

**LOVE & FREINDSHIP
AND OTHER
EARLY WORKS**

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Love & freindship and other early works by Jane Austen

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JANE AUSTEN

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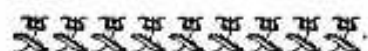
LOVE & FREINDSHIP
AND
OTHER *EARLY WORKS*
NOW FIRST PUBLISHED
FROM THE ORIGINAL MS. BY
JANE AUSTEN
WITH A PREFACE BY
G. K. CHESTERTON



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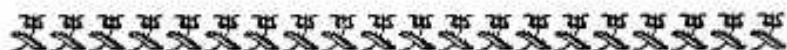


To Madame la Comtesse
DE FEVILLIDE
this Novel is inscribed
by her obliged Humble
Servant THE AUTHOR.



“Deceived in Friendship and Betrayed in Love”

P R E F A C E



IN a recent newspaper controversy about the conventional silliness and sameness of all the human generations previous to our own, somebody said that in the world of Jane Austen a lady was expected to faint when she received a proposal. To those who happen to have read any of the works of Jane Austen, the connection of ideas will appear slightly comic. Elizabeth Bennett, for instance, received two proposals from two very confident and even masterful admirers; and she certainly did not faint. It would be nearer the truth to say that they did. But in any case it may be amusing to those who are thus amused, and perhaps even instructive to those who thus need to be instructed, to know that the earliest work of Jane Austen, here published for the first time, might be called a satire on the fable of the fainting lady. "Beware of fainting fits . . . though at times they may be refreshing and agreeable yet believe me they will in the end, if too often repeated and at improper seasons, prove destructive to your Constitution." Such were the words of the expiring Sophia to the afflicted Laura; and there are modern critics

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capable of adducing *them* as a proof that all society was in a swoon in the first decade of the nineteenth century. But in truth it is the whole point of this little skit that the swoon of sensibility is not satirised because it was a fact, even in the sense of a fashion, but satirised solely because it was fiction. Laura and Sophia are made ludicrously unlike life by being made to faint as real ladies do not faint. Those ingenious moderns, who say that the real ladies did faint, are actually being taken in by Laura and Sophia, and believing them against Jane Austen. They are believing, not the people of the period but the most nonsensical novels of the period, which even the people of the period who read them did not believe. They have swallowed all the solemnities of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and never even seen the joke of *Northanger Abbey*.

For if these *juvenilia* of Jane Austen anticipate especially any of her after works, they certainly anticipate the satiric side of *Northanger Abbey*. Of their considerable significance on that side something may be said presently; but it will be well to preface it by a word about the works themselves as items of literary history. Everyone knows that the novelist left an unfinished fragment, since published under the name of "The Watsons," and a finished story called "Lady Susan," in letters, which she had herself appar-

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ently decided not to publish. These preferences are all prejudices, in the sense of matters of unmanageable taste; but I confess I think it a strange historical accident that things so comparatively dull as "Lady Susan" should have been printed already, while things so comparatively lively as "Love and Freindship" should never have been printed until now. It is at least a curiosity of literature that such curiosities of literature should have been almost accidentally concealed. Doubtless it was very rightly felt that we may go much too far in the way of emptying the wastepaper basket of a genius on the head of the public; and that there is a sense in which the wastepaper basket is as sacred as the grave. But without arrogating to myself any more right in the matter than anybody has to his own taste, I hope I may be allowed to say that I for one would have willingly left "Lady Susan" in the wastepaper basket, if I could have pieced together "Love and Freindship" for a private scrap-book; a thing to laugh over again and again as one laughs over the great burlesques of Peacock or Max Beerbohm.

Jane Austen left everything she possessed to her sister Cassandra, including these and other manuscripts; and the second volume of them, containing these, was left by Cassandra to her brother, Admiral Sir Francis Austen. He gave it