this year the series of lectures through the United States, as had been planned for him. His work in Japan and India will preclude his doing so.

"In Germany I called upon Mr. G. Gebhard, in Elberfeld, who is one of the leading theosophists of the 'Vaterland.' Incidentally he is a large velvet and lace manufacturer, *Commerzien-Rath* of the town and a very highly accomplished gentleman. It will be remembered that it was in his house that the famous materialization of the letter behind the picture, the sounding of the astral bells and other strange occurrences took place at the time Mme. Blavatsky was stopping there. Mme. G. Gebhard is as advanced an occultist as her husband, having been during a number of years a pupil of the famous Éliphas Lévi. Dr. F. Eckstein is the other great theosophical leader of Germany. Dr. Franz Hartmann is not so much of a theosophist as a mystic. I learned from him that he has a new book almost ready for issue, which I fancy will show his position rather more clearly than anything previously put forth by him. Theosophy is gaining ground in Germany, but more slowly than in France. The one magazine published in its interest there — the *Sphinx* — is rather weak. Its editor, Herr Hübbschleiden, is doubtless a good man and a theosophist from conviction, but lacks the courage of his convictions in promulgating the doctrine, seeming to be afraid of getting beyond the established bounds of materialistic science. Nevertheless, his journal

has done some good in awakening thought in new lines, and in its conservatism commands at least tolerant respect. I learned that not long since in one of the German courts a lawyer set up a plea of hypnotic influence as a defence for a client accused of some offense, and when it was rejected by the court, cited as demonstrations and proofs of the correctness of the scientific basis of his theory, articles published in the *Sphinx*, which convinced the court and won the case.

“Several theosophical societies are flourishing in France and the doctrine is already strong and gaining strength very rapidly in Paris, where a new magazine in its interest, *Hermes*, has just been established, in addition to that of M. Arnaud, *Le Lotus*, which is probably the most prosperous of the theosophical periodicals next to Col. Olcott’s *Theosophist* in India.”



## Eulogies in honour of Madame Blavatsky.

### By the “New York Daily Tribune”.

From the *Sunrise magazine*, August – September 1985; Editorial first published in the *New-York Daily Tribune* (founded by Horace Greeley), Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1891, two days after H.P. Blavatsky's death.

**F**EW WOMEN IN OUR TIME have been more persistently misrepresented, slandered and defamed than Madame Blavatsky, but though malice and ignorance did their worst upon her there are abundant indications that her life-work will vindicate itself; that it will endure; and that it will operate for good. She was the founder of the Theosophical Society, an organization now fully and firmly established, which has branches in many countries, East and West, and which is devoted to studies and practices the innocence and the elevating character of which are becoming more generally recognized continually. The life of Madame Blavatsky was a remarkable one, but this is not the place or time to speak of its vicissitudes. It must suffice to say that for nearly twenty years she had devoted herself to the dissemination of doctrines the fundamental principles of which are of the loftiest ethical character. However Utopian may appear to some minds an attempt in the nineteenth century to break down the barriers of race, nationality, caste and class prejudice, and to inculcate that spirit of brotherly love which the greatest of all Teachers enjoined in the first century, the nobility of the aim can only be impeached by those who repudiate Christianity. Madame Blavatsky held that the regeneration of mankind must be based upon the development of altruism. In this she was at one with the greatest thinkers, not alone of the present day, but of all time; and at one, it is becoming more and more apparent, with the strongest spiritual tendencies of the age. This alone would entitle her teachings to the candid and serious consideration of all who respect the influences that make for righteousness.

In another direction, though in close association with the cult of universal fraternity, she did important work. No one in the present generation, it may be said, has done more toward reopening the long-sealed treasures of Eastern thought, wisdom, and philosophy. No one certainly has done so much toward elucidating that profound wisdom-religion wrought out by the ever-cogitating Orient, and bringing into the light those ancient literary works whose scope and depth have so astonished the Western world, brought up in the insular belief that the East had produced only crudities and puerilities in the domain of speculative thought. Her own knowledge of Oriental philosophy and esotericism was comprehensive. No candid mind can doubt this after reading her two principal works. Her steps often led, indeed, where only a few initiates could follow, but the tone and tendency of all her writings were healthful, bracing and stimulating. The lesson which was constantly impressed by her was assuredly that which the world most needs, and has always needed, namely, the necessity of subduing self and of working for others. Doubtless such a doctrine is distasteful to

the ego-worshippers, and perhaps it has little chance of anything like general acceptance, to say nothing of general application. But the man or woman who deliberately renounces all personal aims and ambitions in order to forward such beliefs is certainly entitled to respect, even from such as feel least capable of obeying the call to a higher life.

The work of Madame Blavatsky has already borne fruit, and is destined, apparently, to produce still more marked and salutary effects in the future. Careful observers of the time long since discerned that the tone of current thought in many directions was being affected by it. A broader humanity, a more liberal speculation, a disposition to investigate ancient philosophies from a higher point of view, have no indirect association with the teachings referred to. Thus Madame Blavatsky has made her mark upon the time, and thus, too, her works will follow her. She herself has finished the course, and after a strenuous life she rests. But her personal influence is not necessary to the continuance of the great work to which she put her hand. That will go on with the impulse it has received, and some day, if not at once, the loftiness and purity of her aims, the wisdom and scope of her teachings, will be recognized more fully, and her memory will be accorded the honour to which it is justly entitled.



## By William Quan Judge.

First published in: *Lucifer*, Vol. VIII, June 1891, pp. 290-92. Republished in: Eklund D (Comp). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1975-1987. Vol. 2: publ. 1980, pp. 14-17.

### Yours till Death and after — H.P.B.

**S**UCH HAS BEEN THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR BELOVED TEACHER and friend always concluded her letters to me. And now, though we are all of us committing to paper some account of that departed friend and teacher, I feel ever near and ever potent the magic of that resistless power, as of a mighty rushing river, which those who wholly trusted her always came to understand. Fortunate indeed is that Karma which, for all the years since I first met her, in 1875, has kept me faithful to the friend who, masquerading under the outer *mortal* garment known as H.P.B., was ever faithful to me, ever kind, ever the teacher and the guide.

In 1874, in the City of New York, I first met H.P.B. in this life. By her request, sent through Colonel H.S. Olcott, the call was made in her rooms in Irving Place, when then, as afterwards, through the remainder of her stormy career, she was surrounded by the anxious, the intellectual, the bohemian, the rich and the poor. It was her eye that attracted me, the eye of one whom I must have known in lives long passed away. She looked at me in recognition at that first hour, and never since has that look changed. Not as a questioner of philosophies did I come before her, not as one groping in the dark for lights that schools and fanciful theories had obscured, but as one who, wandering many periods through the corridors of life, was seeking the friends who could show where the designs for the work had been hidden. And true to the call she responded, revealing the plans once again, and speaking no words to explain, simply pointed them out and went on with the task. It was if but the evening before we had parted, leaving yet to be done some detail of a task taken up with one common end; it was teacher and pupil, elder brother and younger, both bent on the one single end, but she with the power and the knowledge that belong but to lions and sages. So, friends from the first, I felt safe. Others I know have looked with suspicion on an appearance they could not fathom, and though it is true they adduce many proofs which, hugged to the breast, would damn sages and gods, yet it is only through blindness they failed to see the lion's glance, the diamond heart of H.P.B.

