Little essays of love and virtue

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LITTLE ESSAYS
OF LOVE AND VIRTUE

HAVELOCK ELLIS
By THE SAME AUTHOR

STUDIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX.
Six Volumes
Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company

MAN AND WOMAN
London: Walter Scott
New York: Charles Scribners' Sons

THE TASK OF SOCIAL HYGIENE
London: Constable and Company
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS.
First and Second Series
London: Constable and Company
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PREFACE

In these Essays—little, indeed, as I know them to be, compared to the magnitude of their subjects—I have tried to set forth, as clearly as I can, certain fundamental principles, together with their practical application to the life of our time. Some of these principles were stated, more briefly and technically, in my larger Studies of sex; others were therein implied but only to be read between the lines. Here I have expressed them in simple language and with some detail. It is my hope that in this way they may more surely come into the hands of young people, youths and girls at the period of adolescence, who have been present to my thoughts in all the studies I have written of sex because I was myself of that age when I first vaguely planned them. I would prefer to leave to their judgment the question as to whether this book is suitable to be placed in the hands of older people. It might only give them pain. It is in youth that the questions of mature age can alone be settled, if they ever are to be settled, and unless we begin to think about
adult problems when we are young all our think-
ing is likely to be in vain. There are but few
people who are able when youth is over either
on the one hand to re-mould themselves nearer
to those facts of Nature and of Society they
failed to perceive, or had not the courage to
accept, when they were young, or, on the other
hand, to mould the facts of the exterior world
nearer to those of their own true interior world.
One hesitates to bring home to them too keenly
what they have missed in life. Yet, let us re-
member, even for those who have missed most,
there always remains the fortifying and con-
soling thought that they may at least help to
make the world better for those who come after
them, and the possibilities of human adjustment
easier for others than it has been for themselves.
They must still remain true to their own tradi-
tions. We could not wish it to be otherwise.

The art of making love and the art of being
virtuous—two aspects of the great art of living
that are, rightly regarded, harmonious and not
at variance—remain, indeed, when we cease to
misunderstand them, essentially the same in all
ages and among all peoples. Yet, always and
everywhere, little modifications become neces-
sary, little, yet, like so many little things, im-
mense in their significance and results. In this way, if we are really alive, we flexibly adjust ourselves to the world in which we find ourselves, and in so doing simultaneously adjust to ourselves that ever-changing world, ever-changing, though its changes are within such narrow limits that it yet remains substantially the same. It is with such modification that we are concerned in these Little Essays.

H. E.

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