

PREFACE

LIFE is not all pleasure, nor is it all pain, but just a jumble of all things inextricably mixed, and so it is with this book : we may laugh in the morning and cry at night, for the immutable law of the universe is *change*.

We are all born with great capacities, but not all have the capacity of enjoyment—more is the pity, for there are so many joys in life, all waiting to be gathered. There is the priceless joy of friendship—sacred friendship, without which life would be colourless. The joy of loving and being loved, to know that we are wanted, and can make someone happy. This capacity, however, bears in its train exquisite pain as well as exquisite pleasure. Again, there is the joy of sport, when all the glories of nature are at our feet. The joy of remembrance, though sometimes a sad joy. Being now in the autumn of my days, when my to-morrows are growing less, I can calmly look back over my life and say that few days have been too long, and not many long enough for all I have wanted to do and enjoy.

It has been my privilege to meet many great and good people, some whose work had been seen and acknowledged, others who have by their natural modesty managed to camouflage their endeavours and have remained unacknowledged, but it has been a joy to know them all.

I feel that I have devoted a good deal of space to the Begam of Bhopal, but her life has been so interesting I could not help it. I allow that her life makes

the trivialities of my own experiences and remembrances seem very small, but life is made up of women and men of Importance as well as Women of No Importance.

Having had many experiences and countless joys, perhaps it may be of interest, in a mild sort of way, for others to read about them. That must be my excuse for writing this book.

“A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE.”