

H.P.B.'s Alter Ego in Europe: Dr. Archibald Keightley

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Archibald Keightley is a familiar name to students of theosophy mostly because of his dedication to H.P. Blavatsky — especially at the time she was writing *The Secret Doctrine*.

The following article by a *New York Times* reporter is an interview with Keightley after his arrival in New York City to attend the Third Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, American Section held in Chicago on April 28th and 29th, 1889. The actual date of his arrival is not known but he delivered a talk at the Aryan T.S. on Tuesday, the 23rd. From there he and W.Q. Judge travelled together to Cincinnati where a special meeting of the Society was held on April 26th.

Archibald Keightley first met Judge at A.P. Sinnett's house in 1884 when Judge was on his way to meet H.P. Blavatsky in Paris before continuing his journey to India. Keightley met Blavatsky for the first time shortly after (*Theosophical Quarterly* 28:289). While in Paris Blavatsky wanted Judge to stay to help her with the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*. Is it only by chance that A. Keightley later became her principal assistant with the *S.D.*? There are hints that since the Masters had other plans for Judge, in America, they also had plans for Keightley to serve as Judge's replacement to help Blavatsky. Bertram Keightley later acknowledged in his *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky* that during this time much of his focus was also as "sub-editor of *Lucifer*" while "Arch's centred upon the *S.D.*" (pp.12,17).

In A. Keightley's January 12th, 1895 pamphlet, written in defense of Judge, he states:

H.P.B. ∴ made a very close tie between W.Q. Judge and myself over nine years ago. She also wrote: "Regard Bro. . . . and William Q. Judge as my two *alter Egos*. — H.P.B." (p.2)

Blavatsky's special occult relationship with A.K. is naively misunderstood by Bertram Keightley. In his book Bertram also writes:

Our after-dinner gathering . . . I recall those evenings as most delightful and instructive. But often they were painful. For H.P.B. "trained" those she took an interest in rather drastically. She pos-

essed an absolutely uncanny insight — clear and unerring — into the foibles, weaknesses, defects and faults of those about her. She watched her opportunity to drag such out into the light. . . . This she insistently did — with me at least — at any or every moment of the day: but rather especially at those evening gatherings. . . . (pp.18-19)

Once I asked her why she left him [A.K.] out in her "training". She replied, it was "because he has a blue liver"* — whatever that might mean. (p.27)

From the article which follows it becomes clear that Blavatsky did not leave A. Keightley out of her special "training" program — that she in fact had a special occult connection with him, as she had with Judge.

A. Keightley came from England as a Delegate from the Branches in Great Britain, and as Special Representative of H.P. Blavatsky. This was the second time in as many years that Blavatsky had chosen him to represent her at the American Convention. While in America some earnest theosophists offered to pay Keightley's expenses to visit distant Western Branches but he declined saying that he could be called back to London at any moment. On Keightley's return from Chicago he and Judge revisited Cincinnati on May 1st. Keightley went on to visit branches in Philadelphia, Boston and Malden.

This article was reprinted in *The Theosophist*, July 1889 with the addition of three footnotes; it is reprinted here directly from the *New York Times*. Upon reading the opening paragraph one cannot help but think that the article must have been written by a member of the Theosophical Society. Another clue is that it was immediately forwarded to the editor of *The Theosophist* — most likely by the reporter himself. The reporter who comes to mind is James H. Connelly, a close friend of Judge and a member of the Aryan T.S. at the time. Although Connelly was associated with *The Sun* for years he did work for other prominent New York newspapers as well. Another interesting fact is that Richard Harte, also a New York newspaper man, was then in India and, at this particular time, was "the interim Editor of *The Theosophist* while Olcott left for a tour of Japan, January to July 1889." (*The Judge Case* I:343)

* One interpretation of Blue Liver goes as follows: as the liver symbolizes the lower quaternary and as Blue is symbolic of the higher mind, blue liver means one whose lower quaternary has been purified. This would have made Archibald of immense value to H.P.B. in editing *The Secret Doctrine*, and would also explain why she did not focus on any of his flaws — there simply were none. - Ed.

