

# *Three Eminent Theosophists*



# Boris de Zirkoff<sup>1</sup> on Three Eminent Theosophists

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### Suggested reading for students.

From our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. 14



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<sup>1</sup> [Boris Mihailovich de Zirkoff (Борис Михайлович Цирков), 1902–1981, Russian-born American Theosophist, editor, and writer. He was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, March 7<sup>th</sup> 1902. His father was Mihail Vassilyevich de Zirkoff, a Russian general; his mother, Lydia Dmitriyevna von Hahn, who was a second cousin to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. The Russian Revolution forced his family to flee in 1917 to Stockholm across Finland. De Zirkoff studied in European universities, where he specialized in languages and classics. “At Baden-Baden in Germany, he met a Russian American, Nikolai Romanoff, and learned from him about the existence, at Point Loma, close San Diego in California, of the organization, named Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. He wrote a letter to Mrs. Katherine Tingley, then head of the Society, and when she visited Europe, they met in Finland. Mrs. Tingley, who had learned that Boris was Blavatsky’s relative, invited him to come to the headquarters at Point Loma and promised him all the necessary help in regard to his travel to America.” — Anton Rozman. Also consult “De Zirkoff recalls his formative years in Russia,” in the same Series. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> Title page illustration by James White, NeoWave Series 3.

# 1. Archibald Keightley

## 1859–1930

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) IX pp. 427-432.

Dr. Archibald Keightley was an English Theosophist and physician, one of the most faithful friends of H.P. Blavatsky, in the London days. He was born in Westmorland, England, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1859. His father was Alfred Dudley Keightley of Liverpool, brother of Bertram Keightley, of Swedenborgian stock. His mother, Margaret Wakefield, belonged to a family of Quakers. He was educated at Charterhouse and in Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he took the degree of B.A., after natural science tripos.<sup>1</sup> He then became a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, London (1886), and later a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and a Master of Arts and Doctor of Medicine of Cambridge. He served his medical apprenticeship at “Bart’s,” in London, which was, in the opinion of many, the best medical school at the time. In later years, from his consulting rooms and home in Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, he carried on a large practice in London, gaining wide experience and an outstanding reputation in chronic cases of all kinds. Subsequently, he passed the necessary examination and qualified as a physician to practise under the laws of the State of New York.

While a student at Cambridge, he became interested in the phenomena of Spiritualism, as indicating the existence of unseen forces in which he instinctively believed. He experimented in alchemy, and studied the mystical and philosophical works he could find in the Library, as well as neo-platonic philosophy. Noticing an advertisement of Sinnett’s *Esoteric Buddhism*, he bought a copy, eagerly devoured its contents, and obtained an introduction to the author. This was in 1884, and it was in Sinnett’s house that he met William Quan Judge, who was then on his way to meet H.P. Blavatsky, in Paris, before continuing his journey to India. The same year he was admitted, together with his uncle, Bertram Keightley, into The Theosophical Society, by Col. H.S. Olcott himself, who was in London at the time. [428]

Archibald Keightley first met H.P. Blavatsky at a special meeting of the London Lodge, which was held in Mr. Hood’s rooms in Lincoln’s Inn, for the purpose of electing a new President. He writes:

The reason for the meeting lay in differences of opinion between Mr. Sinnett on the one hand, and Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Maitland on the other. Colonel Olcott was in the chair and endeavoured to adjust the differences of opinion, but without success. By him were seated the contending parties, Mohini M. Chatterji and one or two others, facing a long narrow room which was nearly filled with members of the Society. The dispute proceeded, waxing warm, and the

<sup>1</sup> [Final honours degree examinations at Cambridge University]

room steadily filled, the seat next to me being occupied by a stout lady who had just arrived, very much out of breath. At the moment someone at the head of the room alluded to some action of Mme. Blavatsky's, to which the stout lady gave confirmation in the words "That's so." At this point the meeting broke up in confusion, everybody ran anyhow to the stout lady, while Mohini arrived at her feet on his knees. Finally she was taken up to the end of the room where the "high gods" had been enthroned, exclaiming and protesting in several tongues in the same sentence, and the meeting tried to continue. However, it had to adjourn itself and, so far as I know, it never reassembled. Next day I was presented to Mme. Blavatsky, who was my stout neighbour of the evening. Her arrival was totally unexpected and her departure from Paris was, she told me long afterwards, arranged "under orders" only half an hour before she left. She arrived at Charing Cross without knowing the place of meeting, only knowing she had to attend it. "Followed my occult nose," she told me, and by this means got from the station to Lincoln's Inn and found her way to the rooms on foot.<sup>1</sup>

Other accounts of this meeting differ somewhat from this one, as seems to be the case with many accounts by "eye witnesses."

