

# PREFACE

## TO THE DISINGENUOUS READER

THERE must be many such in the world, that is if reading is the least like other forms of business. Therefore I address myself to you, O Disingenuous Reader, believing as I do in the wisdom, taste, and rectitude of majorities, and I take it that amongst readers you are in the majority. If, therefore, the greatest number of readers be disingenuous, it follows as a political sequence that the manner of their reading is the right manner. Your majority can make black white and right wrong, in fact often does so.

Now the man who writes a book, even such an unambitious one as the present booklet, likes to have the majority on his side, for certain reasons. Moreover, he who writes a book acts usually as a horse-dealer does in

assigning his reason for parting with the animal he is selling. That is, the writer commonly conceals his reason for writing, or at best puts forth some plea so transparent that by it no one is deceived. And touching my object, I will declare it later, that is, if circumstances render it expedient for me so to do. Suffice it to say that it was not penned for the general benefit of mankind, nor, as far as I know, to increase knowledge, either scientific or theological.

Least of all did I labour and struggle with the evil generation of copyists and others, who make our mystery a weariness of the flesh, as Chaucer setteth forth, to enunciate some great truth which I had discovered. If in my peregrinations about the region of Menteith I had lighted on any such matter, I should have kept it to myself, thus ensuring to it at least one believer. It is commonly the case that when a man writes an account of any district that the natives are enchanted, if in his descriptions there is anything that they can comprehend, or have ever heard before related.

The casual writer, too, if he can detect a printer's error, or an inaccuracy of statement, writes to a newspaper and rejoices most consumedly. There-

fore, in descriptions of any district, it is not infrequent that a writer pleases where he did not look to have given pleasure. Some have (it is asserted) entertained angels unawares. What I have set down I have set down half in idleness and half out of that affection which is common to man and trees for the soil in which they have been for ages rooted. What I have set down in error, O Disingenuous Reader, put down, I pray, not to any malice of afore- or after-thought, but rather to the innate devilry of type-writers, barratry of mariners, the act of God, or any of those causes to which mankind is prone to attribute their own errors. Vale,

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.