

**A BOOK OF
PREFERENCES
IN LITERATURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760573713

A book of preferences in literature by Eugene Mason

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BY
EUGENE MASON

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE
1915

PRINTED AT
THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
LONDON

TO
M. A. M.
ALL SAINTS' DAY 1913

*Æterna fac cum Sanctis
Tuis in gloria numerari*

2033107

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FOREWORD

THE scope of this little volume is suggested sufficiently, I think, by its title—"A Book of Preferences in Literature." The essays included here deal with subjects which, for one reason or another, are dear to the mind of their writer, and represent a personal choice amongst many valued books. Exclusion from these pages does not necessarily mean that such absent authors are less congenial to his taste. It implies simply that M. Anatole France and Mr. Rudyard Kipling amongst novelists, Walter Pater amongst essayists, and Christina Rossetti, Mr. W. B. Yeats, Heredia, and Francis Thompson amongst poets, are peculiarly grateful to his temperament and thought. The writers named, however eminent, are not perhaps of the supremest genius. It matters little. In literature, as in prayer, the devotion at times will be addressed to the saint rather than to the Deity, and yet the homage and petition may gain their reward. In the

following chapters I have offered my duty to Literature through the persons of the acolytes about her shrine. I trust—with fearfulness—that I shall be forgiven. Amongst all the characters of fiction I have coveted greatly the rôle of Interpreter in the House Beautiful. Where I have failed in my aspiration, it is the commentator and not his text that is uninspired.

E. M.