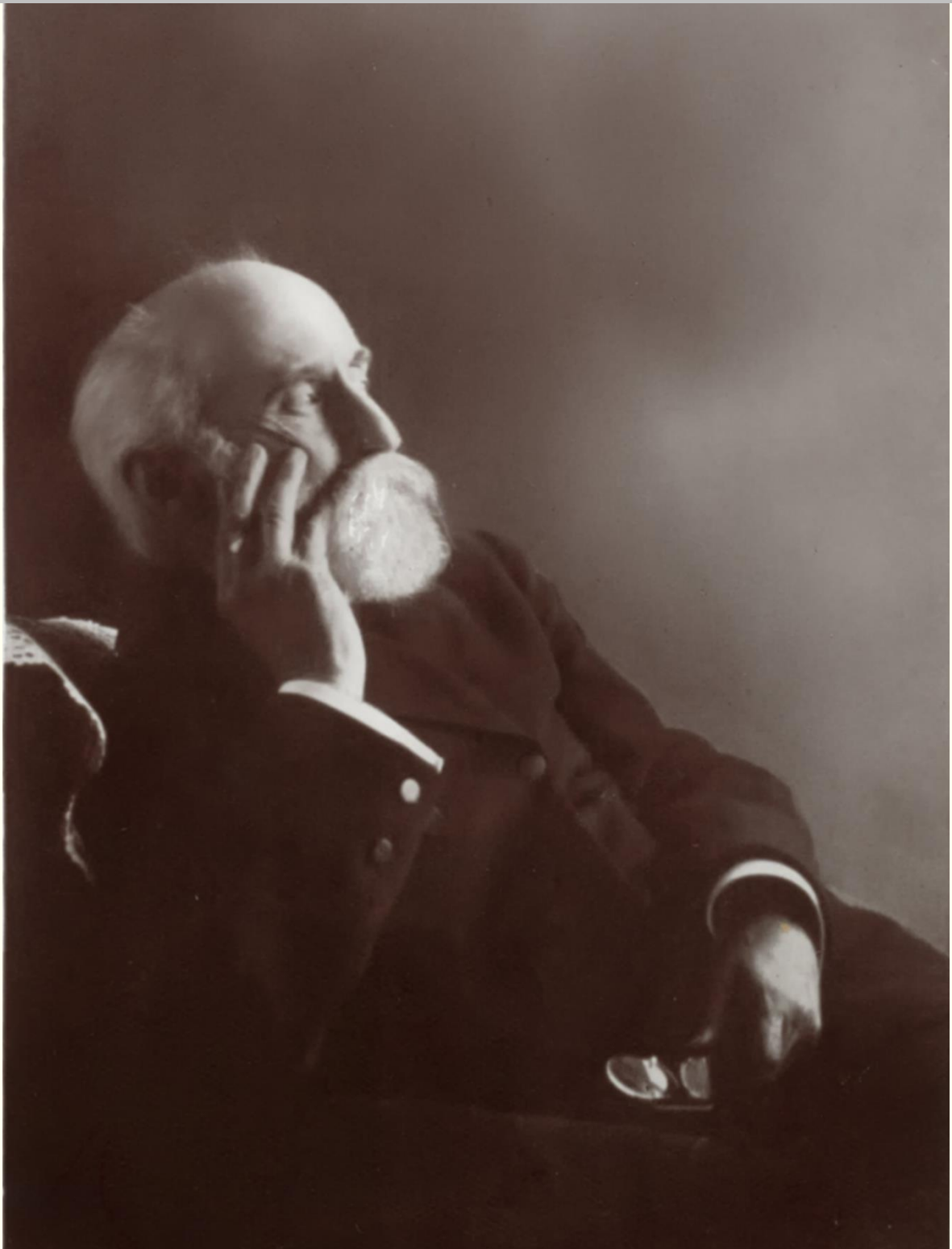


*Boris de Zirkoff on
Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden*



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From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIO-BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES TO VOL. VII) pp. 375-77.

Dr WILHELM HÜBBE-SCHLEIDEN was a German scholar, writer, and Theosophist, born at Hamburg, October 20th, 1846; died at Göttingen, May 17th, 1916. At first, he studied jurisprudence and political economy, obtaining the degree of *juris utriusque doctor*, i.e., Doctor of both Laws, namely, civil and canon law, and practised for some time as an attorney. During the war of 1870–71, he was *attaché* to the German Consulate General in London. Soon after, being greatly interested in geographical exploration and in German colonial politics, he devoted himself to far-reaching travels, mainly in West Africa, where he founded his own commercial house in Gabun Colony. He was a great protagonist of German colonial ambitions, and wrote several works on this subject, such as:

- *Ethiopien: Studien fiber Westafrika* (1879)
- *Überseeische Politik* (2-pts., 1881–83)
- *Deutsche Kolonisation* (1881)
- *Kolonisationpolitik und Kolonisationstechnik* (1882)

During the years 1897–98, he travelled in India, and upon his return wrote a work entitled *Indien und die Inder* (1898). There is evidence to show that he was instrumental in formulating German colonial policy at the time, and that his statesmanlike scheme was adopted by Prince Bismarck.

