

90 Brown Shipley & Co
123, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1

Tiesole, Oct. 12, 1930

Dear Mr. Halpern

I wasn't aware, before receiving your letter, that I was a success, and the fact that you have heard of me doesn't convince me of it. You have also heard of the latest suicide, and you would very likely write for his autograph — you are not shy — if you could be sure of his present address. Success is an ambiguous notion: it may mean becoming something for which there is a demand, or it may mean accomplishing something to which one is inwardly inclined. Neither form of success is necessarily good; because the world may demand some useless and evil things, and a man may be sometimes inclined to experiments which run

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counter to his natural powers—
 as I was at one time inclined to
 write poetry. For this reason I
 have signed your card without
 adding "with best wishes"; not be-
 cause I don't wish you well, but
 because you might understand me
 to wish you "success" conventionally
 without considering whether such
 success would be really good for
 you or for the world.

I think this supposed portrait of
 me is copied from an amateur
 painting made more than twenty
 years ago which they have at Har-
 vard: it doesn't look in the least
 like me. To undeceive you, I en-
 close the last small photo taken
 for my passport.

Yours truly
 W. Santayana

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