Archibald Keightley was then in the midst of his medical studies, and, living outside London, had very little time to spend in visits. So he did not see H.P. Blavatsky very often at the time. During the autumn of 1884, however, when H.P. Blavatsky returned from Elberfeld to London, she rented rooms in Victoria Road, together with Archibald's close friends, Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Cooper-Oakley, and he joined their household for a short time prior to H.P. Blavatsky's departure for India. He accompanied H.P. Blavatsky and the Cooper-Oakleys as far as Liverpool, and saw the steamer leave the docks on the Mersey. [429]

Archibald Keightley stood the test of the so-called Hodgson exposure without flinching. He was present at the meetings of the Society for Psychic Research at which the Report was read, and derived from it the impression of a poorly written "detective story." The only effect produced on his mind was a still greater contempt for circumstantial evidence, hearsay reports, and working hypotheses, than he had before.

In 1887, when H.P. Blavatsky was staying at Ostende, Dr. Keightley wrote jointly with a few others, urging her to make her headquarters in London; he made two trips to see her, and on his second trip accompanied her to England, together with Bertram Keightley, who had gone over for the same purpose. Both the Keightleys, and later Countess C. Wachtmeister, organized H.P. Blavatsky's household, first at Norwood, and later at 17 Lansdowne Road. This was the time when Archibald Keightley and his uncle Bertram became busily engaged in preparing H.P. Blavatsky's MSS. of *The Secret Doctrine* for the press, as well as helping her with the magazine *Lucifer*.

In the Spring of 1888, at H.P. Blavatsky's own request, Dr. Keightley went to the U.S.A., to attend the first Convention of the American Section, T.S., which was held at Chicago.<sup>2</sup> Arriving a little ahead of time, he was able to do some work for the Soci-

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. Keightley, "Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky," *Theosophical Quarterly*, New York, Vol. VII, October 1910

<sup>2</sup> [Look up "Open Letters to the American Convention," in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]



ety on the Eastern Coast of America. Directly after that Convention he returned to Europe. Next year, in 1889, it was again suggested that Dr. Keightley should visit America, but at first H.P. Blavatsky was opposed to his doing so. One Sunday night she said so “finally.” At half past six next morning, however, she sent for Dr. Keightley and asked him: “When can you start for America?” “By the next steamer,” he replied. The following Tuesday he sailed, visiting Chicago, Cincinnati, Boston, Washington, and Philadelphia, where he first made the acquaintance of his future wife, who was then a widow, Mrs. Julia Campbell Ver Planck. She was obliged to live in Philadelphia for family reasons, but none the less gave most valuable help to W.Q. Judge in editing *The Path* in New York, besides contributing invaluable articles as “Jasper Niemand” and under other pen-names.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of 1890, Dr. Keightley travelled to Australia and New Zealand, accompanied by his sister who was in rather poor health, spending six months in New Zealand. From there he went to San Francisco, visiting the Branches on the Coast [430] lecturing on Theosophy wherever he went. In spite of his devoted care, his sister died, this being one of the greatest sorrows of his life. Crossing the continent, he attended the Boston Convention of 1891, as delegate for the British Section, and returned to England in the summer of that year. H.P. Blavatsky had passed away, and his stay in England was but of brief duration. He was soon back in America, marrying Mrs. Ver Planck in the autumn of 1891, and settling in New York, where he practised his profession while giving as much time as he could to lecturing and other work for the Society.<sup>2</sup>

