

**A HAPPY
HALF-CENTURY,
AND OTHER ESSAYS**

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A happy half-century, and other essays by Agnes Repplier

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BY

AGNES REPPLIER, LITT. D.



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TO
J. WILLIAM WHITE

PREFACE

THE half-century, whose more familiar aspects this little book is designed to illustrate, has spread its boundary lines. Nothing is so hard to deal with as a period. Nothing is so unmanageable as a date. People will be born a few years too early; they will live a few years too long. Events will happen out of time. The closely linked decades refuse to be separated, and my half-century, that I thought so compact, widened imperceptibly while I wrote.

I have filled my canvas with trivial things, with intimate details, with what now seem the insignificant aspects of life. But the insignificant aspects of life concern us mightily while we live; and it is by their help that we understand the insignificant people who are sometimes reckoned of importance. A hundred years ago many men and women were reckoned of importance, at whose claims their successors to-day smile scornfully. Yet they and their

work were woven into the tissue of things, into the warp and woof of social conditions, into the literary history of England. An hour is not too precious to waste upon them, however feeble their pretensions. Perhaps some idle reader in the future will do as much by us.

A. R.