

Adyar, Madras, India, April 10, 1913.

My dear Fritz,

Our case is over at last, and we are all delighted to be freed from the worry of it. I went up myself on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week---the first day to give my own evidence, and the second to hear the President's closing speech, which was both masterly and magnificent. She dealt first with various legal points. On the great question of jurisdiction she made a most tactful little speech, saying that as the Judge had been so kind in listening patiently to her and had given so many days of the public time, she did not feel that it would be seemly for her to argue that he had been wrong in doing so---which means that in order to obtain a decision upon the other points, she decides not to press this for the present, though reserving her right to appeal upon it in case the decision on the others should be against her. Then she plunged into the question as to whether according to Hindu law a father can ever by any document alienate his natural rights. Her arguments seemed to me conclusive, and she collected a great number of cases in support of them; but I have not heard the other side. She then took up the evidence and told the whole story as it appears to her, unravelling one by one the threads of the great skein of falsehood which the plaintiff's malignance had constructed. This was done with wonderful cleverness; for she had the whole matter at her fingers' ends. My only doubt was whether the Judge's mind was quick enough to follow her through all the intricacies. He was, however, very kindly and helpful to her; and went out of his way to put to her some points which she ought to answer. He specially gave her an opportunity to speak about me, and she took advantage of it to deliver a most eulogistic little speech intended to undo the effect of her E. S. pronouncement in 1906. Then she wound up with an eloquent appeal to the justice of England to save her ward from the stigma cast upon him by the wickedness of an unnatural father. This was in her best style and produced a tremendous effect upon the crowded audience in the Court.

That closed Wednesday's proceedings, and on Thursday the counsel for the plaintiff made his final speech, about which there is nothing special to report. I suppose we shall have the Judge's decision in a day or two. There can, I think, be no doubt that it will be wholly in our favour with regard to the questions of fact, which are all that we care about. As to the legal points involved, I cannot venture to offer an opinion; but we really care very little what he thinks about those, since the Court has obviously no power to enforce its decrees. What we are anxious to have is a definite judicial pronouncement that there is obviously no foundation for the atrocious slanders of the plaintiff.

In my own evidence I had an opportunity not only of denying these recent falsehoods but also of clearing up some part of the unpleasant matter of 1906. The report of that London Advisory Board was cast aside as obviously valueless, though the opposing counsel asked me two or three questions about it, which I answered very plainly. The forged cipher letter was put into the hands of our opponents by the President; but they were afraid to produce it in Court, so I did not get an opportunity of actually repudiating it. The general impression seems to be that this evidence has cleared up matters a good deal and put a much better complexion on them.

Every day The Hindu newspaper has systematically falsified the evidence in the most glaring manner. It seems to me amazing that neither the Court nor the Government interferes in such a case. They tell us that we have our remedy in a prosecution for libel; but the fact is that we have had enough of prosecutions and do not care to undertake any more. The Police Court cases are still dragging on. There has been a hope that they may finish next week, but we can place no dependence upon this.

Yours affectionately,

B. H. Leadbeater.