In the Spring of 1893, Dr. and Mrs. Keightley moved to London, where he began to build up a practice which increased steadily as the years passed. He did this, partly to please his aging mother, and to be within easy reach of her in Westmorland, and partly because Judge wanted Mrs. Keightley to supervise a department of the work at the headquarters of the Society in London, during the prospective absence of Annie Besant in India. They resided for a while at 17 Avenue Road, next door to the headquarters building, but moved away at the time when troubles had started in connection with the so-called “Judge Case,” and great tension arose among the residents at headquarters. Judge found them at Richmond, when he arrived in London in connection with the so-called “trial,” in July 1894. Dr. Keightley was the foremost of Judge’s representatives at this “trial” and remained loyal to him. Later, after Judge’s return to New York, Dr. Keightley used his home at 62 Queen Ann St., Cavendish Square, where he lived and practised, as an unofficial headquarters for all those in England who had sided with Judge. After the Boston Convention of 1895, when the American Section declared its organizational independence and became the Theosophical Society in America, Dr. Keightley was elected President of this organization in England, July 4–5<sup>th</sup>, 1895, and his home became the official centre for the activities of this Society.

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<sup>1</sup> It was to “Jasper Niemand,” i.e., Mrs. Julia Keightley, that W.Q. Judge wrote the letters published first in the pages of *The Path*, and later in book-form, under the title of “Letters That Have Helped Me.” Their authorship has been wrongly ascribed to different people, including Mrs. Keightley herself.

<sup>2</sup> The reader is referred to the biographical account of Julia Ver Planck, under JULIA WHARTON KEIGHTLEY [see pages 8-10 of this study.]

Dr. Keightley continued to hold this post after Judge's death in 1896, and the election of Ernest T. Hargrove, April 26–27<sup>th</sup>, 1896, as President, to succeed Judge. He was re-elected for another term of office at the Second Annual Convention held in London. May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1896. For a while, both Dr. Keightley and his wife gave whole-hearted support to Katherine Tingley and her activities, and even came over to the U.S.A., in April 1897, when she had completed her tour around the world. They attended the Convention held in New York, April 25–26<sup>th</sup>, 1897, and soon after returned to England. In the course of succeeding months various frictions ensued, and Dr. Keightley resigned as President of the English [431] T.S., November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1897, first without giving any reasons whatsoever, but later stating [to] them somewhat vaguely as being due to the inability of performing his duties and adhering, at the same time, to the principles to which he was dedicated.

After the Convention held by The Theosophical Society in America, at Handel Hall, Chicago, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1898, when Katherine Tingley launched a new Organization called "The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society," Dr. Archibald Keightley and his wife preferred to remain with the small minority which did not accept the new Constitution. They continued for years to be active in that body, in literary and other capacities, contributing many articles to the *Theosophical Quarterly*, which had been started by C.A. Griscom in New York, in 1903.

In October 1915, Mrs. Julia Keightley died, after some years of suffering, leaving her husband with many warm friends but without the companionship of anyone, with whom he had been associated in the early years of the Movement. As was almost to be expected, Dr. Keightley found his way back to New York, where he settled permanently in 1920, and proceeded to build up yet another practice, and a very successful one.

He passed away on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1930, at St. Luke's Hospital, New York, as a result of a heart condition which had caused him much trouble over a period of months. His end came suddenly and apparently without suffering, and his body was cremated on November 20<sup>th</sup>, after a service at the Chapel of the Comforter.

An anatomist such as few are, with an immense experience in medication, open-minded and ready to use Homeopathic, Eclectic, and other remedies, as those of his own school, so long as he found them to be effective, Dr. Keightley was above all "a born healer," as H.P. Blavatsky said of him. His patients loved him for his wonderful kindness, for his sympathy and ready understanding. His knowledge of Theosophy enabled him to act as physician to weary hearts and blighted souls, as much as to diseased bodies. He was not wealthy, but at least half of his time and labour were given for love of his work, and of his fellow human beings, without financial recompense. One of the outstanding traits of his character was his profound humility, both in regard to his professional knowledge, and his Theosophical services.

When H.P. Blavatsky presented him with the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*, as soon as she saw him after their publication, she wrote in the first:

To Archibald Keightley, a true Theosophist — the friend, helper, brother and occult child, of his true and faithful — through her last aeon —

H.P. BLAVATSKY ∴

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1889

And in the second volume:

To Archibald Keightley, my truly loved friend and brother, and one of the zealous editors of this work; and may these volumes, when their author is dead and gone, remind him of her, whose name in the present incarnation is

H.P. BLAVATSKY

My days are my Pralayas, my nights — my Manvantaras.

H.P.B.