The entire space of this whole magazine would not suffice to enable me to record the phenomena she performed for me through all these years, nor would I wish to put them down. As she so often said, they prove nothing, but only lead some souls to doubt and others to despair. And again, I do not think they were done just for me, but only that in those early days she was laying down the lines of force all over the land and I, so fortunate, was at the centre of the energy and saw the play of forces in visible phenomena. The explanation has been offered by some too anxious friends that the earlier phenomena were mistakes in judgment, attempted to be rectified in later years by confining their area and limiting their number, but until someone shall produce in the writing of H.P.B. her concurrence with that view, I shall hold to her own explanation made in advance and never changed. That I have given above. For many it is easier to take refuge behind a charge of bad judgment than to understand the strange and powerful laws which control in matters such as these.

Amid all the turmoil of her life, above the din produced by those who charged her with deceit and fraud and others who defended, while month after month, and year after year, witnessed men and women entering the theosophical movement only to leave it soon with malignant phrases for H.P.B., there stands a fact we all might imitate — devotion absolute to her Master. “It was He,” she writes, “who told me to devote myself to this, and I will never disobey and never turn back.”

In 1888 she wrote to me privately:

Well, my *only* friend, you ought to know better. Look into my life and try to realize it — in its outer course at least, as the rest is hidden. I am under the curse of ever writing, as the wandering Jew was under that of being ever on the move, never stopping one moment to rest. Three ordinary healthy persons could hardly do what *I have* to do. I live an artificial life; I am an automaton running full steam until the power of generating steam stops, and then — good-bye! \* \* \* Night before last I was shown a bird’s-eye view of the Theosophical Societies. I saw a few earnest reliable Theosophists in a death struggle with the world in general, with other — nominal but ambitious — Theosophists. The former are greater in numbers than you may think, and *they prevailed*, as you in *America will prevail*, if you only remain staunch to the Master’s programme and true to yourselves. And last night I saw . . . and now I feel strong — such as I am in my body — and ready to fight for Theosophy and the few *true* ones to my last breath. The defending forces have to be judiciously — so scanty they are — distributed over the globe, wherever Theosophy is struggling against the powers of darkness.

Such she ever was; devoted to Theosophy and the Society organized to carry out a programme embracing the world in its scope. Willing in the service of the cause to offer up hope, money, reputation, life itself, provided the Society might be saved from every hurt, whether small or great. And thus bound body, heart and soul to this entity called the Theosophical Society, bound to protect it at all hazards, in face of every loss, she often incurred the resentment of many who became her friends but would not always care for the infant organization as she had sworn to do. And when they acted as if opposed to the Society, her instant opposition seemed to them to nullify professions of friendship. Thus she had but few friends, for it required a keen insight, untinged with personal feeling, to see even a small part of the real H.P.B..

But was her object merely to form a Society whose strength should lie in numbers? No so. She worked under directors who, operating from *behind the scene*, knew that the Theosophical Society was, and was to be, the nucleus from which help might spread to all the people of the day, without thanks and without acknowledgment. Once, in London, I asked her what was the chance of drawing the people into the Society in view of the enormous disproportion between the number of members and the millions of Europe and America who neither knew of nor cared for it. Leaning back in her chair, in which she was sitting before her writing desk, she said:

When you consider and remember those days in 1875 and after, in which you could not find any people interested in your thoughts, and now look at the wide-spreading influence of theosophical ideas — however labelled — it is not

so bad. We are not working merely that people may call themselves *Theosophists*, but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century. This alone can be accomplished by a small earnest band of workers, who work for no human reward, no earthly recognition, but who, supported and sustained by a belief in that Universal Brotherhood of which our Masters are a part, work steadily, faithfully, in understanding and putting forth for consideration the doctrines of life and duty that have come down to us from immemorial time. Falter not so long as a few devoted ones will work to keep the nucleus existing. You were not directed to found and realise a Universal Brotherhood, but to form the nucleus for one; for it is only when the nucleus is formed that the accumulations can begin that will end in future years, however far, in the formation of that body which we have in view.

H.P.B. had a lion heart, and on the work traced out for her she had the lion's grasp; let us, her friends, companions and disciples, sustain ourselves in carrying out the designs laid down on the trestle-board, by the memory of her devotion and the consciousness that behind her task there stood, and still remain, those Elder Brothers who, above the clatter and the din of our battle, ever see the end and direct the forces distributed in array for the salvation of "that great orphan — Humanity."



## By William Quan Judge, on the Esoteric She.

First published in *The Sun*, New York, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1892, p. 5, and drew widespread interest to H.P.B. It was reprinted in the *Platte County Argus*, Nebraska, of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1892, under the title "A Woman's Noble Work"; and, as far away as Sri Lanka, under the title "Madame Blavatsky," in *The Buddhist*, Colombo, November and December issues, 1892. (Russian names have been revised according to the biographical sketch of H.P.B. in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, I. This edition was excerpted from: Eklund D. (Comp.) *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 2009-11 [4-Vols.]. Vol. III, 2010; pp. 204-212.

### A sketch of Madame Blavatsky's career.

A woman who, for one reason or another, has kept the world — first her little child world and afterward two hemispheres — talking of her, disputing about her, defending or assailing her character and motives, joining her enterprise or opposing it might and main,<sup>1</sup> and in her death being as much telegraphed about between two continents as an emperor, must have been a remarkable person. Such was Mme. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, born under the power of the holy Czar, in the family of the Hahns, descended on one side from a famous crusader, Count Rottenstern, who added Hahn, a cock, to his name because that bird saved his life from a wily Saracen who had come into his tent to murder him.

Hardly any circumstance or epoch in Mme. Blavatsky's career was prosaic. She chose to be born into this life at Ekaterinoslav, Russia, in the year 1831, when coffins and desolation were everywhere from the plague of cholera. The child was so delicate that the family decided upon immediate baptism under the rites of the Greek Catholic [Russian Orthodox] Church. This was in itself not common, but the ceremony was — under the luck that ever was with Helena — more remarkable and startling still. At this ceremony all the relatives are present and stand holding lighted candles. As one was absent, a young child, aunt of the infant Helena, was made proxy for the absentee, and given a candle like the rest. Tired out by the effort, this young proxy sank down to the floor unnoticed by the others, and, just as the sponsors were renouncing the evil one on the babe's behalf, by three times spitting on the floor, the sitting witness with her candle accidentally set fire to the robes of the officiating priest, and instantly there was a small conflagration, in which many of those present were seriously burned. Thus amid the scourge of death in the land was Mme. Blavatsky ushered into our world, and in the flames baptized by the priests of a Church whose fallacious dogmas she did much in her life to expose.

She was connected with the rulers of Russia. Speaking in 1881, her uncle, Gen. Fadeyev, joint Councillor of State of Russia, said that, as daughter of Col. Peter Hahn, she was granddaughter of Gen. Alexis Hahn von Rottenstern Hahn of old Mecklenburg stock, settled in Russia, and on her mother's side daughter of Helene Fadeyev and granddaughter of Princess Helena Dolgorukov. Her maternal ancestors were of the oldest families in Russia and direct descendants of the Prince or Grand Duke Rurik, the first ruler of Russia. Several ladies of the family belonged to the imperial house, becoming Czarinas by marriage. One of them, a Dolgorukov, married the grandfather of Peter the Great, and another was betrothed to Czar Peter II. Through these connections it naturally resulted that Mme. Blavatsky was acquainted

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<sup>1</sup> [with all of one's strength]

personally with many noble Russians. In Paris I met three princes of Russia and one well-known General, who told of her youth and the wonderful things related about her then; and in Germany I met the Prince Emil de Wittgenstein of one of the many Russo-German families, and himself cousin to the Empress of Russia and aide-de-camp to the Czar, who told me that he was an old family friend of hers, who heard much about her in early years, but, to his regret, had never had the fortune to see her again after a brief visit made with her father to his house. But he joined her famous Theosophical Society by correspondence, and wrote, after the war with Turkey, that he had been told in a letter from her that no hurt would come to him during the campaign, and such turned out to be the fact.

