

VIII.

A PRIVATE LETTER.

DEAR COUNTESS WACHTMEISTER,

As you are preparing a book upon H.P.B.'s method of writing *The Secret Doctrine*, you may like to include a sketch of her method of personally teaching her pupils at a distance.

Nothing has heretofore been printed upon this subject, nor could I do so if my name were appended to the account. Yet I think you and others will accept my statements especially as some of you have had proof that I was so taught, as, I doubt not, were others, though I do not know of them.

It is because this method in part resembles her description of how she was taught herself, and how she wrote *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine*, that I think it will be interesting in this connection.

Living some thousand of miles from England, I never met Madame Blavatsky in person. It is now seven years since first I heard her name, and the word "Theosophy." Like others of my acquaintance, I first heard of both by coming across the S.P.R. pamphlet denouncing her as an impostor and asserting the Hodgson-Coulomb slander as a true fact. Against this weak background with its feeble personalities, her colossal individuality stood sharply outlined, astonishing the spectators of this shallow age. It is not my habit to judge of persons by any specific acts, but

by the whole tendency of their teaching or their lives. H.P.B. herself wrote at about that time :—

“ Follow the path I show, the Masters who are behind : do not follow me or my path.”

I first took this as pointing out in herself, that common human liability to fail in living the truths it teaches and would fain attain, and I was willing to extend to Madame Blavatsky, the courageous Messenger, that lenient judgment which we ourselves ask for in like case.

Soon, however, I began to realise, through my own experience, that she was not what she seemed to be. Upon this point I will not dwell, further than to say that the evidence I had, caused me to ask H.P.B. to teach me; and the fact that I fully trusted in and believed her, is precisely what gained for me the fulfilment of my wish. The mental attitude of belief sets up, in our aura and in our inner bodies, magnetic and attractive conditions, very different to those of contraction and densification, which exist where doubt or criticism fill the mind. A literal quickening of my aura and inner body took place; the former was felt even by persons to whom my thoughts and Theosophic interests were all unknown. The contraction in which men and women enfold themselves is too little understood. To be known, faith and devotion must first be had. I have heard tell of one of her readers who said that Madame Blavatsky never published anything about the human aura. What a ripple of amusement then went the rounds of those who have any clues to *The Secret Doctrine* or knowledge of certain other matters!

The situation was then this. I was at a great distance from H.P.B. Madame Blavatsky died before I ever met her. I was not, I never became a “ Psychic ” as that

word is generally used. I had no wish for "powers," never sat for "meditation" or "concentration." It is, however, natural for me to concentrate upon whatever I do, and Theosophy is never out of my mind. I was not and I am not a vegetarian. I had taken no ascetic vows. I had never had any "psychic," clairvoyant or subjective experiences (except those of thought) in my life. I lived quite another life until Theosophy expanded my mind and urged me to strenuous efforts in study and T.S. work, in order that help might come to all those minds obscured by the chill sense of being alone and helpless in a world of chance, where no internal peace could be gained save through the narcotization of Dogma, Doctrine or Convention. The use of narcotics—even for the mind—becomes in time a new form of suffering.

After H.P.B. accepted me as a pupil, no rules were laid down, no plans formulated. I continued my daily routine, and at night, after I fell into a deep sleep, the new life began. On waking in the morning from a sleep so profound that the attitude of the previous night was still retained, I would vividly remember that I had gone, as it were, to H.P.B. I had been received in rooms which I could and did describe to those who lived with her—described, even to the worn places or holes in the carpet. On the first occasion of this kind she signified to me her acceptance of me as a pupil and in no other way. After that, she would receive me in varying fashion, showing me pictures which passed like panoramas across the walls of the room.

There are but few that I could verbally describe, containing as they do methods of Motion, of vibration, of the formation of a world from the first nucleolus, of "Spirit

moulding matter " into form, of Motion that was Consciousness and that was precipitated in my brain as a picture of a fact or a truth. There were definite things too, facts given in *The Secret Doctrine* and in other teachings, none of these being published at the time. Many more things than I can name were thus taught to me, such as future events, events then actually occurring, and facts still unknown relative to the lives of other persons or of the T.S. At other times, times more rare, I would awake to find her standing at the foot of my bed, and as I leaned upon my elbow, her sign-language would begin, the harmonies of Nature would fill the moonlit room, while the wondrous living pictures passed across the wall. All this was perfectly objective to me. I was fully awake to all the surroundings, to all the natural sounds of the night, and I have taken my pet dog into my arms because it shivered and whimpered at sight of her. All the expressions of H.P.B.'s face became familiar to me. I can see her now, her old bedgown—what dingy old gown was ever so cherished?—folded about her, as she opened out space before me, and then, too, expanded into her own real being.

I have hardly more than half-a-dozen letters from her, and these contain no teaching; they bore upon external theosophic affairs and have this peculiarity. At night she would tell me to advise certain persons of certain things. I would obey, giving her as my authority, and a few days afterwards, but never long enough for the full voyage, would come her letter giving in writing the instructions previously heard at night. Thus I was enabled to prove that I really heard her wish over seas, for always the request concerned some sudden emergency which had

just arisen a day, two days at most, before. I was able to check off my experience in this way, as I was also able to speak at times before an event occurred. I never went into a trance but once, and that was after Madame Blavatsky's death. I never had anything to do with spiritualism or mediums. After a short time, I was able to see and to hear at will, without training or effort, as simply and as easily as one breathes. I could see a distant place or person or hear a reply to a question at will. I never made a mistake, though those who had the right, tested me. But let me hasten to add also that I never did any of these things for idle curiosity, but only for the work of Theosophy, and that such use of force at will is with me comparatively infrequent. I do not know how far it extends, simply because I do not care to know.

