

WOMEN AND THE FRENCH TRADITION

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649225057

Women and the French tradition by Horence Leftwich Ravenel

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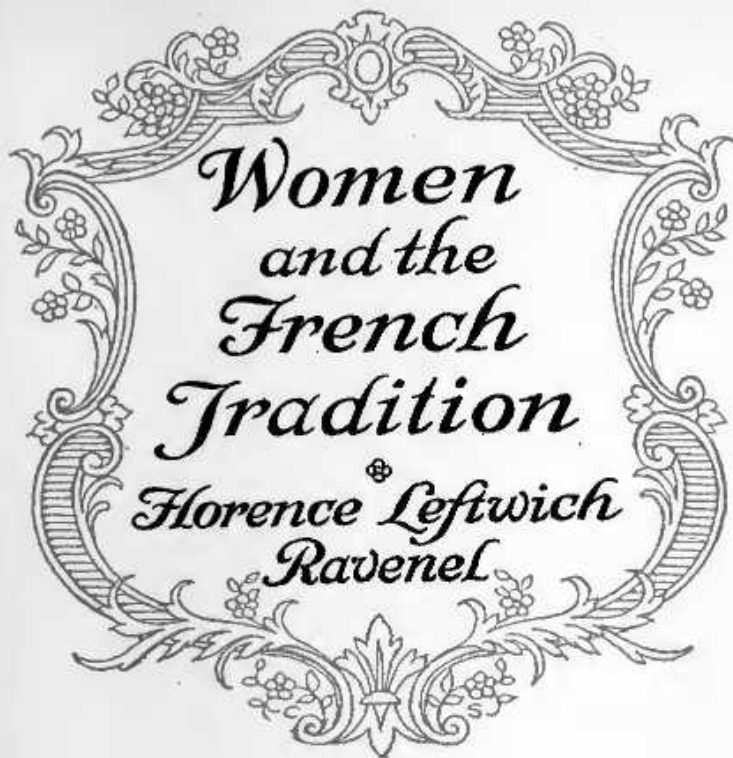
HORENCE LEFTWICH RAVENEL

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MME. DE SÉVIGNÉ



New York
The Macmillan Company
1918



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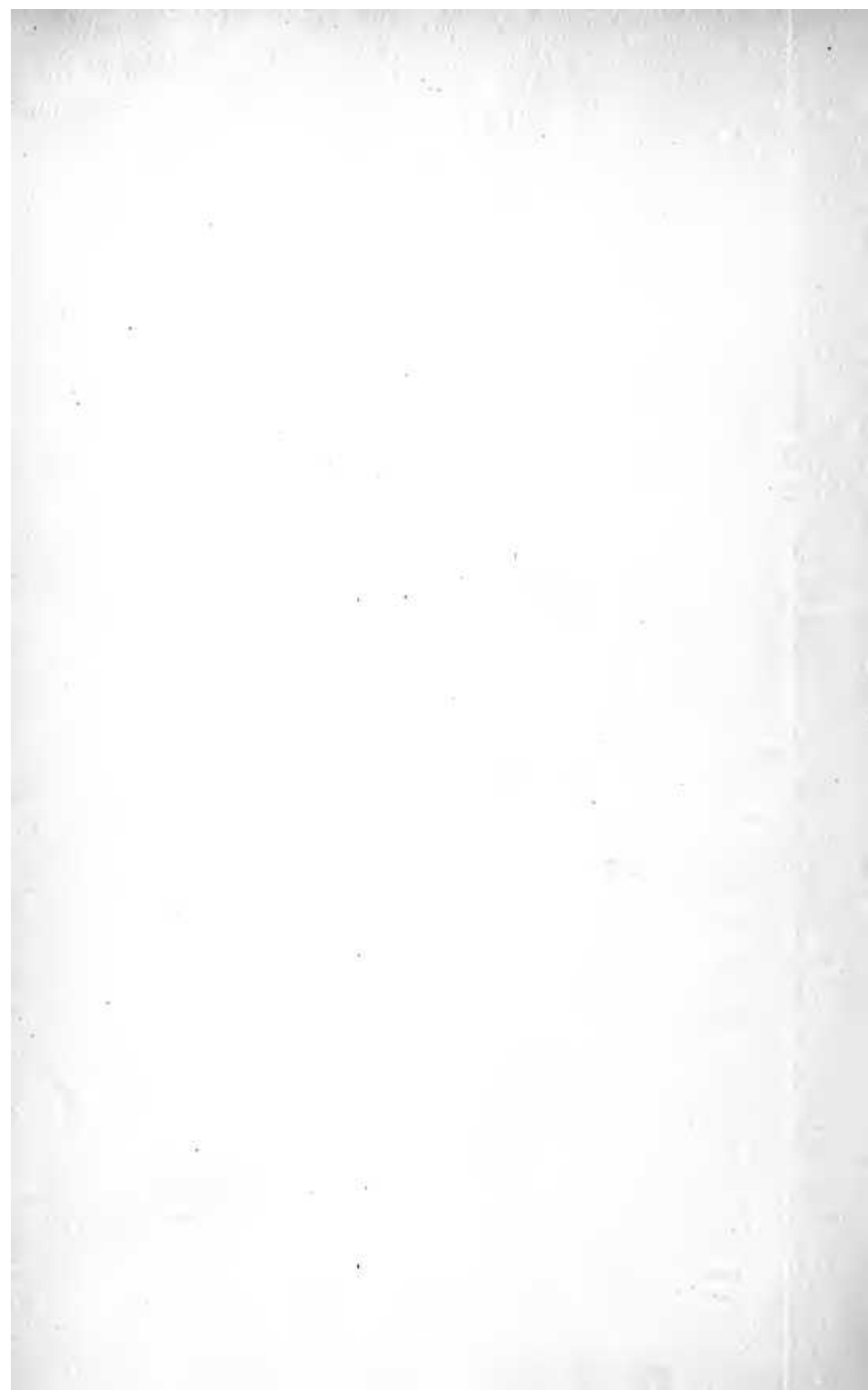
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Set up and electrotyped. Published, June, 1918

TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FRIEND
WILLIAM GARROTT BROWN
WITHOUT WHOSE KIND ENCOURAGEMENT
AND WISE CRITICISM THESE ESSAYS
WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN
ATTEMPTED.

F. L. R.



PREFACE

It is many years now since I owned to myself, with some surprise, that two subjects of study and observation were engrossing my attention more and more, and were proving each for its own sake—at least in that earlier time independent of one another—an unfailing source of interest and reward: and one of those subjects was Women and the other France.

I have cared for women, partly no doubt because I am one of them, and that *esprit de corps* which is only an expanded egotism, finds its account in emphasizing the importance of one's own kind. But partly also, I am sure, for a worthier reason. This has been called the woman's age and every hour she is solicited by new duties and responsibilities—fresh and sometimes unreasonable exactions and demands—to which her nature or her training make her unequal. On the other hand she is assailed and buffeted by the cynical taunts and reproaches of those who resent her growing freedom and intelligence—who would have her petty, frivolous and unworthy that they may continue to exploit her weakness. But in all this discordant tumult of praise and blame I have too often missed the low clear note of that justice which begins with under-