As a child she was the wonder of the neighbourhood and the terror of the simpler serfs. Russia teems with superstitions and omens, and as Helena was born on the seventh month and between the 30<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> day, she was supposed by the nurses and servants to have powers and virtues possessed by no one else. And these supposed powers made her the cynosure of all in her early youth. She was allowed liberties given none others, and as soon as she could understand she was given by her nurses the chief part in a mystic Russian ceremony performed about the house and grounds on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July with the object of propitiating the house demon. The education she got was fragmentary, and in itself so inadequate as to be one more cause among many for the belief of her friends in later life that she was endowed with abnormal psychic powers, or else in verity assisted by those unseen beings who she asserted were her helpers and who were men living on the earth, but possessed of developed senses that laughed at time and space. In girlhood she was bound by no restraint of conventionality, but rode any Cossack horse in a man's saddle, and later on spent a long time with her father with his regiment in the field, where, with her sister, she became the pet of the soldiers. In 1844, when 14, her father took her to London and Paris, where some progress was made in music, and before 1848 she returned home.

Her marriage in 1849 to Nikifor Blavatsky, the Governor of Yerivan in the Caucasus, gave her the name of Blavatsky, borne till her death. This marriage, like all other events in her life, was full of pyrotechnics. Her abrupt style had led her female friends to say that she could not make the old Blavatsky marry her, and out of sheer bravado she declared she could, and, sure enough, he did propose and was accepted. Then the awful fact obtruded itself on Helena's mind that this could not — in Russia — be undone. They were married, but the affair was signalized by Mme. Blavatsky's breaking a candlestick over his head and precipitately leaving the house, never to see him again. After her determination was evident, her father assisted her in a life of travel which began from that date, and not until 1858 did she return to Russia. Meanwhile her steps led her to America in 1851, to Canada, to New Orleans, to Mexico, off to India, and back again in 1853 to the United States. Then her relatives lost sight of her once more until 1858, when her coming back was like other events in her history. It was a wintry night, and a wedding party was on at the home in Russia. Guests had arrived, and suddenly, interrupting the meal, the bell rang violently, and there, unannounced, was Mme. Blavatsky at the door.

From this point the family and many friends testify, both by letter and by articles in the *Rebus*, a well-known journal in Russia, and in other papers, a constant series of marvels wholly unexplainable on the theory of jugglery was constantly occurring. They were of such a character that hundreds of friends from great distances were constantly visiting the house to see the wonderful Mme. Blavatsky. Many were incredulous, many believed it was magic, and others started charges of fraud. The superstitious Gooriel and Mingrelian nobility came in crowds and talked incessantly after, calling her a magician. They came to see the marvels others reported, to see her sitting quietly reading while tables and chairs moved of themselves and low raps in every direction seemed to reply to questions. Among many testified to was one done for her brother, who doubted her powers. A small chess table stood on the floor. Very light — a child could lift it and a man break it. One asked if Mme. Blavatsky could fasten it by will to the floor. She then said to examine it, and they found it loose. After that, and being some distance off, she said, “Try again.” They then found that no power of theirs could stir it, and her brother, supposing from his great strength that this “trick” could be easily exposed, embraced the little table and shook and pulled it without effect, except to make it groan and creak. So with wall and furniture rapping, objects moving, messages about distant happenings arriving by aerial post, the whole family and neighbourhood were in a constant state of excitement. Mme. Blavatsky said herself that this was a period when she was letting her psychic forces play, and learning fully to understand and control them.

But the spirit of unrest came freshly again, and she started out once more to find, as she wrote to me, “the men and women whom I want to prepare for the work of a great philosophical and ethical movement that I expect to start in a later time.” Going to Spezzia in a Greek vessel, the usual display of natural circumstances took place, and the boat was blown up by an explosion of gunpowder in the cargo. Only a few of those on board were saved, she among them. This led her to Cairo, in Egypt, where, in 1871, she started a society with the object of investigating spiritualism so as to expose its fallacies, if any, and to put its facts on a firm, scientific, and reasonable basis, if possible. But it only lasted fourteen days, and she wrote about it then: “It is a heap of ruins — majestic, but as suggestive as those of the Pharaoh’s tombs.”<sup>1</sup>

It was, however, in the United States that she really began the work that has made her name well known in Europe, Asia, and America; made her notorious in the eyes of those who dislike all reformers, but great and famous for those who say her works have benefited them. Prior to 1875 she was again investigating the claims of spiritualism in this country, and wrote home then analysing it, declaring false its assertion that the dead were heard from, and showing that, on the other hand, the phenomena exhibited a great psycho-physiological change going on here, which, if allowed to go on in our present merely material civilization, would bring about great disaster, morally and physically.

Then in 1875, in New York, she started the Theosophical Society, aided by Col. H.S. Olcott and others, declaring its objects to be the making of a nucleus for a Universal Brotherhood, the study of ancient and other religions and sciences, and the investi-

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<sup>1</sup> [*Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, George Redway, London, 1886, p. 159]

gation of the psychical and recondite laws affecting man and nature. There certainly was no selfish object in this, nor any desire to raise money. She was in receipt of funds from sources in Russia and other places until they were cut off by reason of her becoming an American citizen, and also because her unremunerated labours for the Society prevented her doing literary work on Russian magazines, where all her writings would be taken eagerly. As soon as the Theosophical Society was started she said to the writer that a book had to be written for its use. *Isis Unveiled* was then begun, and unremittingly she worked at it night and day until the moment when a publisher was secured for it.

Meanwhile crowds of visitors were constantly calling at her rooms in Irving Place, later in Thirty-fourth Street, and last in Forty-seventh Street and Eighth Avenue. The newspapers were full of her supposed powers or of laughter at the possibilities in man that she and her Society asserted. A prominent New York daily wrote of her thus:

A woman of as remarkable characteristics as Cagliostro himself, and one who is every day as differently judged by different people as the renowned Count was in his day. By those who know her slightly she is called a charlatan; better acquaintance made you think she was learned; and those who were intimate with her were either carried away with belief in her power or completely puzzled.<sup>1</sup>

*Isis Unveiled* attracted wide attention, and all the New York papers reviewed it, each saying that it exhibited immense research. The strange part of this is, as I and many others can testify as eyewitnesses to the production of the book, that the writer had no library in which to make researches and possessed no notes of investigation or reading previously done. All was written straight out of hand. And yet it is full of references to books in the British Museum and other great libraries, and every reference is correct. Either, then, we have, as to that book, a woman who was capable of storing in her memory a mass of facts, dates, numbers, titles, and subjects such as no other human being ever was capable of, or her claim to help from unseen beings is just.

In 1878, *Isis Unveiled* having been published, Mme. Blavatsky informed her friends that she must go to India and start there the same movement of the Theosophical Society. So in December of that year she and Col. Olcott and two more went out to India, stopping at London for a while. Arriving in Bombay they found three or four Hindus to meet them who had heard from afar of the matter. A place was hired in the native part of the town, and soon she and Col. Olcott started *The Theosophist*, a magazine that became at once well-known there and was widely bought in the West.

