

**WIDE SEAS AND
MANY LANDS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649253142

Wide seas and many lands by Arthur Mason

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ARTHUR MASON

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By

ARTHUR MASON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
MAURICE BARING

NEWNES : LONDON

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PREFACE

I HAVE been asked to write my biography. Other people have written of their lives, lives of greater value to the world than mine; though possibly mine too has not been without value in some little ways. Lives have been written so interesting in the telling, that sceptical readers have condemned them as adorned.

My story, I believe, is not lacking in excitement; it shall be told simply, and as swiftly and truly as though the years were crossing the paper, crowding me away from youth and toward the Great Adventure.

There may be glued leaves in the volume of my life, but I shall steam them apart, trying to piece out a pattern that is not so much smudged as the background would lead one to suppose.

There will be in the pattern success and failure; heart-cheer and heart-break, such as are in all our lives; such philosophy too as would result from the thinking my life has invited. That there is love to the very end, and will be, as long as I live, speaks not so well for me (for if ever anyone knows the rough-and-tumble of life, I should know it) as it does for human nature.

P R E F A C E

Surely I may claim to know people, the good of them and the bad ; yet I think loving thoughts and incline to loving deeds, and I do believe that the good in me is uppermost and will remain uppermost to the last.

ARTHUR MASON.

INTRODUCTION

It has been noted and deplored that by some curious irony those who have the most interesting things to tell so often do not know how to tell them, while those who have the art of telling at their fingers' ends have nothing to say. A French critic once pronounced on some writer what Matthew Arnold called a damning sentence :

" Il dit tout ce qu'il veut mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire."

On the other hand, how often men, and sometimes even women, with the richest stores of original and interesting material at their disposal, not only when they try to present it, fail to do so, but they give us something else, something different. Their personality seems to change, to put on a disguise, to be anything else than what it really is.

But there are at times exceptions to this general rule. It sometimes happens that the writer who really has something to say, is, by nature (and by grace), a born writer. He finds to his surprise that it is as easy to tell his story as it was to live it.

In my opinion, Mr. Arthur Mason should afford us a remarkable example of such an exception. Perhaps I have hit on the reason of this unconscious