THE USEFUL ASTRAL LIGHT*

By Which One Can Quote What He Has Not Read.

Very Latest News About The Condition of Theosophy, Occultism, and Mme. Blavatsky.

Dr. A. Keightley of London, one of the leading theosophists of England, passed through New-York a day or two ago on his way to attend, as a representative, the annual theosophical convention in Chicago. In a conversation here upon topics of theosophic interest he said:

“When Col. H.S. Olcott was in England last October there was a reorganization of the British section of the Theosophical Society upon a plan analogous to that of the American section. Prior to that time we had only one lodge, situated in London, but having members all over the country. It was a large, unwieldy body, too much scattered and its members too generally personally unknown to each other to admit of that unity of feeling and harmony of action which were deemed essential to right progress. Col. Olcott, President of the society, therefore chartered new branches in London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Cambridge, and elsewhere, and put the English section upon a new basis, with an autonomous government so far as its own affairs were concerned. The movement is now flourishing well in England, including among its earnest supporters some of the most intelligent, learned, and progressive thinkers of the present day in that country. It is, of course, not advancing so rapidly as in the United States, but that is not to be expected. For England is doing remarkably well. Col. Olcott also effected like reorganization in France, and established a Continental European section similar to the British, the American and the three already in being in India.

“There have been recently some noteworthy defections from the theosophic body in England; some previously prominent members have developed a personality of feeling not in harmony with theosophical principles, and have abandoned or been read out of ‘the fold.’ While they are to be regretted — mainly for their effect upon the persons themselves — they were not at all unexpected, and the explanation of them is peculiarly interesting. A few months since a class was formed, under the direct instruction of Mme. H.P. Blavatsky, for the prosecution of study in occultism known as the ‘esoteric section,’ and a considerable number of the most earnest and devoted theosophists of Europe and America are included in it. When that class was formed the warning was to all who entered it that an inevitable effect of occult stud-

ies, and an early one, would be the animating and bringing to the surface with almost irresistible force of all the most hidden and powerful impulses, desires, purposes, and traits of character in the student. Every possible phase and degree of selfishness, from the loftiest purposes of personal ambition down to the most degrading tendencies to vicious self-indulgences, however previously concealed or suppressed, or even if only latent and hardly visible to the self-knowledge of the student, would rise up with hitherto undreamed-of energy as tempters and betrayers that would have to be overcome and crushed out of being forever in the student’s soul before real progress could be attained. It is probable that few realized the importance of that warning, certain that some did not believe in the reality of the dangerous condition they would inevitably be called upon to endure. But the realization of what was foretold has come already, and some of those most sensitive to the effects have developed such personal characteristics and tendencies as render further progress impossible for them until they shall have achieved such victory over self as at present seems too great for them even to comprehend. And as the study progresses more will no doubt be similarly affected among those who are slower, but none the less certain, to find that obstacle in their way. The study of occultism has an effect in the soul like the furious boiling of a liquid that drives to its surface and makes visible all the scum and impurities it may contain. Not until the scum has been brought to light and removed can the liquid become clear and pure; not until the evil that is in the soul is made manifest, recognized, and expelled can the soul be elevated and rendered capable of grasping and making use of the higher knowledge. That there are dangers, real and terrible, thus to be encountered almost at the threshold of occultism is beyond all question, as sad proofs in our experience already amply attest.

“Mme. Blavatsky continues to labor as ceaselessly as of old, and under conditions of such physical disability as render not simply her working but actually her living truly marvelous. I may say, as a physician, and not simply upon my own authority, but as a fact known to some of the leading medical practitioners of London, that never before has a patient been known to live even for a week under such conditions of renal disorder as have been chronic with her for very many