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1889<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sources:

Dr. A. Keightley, "Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky," *Theosophical Quarterly*, New York, Vol. VII, October 1910, pp. 109 *et seq.*;

E.T. Hargrove, "Archibald Keightley," *ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, January 1931, pp. 289-93;

C. Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*, etc. (London 1893), pp. 96-100;

Dr. A. Keightley, "In Memoriam," *Lucifer*, Vol. VIII, July 1891, pp. 362-64; and "From Ostende to London," *The Path*, New York, Vol. VII, November 1892, pp. 245-48;

"Dr. Keightley Speaks," reprinted from the *New York Times* in *The Theosophist*, Vol. X, July 1889, pp. 595-601;

"Faces of Friends," *The Path*, Vol. VIII, September 1893, pp. 177-78; brief items in *The Path*, Vol. X, August 1895, pp. 165-66; *Theosophy* (cont. of *The Path*), Vol. XI, July 1896, pp. 126; August 1896, p. 131; November 1896, p. 255; and Vol. XII, May 1897, p. 64; June 1897, p. 126;

*The Theosophical Forum*, New Series, Vol. III, February 1898, pp. 25-27.

## 2. Julia Wharton Keightley

### 1851–1915

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) IX pp. 435-38.

Mrs. Julia Wharton Keightley was a Theosophical writer and lecturer. She was the daughter of the Hon. James H. Campbell, a prominent Pennsylvania lawyer who had a distinguished career; he commanded a regiment during the Civil War, served as member of the U.S. Congress for several terms, and held two diplomatic commissions under President Lincoln, as Minister to Sweden and Norway, and later at Bogotá, Colombia. Her mother was Juliet Lewis, daughter of Chief Justice Ellis Lewis of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, a writer of verse possessing great poetic charm and value.

The year of Julia's birth is not definitely known, but must have taken place sometime in the middle of the fifties of last century.<sup>1</sup> Her childhood was spent among the Pennsylvania mountains, [436] and later on the continent of Europe, where she was educated and entered the Society of foreign courts at the early age of sixteen. Even then, she had already developed the literary talent for which she became well-known in later days, and which were so characteristic of her family. Her early writings consisted of translations from the poems written by the Kings of Sweden, and of original verse, tales, and descriptions published in *Harper's Magazine*, the *Galaxy*, and other periodicals, both under her own name and the *nom-de-plume* of "Espérance." The full market rates paid to her for these writings are evidence that their fine quality was recognized by the Editors of the day. The author felt an intense desire to help others by means of her writings.

Julia W.L. Campbell married in 1871 Philip W. Ver Planck of New York. Six years later, in the course of a single year, she lost her husband and both of her sons suddenly, as the result of a dramatic series of events, the nature of which does not seem to have been definitely recorded. This was followed by a long and difficult illness brought about by the sudden shocks.

It was during her slow recovery that Julia Ver Planck wrote her two successful plays, *The Puritan Maid* and *Sealed Instructions*, the latter having had a marked success during two seasons at the Madison Square Theatre in New York, as well as in other parts of the country.

Owing to family custom, Julia belonged to the Episcopal Church, but found no spiritual life there. For a time, she had ceased to seek for any such life, satisfied to all appearances with what literature and art had to offer, in a happy domestic and social

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<sup>1</sup> [Nineteenth Century]



circle where leisure and refined conditions permitted the cultivation of personal gifts. Yet an inner yearning for something greater and deeper made itself felt.

One day, while lunching with her close friend, Mrs. Anna Lynch Botta, the name of Madame Blavatsky was mentioned, though she was spoken of as an exposed fraud. Mrs. Botta invited her to hear Arthur Gebhard speak on Theosophy at the home of a friend of hers. The impression produced upon Julia Ver Planck was so deep that she joined the Theosophical Society within two weeks, and started upon her Theosophical career. This must have taken place sometime around 1886.

