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THE REMARKABLE HEALING POWERS OF COL. HENRY STEEL OLCOTT

Theosophical historians remember Col. Henry Steel Olcott for his capable administrative and executive abilities. During the formative years of the Theosophical Society, his organizational skills proved to be invaluable. But there was another more mysterious side to Colonel Olcott that is sometimes overlooked. In addition to his executive skills, he possessed an amazing ability to heal the sick and did so on numerous occasions.

The second volume of Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* describes a number of such instances, which took place during 1882 – 1883. Olcott had been familiar with the phenomenon of mesmeric healing for over thirty years but had never done more than dabble with it. While traveling in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) during August 1882, he began exercising his latent power of healing with astonishing results. After having had some initial success curing dozens of patients with limb paralysis, he noted, "With the rapid growth of confidence in myself, my magnetic power multiplied itself enormously, and what I had needed days to accomplish with a patient, at the commencement, could now be done within a half hour."

Being a matter-of-fact person, Colonel Olcott also described the nuisance factor which accompanied these miraculous healings. "Within a week or so my house was besieged by sick persons from dawn until late at night, all clamoring for the laying on of my hands. They grew so importunate at last that I was at my wit's end how to dispose of them . . . They would besiege me in my bedroom before I was dressed, dog my every step, give me no time for meals, and keep pressing me, no matter how tired and exhausted I might be."

Henry Steel Olcott was a man who could take minor inconveniences in stride without losing his greater sense of purpose. He demonstrated this over and over again, and we could all take a lesson from him in this regard. Throughout his many years of service to the Theosophical Society, his one overriding motivation was to serve the Masters of Wisdom and through them, humanity.

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