

CWL travels with Madame Blavatsky



C. W. Leadbeater as a Curate at the Parish Church of Bramshott,
County of Southampton, England, circa 1883

The second letter which CWL received from Master K.H. in London, on 31 October 1884, through the agency of Madame Blavatsky, contained the following advice:

“Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was *my desire* you should go to Adyar *immediately*, I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th, if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know that you are going, and may the blessing of our Lord and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life.

Greeting to you, *my new chela*.

K. H.”

And that was what CWL did. Below are two extracts from his brief autobiographical memoir, *How Theosophy Came to Me*, which describe interesting moments of his travels with HPB on their way to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and then India. (Mrs. Oakley was Isabel Cooper-Oakley who was closely associated with HPB and who wrote a number of books dealing with the western esoteric tradition):

We Meet Again

We sailed the same evening, and reached Port Said on the following morning, where Mr. A. J. Cooper-Oakley came off to meet me, and took me ashore to a hotel where I found Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Oakley sitting on the veranda. Madame Blavatsky’s last word to me in London had been: “See that you do not fail me”; and now her greeting was: “Well, Leadbeater, so you have really come in spite of all difficulties.” I replied that of course I had come, and that when I made a promise I also made a point of keeping it; to which she answered only: “Good for you!” and then plunged into an animated discussion—all discussions in which Madame

Blavatsky took part were invariably animated—which had evidently been interrupted by my arrival. Though she said no more than this, she was clearly pleased that I had come, and seemed to regard my presence in her retinue as a kind of card in the game which she had to play. She was returning to India expressly in order to refute the wicked slanders of the Christian College missionaries, and she appeared to consider that to bring back with her a clergyman of the Established Church who had abandoned a good position in that Church to become her enthusiastic pupil and follower was somehow an argument in her favour.

A Message

As the journey continued Madame Blavatsky gradually recovered her strength, and a little conversation arose; but it was distinctly coloured by the influence of the previous night, for our leader favoured us with the most gloomy prognostications of our future fate:

“Ah! you Europeans”, going to enter upon the path triumphantly through all its what is before you; you by the wayside as I have. expect, and they have and trials such as have never dreams; but you, poor feeble

She continued these with a maddening

was far too reverential to try sat in the four corners of the Blavatsky facing the engine, and Mr. Oakley sitting opposite to her with the resigned expression of an early Christian martyr; while Mrs. Oakley, weeping profusely, and with a face of ever-increasing horror, sat opposite to me. For myself, I had a sort of feeling like putting up an umbrella against a heavy shower, but I reflected that after all a good many other men had entered upon that path and had reached its goal, and it seemed to me that even if I could not reach it in this life I could at any rate lay a good foundation for the work of the next incarnation. *Che sara, sara!*



Isabel Cooper-Oakley



H. P. Blavatsky in London, 1884

she said, “you think you are of occultism and pass troubles; you little know have not counted the wrecks The Indians know what to already passed through tests entered into your wildest things, what can you do?”

Cassandralike prophecies monotony, but her audience

to change the subject. We compartment, Madame Blavatsky facing the engine, and Mr. Oakley sitting opposite to her with the resigned expression of an early Christian martyr; while Mrs. Oakley, weeping profusely, and with a face of ever-increasing horror, sat opposite to me. For myself, I had a sort of feeling like putting up an umbrella against a heavy shower, but I reflected that after all a good many other men had entered upon that path and had reached its goal, and it seemed to me that even if I could not reach it in this life I could at any rate lay a good foundation for the work of the next incarnation. *Che sara, sara!*

In those prehistoric days trains were usually lit by smoky oil lamps, and in the centre of the roof of each compartment there was a large round hole into which porters inserted these lamps as they ran along the roofs of the carriages. This being a day train, however, there was no lamp, and one could see the blue sky through the hole. It happened that Mr. Oakley and I were both leaning back in our respective corners, so that we both saw a repetition of the phenomenon which I have previously described as

occurring in England; we saw a kind of ball of whitish mist forming in that hole, and a moment later it had condensed into a piece of folded paper, which fell to the floor of our compartment. I started forward, picked it up, and handed it at once to Madame Blavatsky, taking it for granted that any communication of this nature must be intended for her. She at once unfolded it and read it, and I saw a red flush appear upon her face.

“Umph,” she said, “that’s what I get for trying to warn you people of the troubles that lie before you,” and “she” threw the paper to me.

“May I read it?” I said, and her only reply was: “Why do you think I gave it to you?”

I read it and found it to be a note signed by the Master Kuthumi, suggesting very gently but quite decidedly that it was perhaps a pity, when she had with her some earnest and enthusiastic candidates, to give them so very gloomy a view of a path which, however difficult it might be, was destined eventually to lead them to joy unspeakable. And then the message concluded with a few words of kindly commendation addressed to each of us by name. I am sorry that I cannot be quite certain of the exact wording of that message, though I am sure that I have correctly reproduced its general tenor. The little sentence addressed personally to me was: “Tell Leadbeater that I am satisfied with his zeal and devotion.”

(The full text of the book can be read at

<http://www.singaporelodge.org/htctm.htm#5A>

courtesy of Singapore Lodge of the Theosophical Society.)

Compiled by Pedro Oliveira