There in Bombay and later in Adyar, Madras, Mme. Blavatsky worked day after day in all seasons, editing her magazine and carrying on an immense correspondence with people in every part of the world interested in Theosophy, and also daily disputing and discussing with learned Hindus who constantly called. Phenomena occurred there also very often, and later the society for discovering nothing about the psychic world investigated these, and came to the conclusion that this woman of no fortune,

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<sup>1</sup> [Condensed from the *New York Times*, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1885, p. 3]

who was never before publicly heard of in India, had managed, in some way they could not explain, to get up a vast conspiracy that ramified all over India, including men of all ranks, by means of which she was enabled to produce pretended phenomena. I give this conclusion as one adopted by many. For anyone who knew her and who knows India, with its hundreds of different languages, none of which she knew, the conclusion is absurd. The Hindus believed in her, said always that she could explain to them their own scriptures and philosophies where the Brahmans had lost or concealed the key, and that by her efforts and the work of the Society founded through her, India's young men were being saved from the blank materialism which is the only religion the West can ever give a Hindu.

In 1885 Mme. Blavatsky returned to England, and there started another theosophical magazine, called *Lucifer*, and immediately stirred up the movement in Europe. Day and night there, as in New York and India, she wrote and spoke, incessantly corresponding with people everywhere, editing *Lucifer*, and making books for her beloved Society, and never possessed of means, never getting from the world at large anything save abuse wholly undeserved. *The Key to Theosophy* was written in London, and also *The Secret Doctrine*, which is the great textbook for Theosophists. *The Voice of the Silence* was written there, too, and is meant for devotional Theosophists. Writing, writing, writing from morn till night was her fate here. Yet, although scandalized and abused here as elsewhere, she made many devoted friends, for there never was anything half way in her history. Those who met her or heard of her were always either staunch friends or bitter enemies.

*The Secret Doctrine* led to the coming into the Society of Mrs. Annie Besant, and then Mme. Blavatsky began to say that her labours were coming to an end, for here was a woman who had the courage of the ancient reformers and who would help carry on the movement in England unflinchingly. *The Secret Doctrine* was sent to Mr. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to review, but none of his usual reviewers felt equal to it and he asked Mrs. Besant if she could review it. She accepted the task, reviewed, and then wanted an introduction to the writer. Soon after that she joined the Society, first fully investigating Mme. Blavatsky's character, and threw in her entire forces with the Theosophists. Then a permanent London headquarters was started and still exists. And there Mme. Blavatsky passed away, with the knowledge that the Society she had striven so hard for at any cost was at last an entity able to struggle for itself.

In her dying moment she showed that her life had been spent for an idea, with full consciousness that in the eyes of the world it was Utopian, but in her own, necessary for the race. She implored her friends not to allow her then ending incarnation to become a failure by the failure of the movement started and carried on with so much of suffering. She never in all her life made money or asked for it. Venal writers and spiteful men and women have said she strove to get money from so-called dupes, but all her intimate friends know that over and over again she has refused money; that always she has had friends who would give her all they had if she would take it, but she never took any nor asked it. On the other hand, her philosophy and her high ideals have caused others to try to help all those in need. Impelled by such incentive, one rich Theosophist gave her \$5,000 to found a working girls' club at Bow, in London, and one day, after Mrs. Besant had made the arrangements for the house and

the rest, Mme. Blavatsky, although sick and old, went down there herself and opened the club in the name of the Society.

The aim and object of her life were to strike off the shackles forged by priestcraft for the mind of man. She wished all men to know that they are God in fact, and that as men they must bear the burden of their own sins, for no one else can do it. Hence she brought forward to the West the old Eastern doctrines of karma and reincarnation. Under the first, the law of justice, she said each must answer for himself, and under the second, make answer on the earth where all his acts were done. She also desired that science should be brought back to the true ground where life and intelligence are admitted to be within and acting on and through every atom in the universe. Hence her object was to make religion scientific and science religious, so that the dogmatism of each might disappear.

Her life since 1875 was spent in the unremitting endeavour to draw within the Theosophical Society those who could work unselfishly to propagate an ethics and philosophy tending to realize the brotherhood of man by showing the real unity and essential non-separateness of every being. And her books were written with the declared object of furnishing the material for intellectual and scientific progress on those lines. The theory of man's origin, powers, and destiny brought forward by her, drawn from ancient Indian sources, places us upon a higher pedestal than that given by either religion or science, for it gives to each the possibility of developing the godlike powers within, and of at last becoming a co-worker with nature.

As everyone must die at last, we will not say that her demise was a loss; but if she had not lived and done what she did humanity would not have had the impulse and the ideas toward the good which it was her mission to give and to proclaim. And there are today scores, nay, hundreds, of devout, earnest men and women intent on purifying their own lives and sweetening the lives of others, who trace their hopes and aspirations to the wisdom-religion revived in the West through her efforts, and who gratefully avow that their dearest possessions are the result of her toilsome and self-sacrificing life. If they, in turn, live aright and do good, they will be but illustrating the doctrine which she daily taught and hourly practiced.



# Tributes to Madame Blavatsky.

## By those who know her.

### Tributes by her Masters.

. . . Imperfect as may be our visible agent — and often most unsatisfactory and imperfect she is — yet, she is the best available at present . . . <sup>1</sup>

Try to believe more than you do in the “old lady.” She *does* rave betimes; but she is truthful and does the best she can for you. <sup>2</sup>

The Old Woman is accused of *untruthfulness, inaccuracy* in her statements. “Ask no questions and you will receive *no lies.*” *She is forbidden* to say what she knows. You may cut her to pieces and she will not tell. Nay — she is ordered *in cases of need* to *mislead people*; and, were she more of a natural born *liar* — she might be happier and won her day long since by this time. But that’s just where the shoe pinches, Sahib. She is *too truthful, too outspoken, too incapable of dissimulation*: and now she is being daily crucified for it. <sup>3</sup>



### Tributes by Henry Travers Edge. <sup>4</sup>

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) XII pp. 737-46. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff.

Henry Travers Edge was a personal pupil of H.P.B. in the London days, born at Cubington, near Leamington, Warwickshire, England, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1867; died at the Theosophical Headquarters, Covina, California, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1946. His father was Francis Edge, a Clergy man of the Church of England, and his mother, Cecilia Tarratt Edge. He was educated at Malvern College from 1880 to 1886; thereafter at King’s College, Cambridge. In 1889, he entered for the Natural Sciences Tripos, in Chemistry, Physics and Geology, taking high honours. He then studied a year in Germany, and taught in various institutions in England. In 1899 he resigned his post as Demonstrator in Practical Physics at the Royal College of Science, South Kensington, London, in order to accept Katherine Tingley’s invitation to join the Theosophical Headquarters Staff at Point Loma, California.

Henry T. Edge’s acquaintance with Theosophy dated from the early days of The Theosophical Society. The background of this is best outlined in his own words:

<sup>1</sup> Mahātma Letter 2 (2), pp. 9-10; 3<sup>rd</sup> Combined ed.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* 106 (7), p. 436

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* 47 (48), p. 268

<sup>4</sup> [A personal pupil]

. . . Of a pronounced nervous mental temperament and physique, I had begun at a very early age to devour what scientific books I could come across; lacked the power of concentration necessary for reading or for assiduous study, but had a quick bright mind that readily picked up a store of miscellaneous information and stored it up in a retentive memory ready for use when required. Thus the scientific element entered as one skein in the fabric. On the moral side I was always of a conscientious and religious disposition.

At about eighteen a third element manifested itself, which may be called the mystical, concerned with interest in the occult and “supernatural.” The attitude of scientific materialism received a rude shock from the reading of Catherine Crowe’s *The Night Side of Nature*, which is a collection of ghost-stories made by that novelist, the cumulative evidence of which is enough to convince a competent mind of the reality of phenomena attested by universal experience of all ages . . . .

I realized that these stories of the “supernatural,” after filtering off the trash in them, were essentially facts; and that, however irritating they might often be to my acquired sense of what might be allowed to be possible in a trim scientific scheme of the universe, I had to fit them in somehow, and must accordingly stretch my boundaries. . . .

