

Asbury Theological Seminary

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Correspondence

Hannah Whitall Smith

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Box 2_3 (Correspondence- Gestafson, A.V to Hart, Abbie S.-1886-1906)

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I
Mamie M. Gurnee

35 Mt. Vernon Place.

Feb. 8th - 79.

My dear Mrs. Smith -

I have
just put down your book
having read all but the last
few pages. That does not sound
well after such delay in its
acknowledgement. But I let
Mamma have it the first
two days, & since then a bad
cold has utterly disabled my
eyes -

As I should always tell you
the truth, it is no politeness.

makes me say that I rarely enjoy
a book more, or personally like
one better. I say personally,
because I of course see how it
could help ~~convincing~~ others to
much in which I do not believe.
I do not think you will quite
be disappointed in its not
convincing me.

I have for some time
seen & held devotedly that we
are to ~~earn~~ ~~earn~~ what is true
& beautiful, reconcile our wills
with that perception, & never
again think of ourselves; only
open our eyes to the things
around, & be sure that that
perception & will must guide
aright. "With joy the stars perform

their shining, And the sea its
long moonsilvered roll." - And
apart from the policy of ~~brooding~~
on past actions, my strength &
inspiration has been from a
passage of Shelley's Revolt of Islam
which you must let me quote
you - if you remember it, it
is a friend ~~one~~ ~~is~~ not easily bred
off.

"Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself
Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own;
It is the dark idolatry of self
Which when our thoughts & actions once are gone
Demands that man should weep, & bleed & groan,
O vacant expectation! - be at rest
The past is death, the present is ~~thine own~~
And love & joy can make the foulest place
A paradise of flowers where peace might
build her nest".

Even from that you can guess
how much I liked your book
& perhaps too how little its beauty

& comfort seem to me dependant
on Christianity - I can perfectly
conceive almost all - all the best -
of what you say, without any
belief in a God.

Minnie lent me Phantastes
the other day, much to my delight.
I wonder is it in my imagination
or is there a real resemblance between
your style & MacDonald's? - I cannot
decide, yet I am always reminded.

Fully as I agree with what
you said about trammels, it is
a watchword the soldier likes to
hear repeated. Still, I had no
sooner written my little complaint
than I felt the cowardice of so
whining about what we have
certain power to overcome. It
is rather hard for me, not to

dramatize myself - that is, not
to look at certain points of my
situation from outside. ^{35 Mt. Vernon Place.}
& consider their natural workings
if left to themselves; whereby
all shortcomings seem inevitable,
which are impossible in the
presence of my faith & will

- Of course, I do not think
myself prejudiced against Chris-
tianity: it is only restating the
whole difference to say I am
not prejudiced. I do not admire
its general character or influence;
while I believe every doctrine has
a lofty side some behaviors at
least will embrace - With
Christ it is to me literally -

"The names that exalt & transmute
The blood bright splendor of Brutus
The snow bright splendor of Christ -"

but you can see that we who are
not Christians cannot make
frequent use of his name.

Once more I thank you
for your book, & I should thank
you in Mamma's name as well,
who says she has found a great
deal of comfort.

Give Mrs. Whitall my best
love & gladness in her recovery; Mrs.
Thomas' staying here has been the
one thing needful to ^{confirm} ~~they~~
certainly that she is well again -
It was doubly good of you to write
at such a time -

I shall try not to go to bed
to night without reconciling my will
with - my God if you choose to
call it so - shall it be Apollo?
Yours ~~with~~ love & gratitude
Mamie M. Gwin