* Reprinted from *New York Times*, April 29, 1889, p.5

months past. Lately they have been somewhat modified by the action of strychnia, of which she now takes a little over six grains daily. Very frequently she has attacks of cerebral apoplexy, but without any treatment known to medical science wards them off and goes on, firmly confident as ever that her present life will not end from any cause before its work is fully accomplished. And in that work she is indefatigable. Her hours of labor are daily from 6:30 A.M. to 7 P.M. with only a few minutes interruption for a light meal just before the sun reaches the meridian. During that time she devotes a great deal of her attention to preparing the instructions for the 'esoteric section,' giving out such knowledge as is permitted her to impart and its members are capable of receiving. Then the editorial labor connected with the production of her magazine, *Lucifer*, devolves entirely upon her. And she also edits the new French theosophical monthly magazine *La Revue Theosophique* published by the Countess d'Adhemar in Paris, and writes occasional articles for the *Path*, the *Theosophist*, and other journals. In addition to this she carries on a voluminous personal correspondence. The Countess d'Adhemar, by the way, is an American by birth. Her magazine is now publishing a series of brilliant articles by 'Amaravelia' and a translation in French of Mme. Blavatsky's 'Secret Doctrine.'

"The third volume of 'The Secret Doctrine' is in manuscript ready to be given to the printers. It will consist mainly of a series of sketches of the great occultists of all ages, and is a most wonderful and fascinating work. The fourth volume, which is to be largely hints on the subject of practical occultism, has been outlined, but not yet written. It will demonstrate what occultism really is, and show how the popular conception of it has been outraged and degraded by fraudulent pretenders to its mysteries who have, for greed of gain or other base purposes, falsely claimed possession of the secret knowledge. This exposure will necessitate its being brought up sharply to date as a historical record, so that the actual work of writing it will not be commenced until we are about ready to bring it forth.

"In the evening, from 7 until 11 o'clock, and sometimes 2 o'clock A.M., Mme. Blavatsky receives visitors, of whom she has many. Of course, many are friends, others are serious investigators, and not a few are impelled by curiosity to see a woman who is one of the prominent personages of the world to-day. All are welcome and she is equally ready in meeting all upon any ground they select.

"Mr. G. J. Romanes, a Fellow of the Royal Society, comes in to discuss the evolutionary theory set forth in her 'Secret Doctrine;' Mr. W. T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who is a great admirer of the 'Secret

Doctrine,' finds much in it that seems to invite further elucidation; Lord Crawford, Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, another F. R. S. — who is deeply interested in occultism and cosmogony and who was a pupil of Lord Lytton and studied with him in Egypt — comes to talk of his special topics of concern; Mrs. Besant, whose association with the National Reform Society has made her famous, drops in to express her interest in theosophy as a power affecting the social life of humanity; Mr. Sydney Whitman, widely known by his scathing criticisms upon English cant, has ideas to express and thoughts to interchange upon the ethics of theosophy, and so they come.

"Generally they are pronounced free thinkers and people who see that the loss of spirituality, which is so prominent a feature in the thought of the present day, is saved by theosophy, which at once demonstrates it and places it upon a scientific basis, which is altogether missed by the Christian churches. But sometimes among her visitors are devoted church members, who come to take exceptions to her teachings. Then a battle royal ensues, she speaking with real knowledge of symbolism and full comprehension of the true and hidden meaning of rites and ceremonies, they insisting on the dead letter of the law as it is known to them. All may not agree with her, but none can fail to be impressed by her eloquence, her power of argument, and her vast erudition, the resources of which seem to be so unfathomable that one listening to her is often compelled to feel that it is impossible that she should be drawing entirely upon her own stores of knowledge, great as they may be, but that she had the efficient aid of powers invisible to those about her."

"Does she now ever produce any of the phenomena of manifestation of occult potencies with which she has been credited in the past?"

"Very rarely, except as they occur in a practical, matter-of-fact way in the course of work. One such recurs to my present remembrance. While working upon her 'Secret Doctrine' Mme. Blavatsky had not a single book of reference or authority about her, yet would frequently make long quotations of two or three hundred words from various works, giving author, volume, and page as precisely as if by immediate reference. I became a little uneasy about it and said to her: 'Do you not think I had better verify the accuracy of some of these quotations?'