Having thus passed a portal, it is not surprising that I soon found other books to feed my new curiosity; among which I will mention Bulwer Lytton’s *The Haunted and the Haunters*.<sup>1</sup> This story contains a vivid description of a Black Magician, who by developing the will, with the aid of a rare natural aptitude, has found the means of prolonging his life through the centuries, and who periodically celebrates a fictitious funeral and reappears among men in a new guise and a new name, to perpetuate the enjoyment of his sensual proclivities. His will is supreme and resistless and his character one of surpassing grandeur and dignity, but (alas) evil.

Here then comes a crucial point in my mental life — the antagonism between the high ideals of human attainment thus depicted, and the voice of conscience and love of good. Power on one side, goodness on the other; how *could* such opposing forces ever be reconciled? Yet the inner man, the clear-seeing function of the mind that lies below the surface, must have been prescient of the issue so soon to supervene; else why was it that the even course of my life and avocations was so little disturbed? Truly we have that within us which sees and knows, and fulfils its calm ends despite our blind struggles. Still thy mind and strive to hear and acquiesce in that higher wisdom.

Phrenology — Swedenborgianism — Psychic Research — anything off the beaten track, anything available in those days (1885-87). An accident, laying me on my back and giving an opportunity for study and reflexion; the change from school to the freedom of university life; the studies and laboratory work, the many new-found friends; into this busy scene came Theosophy, the goal to

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<sup>1</sup> In its original and complete form, not in the abbreviated and altogether emasculated form in which it later appeared.

which I had from earliest self-consciousness been dimly striving, to resolve my enigmas and reconcile my conflicting motives.<sup>1</sup>

I was in early manhood a student at Cambridge University, reading for honours in science. In pursuance of the aforesaid instinct, I had been attending meetings of some society (its name I struggle in vain to remember), whose object was, as far as one could see, somewhat different from that of scientific sceptics who denied and scoffed at all apparitions and occult phenomena. The method of this society was to accept the possibility of such phenomena, but to reduce them by every possible means to the level of the commonplace. It was very learned, very documentary, very dry-as-dust and uninspiring; and I ceased to think any more about it and its doings, at the very first chance I had to find something better worth thinking about.

How vividly stand forth in one's memory the incidents — nay, perhaps, the one incident — marking a turning-point in one's life! I can see, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1887, a young student in cap and gown walking along the King's Parade, and meeting a cousin, who was an undergraduate of Caius College, and who stopped me to say: "Have you read that book, by Mr. Sinnett, called *Esoteric Buddhism*, all about worlds and planets and races and rounds . . . ?"

What he said, I don't recollect, but it was enough to send me straight to the University Library after that book. It was out, but another book by the same author, *The Occult World*, was in; and from that afternoon I had entered upon a new phase of my life — begun my life, one might almost say — been born again, as it were. There was a child's handful of other books on Theosophy or near-Theosophy; some of them still known, others forgotten; but no *Key to Theosophy*, no *Voice of the Silence*, no *Secret Doctrine* — though there was *Isis Unveiled*.

I lost no time in communicating with H.P. Blavatsky's agents in London, and obtained an introduction to certain Theosophists resident near Cambridge. It was at the country-house of these members that a small band, chiefly of members of the University, constituting the Cambridge Lodge of the Theosophical Society, used to hold its meeting; and the recollection of those days is full of poetry and music to the recorder, but to the reader will be of secondary interest to my recollections (such as they are) of H.P. Blavatsky herself.

And here it must be said that the record will be more an impression than a diary, more a picture than a description. Not being gifted or hampered with a photographic memory or a passion for detail, my memory brings up a general idea, in which the salient features stand out regardless of chronological sequence, and things blend into one another to form a composite.

It must have been at the end of the term, near Christmas, 1887, that I first went to see H.P. Blavatsky. The association of ideas has hallowed the memories of the underground railway with its sulphurous smoke, and the street-names that lay along the route.

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<sup>1</sup> [*The Theosophical Path*, Point Loma, California, Vol. XXXVII, February 1930]

H.P. Blavatsky was then residing, with a little group of helpers, in a small semi-detached house in a residential quarter of London, West — 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, W. I arrived just before the evening meal, so that my first meeting with her was a social one. After the meal we adjourned to the sitting-room, where H.P. Blavatsky habitually entertained her guests and visitors in the evenings. At that time of life I was what I should describe as shy and backward, admirably formed to play the part of a silent and unobtrusive spectator.

The first impression which I got of H.P. Blavatsky was the same as that which so many others have got, and at which some of them have stopped short — namely that she was an eminently *human* person. I say “first” advisedly, because, as will be seen, that was not the only impression.

Now, assuming H.P. Blavatsky to be a great character, what ought one expect to find? Experience and records of great characters, or prominent characters, might suggest one or other of two things. We might expect the person to strike us at first sight with awe, as from one who was not only great but was aware of the fact and not unwilling that you should also be aware. Or, on the other hand, perhaps he would be a person of extraordinary simplicity, a great one but not wishing to enact that part. Which of these supposed persons, if either, would be truly great? Number 1 would certainly be acting a part, and his self-consciousness would add an element of littleness detracting from his greatness. Number 2 even *might be* acting a part — affected simplicity. But in the really great person the simplicity would be no pose, but merely his natural character expressing itself naturally and without art.

It would be quite impossible to connect the idea of H.P. Blavatsky (as I saw her — and that is what I am concerned with at present) with pose or vanity or vain-glory or self-consciousness. Whatever view one might take of her or her mission, at least one must conclude that here was a thorough, earnest, and sincere character; the kind that would scorn simulation or dissimulation; the kind so sure of its own sincerity as to feel no need for any attempt to impress it on people.

In short I saw simply a very vivacious and interesting Russian lady, talking on a variety of subjects and expressing each emotion as it came along, with the ease and alertness which we all have in early childhood and so soon lose. Such people hate humbug or pretence of whatever sort. No doubt there are some who feel uncomfortable in the presence of such a person. No doubt I should have felt uncomfortable had she not been so kind.

The evening was spent in the sitting-room where H.P. Blavatsky was wont to receive her guests and visitors; and, though I can recall nothing definite, my impression was the same. Extreme versatility and a mind active enough for several persons at once, were noticeable. H.P. Blavatsky could carry on two conversations at once, in different languages, and have enough spare energy left to require occupation in a game of solitaire. And yet all this external activity might have served mainly to keep the body quiet while the *mind* was busy in

activities whose nature we cannot surmise but whose existence was surely indicated by the depth of those wonderful eyes.<sup>1</sup>

The many extant portraits will give an idea of her features; and in this connexion I remember roughly, though without the exact words to quote, a description given in a novel of that period, in which novel she enters as a character and is treated with much sympathy and respect by the author.<sup>2</sup> In this description the remarkable contrasts of the face are emphasized. In many respects the physiognomy was Turanian; but in place of small dark deep-set eyes were eyes unusually large, and light grey or blue-grey in colour. The massive jaw and firm mouth were contradicted by the small alert nose; the complexion sallow, the hair medium brown, fine in texture, crisp and wavy. Fitting signature of a Light-Bringer into a world needing light: the eyes showing the irradiated mind, the powerful, rugged features marking the strength demanded by such a contact. To be a connecting link, a buffer, what a rare union of purity and clarity with strength and toughness is required! Stature short and stout, and at that time, owing to the infirmities brought about by a life of most strenuous and unsparing devotion, very corpulent and dropsical. A most nervous and excitable temperament in a lymphatic physique.

