

NOCTURNE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649658053

Nocturne by Frank Swinnerton

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Cover @ 2017

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FRANK SWINNERTON

NOCTURNE

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NEW YORK: GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

NOCTURNE

BY
FRANK SWINNERTON

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NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

PR
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NOCTURNE

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO
MARTIN SECKER
THIS "NOCTURNE"



INTRODUCTION BY H. G. WELLS

"'But do I see afore me, him as I ever sported with in his times of happy infancy? And may I—*may* I?"

"This May I, meant might he shake hands?"

—DICKENS, *Great Expectations*.

I DO not know why I should be so overpoweringly reminded of the immortal, if at times impossible, Uncle Pumblechook, when I sit down to write a short preface to Mr. Swinnerton's *Nocturne*. Jest comes at times out of the backwoods of a writer's mind. It is part of the literary quality that behind the writer there is a sub-writer, making a commentary. This is a comment against which I may reasonably expostulate, but which nevertheless I am indisposed to ignore.

The task of introducing a dissimilar writer to a new public has its own peculiar difficulties for the elder hand. I suppose logically a writer should have good words only for his own imitators. For surely he has chosen what he considers to be the best ways. What justification has he for praising attitudes he has never adopted and commending methods of treatment from which he has abstained? The reader naturally receives his commendations with suspicion. Is this man, he asks, stricken with penitence in the