Living with her parents at a distance from New York, she made herself useful by writing for Mr. Judge's *Path* magazine under the names of "Julius," "August Waldensee," "J" and later under the pseudonym of "Jasper Niemand," and also corresponding with various T.S. inquirers. Writers were so few in these early days of the Movement that they had to take several names and sometimes try and develop several distinct styles of writing. [437]

It appears that when Julia Ver Planck began to write articles for Theosophical journals, H.P. Blavatsky sent her a pen which Julia always used for this type of work. She said that, while the articles were always written in full objective consciousness, she felt at such times special inspiration and greater mental freedom. There can hardly be any question about the high level of her writings, and the profound mystical quality of most of them. Here and there they embody some profound occult truths which bespeak deeper knowledge acquired perchance in former lives.<sup>1</sup>

The well known series of letters known as the *Letters that have Helped me*, began to be published in *The Path*, Vol. III, December 1888, and continued through Vol. IV, March 1890. They were signed "Z," which letter stands for William Quan Judge, who wrote these Letters to Julia Ver Planck, or "Jasper Niemand," at the express wish of H.P. Blavatsky. They were later published in book-form in 1891, and re-published many times since.<sup>2</sup>

In connection with H.P. Blavatsky's request that such Letters be written, we have a very interesting and valuable statement from Bertram Keightley, in which he says:

The letter which is the source of this request, and which conveys assurance of Mr. Judge's qualifications for the office of instructor, purported to be written *through* Madame Blavatsky (it begins "Says Master"), and is one of those so ably described by Col. H.S. Olcott in *The Theosophist* for July 1893, where he says that communications from higher occult sources received through H.P. Blavatsky always resembled her handwriting.

This modification of H.P. Blavatsky's handwriting is decidedly interesting in the above-mentioned letter, whose data amply justify the manner in which "Z" is spoken of in Niemand's preface. Moreover, H.P. Blavatsky spoke of her friend Mr. Judge as the "exile," and Annie Besant wrote later on, "You are indeed fortunate in having

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<sup>1</sup> See especially her "Tea-Table Talks" in *The Path*, beginning with Vol. I, December 1886; and her remarkable "Letters to a Lodge," published in *The Irish Theosophist*, Dublin, beginning with Vol. III, November 1894.

<sup>2</sup> A second Series of Letters was published in 1905 under the same title; this is somewhat misleading because, as is stated in the Preface, they are excerpts from Judge's letters written to various people, and are not the continuation of the original series.

W.Q.J. as Chief. Now that H.P.B. has gone, it is the Americans who have as immediate leader, the greatest of the exiles.” [438]

After the passing of H.P. Blavatsky, Julia Ver Planck now and again joined the New York staff of workers as a re-inforcement during Judge’s prolonged absences. During one of these periods she met Annie Besant at the Boston Convention of 1891; it was also at that time that the T.S. League of Workers was formed, later inaugurated in Europe also.

Julia Ver Planck continued to live with her parents in Philadelphia until the Fall of 1891, when she married Dr. Archibald Keightley. After a year’s residence in New York, they were called to England by the health of Dr. Keightley’s mother.

For later events in her life, until her passing in October 1915, the reader is referred to the biographical account of Dr. Archibald Keightley.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Chief Source: *The Path*, New York, Vol. IX, April 1894.

## 3. Bertram Keightley

### 1860–1944

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) IX pp. 432-35.

Mr. Bertram Keightley was an English Theosophist and staunch friend and collaborator of H.P. Blavatsky during the London days. He was born at Birkenhead, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1860. His father was a Liverpool solicitor and owner of much land which later greatly increased in value. Both his parents were to some degree influenced by the mystical Christianity of Swedenborg, so that Bertram escaped the more orthodox forms of faith. His education began at Charterhouse, a famous school, and was then carried on in Germany and France, and finished at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he majored in mathematics. He also took the degree of Master of Arts. Being endowed with an eager intelligence, he was especially attracted by philosophy and science, and combined the critical acumen of the student with a genuine love and intuition for mysticism. While still at Cambridge, he studied mesmerism and was led to the reading of Éliphas Lévi, mediaeval mystics, and neo-platonic writers. He came into Theosophy quite naturally. Having come across Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* and recognizing in it the outline of a system which would co-ordinate previous study and furnish a complete philosophy of life, he promptly made the acquaintance of the author. He first merely attended the meetings of the London [433] Lodge, T.S.; then, early in 1884, he was admitted to the Theosophical Society, together with his own nephew, Dr. Archibald Keightley, and Mr. and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, by Col. H.S. Olcott himself, then in England.