The manners of this lady were entirely natural and unaffected; in which respect she conveyed the impression of a child: the same alertness and freedom of gesture. But a grown-up child, a much-travelled and well-informed child; full of animation, passing easily from topic to topic and diffusing her own enthusiasm into her auditors. Thinking aloud, as it were, scorning petty hypocrisies, having nothing to conceal. Many of these traits doubtless pertaining to nationality and family, others peculiar to herself.

I was by temperament excellently qualified for the part of silent listener, which has its advantages and disadvantages. My recollections are vague as to detail. Not living in London, my visits to H.P.B. were infrequent and intermittent; their number and particular features are lost in a general haze. Yet perhaps, as said before, this circumstance may be regarded as serving to filter out the non-essentials and preserve the essence.

The *second* time I visited her, she stated that I had already been, not once, but *twice* before; and spoke of a visit which (as she said) I had made before my last visit. She described the dress I had worn (which was verified by a friend at Cambridge as being the one he was accustomed to see me wearing). She told me what I had said on the occasion of the alleged visit. I had told her (she said) about an illness giving me an opportunity to study and reflect. This was true, as mentioned above; but I had never told H.P.B. Upon being asked whether it was in my astral body that I had been present, she said:

“No, he was just as he is now.”

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<sup>1</sup> [The Theosophical Path, Vol. XXXII, June 1927]

<sup>2</sup> *Affinities: A Romance of Today*, by Rachel M. Campbell-Praed. London: Bentley & Sons, 1885; and G. Routledge & Sons, 1886, 8vo.

Now it is true that I was at that time much addicted to day-dreaming, especially when taking walks; and nothing is easier than to see how my entire mind, and perhaps a good deal more, might be transferred; but the question of the physical presence is a mystery the solution of which I hereby leave to my readers to exercise their intuition upon.

In October, 1888, returning from vacation to my rooms in Cambridge, I found on my table a copy of *Lucifer*, containing an announcement in which H.P.B. invites Theosophists to embrace the opportunity for a deeper study of Theosophy; and this marks another great epoch in my life. It is here however that we trench upon matters not pertaining to this magazine. Much must therefore be represented by a hiatus, or by those rows of dots or stars by which the printer loves to signify a jumping-off place for the imagination. If you are fond of mystery, what more mysterious can you have than such a row of dots?



However, it is here that I came in contact with H.P.B. the Teacher, and first became conscious of that relationship between teacher and pupil which is so much more than any ordinary relationship, whether between ordinary teachers and pupils or in any other bond.

Real teaching is not conveyed orally or by writing. The marks by which a Teacher is recognized as such are well known to those who are privileged by this relationship. There is first the power to teach: which does not consist in telling you what you must believe, but in calling your attention to what you want to know. A Teacher is a revealer, an opener of one's eyes; one who has something to give to those who can ask — who can give the right "password." Then there is the responsiveness of the Teacher to one's secret aspirations and other feelings; which does not mean thought-reading, if you please, for that would amount to burglarizing another person's mind, a thing no Teacher would do. What I do mean can be illustrated by an instance.

Having on one occasion, while far away from London, chanced to be thinking of H.P.B., and to have achieved some kind of realization of her real character and work, I had felt a glow of the true Love go forth from my heart. The next time I saw the Teacher, she had something for me, something which only a Teacher can give, something which not even a Teacher can give except to one who has *asked*. "Knock, and it shall be opened to you."

Thus was H.P. Blavatsky recognised as a Teacher, as one able to teach by more intimate means than oral instruction.

She turned one's aspirations into the right channel and inculcated the Heart-Doctrine, which supersedes all personal motives by the power of universal Love — the life of the Spiritual Man. The Teacher can appeal directly to the real Self of the pupil, causing him to recognize the Light and Truth, even though his brain-mind may not see it; and thus he is able to dedicate himself inwardly by a vow whose power will ever afterwards guard and guide him.

One thing which H.P.B. said in my presence was this: that, when she had first met me, she had said to herself: “Here is a young man who has an eventful occult life before him. He has two paths open: in the one he will be happy; in the other miserable. I wonder which he will choose.”

Another time she put into my hands the manuscript of *The Voice of the Silence* and sent me to another room to read it.<sup>1</sup>

In 1888 Henry T. Edge received his diploma of fellowship in The Theosophical Society, signed by Col. Henry Steel Olcott, President, and A.J. Cooper-Oakley, Secretary. Shortly thereafter he became a personal pupil of H.P.B. and was entrusted by her with private literary and office duties, which he continued to perform until her death on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1891. His diploma was “Endorsed valid under the Constitution of The Theosophical Society in Europe” by William Quan Judge as President, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1895.

After a few years of varied activities at Point Loma, H.T. Edge was appointed Head Master of the Boys’ Department of the Rāja-Yoga School. He was one of the original incorporators of Theosophical University on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1919, and became its President on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1939, which post he held until June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1946. At Point Loma, he taught Latin and Greek, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Geology. He also conducted classes in *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. For forty-six years, he contributed *gratis* his time and his talents to the educational and literary work conducted at Point Loma; he was also generous in his financial support of the Society’s activities.

From 1888 until his death in 1946, Dr. Edge was an incredibly prolific contributor to various Theosophical periodicals, including H.P.B.’s *Lucifer*, the Point Loma weeklies, *The New Century*, *The New Century Path* and *The Century Path* (the three published in succession from September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1897 to June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1911); the monthly and later quarterly *Theosophical Path* (July 1911 to October 1935); *The Theosophical Forum* (published monthly, beginning in September 1929, and contributed to by H.T.E. from 1929 until his death in 1946). As an illustration of his literary creativity, a collection of his contributions to *The Theosophical Path* between July 1911 and December 1916 alone, under his own name or initials and under the pseudonyms H. Travers, T. Henry, Ariomardes, The Busy Bee, Magister Artium, T.H. and Student, includes 197 articles. He made numerous contributions defending H.P.B.’s memory, explaining her mission, and expounding her teachings continuously for more than half a century.

Among his lengthier monographs are: *Studies in Evolution*;<sup>2</sup> *Questionnaire on Evolution*;<sup>3</sup> *The Universal Mystery-Language and its Interpretation*;<sup>4</sup> *Theosophical Light on the Christian Bible*;<sup>5</sup> and Manuals on *Theosophy and Christianity*, *The Astral Light*,

<sup>1</sup> [*The Theosophical Path*, Vol. XXVII, February 1930]

<sup>2</sup> Papers of the School of Antiquity, No. 8, Point Loma, California, The Aryan Theosophical Press, November, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> Theosophical University Press, Covina, California, 1943; repr. by Point Loma Publications, San Diego, California, 1979, as *Design and Purpose*.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 1945. The last two reprinted in a slightly revised form by Point Loma Publications, Inc., San Diego, California, 1973.

and *Evolution*.<sup>1</sup> All of his writings reveal the sound, balanced judgment of a Cambridge-trained scientist and scholar, illuminated by his life-long study and acceptance of Theosophy as he had learned it from H.P.B. and those who followed faithfully in her footsteps.

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1946, in his eightieth year and near the end of his earthly sojourn, failing in health and facing ingratitude and misunderstanding, he wrote to sympathetic friends in part as follows:

Dismissing doubt and fear from our hearts, and with full confidence in the spiritual power thus evoked, let us stand together in valiant defence of our convictions and of the great work for which our Teachers have sacrificed so much. It may well be that trials like the present are needed in order to infuse new vigour into the hearts of members, and to spur them to stand on their own feet. This is no time to stand still and wait; for the Masters cannot help us unless we make the appeal. It is the time for action, and even the oldest and feeblest can act on the spiritual plane by assuming the right attitude.

