

[A very interesting letter from Beatrice Hastings to her dear friend Albert Smythe.]

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4 Bedford Row Worthing. Oct 16 39.

Dear Mr Smythe, I feel a real spur to write to you tonight. You must be wondering what has become of me. Nothing. I'm just meandering plus an extraordinary inhibition against writing anything, even letters to real friends. But I am indignant at the way the Theosophists are now treating you after a lifetime of service to the common cause. I guess there isn't much to be done with humanity. As it was a million years ago..." It seems to me that so far back as one looks, there were always the same types in the same proportion. In a Zulu village or a Redskin wigwam, you will find a few givers and all the rest takers. I won't try and puzzle out what the deuce your dear friends imagine to gain by downing you as I haven't yet found any reasonable reason about what my dear friends here thought to gain by downing me. Maybe it is just "Madolph", the disease of the times. But I'm awfully sorry about it as you may take it a bit hard. I intended to see Dr Pandia if he came to England, but suppose he will not come now. It's no paradise. I wish to goodness I were abroad in France or overseas! I was going to South Africa, had actually sold most of my furniture and then phut, la guerre! But don't condole about the furniture anyway. I'm much more comfortable with what is left and I find some things I rather despised ever so charming now; a little chest of drawers in yellow wood, hand-made in the good old way, with handles that wink and smile in the sunlight. When I came in I put my library into stained orange-boxes and found them so convenient that there they have stayed ever since, so that's nothing new. A set of bookcases as commode as these would cost at least fifty pounds. You see, I spent a good many years in the back-veld, so things like that rather amuse me. But let me tell you that a certain Dr Irene Hudson who came here was puffishly scornful of such rubbish and snorted almost wickedly. Another absolutely-HPB-ite! I don't think. I'm sick of the bunch. However, Mrs. Henderson did write at last offering twenty pounds towards the Solovyoff book. It's no use, though. First, I have no push to do it; second, it would cost at least 100 pounds to publish; thirdly, if I do another book, I intend to be well-paid for it. Enough of doing things for nothing! And however cheaply, or for nothing, I may give myself away, I should be quite expensive to hire. As Mrs Leisenring wrote to Mrs Davey and Co: "Any society would pay large sums to have such work done for them". Why, even first-class hacks, like "Ephesian" and Rebecca West would not touch it under a guarantee of a thousand pounds. Several years' work, years! And then, they couldn't do it. You need more than mere documentarian skill (I don't say either of those two have it!) to defend H.P. Blavatsky: you have to love her and to believe in her Masters. Well, well, no use lamenting. I shall certainly complete the Vol.3., but will leave the MSS to my heirs. (Meanwhile, a book making clear that I loathe Theosophists might bring in the money to let me publish the Vol.3 without any binding of myself - the which I would never submit to: that would be funny!) Cheer-O dear Mr Smythe! The world was old before we were born and it looks as if Nature has got pretty sick of Man and his destructive exploits on the planet. It is strange to note that so soon as Man gets to the Kolossal after mining and fooling with the earth's innards - his "civilisation" gets wiped out. The ruins of the world testify to this, whatever may be the reason. What a disturbance it must have made while Egypt was displacing all that stone! And now, we have got to taking out the very oil! Not to mention gold, diamonds, stone, and every conceivable mineral support of the earth's economy; destroying the forests, ploughing up the prairies and the steppe (Russia will know it one day when the Asian sand moves over Moscow). Mad. So let us take things as easily as we can. I guess that the world is in for a ten, twenty years war, every country being dragged in. Cheer-O!

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