

**A MOTLEY CREW;
REMINISCENCES,
OBSERVATIONS AND
ATTEMPTS AT PLAY-WRITING**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760575762

A Motley Crew; Reminiscences, Observations and Attempts at Play-Writing by Mrs. G. W. Steevens

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Cover @ 2017

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MRS. G. W. STEEVENS

**A MOTLEY CREW;
REMINISCENCES,
OBSERVATIONS AND
ATTEMPTS AT PLAY-WRITING**

UNIV. OF
TORONTO

A MOTLEY CREW

REMINISCENCES, OBSERVATIONS
AND ATTEMPTS AT PLAY-WRITING

BY MRS. G. W. STEEVENS



LONDON: GRANT RICHARDS

HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1901

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I ONLY publish this Motley Crew because it was the wish of one whose word to me was—and is—law that it should be done.

Should any part of the volume attain any measure of success, it would encourage me to go on, so let the critic and public beware.

CHRISTINA STEEVENS.

MERTON ABBEY, SURREY.

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A SKETCH IN FIVE PHASES

PHASE THE FIRST

SHE never cared about him, but then she cared about no one else, except her own people and her father's house. She adored her father, who was a weak, unlucky, but adorable man, full of wit and humour and kindness—unembittered by failure, unelated by success.

So she married her lover—for he was good-natured enough, and fond of her in his aimless, limp way. A country gentleman of large property, and beautiful to look at—a credit to any one to go about with. But, oh! so weak, so self-indulgent, so soulless, so hopelessly, so ineffably dull.

She was as bright as possible,—not pretty, but full of charm and *chien* and innocence all tumbled up together.

She thought how nice it would be to have a jolly home for the boys to come to, and a place of happy rest for the ruined father. It

A SKETCH IN FIVE PHASES

seemed just the best thing to do all round, and so she did it; for she had great confidence in her own judgment, and a certain sort of wish and determination to act wisely and without self-consideration at all times.

Well! Twenty-four hours after the marriage she began to feel what she had done. She had no one to talk to, nothing to do. She came of a bright, clever, active, merry family, and the quiet was awful. No jokes. No laughter. He understood nothing she thought, very little she said—in fact, she was bored to death.

It was better for a while when they got home, for then she was among her friends and her kindred again, and the new life and interest that surround a young married girl closed her eyes for a time.

I think she never felt like a girl again after she first saw him drunk. That shut the door on her youth, and filled her with a bitter sense of disgrace and humiliation that never left her.

It grew and grew and ate into her soul. Her tremendous spirits and good health, with her keen capacity for enjoyment, however,

A SKETCH IN FIVE PHASES

concealed well the mine that was always ready to explode—the fox that was gnawing at her heart; and no human being guessed that the merry, laughing, amusing girl—the life and soul of every social gathering—was rapidly changing into a reckless, callous woman, chafing under the bondage that she felt was killing all that was good in her, and making impossible the fulfilment of all that she had longed and hoped to do with her life.

PHASE THE SECOND

Then came the baby, and brought with it the torrent of love that had been latent and unsuspected, — passionate, uncompromising love for the fine, healthy, commonplace child, growing stronger every day, till all disappointment, all sense of want, was lost or forgotten in the overwhelming enjoyment of the fulness of this love. His wants and wishes of all kinds filled every moment of her life, absorbed her thoughts, blinded her to every deficiency and to every other duty, and left no blanks—for every aching void was filled.

Of course, as he grew older he occupied