He first met H.P. Blavatsky at a special meeting of the London Lodge described by his nephew, Dr. Archibald Keightley.<sup>1</sup> William Quan Judge tells<sup>2</sup> how H.P. Blavatsky suddenly informed him that she was ordered by her Teacher to go quickly to London and attend the London Lodge meeting, although she was not well at the time. An old tie between H.P. Blavatsky and Bertram as well as Archibald Keightley was no doubt renewed, and they placed themselves and all they had at her service. Bertram spent much of the spring and summer of 1884 in H.P. Blavatsky's company in Paris and London, going with her to Elberfeld, Germany, in the fall of the same year. He met W.Q. Judge that same summer, when he was in England on his way to India.

In the year 1885, Bertram Keightley was Hon. Sec. of the London Lodge T.S., and continued to be associated with it until the formation of the Blavatsky Lodge in 1887. In that year, H.P. Blavatsky being quite sick at Ostende, he and his nephew went over twice to that city to urge her to come over to London and help [her] with the

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<sup>1</sup> See the foregoing biographical sketch.

<sup>2</sup> *The Path*, Vol. VIII, August 1893, p. 143



work there. After his second visit, he and Dr. Keightley accompanied her to England, after she had decided to make the move.

In the same year he joined with Dr. Archibald Keightley and Countess Constance Wachtmeister in forming the celebrated household at 17, Lansdowne Road, London, making it possible for H.P. Blavatsky to reside in England. From that time, dates the active participation of both the Keightleys in the preparation of the manuscript of *The Secret Doctrine* for the press.<sup>1</sup> Bertram Keightley was largely responsible in meeting the financial deficiencies incurred in the printing of this work. Apart from this work, he helped H.P. Blavatsky with her newly-founded magazine *Lucifer*, and later, together with his nephew, typed and duplicated her E.S. *Instructions*.

At the request made by H.P. Blavatsky herself, Bertram Keightley came to New York in the Fall of 1889, and visited the majority of the Branches in the United States, attending the Chicago [434] Convention of April 27–28<sup>th</sup>, 1890, as special delegate, afterwards returning to Europe. A month later, again at H.P. Blavatsky's request, he embarked for India, reaching Bombay August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1890.<sup>2</sup> He was soon elected General Secretary of the newly-formed Indian Section which was chartered January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1891. He also organized the Indian E.S.

Simultaneously with the founding of the Indian Section, Bertram Keightley started the publication of a monthly journal called *The Prasnotara*, very similar to *The Theosophical Forum* issued by W.Q. Judge in the U.S.A. It was intended for Questions and Answers and was to be distributed free to the Members of the Section.<sup>3</sup>

While in India, Bertram Keightley travelled extensively, working among the various Branches and founding new ones. H.P. Blavatsky died while he was absent from England. After her passing, he joined Col. H.S. Olcott at Colombo, Ceylon, and sailed with him for a brief visit to London, returning to India shortly afterwards, and leaving India again in January 1893.

On this last trip he suffered shipwreck on his way from Madras to Colombo. The SS. *Niemen*, a coasting steamer of the "Messageries Maritimes," was wrecked-off the coast of Trincomalee on the Eastern shore of Ceylon, within a few hundred yards of shore. Bertram Keightley was the last of the passengers to leave the sinking ship. All of them spent the night in crowded boats, unable to cross the surf till daylight, and then were obliged to walk many miles through sand, marsh, mud, and jungle to the nearest village, in the blistering sun and without food or water. Bertram Keightley was barefoot. A few articles were washed ashore, but almost all of his luggage was totally lost, money, letters, personal souvenirs — worst of all, his "dispatch box," containing notes collected during two years for a work on Indian literature, and his cherished letters from H.P. Blavatsky.<sup>4</sup> It took him four days to get to Colombo. This misadventure came after another in which he was robbed.

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<sup>1</sup> See Bertram Keightley, *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky*. Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1931; 37pp., illus., as well as his and Dr. A. Keightley's accounts in Countess C. Wachtmeister's *Reminiscences*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *The Theosophist*, Vol. XII, Supplement to October 1890, pp. ii-iii

<sup>3</sup> Published from January 1891 to about March 1904, when Theosophy in India took its place.

<sup>4</sup> *The Path*, Vol. VIII, April 1893, pp. 30-31; *Lucifer*, Vol. XII, p. 75.

