

A New Year's Greeting

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[Page 3] THE new year, 1891, has now commenced, and as it is likely to prove an eventful one in the history of the Theosophical Society, I should like to begin by sending a few words of greeting and grateful thanks to all who have helped me by their sympathy to carry out my share of the work.

When I first went to W,rsburg in 1885 to visit Madame Blavatsky, I little realized the vast importance and magnitude of the work in which we are now engaged; and though I firmly believed in the mission which H. P. B. was trying to accomplish, and had full faith in her honesty of purpose, it seemed to me an utter impossibility that Theosophy could ever reach the hearts of the people, and so become a living power in the world for good. I looked around me and saw that what most interested the public was phenomena; the sublime and divine truths contained in Theosophy were ignored, or assimilated only by the very few; and when that cowardly and abominable attack was made on Madame Blavatsky by the Psychological Research Society, I feared that it would either kill the Theosophical Society or alienate those who were attracted only by curiosity and desire for the marvellous. At first it seemed as if the Society had received its death blow; day after day came in resignations from those who had hitherto been looked upon as shining lights in the Society, or else insulting letters from men and women who until then had worn the mask of friendship. The remainder of the members of the T.S. were more or less paralyzed, and all they wanted to do was to keep quiet and out of sight, so that no mud should be thrown at them.

But a few bright stars shone through the darkness, jewels of friends who kept staunch and true through all, and it was really their expressions of sympathy and love which kept H. P. B. alive.

When I think of that long, dreary winter, when we two lived together in that quiet German town, where we had not a single friend; when I think of how my heart used to sink every morning, when the postman's ring was heard, at the thought of fresh insults which the letters would surely contain, I consider it a sacred duty to tell all members of the T.S. how deeply H. P. B. has suffered for the noble cause to which she has dedicated her life. Day after day she sat at her desk from early morn till night, writing the *Secret Doctrine*, which was destined to teach and help so many seekers after truth, we little knowing the work and future which lay before us. As I think of those days there always lies deep down in my heart one eternal regret, viz: that my intuition should have been so obtuse [Page 4] that I did not realize the enormous importance of this grand philosophy, and that I did not give every moment of my time to its study. But it seemed so far beyond me in those days, as if the understanding of such sublime truths could never be reached by me in this lifetime, and so I let the valuable hours slip away. And now when experience and study have given me the hope that I could comprehend what before appeared so difficult, my work lies in another direction, practical work for the spreading of Theosophy, which brings me little leisure for quiet reading and reflection. Karma, I suppose.

The winter of 1886-87 I spent alone with H. P. B. in Ostend. Notwithstanding my forebodings, the Society had not collapsed under the P. R. S.'s treacherous blow, and a few straggling members came to life again and rallied round Madame Blavatsky. Visitors appeared one after the other on the scene; confidence in H. P. B. began to revive; and serious thoughts for the future were entertained as to the further development of the T. S. These culminated in the plan of her coming to London. Arriving there in May, H. P. B. settled in Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill, in September, 1887, in company with a few devoted friends. Since that time the work and influence of the Society have steadily increased, notwithstanding the defalcation of a few members whose personal vanity was hurt because they did not receive the homage to which they felt they were entitled. The T. S. continued to widen out, friends rallied round in greater numbers, and after three years of steady work the Society was placed on a firm basis. It became apparent that a larger house was necessary, and a move was made to our present Headquarters, during the summer of the past year; and now in 1891, after all these years of persecution and suffering, Madame Blavatsky is surrounded by a strong and faithful band of tried men and women, who are true to the death, and who will bear the brunt of any new attack or insult which the future may have in store for her. Not only has she formed from among these an efficient staff of workers, but she has the happiness of knowing that she has about her those who love and revere her, who value her teachings, and who would willingly give their lives to save her a single pang. There is now every hope that the remaining years of her life may be passed in that peace which is essential to the achievement of her great work; no attack from without will be allowed to fall upon her, and no besmearing of her reputation will have the slightest effect upon those who have known and put her to the test, and who now appreciate her as she deserves. On the contrary, any such attack will be sure to rebound on those who may attempt to blacken her name, to disturb her peace, or to depreciate her mission.