"Certainly, if you wish to.' she replied. So I took a lot of them and went to the British Museum; the only place where the books were, to my knowledge, accessible. There I found them accurate to the minutest degree, except that in one or perhaps two instances I did not find the passage quoted upon the page she had given. Say, for instance, the page specified was

307. It was not there. But, acting upon an idea that occurred to me, I tuned to page 703, and there found it, word for word. The cause for the transposition of the figures was in their reversal in the astral light, which presents things exactly as if shown in a mirror. She did not always, when physically very weary, take the trouble to carefully reverse the process and bring the image down on the physical plane in its exact order there when copying from the astral light the matter she wished to use. The quotations referred to were mainly from the Journal of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta, many of them from Col. Wilford's papers, works not more than fifty or sixty years old and not exceedingly rare, but in the possession of very few private individuals, and certainly not in hers, nor consulted by her in the process of her work otherwise than in the astral light in the manner I have indicated.

"Two other incidents demonstrative of her strange powers and worthy of note as phenomena, impossible of production by any trick, and not intended to impress anybody, but just occurring in a perfectly natural way as if quite ordinary things, I recall. One day it so happened that I came home late to a meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge — which meets in her house, on Lansdowne road — and found that she had left word that she desired to see me immediately when I came in. She said to me: 'I have been told to quote to you a letter. I have not got the letter, but it has been photographed in the astral light for me.' I sat down and wrote it out from her dictation. She asked me: 'What would you do with that?' I said that I would recommend her to quote it — as she already had to me — to the person to whom it was addressed, who would be in attendance at the meeting of the lodge. She did so, repeating it word for word to the individual who had not received it more than ten minutes before and had not made it known to any other person. The letter was not one that either the writer or the recipient would voluntarily have made known to her, and there was not any other way in which it could possibly have been made known to her than that which she stated to me. The astonishment of the recipient of the letter was unbounded, for he fully comprehended that fact.

"The second instance was this: Working at the office in Duke-street one day, I became very seriously annoyed over what seemed to justify some strong language as a sort of safety valve, and did express myself, when altogether alone in my private room, with rather more vigor than propriety. That was about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, or a little after. Before 3 o'clock I got a letter from Mme. Blavatsky, from her Lansdowne-road residence, four miles distant, quoting my exact language and asking: 'Why do you utter it?' To get that reproof to me in the time I received it she must have mailed the letter almost in-

stantly upon my utterance of the objectionable words. There would not have been time for anybody to have reported them to her in any way, and it was simply utterly impossible that they should have been heard by anybody's merely material sense of hearing when they were uttered.

"In this way things frequently occur in the knowledge of those intimately associated with Mme. Blavatsky that make the phenomena of occultism so far a recognized part of the ordinary course of events that they are accepted with scarcely even remark as quite what might reasonably have been expected. And, so far as the public is concerned, the progress of the theosophic movement is ethical far more than phenomenal in its tendency. It appeals most strongly to the interest of those upon whom the pressure of life comes heaviest, those to whom the conditions of physical existence seem absolutely unjust, and who seek in vain explanation and consolation in the dogmas of Christianity. To them the laws of Karma and reincarnation afford a rational explanation of the why and wherefore of human suffering as consequent upon the acts of the past, and accord such comprehensible knowledge of the measure of individual present responsibility in the determination of the individual future as is found in no other system.

"It is not to be expected, however, that the growth of theosophy in England or in any part of continental Europe will even approximate to what it will be in America, the cradle of the new race. Ethnologically speaking, the Americans are the descendants of the union, practically, of all the races of the Old World. Thus arises what may be termed a loosened physiological constitution in the direction of that which is below the ordinary physical constitution, and the necessary conditions are provided for the starting up of a new growth, a new type of race and humanity. This is why Americans have a tendency to run into specialties. They are 'all or nothing,' full of energy, purpose, and resource in whatever chosen line of direction they may apply themselves.