Being in London in April 1893, he again travelled to America, and was a delegate from the European and Indian Sections at the American Convention of that month. In July 1893, being back in London, he was present at the Third Convention of the T.S. held there, William Q. Judge being present also. In May 1894, Annie Besant and he went to Sweden to attend the First Annual Convention of the Swedish T.S. [435]

During Judge's so-called "trial" Bertram Keightley was in London, his attitude being diametrically opposite to that taken by Dr. Archibald Keightley.

He remained in England until the death of his mother. Later he broke up his home and sailed for India, together with Annie Besant, who was on her way to Australia, reaching Colombo August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1894. Before going to Adyar, he lectured extensively in various parts of India, going first to Calcutta. Together with Annie Besant and Countess C. Wachtmeister, he took part in the organization of the Benares Centre, which became the headquarters of the Indian Section.

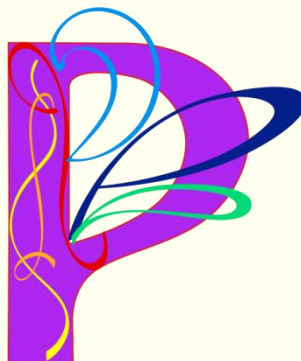
At the time of the so-called "split" of the original T.S., Bertram Keightley remained with the main body under the Presidency of Col. H.S. Olcott, and served for some time on the General Council of the Society, and as General Secretary of the British Section, 1901–1905. At a later time, after the passing of Col. Olcott, being opposed to the "presidential policy" of Annie Besant, he publicly expressed his dissent, but remained in the T.S., and it is said that he had promised to H.P. Blavatsky never to leave it. From that time on, until his passing at Cawnpore in 1945, he lived in practical seclusion and took no active part in the activities of the Theosophical Society.

Throughout the years of his work, Bertram Keightley was an eloquent speaker in the cause of Theosophy, and contributed a considerable number of essays and articles to various Theosophical periodicals. His *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky* (Adyar 1931) originally appeared as a contribution to the pages of *The Theosophist*.<sup>1</sup>

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

Compiler and Editor of

*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*



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<sup>1</sup> Sources, in addition to those referred to in the text above:

*The Path*, Vol. VI, 196-97; Vol. VIII, August 1893, pp. 143-44;

*Lucifer*, Vol. XV, pp. 171, 255, 507;

*The Canadian Theosophist*, Vol. XXV, p 339;

*The Theosophist*, Vol XXX, September 1909, pp. 729-30.



