

**LOVE'S
CROSS-CURRENTS;
A YEAR'S LETTERS**

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Love's cross-currents; a year's letters by Algernon Charles Swinburne

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ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

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1870

1871

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Love's Cross-currents

A Year's Letters

By

Algernon Charles Swinburne



New York and London
Harper & Brothers Publishers
1905

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TO THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

As it has pleased you to disinter this buried bantling of your friend's literary youth, and to find it worth resurrection, I must inscribe it to you as the person responsible for its revival. Were it not that a friend's judgment may always seem liable to be coloured by the unconscious influence of friendship, I should be reassured as to its deserts by the approval of a master from whose verdict on a stranger's attempt in the creative art of fiction there could be no reasonable appeal—and who, I feel bound to acknowledge with gratitude and satisfaction, has honoured it by the sponsorial suggestion of a new and a happier name. As it is, I can only hope that you may not be for once mistaken in your favourable opinion of a study thrown into the old epistolary form which even the giant genius of Balzac could not restore to the favour it enjoyed in the days of Richardson and of Laclous. However that may be, I am content to know that you agree with me in thinking

Love's Cross-currents

that in the world of literary creation there is a legitimate place for that apparent compromise between a story and a play by which the alternate agents and patients of the tale are made to express what befalls them by word of mouth or of pen. I do not forget that the king of men to whose hand we owe the glorious history of Redgauntlet began it in epistolary form, and changed the fashion of his tale to direct and forthright narrative when the story became too strong for him, and would no longer be confined within the limits of conceivable correspondence: but his was in its ultimate upshot a historic and heroic story. And I have always regretted that we have but one specimen of the uncompleted series of letters out of which an earlier novel, the admirable Fortunes of Nigel, had grown up into immortality. The single sample which Lockhart saw fit to vouchsafe us is so great a masterpiece of dramatic humour and living imagination that the remainder of a fragment which might well suffice for the fame of any lesser man ought surely to have been long since made public. We could not dispense with the doubtless more generally amusing and interesting narrative which superseded it: but the true and thankful and understanding lover of Scott must and will readily allow or affirm that there are signs of even rarer and finer genius in the cancelled fragment of the rejected study. But these

Dedication

are perhaps too high and serious matters to be touched upon in a note of acknowledgment prefixed to so early an attempt in the great art of fiction or creation that it would never have revisited the light or rather the twilight of publicity under honest and legitimate auspices, if it had not found in you a sponsor and a friend.

