

**TRUTH WITHOUT
PREJUDICE**

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Truth Without Prejudice by F. C. Montgomery

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F. C. MONTGOMERY

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Thoughts and Fears in Solitude	1

CHAPTER II.

The Transgression of the Divine Law	19
---	----

CHAPTER III.

The Character we Possess : the Means of Maintaining it	61
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

The Eucharist	104
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CHAPTER V.

The One Ruling Principle	125
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TRUTH WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

CHAPTER I.

THOUGHTS AND FEARS IN SOLITUDE.

THERE is probably no one who, in some moment of idle thought, has not amused himself with wild conjectures as to what may be the real position and actual *home* feelings of many of the stray acquaintance and chance friends with whom he associates. There is a broad groundwork of general principles which are universal in human nature, and which gives to every man a sort of clue, more or less certain, to the hearts of his fellow-beings. For though we meet together upon an infinite variety of relationships, and every individual comes into

the crowd wearing his own peculiar stamp of manner and appearance, which is the result of many combined influences in his character and circumstances, yet, in point of fact, we all know, and we all feel, that we alike carry about with us, in different degrees of depth and intensity, the same affections, the same hopes, and the same fears. Even in the excitement of society and the whirl of business, underneath that outward demeanour imposed upon us by the presence of others, every man is conscious of a silent depth in his own soul which no human eye has ever pierced. And it is this recollection of how different we ourselves are in solitude from what we generally appear to others which leaves us to speculate with a feeling of interest upon what may be the heart secrets of those around us. History and biography derive their power over us from this principle, and even the daily talk of common life, and the universal love for private anecdotes of those we know or have heard of, arises from the desire to compare ourselves with others, and to seek some interpretation of our own mind and feelings by learning what others have experienced.

We go about the world endeavouring to support the character imposed upon us by the society we live in, and in proportion as that society is artificial and deceitful must be the disguise which we throw over our natural impulses. We should infringe upon its cold and harsh laws were we for a moment to allow the ebb and flow of our individual feelings to intrude upon the smooth surface with which the selfishness and the prudence of man has invested the whole modern system of society. We cannot argue that these restraints are unwise or unnecessary; we may regret the causes that have produced them, but we yield to them as imperative. Yet they do not haunt us every where; and, oh! when we are alone, and the falsehood of the calm, even *insouciance* which we assume to others, is thrown off like an irksome garment, who does not know the flood of wild, deep, natural feelings, which rush upon the heart, and make it beat again, whether to joy or sorrow, with a pulse unchecked by any necessity for assuming gravity or mirth which it does not feel? How many a man, as he closes the door of his solitary room, groans inwardly

to find the burthen of his own thoughts come back again, and to feel that while he is alone he must be *himself*, with all his private sorrows and his secret errors!

At all times we are a mystery to ourselves. We cannot fathom our own souls, but not unfrequently we catch glimpses of their awful capabilities and untold powers of happiness or misery. Some sudden pang of remorse, the slow anticipation of a cruel sorrow, the loss of an object dear to us, or the intense yearning of deep affection, frequently startle us into the dreadful conviction of *how* much we may be made to suffer; and then comes the thirst for sympathy, and the fear that we shall not find it. The world knows nothing of our heart; the best friend may not understand its many windings; and even if we could trust him, our efforts to explain ourselves most frequently end in the simple declaration that words cannot express what we mean. In short, as far as human sympathy goes, there must still be many a time when a man feels that he is utterly alone.

I know not before whose notice these scat-