As a man, Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden was a charming personality, full of humour, very clever, and always ready to help others. He was deeply interested in occult subjects, and became one of the chief founders, and the first President, of the Germania Theosophical Society, when the latter was organized by Col. H.S. Olcott at the home of the Gebhards at Elberfeld, on July 27th, 1884. His Theosophical activities took primarily a literary form, and he founded and edited a valuable monthly metaphysical journal, called the *Sphinx*, twenty-two volumes of which appeared between the years 1886 and 1896. He also published a pamphlet entitled *Jesus, a Buddhist?* In it he draws, from the close similarity prevailing, the conclusion that Jesus was essentially a Buddhist [376] building his argument with methodical precision and the support of various historical data.

In 1893, he organized at Steglitz, near Berlin, an independent organization called the *Theosophische Vereinigung*, with aims wholly identical with the Theosophical Society, but methods of work more consonant, as he thought, with the characteristics of the

German people.¹ Some years later, after Dr. Rudolf Steiner had organized his Anthroposophical Society, Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden served for a short time as General-Secretary of the re-organized Theosophical Society (Adyar) in Germany.

Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden considered *The Secret Doctrine* to be a work of the utmost importance, actually containing the sacred wisdom of the sages of all times. He had found in its pages the key which would “solve the riddles of existence as well of the macrocosm as of the microcosm.” He strongly felt that explanatory abstracts should be written on various teachings contained in this work, in order that the contents be better understood by readers of his time. It was with this end in view that he wrote in 1891 his work entitled *Lust, Leid und Liebe*, which, in his own words, “confined itself to the language and to the terms of Darwin, Haeckel, and modern philosophy, with the purpose of putting a key to *The Secret Doctrine* into the hands of the leading scientists.” His effort found no response with the English public, and only a meagre one in Germany.

Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden dedicated his last years to a large work on Palingenesis, in which he desired to prove scientifically the law of Reincarnation.² He died, however, before completing this task. After his death, his books were donated to the Göttingen University Library, and it is possible that the voluminous MSS of this last work may have been there for a time. It was either destroyed during the bombing of the Second World War, or otherwise lost, as upon recent inquiry, it could not be located by the University authorities.

Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden knew Madame Blavatsky personally and paid her four or five visits. The first of these was from September to December, 1884, when she stayed with the Gebhards at Elberfeld, Germany. He speaks of meeting her for a few days in August of the same year. After that, he remained with her in Würzburg about a week or ten days in October 1885, and saw her engaged in writing her *magnum opus*. He saw her last one afternoon and night, early in January 1886. He writes:

When I visited her in October, 1885, she had just begun to write it [*The Secret Doctrine*], and in January, 1886, she had finished about a dozen chapters . . . she was writing at her [377] manuscript almost all day, from the early morning until the afternoon and even until night, unless she had guests . . . I saw a good deal of the well-known blue K.H. handwriting as corrections and annotations on her manuscripts, as well as in books that lay occasionally on her desk.

I must say though that the view I took then was the same that I hold now. I never did and never shall judge of the value or the origin of any mental product from the way and manner in which it is produced. And for this reason I withheld my opinion then, thinking and saying: “I shall wait until *The Secret Doctrine* is finished and then I can read it quietly; that will be the test for me, the only one that will be any good.”

¹ See *Lucifer*, Vol. XII, March, 1893, p. 80; and *The Path*, Vol. VIII, April 1893, p. 24.

² [Consult “Transmigration, Reincarnation, Gilgulim,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

This is the reason *why* on the night of my last parting from H.P.B., the two *certificates* . . . were given to me. At least I found them in my copy of Hodgson's S.P.R. Report after I had left her. . . .¹

Faithfully yours
Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden.

Besides the two “certificates” spoken of by the Doctor, two more letters were received by him from the same Teachers. The original letters became part of his estate in 1916, and passed into the hands of Herr Clemens Heinrich Ferdinand Driessen, who was a Geheim Justitzrat in Witzenhausen, near Cassel, Germany. C. Jinarājadāsa copied them direct from the originals which had been loaned to him by Herr Driessen, and published their text.² Ernst Pieper, a very active Theosophical worker in Dusseldorf, Germany, obtained from Herr Driessen in 1934 all of the four original letters with their accompanying envelopes, bearing on one side Chinese characters. He arranged for an exact *facsimile* to be made of the “certificate” from Master M., reproducing it in its actual size and using an almost identical type of paper and red-coloured ink.

In 1941, all the four original letters from the Teachers, received by Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden, fell into the hands of the Gestapo, and were presumably destroyed.³



¹ From a letter received by Countess Constance Wachtmeister from Dr. Wm. Hübbe-Schleiden. See *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky and “The Secret Doctrine,”* by C. Wachtmeister (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1893), pp. 110-13.

The “certificates” spoken of are the two short letters from M. and K.H. concerning the real authorship of *The Secret Doctrine*. They may be found in C. Jinarājadāsa's *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, Nos 69 and 70.

² C. Jinarājadāsa, *op. cit.*, *Letters* Nos 68, 69, 70, 71.

³ For further information concerning these letters, consult *The Path*, New York, Vol. VIII, April 1893, p. 2; and *The Theosophical Forum*, Covina, California, Vol. XXVI, April 1948.

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