It is my earnest wish to spread far and wide the confidence which inspires me and which I feel has given me renewed strength to meet the obligation which my situation entails. Not a morning nor a night passes without my vision going back to 1886 when, at the feet of H.P.B. I dedicated my life to her Cause.

Some years prior to that, writing in *The Theosophical Path*,<sup>2</sup> he had said:

The crowning privilege of an eventful life has been my intimate personal relationship with H.P. Blavatsky, as pupil of that great Teacher. This extended from 1887 until her death, while she was carrying on at her London residence her work of promulgating Theosophy, by her receptions to inquirers and the publication of her books and magazines. She showed me that Theosophy is the most serious movement of the age, and that it requires of its adherents entire devotion to the Heart-Doctrine; and her own life was the noblest exemplar of her teachings. In the face of illness, incessant and malicious opposition, and at great pecuniary sacrifice, she toiled heroically at her great work for the bringing of Truth, Light, and Liberation to discouraged humanity.



### **Tributes by her contemporaries.**

A close friend of George W Russell (1867–1935) quoted Æ as saying:

Having “bathed in these [writings of HP Blavatsky] I marvelled what I could have done to merit birth in an age wherein such wisdom was on offer to all who could beg, borrow or steal a copy of these works.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Re-issued by Point Loma Publications in 1974-75.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. XX, January 1921

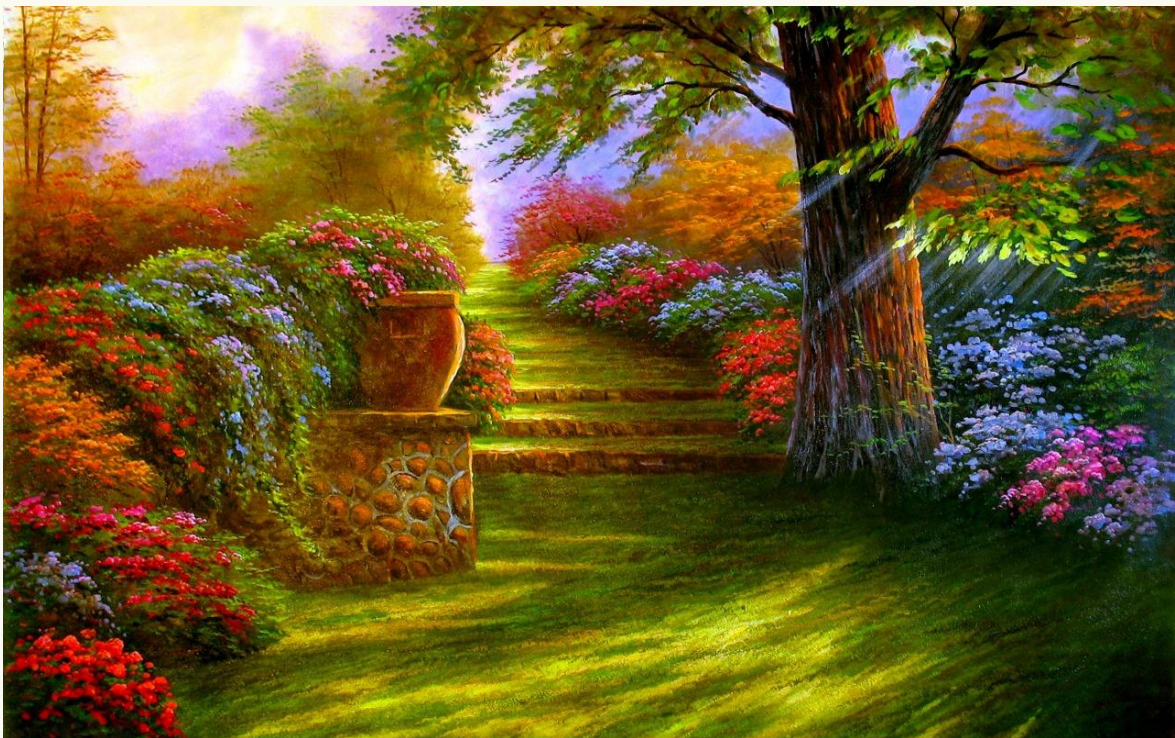
<sup>3</sup> “Letters of H.P. Blavatsky I,” *The Path*, December 1894, p. 266

The ill health, the wandering life, the unpropitious surroundings, the lack of materials, the defection of false friends, the attacks of enemies.<sup>1</sup>

But why, it will be asked, did she continue to suffer, with powers at her command which could relieve suffering? Why, when she was labouring at so important task [writing the *Secret Doctrine*] through long hours every day — a task that needed a mind untroubled and a sound body — why did she never stretch out a finger to amend the conditions and to banish weakness and pain that would have prostrated any ordinary person completely?

The question is a natural one, and it did not fail to occur to me, knowing as I did the healing powers she possessed, and her capacity to alleviate the pains of others. When the question was put to her, her answer was invariably the same:

In occultism a most solemn vow has to be taken never to use any powers acquired or conferred to the benefit of one's own personal self, for to do so would be to set foot on the steep and treacherous slope that ends in the abyss of Black Magic. I have taken than vow, and I am not one to break a pledge the sanctity of which cannot be brought within the comprehension of the profane. I would rather suffer any tortures than be untrue to my pledge.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Wachtmeister C, et al. *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky and the Secret Doctrine*. Wheaton: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1976; p. 3

<sup>2</sup> Wachtmeister C, et al. *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky and the Secret Doctrine*. Wheaton: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1976; p. 35

## Boris de Zirkoff pays homage to H.P.B.

H P B

W. Emmett Small. (Comp. & Ed.) *The Dream That Never Dies: Boris de Zirkoff speaks out on Theosophy*. San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1983; [H.P.B., pp. 68-71, written May – June 1947.]

**A** MAGIC NAME WITH A POWER ALL ITS OWN, with a meaning deeper than speech, with a message unique and enduring! A name, truly, with a Cosmos in it!

The power of a name lies in the ideal which it represents, in the thought which it embodies, in the inspiration which it brings forth. And “H.P.B.” represents the loftiest ideal of mankind — that of renunciation of self-love and of tireless labour for the spiritual liberation of the human race from the bondage of material existence.

It embodies the noblest thought which the Seers and Sages of all times have proclaimed — that of the essential Unity of all that is. It stands for the most inspiring idea which the mind can conceive — that of beginningless and endless evolution along the spiral pathways of the Universe.

More than a hundred years ago H.P.B. was born in a country whose chaotic genius resembled her own, until the fire of her will had shaped her inner life into a Cosmos. Misunderstood, persecuted, victimized, she stood undaunted amidst the clashing hordes of a heartless world, and silenced her foes by the mere power of her Being. Exhaustless in her resistance, unfathomable in her deep-seated reality, her Spirit was anchored in the very depths of Mother-Nature, and reached to the primeval eternities of the Universe.

In an age of decadence and denial, with torrential energy she cast herself against the clouds of materialism stifling the spiritual life of man. With unparalleled force she asserted the transcendent reality of Spirit. With indomitable courage she proclaimed the basic principles of Truth. Fresh and strong as the primeval forces of Nature, her character was of such magnitude as to divide the world into her adherents and her opponents.

The vast surge of her creative activity swept from one continent to the other, across the distances of land and sea. The spiritual flame with which she touched the hearts of men cleansed their natures and burned away the veil before their eyes. As only those can who have earned the right to be Teachers, she imparted a new life-impetus to the would-be disciple and quickened to germination the dormant seeds buried within his heart. Only those who have passed through it know the reality of the burgeoning of energy as possessed by certain souls. Some there are who may *teach* a

truth and yet may not *be* that truth. But who can impart a truth in its surging vitality, so that it fructifies in the lives of others, except one who himself possesses the richness and depth of this life-impulse by reason of having become it! Hence Message and Messenger are invariably one and the same in the occult laws operating behind the veil of illusions.