There are persons who hope to turn us to the belief that H. P. B. was no more than a chela, deserted at the last. But to this day the things she foretold keep on coming true, aye, even to their tempting us, even to definite events for which she prepared us by forewarning us. So all the clatter and chatter, the turmoil and revelations leave us undisturbed, and the apostles of a revised teaching reveal their ignorance of what she taught as clues, clues which they cannot find. The proof, the ever-recurring, ever-living proof, is ours.

There were thus two classes of events. First, those in which she taught me, or in which persons, to me objective, would appear and would show me certain things, or when voices would speak bringing news which came again later on, by post or otherwise. The second class was made up of those minor occasions in which I used my own will.

Well do I remember that night when H. P. B. commanded me to use the developing powers for the Theosophical Society only, and to beware of the psychic will-o'-the-wisp.

What I write may seem vague. I will give instances. I was about to enter upon a plan of work with a person whom I was meeting for the first time. All at once I saw in the air H.P.B.'s beautiful hand—the hand with the seal ring upon it—drawing along the atmosphere, just at the height of my eyes, a series of pictures. These pictures represented a course of events and caused me to change my plans; some time after I verified the occurrences. Once I was forewarned of a death which took place at some distance, at the very hour of the warning. Again, I trusted and leaned much upon a certain person, who was gaining an influence over my mind as one learned in spiritual things. One night H.P.B. came, leading this person by the hand, and drawing the skin away from the body of her companion, showed me the internal organs in a hideous state of disease. H.P.B. then pointed to the corner of the room; a bright star seemed to shoot from the heavens and to fall into an abyss. H.P.B. made a sign (and her language was one of signs which vibrated through the ether and seemed to fall into my brain as thoughts), the sign and gesture meant:—"Trust not the fallen star." All this came true, horribly, sadly true.

These events continue to take place, but I must note a difference in their method of occurrence since the death of Madame Blavatsky.

1. I do not see that person.
2. The events occur almost always in the daytime.
3. I am almost always fully conscious on the objective material plane as well.

4. The exceptions to 3 are when my consciousness seems to function in another time or place or body, but even then they occupy but a few seconds apparently, inasmuch as the people about me will have noticed nothing, and I have apparently continued my previous occupation, while I have, so far as my own consciousness goes, been living quite a time in other ages, planes or places. For instance, while dressing in the morning and thinking of the day's plans, I have at the same time felt myself to be in the body of a friend who was then in a steamer in mid-ocean, fastening his collar-button before a mirror, cursing it because it would not fasten, and thinking of me. His sea-trunk lay open behind him. I took a note of the day and hour and subsequently verified his action. The curious part of it is that I felt myself to be both persons and continued both trains of thought at one and the same time.

5. I use my will much more frequently than I did.

And finally, this. A few days after Madame Blavatsky died, H. P. B. awoke me at night. I raised myself, feeling no surprise, but only the sweet accustomed pleasure. She held my eyes with her leonine gaze. Then she grew thinner, taller, her shape became masculine; slowly then her features changed, until a man of height and rugged powers stood before me, the last vestige of her features melting into his, until the leonine gaze, the progressed radiance of her glance alone remained. The man lifted his head and said: "Bear witness!" He then walked from the room, laying his hand on the portrait of H. P. B. as he passed. Since then he has come to me several times, with instructions, in broad daylight while I was busily working, and once he stepped out from a large portrait of H. P. B.

In closing this partial sketch of an inner life which goes on *pari passu* with the outer, let me impress upon you the fact that I never seek or look for any of these things, just as I never use my will to see or hear except when impelled from within. H. P. B. taught me to be "positive" on the psychic plane and "receptive" to higher planes or Beings alone. She taught that the mind was all. Whatever development I gained, came unsought, I never made myself "passive." I am, when awake, at all times able to use whatever gifts I have; I found them within myself and I use them instinctively, naturally, although I had no trace of them before I found H.P.B. Rarely, very rarely now, do I get things in dreams.

It is my firm conviction, based upon experience, that to the sole fact of my devotion to the Lodge, the T.S. and H.P.B., do I owe any of these teachings. This devotion no shock can impair, for my double life and all my consciousness daily prove what these high truths are. In that belief and in the hope that my experience may quicken the seeds of devotion in other minds, I give this out impersonally, for H.P.B. showed me that the mind was all, and how she came to break the moulds of human minds and to set them free. The real H.P.B. was disclosed, and I am one of those who have no difficulty in reconciling all the facts of her outer existence, for some there are who can see behind the veils used by the high occultist when dealing with the unseen at the heart of material things.

Thus taught, in the harmonious nights, that H.P.B. who wrote:—

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

Blessed, indeed, are those who shared her Manvantaras, and who "have not seen and yet have believed."

R. S.

NOTE.—It has been suggested to me that this rapid unfolding without ascetic practice, was due to my "getting back" what was before known to me. I cannot say yea or nay to this, for I know nothing about it. What appears to be necessary, in occultism, is that *each should follow the doctrine of his own Teacher with regard to himself*. There are many souls at various stages of evolution, each with its own requirements. Moreover, the requirements of practical occultism, the evolution of force in one's self, are again different. To these I have not been attracted, in this life at least. But above all, Devotion to the ideal of the Teachers and to the work, is the firm ground upon which to stand.

R. S.