## Suggested reading for students.



### From our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.

- A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO LORD LYTTON
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- ALETHEIA IS OUR GOD AND DOGMA
- ANCIENT ETHICAL WORSHIPS
- ARCHAIC THEOSOPHY IS PRE-BUDDHIST WISDOM-RELIGION
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS BLAVATSKY
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY
- BLAVATSKY ON ANNA KINGSFORD
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ORIGIN AND SOURCE OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE THEOSOPHY OF DR. N.I. PIROGOV
- BLAVATSKY REFUTES ARGUMENTS AGAINST THEOSOPHY
- BLAVATSKY REFUTES THE ASSERTIONS OF A FRENCH THEOSOPHIST
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- COLD METAPHYSICS VERSUS DIVINE WISDOM
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- CORY'S ANCIENT FRAGMENTS (1832)
- COSMOPOLITANISM IS FAR HOLIER AND NOBLER THAN GRASPING GREEDINESS CLOAKED IN PATRIOTISM
- DE ZIRKOFF ON CHARLES JOHNSTON
- DE ZIRKOFF ON EDWARD DOUGLAS FAWCETT
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- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE DREAM THAT NEVER DIES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON WILHELM HÜBBE-SCHLEIDEN
- DE ZIRKOFF RECALLS HIS FORMATIVE YEARS IN RUSSIA
- EASTERN LIGHT SHINES ON WESTERN MINDS
- EASTERN OCCULTISM IS THE PARENT STREAM OF INNER WISDOM
- EASTERN THEOSOPHY IS NEITHER A CREED, NOR A RELIGIOUS BODY
- ESSENTIAL THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES
- HARTMANN ON HOW TO ENTER THE PATH TO INFINITE LIFE
- HARTMANN ON THE HARMONICAL SOCIETY
- HOW THEOSOPHY REKINDLED TRUE BROTHERHOOD IN INDIA
- HUMANITY SEEMS TO PROGRESS BY INVENTING ONE DISCOVERY AFTER THE OTHER
- IMPORT AND POTENCY OF NUMBERS AS SYMBOLS
- IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- ISIS UNVEILED IS THE MAJESTY OF TRUTH UNVEILED
- JUDGE AND DE ZIRKOFF ON GEORGE MEAD
- JUDGE ON THE HEART DOCTRINE
- JUDGE ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- JUDGE ON THE TRUE THEOSOPHIST'S PATH
- JUDGE ON THEOSOPHICAL STUDY AND WORK
- KEYS TO THE MYSTERY LANGUAGE
- LET THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY PERISH, THAN FORSAKE THE CAUSE OF TRUTH
- MYSTERY IS NOT UNREVEALED KNOWLEDGE
- OCCULT TRUTH IS NATURE WITHOUT THE ILLUSORY VEIL OF THE SENSES
- OUR GOD IS HUMANITY AND OUR CULT THE LOVE OF OUR FELLOW-MAN
- OUR ONLY DELIVERER AND SAVIOUR
- PLEDGED STUDENTS' PRESCRIBED GUIDE FOR CONDUCT
- PREREQUISITES TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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- SPURNED THE SUBSTANCE AND CLUTCHED THE SHADOW
- STUDENTS HAVE A CHOICE OF TWO PATHS
- SUBBA ROW DEFENDS ESOTERIC BUDDHISM
- SUBBA ROW'S ESOTERIC WRITINGS (1895)
- THAT WHICH IS FALSE CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY TRUTH
- THE AIMS AND MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY FULFILLED
- THE CHALDEAN ORACLES OF ZOROASTER
- THE CROWN JEWELS OF THEOSOPHY (PHOTO ALBUM)
- THE POWER OF THE TRINITY OF KOSMOS MANIFESTS THROUGH THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MAN
- THE REVIVAL OF EASTERN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY
- THE SUN OF TRUTH FEARS NO LIGHT AND NEEDS NO LIES
- THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IS NOT A NURSERY FOR BUDDING ADEPTS
- THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ARCANE TERMS
- THEOSOPHIA - FOUNTAIN, PERSPECTIVES, PRACTICE (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHIA: INNER WISDOM
- THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, THE GREAT MORAL BUT SILENT FORCE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - ESOTERIC SECTION (LETTERHEAD)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MISSION AND FUTURE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - OBJECTS AND EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SYMBOLS (TRUE TYPE FONT)
- THEOSOPHIST IS WHO THEOSOPHY DOES
- THEOSOPHISTS DEFINED ATTITUDINALLY, ETHICALLY, PHILOSOPHICALLY (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS
- THEOSOPHY BRINGS THE WISDOM OF LOVE BEFORE THE EYE OF THE SOUL
- THEOSOPHY IS DEEPER MONISM THAN SECULARISM, AND MORE PHILOSOPHICAL
- THEOSOPHY IS RELIGION ITSELF AND SUBLIME CODE OF ETHICS
- THEOSOPHY IS THE SCIENCE OF TRUTH AND THE RELIGION OF JUSTICE
- TRIBUTES TO WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- TRUE THEOSOPHISTS ARE ALWAYS UNDER THE MASTER'S EYE

**THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES**  
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- TRUTH IS ALWAYS MIXED WITH ERROR AND HINDERED BY TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
- TWO JOURNALS DEVOTED TO THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
- VERNAL BLOOMS BY WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- VISTAS OF VIRTUE AND TRUTH
- WADIA'S RESIGNATION FROM THE TS
- WHAT SORT OF MAN THE REAL PHILOSOPHER SHOULD BE?
- WHEN PURE LOVE IS PERVERTED, HUMANITY QUIVERS
- WHO CAN MEND THE BROKEN SOCIETY?
- WHO CAN READ THE RIDDLE OF THE SERPENT?
- WHO SHOULD BE INVITED TO THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS?
- WHY A BRAHMIN ABANDONED HIS CASTE
- WHY PAGAN SYMBOLISM IS INDESTRUCTIBLE?
- WILDER ON THE WISDOM RELIGION OF ZOROASTER

