

“FRIENDS” MILITANT AND TRIUMPHANT

Editor, *Canadian Theosophist*: — I am afraid that you must have been given some misinformation concerning the success of The Friends of Madame Blavatsky. When I state that between January and March we spread to fifteen countries, I guess you will agree that we have not much to complain about. Add that our Friends belong to all kinds of Theosophical Societies; Hermetic Society, Point Loma, British (Adyar) T. S., U.L.T., (London and India) Blavatsky Association. Blavatsky Centre (Texas), H.P.B. Library Centre (Victoria, B.C.), Swedish T.S. (P.L.)—was ever such a gathering of the clans seen before? As for Independents and people who don't say where they belong, a whole host! In one of our London branches Theosophists and non-Theosophists are working together; in a provincial branch, Hermetics and Adyarites have made common harmonious cause on the subject of defending their common benefactor. A South African branch is non-Theosophist altogether. In Melbourne, a Crazy Gang, as they dub themselves, gather from the highways and hedges anyone who likes to join, advertise the FRIENDS at their own expense and are planning lectures; they have already spread the work to Tasmania.

Initiative is our keynote. The FRIENDS is being organized in such a way that it can go on to 1975 or as long as needed, as a vigilance society. I know who you mean by the “professing Theosophists whose sympathy has not been enlisted”. But who cares about them? Presently they will find themselves in a backwash, that's all. Sometimes I fancy that the old ex-personalities who betrayed H.P.B. are still hovering about this sphere and clutching on to suitable minds. I even come up against Humes and Coues and Wylds and Masseys and all the caboodle, all still playing their own private games.

The fact is that this crusade is of the kind that could be won by just a few resolute persons, but we don't want it won that way; we should lose the effect of the wide propaganda regarding H.P.B.'s innocence that is to be spread by a multitude who know *the facts* and do not merely proclaim that they are convinced. Conviction without a basis is not conviction at all but a simple expression of opinion . . . dangerous, liable to a turn-about. The history of Theosophy as a modern movement swarms with examples of ever-so-spiritual folk who turned on her at the first production of what only looked like damaging evidence. They, however, will surely be accounted less guilty than those who today are given the facts and do not use them to defend H.P.B. The facts were not available in 1884; they were only partly available even some years ago, that is, before the publication of the *Mahatma Letters*. I truly think that no practical defence could have been made without these *Letters*. Except for the circumstance that I knew these *Letters* almost by heart before ever I saw the S.P.R. Report, I could not have tackled the matter.

Perhaps your readers may be interested in a little bit of personal gossip. One day in the week after I walked into a Spiritualist library and lighted on the Report. I went to the shop of Mr. Watkins, the well-known bookseller and old friend of H.P.B., to buy a book—nothing to do with Madame Blavatsky. While there, I suddenly said, “I suppose you haven't got the S. P. R. Report?” The manager went into another room and came back with the Report. I bought it. Then I said, “I suppose you haven't got Madame Coulomb's pamphlet?” Same exit, same result. I daresay these were the only available copies in London. After that, the books I needed simply dropped into my hands. The way I got the Adyar Defence Report was quite mysterious. Mr. Watkins' manager told me they had no copy of it. Some months later, I got the notion, to write to Mr. Watkins and ask whether, if he had a copy in his private collection, he would allow me to type it out. Then, thinking I had no right to ask a stranger, and in the book trade, such a service, I cut out from my business letter to him this reference. By cross-post came a note from a friend of mine, saying—“Mr. Watkins says if you need any particular pamphlets to let him know”. I then wrote and heard by return that he had the *Adyar Report*; it had just come in and he himself had never previously seen a copy. That copy is

now mine. And I could tell many another strange tale of the kind.

You will see in “New Universe” No. 4, now on the machines, that I take the same ground as yourself (*Canadian Theosophist*, March) in regarding the case of Madame Blavatsky as of interest to the whole world, as of capital importance in the universal defence of justice against the dictatorship of the mind that springs up every century and claws some victim. Some Theosophists may find it strange that I advertise the Friends of Madame Blavatsky in journals apparently outside, and even, inimical to, her cause. I know what I am doing, however. We must try to cure the public of some of its blind prejudice, and the quickest way is through its own journals.

We do not despair of convincing the present-day members of the S.P.R. that an injustice has been done; we shall break through the silence of the officials. Think of it—not a word from these once loud-speakers who *still, today*, welcome the “Ephesians” and the Hares et hoc! We do not despair of convincing the Scottish Free Church people that their Rev. Patterson put a shocking blot on their record. We have every hope and belief that *all* unorthodox and independent movements, all minds concerned with the defence of justice and liberty, and even all instinctive lovers of fair play, will come in to support us; and that is why I think that money spent on drawing the attention of the different crowds to the idea that there really may be a case for this Madame Blavatsky whom they have been taught to hate, or at best, despise, is money well spent.

This mingling of folk of different views is the reason, why the “Parent” remains strictly neutral. Non-Theosophists are honourably assured that there will be no furtive attempt to “convert” them, and Theosophists of differing views will, and must, refrain from special propaganda inside the FRIENDS as thoroughly disloyal. The defence of H. P. Blavatsky belongs to the world, to the universal defence of justice, so everyone may take the widest view of their participation.

A word on the manner of helping the Defence. It is a bad manner to mention the matter, pay me a few compliments and then drop it. Positively, it is very grievous to find certain Theosophical journals treating my books as though these were ordinary stuff for a brief review and The Defence no further concern of theirs! Well, they are writing their own record! The whole Theosophical movement will gain by the vindication of Madame Blavatsky and the record of her false friends as well as her true friends is now being made by themselves for the historian a few years hence.

Beatrice Hastings.

P.S. “New Universe” No. 5 (out for H.P.B.’s birthday in July) will contain the first hundred names on the list of Friends, the Roll of Honour; two hundred if I can find space. I point out that the magazine is already twelve to sixteen pages longer than I reckoned for; but there is such a quantity of data to be produced in H.P.B.’s favour and to cut the ground from the feet of the attackers that “N.U.” might reasonably be much bigger. In view of the importance of producing this data, I have to sacrifice other matter, but No. 5 will contain much concerning the society and organization, of the FRIENDS.
