

**LETTERS TO SANCHIA UPON
THINGS AS THEY ARE;
EXTRACTED
FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE OF
MR. JOHN MAXWELL SENHOUSE**

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Letters to Sanchia upon Things as They Are; Extracted from the Correspondence of Mr. John Maxwell Senhouse by Maurice Hewlett

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MAURICE HEWLETT

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LETTERS TO SANCHIA

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UPON

THINGS AS THEY ARE

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MR. JOHN MAXWELL SENHOUSE

BY

MAURICE HEWLETT

For of the soule the bodie forme doth take ;
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

An Hymne in Honour of Beautie.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK : : : : : 1910

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A DESIRE has been more than once expressed that the Letters upon Affairs at Large which my friend Mr. Senhouse addressed to his friend Miss Sanchia Percival should be published in a convenient form; and as nobody can be more anxious than myself that his opinions should be widely known, I have prevailed upon my publishers to allow me to extract them, together with the necessary matter of explanation, from that true tale, *Open Country*, in which I was first allowed to put them before the world. It is proper that I should now explain that the Introduction and the sections of the text within square brackets are only varied from what appears in *Open Country* so far as is rendered necessary by this present Edition of the Letters. The Letters themselves are reprinted verbatim.

MAURICE HEWLETT.

LONDON, February 1910.

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Apr 30/10

INTRODUCTION

THE pages which follow, and the tale which they unfold, are the work of a man still living, and, in a sense, the property of a lady in the same state of grace. For these reasons the actual names are not warrantable. The writer is content to be known as John Maxwell Senhouse; Sanchia Percival is as near to the recipient's name as I need to go. With this provision, I have the consent of both parties to the publication of letters which do them no discredit, and do not reveal an intimacy of which they have any reason to be ashamed. It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to add that while the writer has my sympathy, I am not to be taken as sharing all his opinions with him, and that I have allowed myself the responsibility of selecting what I would print. The correspondence as a whole is massive; some of it is occasional; some relates to the correspondent's private affairs, and some to the private affairs of other people. There is a good deal of freedom used in dealing with the names and deeds of persons much in the world's eye. To publish names and comments together might be scandalous; either without the other would be stupid. So also with the tale—such tale as lay in the relations

of the eloquent, profuse, and random writer of these letters with Miss Sanchia Percival; with that again I have had to be very frugal here, contenting myself for the most part with the briefest explanation, introductory of each chosen document. It is a good tale, as all true tales are, and has in fact been told—part in a volume called *Open Country*, and part again in a sequel to that work which bears the appropriate title of *Rest Harrow*. But these matters do not concern me now. I have found my present interest amply in the opinions of the man, not in his emotions, except in so far as they sway his opinions.

By way of introduction, however, to this little volume, something must be said before the letters can be left to speak for themselves. Their writer, when I knew him first (red hot and sizzling with theory), was the most cheerful revolutionary you could conceive of. Anarchism—for he signed himself Anarchist—on his showing, was the best joke in the world. He would have dethroned kings and obliterated their dynasties as Isaac Walton would have had you impale worms on your hooks, with the same tender nicety. 'My dear old chap,' one might hear him say to a doomed monarch, 'we've had a splendid time; but a game's a game, and really yours is up. You perish for the good of your so-called people, you know; upon my honour, it's all right. Now, this bomb is beautifully timed. It'll be over before you can say knife. Just you see.'

That was the sort of impression he made upon one in those early days; he was frightfully reason-

able, and perfectly ridiculous. He was then at Cambridge, King's his college, embroiled for ever with the dons—heading his examination papers 'Down with the *bourgeois!*' or 'Death to tyrants!'¹—and yet for ever in their houses. It was the women who would have him there; his manner with women was perfect. He put them on his own level, to begin with, and his level was high. He neither flattered nor bullied, never told fibs, nor paid compliments, nor posed for what he was not; nor, so far as I can learn, did he ever make love. Flirtation and he were contradictories, for, ridiculously as he would put things, and do them, the most ridiculous part of his performance always was that he was perfectly serious. But he was all for liberty and equality, and very likely was waiting for the ladies to begin. He would have seen no reason whatever against that; and I can imagine him discussing a tender proposal from one of them with the most devastating candour, lying on the hearth-rug (his favourite place in the room) with his face between his thin hands, and his dark eyes glossy with mystery. He was extraordinarily popular; and when he was sent down for some outrageous act or another—I forget exactly what it was, but fancy it had something flagrant to do with Lord Beaconsfield or the Athanasian Creed—he spent the time of rustication actually in Cambridge, in the house of a Fellow of his college, as everybody knew perfectly well. They dug a canoe out of a tree-trunk, the queer pair of them, and navigated the Cam from Ashwell to Littleport.

¹ This he used to call 'sowing the seed.'