"The typical American has no 'middle course'. The consequence of that is that whatever Americans undertake they do to their utmost, and their success is, as a rule, proportionately great. This is equally true whether they devote themselves to material interests or spiritual. If they are religious at all they are likely to be ultra-religious. Therefore when such things as psychic force and spiritual considerations come up, they run riot in the minds of a people sufficiently free from previous prejudice to take up such things. And, in consequence of the lack of confinement to particular type and what we may call their physiological looseness, their development in such directions will be rapid, as is seen in the numberless instances of

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. . . **Useful** *continued from page 63*

development of magnetic and psychic constitutions in this country. The cause for the wonderfully-rapid development and spread of the spiritualistic movement in the United States was in the freedom from prejudice and the conditions of physiological constitution which favored psychic development, the psychic dominating the physical and not the physical mastering the psychic, as in the older races. As the spiritualistic movement in the direction of psychic phenomena took its rise in this country and ran riot, so it is further practicable to have a like development in the direction of the occult. Consequently the probability is that there will be an extreme development of numbers of persons in this country toward what are now termed 'magic powers.'


"Let it be clearly understood that the Theosophic Society is by no means a school of magic, but it recognizes the facts of an occult knowledge of the higher — and as yet little understood by the world at large — laws of nature and desires to do away with the selfishness inherent in present man and to utilize those magical powers which do exist for the benefit of the race. Incalculable would be the harm of general knowledge of those magical powers at the present time, for they would naturally be employed for material considerations connected with the personal life of man for selfish and illusory ends. The Theosophical Society endeavors to promote knowledge of and care for, rather, that individual life of man (not personal) which extends from incarnation to incarnation over a period of many thousands of years.

"In the language of medieval and cabalistic thinkers, 'man's true endeavor is in the direction of his greater self and of the universal life, in contradistinction to the personal life,' and it is in the new race in America that such ideas are likely to take root and grow rap-

idly. There will be an upheaval in the direction of magic, both white (good) and black, (evil,) and it is the mission of The Theosophical Society to teach men how to use their newly-acquired powers wisely, for the good of humanity."

"How will those new conditions be manifested?"

"The progress will be shown by an increasing number of people being born with abnormal senses, and they will increase until the generality will be what we would now term abnormal and those born with the present ordinary range of senses will be looked upon as failures in development. And, as those of awakened psychic perceptions marry and have children, their offspring will be even more highly endowed than they with psychic powers. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought transference, direct perception without the use of any of the external senses, the development of one sense which shall be the synthesis of all and which will correspond to the faculty of intuition, will be the outcome of the psychic development of which I have spoken.

"The most prejudiced materialist, if he is not grossly ignorant, cannot deny that the possibility of such abnormal powers has been amply proved by innumerable isolated instances. It is, therefore, not difficult to conceive their spread among the generality of a race suitable for such development. If the Theosophical Society succeeds in its mission and does not fall away from it, as similar efforts have fallen away in past centuries, there will be a development of such powers of knowledge during the next century as will in great measure destroy the material considerations of the present day and direct science mainly toward the study of the occult rather than the phenomenal and physical." 

. . . **Messenger** *continued from page 69*

She told me that at that time they had a small list of titles, and a few hundred stores on their mailing list. By 1975, they had over 1000 and their booklist was many hundred titles. By 1980 there were 2000, and by 1985 there were 3500 stores on their list. I can verify this number, because when DeVorss accepted a Wizard title for distribution, they asked for flyers in that quantity. Correspondingly, their catalog grew to several thousand entries.

When Hedda Lark retired in 1998, the denouement had taken hold of the entire publishing industry, and with the advent of the internet, most of the small new age bookstores were gone or dying. Giant mega-cor-

porations took over, and forced conformity with their regulations and procedures. The small independents of which the entire movement consisted, were forced out. Today, we find self-help, self-improvement, personal interaction, has replaced the metaphysical interest in most areas. The internet has become a huge auction, with only the wealthy able to afford books trading at ten to fifteen times their price only a few years ago. Those of us in the center of it all can truly say that it was limited to the last quarter of the 20th century. No one can doubt that the messenger sent a powerful message, from behind the scenes, and to all, not just theosophists. 