

PERSONAL PREJUDICES

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Personal prejudices by Mrs. R. Clipston Sturgis

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MRS. R. CLIPSTON STURGIS

**PERSONAL
PREJUDICES**

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by

M^{RS} R. CLIPSTON STURGIS

The Author

of

THE RANDOM REFLECTIONS

OF A

GRANDMOTHER



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TO
HARRIET LOCKWOOD CARTER
HER MOTHER AND MINE
HER GRANDMOTHER AND MINE
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK IN MEMORY OF
THE UNBROKEN FRIENDSHIP OF
THREE GENERATIONS

PREFACE

BY THE AUTHOR'S HUSBAND

THE woman who wrote this book is a past-mistress in the arts of her sex; delicate flattery and gross exaggeration come with equal facility. I fancy she was tired of writing the book before she had finished the last chapter (or the first, I forget which), so, when her publisher suggested adding a preface, she at once turned her attention to me.

She began with the familiar phrase, "Do you love me, dear?" and I promptly replied, "Not if it's upstairs." Then followed the usual process of persuasion on her part and clumsy, futile effort to escape on my part. From the first gentle phrase until my complete acknowledgement of defeat, there was not the shadow of a doubt about the result. I would do what I was told to do, and do it with a cheerful countenance. The attack (after that gentle opening phrase) began something like this: "I have always

PREFACE

admired the way you work on the train; I think your ability to concentrate in such a place is marvellous." It seems absurd, but you know how it is; this indelicate flattery made me feel that my fine qualities were really appreciated, and although this simple little method had been applied over and over again, it was just as effective as if it were brand-new. Well, it is no use going on and explaining this familiar process; it is, I fancy, not unfamiliar to the male readers of this book, and it explains why I am writing this preface.

Let me say at the outset, with her favourite ascription of "Thank the pigs," that this book at least is not about me, and I shall not be looked upon as pusillanimous because I do not apply for a divorce, or even enter a suit for libel, as was the case with her first venture. We all like to feel that we have our private virtues, but from the first page of that book to the last there was no privacy left. My innocent love of the country, my kindness to and thoughtfulness for her (for after the first twenty-

PREFACE

five years of country summers I no longer insisted upon her accompanying me), my cheerful acquiescence in her long absences, even across the water, all were as nothing compared to her desire to see me writhe under her facile wit.

So, thank the pigs, I say, I am out of it this time, and others take my place. I can therefore cheerfully recommend this book to any readers. It is not immoral, and therefore not really modern; but I have an idea that we are returning to a saner point of view, and good and homely qualities are once more coming in for their share of attention. This prohibition craze is one of the symptoms of returning health; we are all apt to overdo things when we are carried away by an idea, and a little purging, like the blood-letting of an earlier generation, will do no harm. We old folk will manage to get along, and the next generation, or the next after, will return to a sane temperance.

So this book is quite harmless; any one can use it with propriety; even those who