

THE ESOTERIC SECTION

IN 1888, H. P. B. made a departure which was in reality a reversion to the old basis of the Society. It has been mentioned how, as far back as 1876, the Society had been made a semi-secret body, and had divided its members into three Sections. The Second Section of the Society was to be composed of people who had proved themselves, and had shown by their conduct that they believed both in Brotherhood as the guiding factor in life, and also in the Masters of the Wisdom. After the events of 1884 and 1885, and after H. P. B. left India, Colonel Olcott was averse to introducing the idea of the Masters into the work of the Society. The *Theosophist* under him became a mere literary and philosophical journal, and lost the vivid quality it had under H. P. B.'s editorship. In many ways, while Branch after Branch was being formed, that quality in the Society which once had brought a spiritual exhilaration was passing out of the Movement, because the occult inspiration which had guided it was no longer sought as a necessary factor in its development. Seeing this danger to the Society, H. P. B. determined to make a band round her who would pledge themselves to serve the Masters faithfully come what may. She now definitely took the rôle of a spiritual teacher to a band of disciples, and began to give secret occult teachings to those who were round her at the London Headquarters. These teachings naturally made them full of energy and devotion to develop the work of the Masters.

In many ways however, this action of H.P.B. was not congenial to Colonel Olcott. He was somewhat suspicious, and

said so openly, of any kind of a second control within the Society, such as he thought would be the case if H. P. B. put herself forward in such a rôle as she proposed. He did not in the least object to her writing books, but to become the leader of a band of disciples who claimed the privilege of protecting and serving the Society more devotedly than all other members was to him utterly subversive of the good of the Movement. His objections were strong and positive, and he was unwilling to adapt himself to the new move of H. P. B. It required the interference of the Master K. H. to make him see matters from a different standpoint. On the way to London in August, 1888, when he was on board S. S. *Shannon* nearing Brindisi, there dropped phenomenally in his cabin a letter from the Master K. H., which explained to him the situation. It is now at Adyar, and was published as Letter XIX in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series. Colonel Olcott was definitely told that, while he was to keep all administrative details in his hands, he was to give full liberty to H. P. B. to develop the occult side of the Movement. It was only then that his rigidity on this matter changed.

After seeing H. P. B. in London, and consulting with her as to details, he issued a circular which was signed by him as President of the Society, and by her as Corresponding Secretary, announcing the formation of the "Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society". A year later, in order to make clear that the "E. S. of the T. S." had no official connection with the T. S., its name was changed to the "Eastern School of Theosophy".

The call sent out by H. P. B. to those who desired to offer themselves as pupils of the Masters to gather round her made a profound change in the future of the Movement. It brought together in each country into closer association those to whom the T. S. was not merely an idealistic organisation, but a way of service of the higher interests of humanity under the

direction of the Masters of the Wisdom. In every country where there were Theosophists, applications came to H. P. B., and Colonel Olcott himself facilitated matters in India by being for the time being H. P. B.'s agent to transmit letters and documents of the E. S. T.



FIG. 134
H. P. B.