A worthy Messenger of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion and Peace, she stood alone, facing the opposition of an unbelieving world. The bigotry of religious fanaticism, the scepticism of materialistic science, the vindictive jealousy of all who knew that the light she brought would sooner or later dispel the darkness in which their own petty schemes were wrought — all these and vastly more of a nature which the humdrum world, in its blind conceit, is unable to perceive, she met, faced, and conquered.

The sword of spiritual knowledge with which she hewed at the malignant materialistic growth of a passing age, she wielded with wisdom and consummate skill. The rifts in the leaden masses of heavy clouds through which, high above, we catch today a glimpse of the infinite blue, bears testimony to the greatness of the power that rent them asunder.

Abused and vilified, slandered and persecuted, she asserted the truth of the Message which she was sent to proclaim, and, when the first mad onslaught of antagonism had subsided, it was seen that her mere presence among men had confounded the arrogant negations of those who laughed at the reality of spiritual Being.

She flung down the gauntlet to the religious sectarianism of her day, with its gaudy ritualism and the dead letter of orthodox worship. She challenged entrenched scientific dogmas evolved from minds which saw in Nature but a fortuitous aggregate of lifeless atoms driven by mere chance. The regenerative power of her Message burst the constricting shell of a moribund theology, swept away the empty wranglings of phrase-weavers, and checkmated the progress of scientific fallacies.

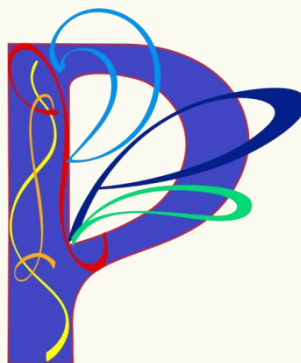
Today this Message, like the spring-flood of some mighty river is spreading far and wide over the earth. The greatest thinkers of the age are voicing well-nigh theosophical thoughts, couched sometimes in the very language which H.P.B. used. We witness the turning of men's minds towards the treasure-chamber of esoteric knowledge which she unlocked for us. Some day public recognition will be given to the truth of her teachings, to the depths of the source of knowledge from which she drew, and then H.P.B., the "direct agent" of her Teachers, will take her rightful place in the history of our spiritual awakening, among other Great Souls who have stemmed the tide of disintegration, pointed the way to the mountain-tops of Spirit, and, having shown mankind where Truth can be found, taught it, like the Druids of old, how to hold that "Truth against the World."

The writings of H.P.B. stand by themselves. They speak louder than any human commentary to those who have ears to hear, and the ultimate proof of the teachings they contain rests with the disciple who attunes his mind and heart to the cosmic harmony which they bring to light. Like all mystic writings throughout the ages, they conceal vastly more than they reveal, and they mean to the student just what he is able to perceive in them — neither less nor more.

Unchanged by time, unmoved by the phantasmagoria of the world's pageant, unhurt by scathing criticisms, unsoiled by the vituperations of petty and dogmatic minds, these writings stand today, as they did at the time of their first appearance, like a majestic rock amidst the foaming crests of an unruly sea. Their clarion-call resounds as powerfully now as it did of yore, and thousands of heart-hungry, suffering, disillusioned men and women, in search of truth and peace, are turning their eyes to the enduring Message contained in H.P.B.'s far-flung literary work.

Great Souls, Warriors of Light, descend into our midst from worlds supernal. They often are but Messengers of still greater Beings completely beyond our reach or ken. They bring with them another spark of that Promethean fire which kindles upon our altars the flames of thought. They pass like blazing meteors through the night-sky of human sorrow. They mould gigantic structures with godlike hands and vanish sooner or later beyond the mystic veil which hides from us as yet the world of silent Realities. Their home is there, within a sea of Light which humans call genius, Truth, creative inspiration. And although for a time we are unable to follow their journey and to witness their work behind the veil, yet we have with us tangible proofs of their existence, of their passage through this valley of shadows, and the assurance of their return on the crests of spiralling cycles when the time is ripe.

We commend her writings to the weary pilgrim and the seeker after enduring spiritual values. They contain the answer to many a harassing problem. They open wide undreamt of portals, revealing vistas of cosmic splendour and lasting inspiration. To the fainthearted but sincere student, they bring new hope and courage. To those who have already travelled on the Path, they are a comfort and a staff, as well as a guide and Teacher. And to those few who are ahead of others, valiantly scaling the solitary passes leading to the Gates of Gold, they convey that secret knowledge which alone can lift the heavy bar which must be raised before the Gates admit the pilgrim into the land of Eternal Dawn.



## Madame Blavatsky's plea to keep the link unbroken!

**T**HE “KEEP THE LINK UNBROKEN” PLEA first appeared in a short biography of Isabel Cooper-Oakley by W.Q. Judge published in *The Path*, July, 1894. In fact, these were not Blavatsky's “last words” for she is quoted of pronouncing them two days (nights, to be more precise) before her death. Her plea has been cited as follows:

### Primary citation.

Continued bad health has prevented Mrs. Cooper-Oakley from doing the work she would like to have done. In 1890 the Headquarters was moved to 19 Avenue Road; the following year H.P.B. left us and her last message for the Society was given to Mrs. Oakley the night but one before she died. At three a.m. she suddenly looked up and said “Isabel, Isabel, keep the link unbroken; do not let my last incarnation be a failure.” At the moment of H.P.B.'s death Mrs. Cooper-Oakley was out, but received a telegram recalling her and arrived just ten minutes late.<sup>1</sup>

### Secondary citation.

The following words were minuted at an “Eastern School of Theosophy” council meeting held 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1891, at 19 Avenue Road, London, “in reference to the [Eastern] School [of Theosophy]”:

. . . it was recorded that there was ample proof by witnesses, members of this School, that her last words in reference to the School and its work were “KEEP THE LINK UNBROKEN! DO NOT LET MY LAST INCARNATION BE A FAILURE.”<sup>2</sup>

H.P. Blavatsky died 8<sup>th</sup> May 1891 at, or soon after, 11.30 A.M. at 19 Avenue Road, London. Her body was cremated in Woking, England, two days later.<sup>3</sup>

SERIES EDITOR



<sup>1</sup> *The Path* [Isabel Cooper-Oakley 1854-1914], Vol. IX, July 1894, pp. 122-24

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 340

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Cranston S. *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1994; p. 409

## Suggested reading for students.



### **Tributes to Madame Blavatsky.**

- “Blavatsky interviewed by Charles Johnston”
- “Blavatsky makes it in Bagpipe Music”
- “Blavatsky on Blavatsky”
- “Blavatsky remembered by Henry Travers Edge”
- “Blavatsky's Obituary by NY Daily Tribune”
- “Blavatsky's Obituary by WQ Judge”
- “Blavatsky will instruct me in the seven sacred trances”
- “Cleather on Blavatsky (1922)”
- “Cleather on the Great Betrayal (1922)”
- “De Zirkoff on Blavatsky's background and early life”
- “De Zirkoff pays homage to Blavatsky”
- “The Esoteric She by WQ Judge”
- “The New York Times on Blavatsky”
- “The Seal of HP Blavatsky”
- “Wachtmeister et al. reminisce on Blavatsky (1893)”





Artwork by Helen White

The Theosophical Society stands or falls by Blavatsky. Give her up as an idea, withdraw from the path traced by her under orders, belittle her, and the organization will rot; but remember her and what she represented, and we triumph. — William Quan Judge.