

À

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
VIGNETTES

BY AUSTIN DOBSON

'Faute d'archanges, il faut aimer des
créatures imparfaites'

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TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE.

SIXTEEN of the twenty papers comprised in this volume appeared in America; but only one of these—'The Citizen of the World'—has been reprinted in England. Of the four papers remaining, one was published (in part) in the 'Saturday Review,' and the other three in 'Longman's Magazine,' the 'National Review,' and the 'Library' respectively. Where permission to reprint was required, it has been obtained; and it is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

With the exception of the last two, which are more general in character than the rest, the papers are now chronologically arranged. They do not by any means exhaust the list of subjects originally drawn up by their writer for the kind of episodic treatment at which they aim; and should these first experiments find a public, it is not impossible ('if the good Fates please') that they may be followed by a further collection.

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EIGHTEENTH CENTURY VIGNETTES.

STEELE'S LETTERS.

ON the 19th of May, 1708, Her Majesty Queen Anne being then upon the throne of Great Britain and Ireland, a coach with two horses, gaudy rather than neat in its appointments, drew up at the door of my Lord Sunderland's Office in Whitehall. It contained a lady about thirty, of considerable personal attractions, and dressed richly in cinnamon satin. She was a brunette, with a rather high forehead, the height of which was ingeniously broken by two short locks upon the temples. Moreover, she had distinctly fine eyes, and a mouth which, in its normal state, must have been arch and pretty, but was now drawn down at the corners under the influence of some temporary irritation. As the coach stopped, a provincial-looking servant promptly alighted, pulled out from the box-seat a large case of the kind used for preserving the