

## INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

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MY DEAR PUBLISHER,—I did promise to write an Introduction to these charming papers ; but an Introduction,—what is it?—a sort of *pilaster*, put upon the face of a building for look's sake, and usually flat,—very flat. Sometimes it may be called a *caryatid*, which is, as I understand it, a cruel device of architecture, representing a man or a woman, obliged to hold up upon his or her head or shoulders a structure which they did not build, and which could stand just as well without as with them. But an Introduction is more apt to be a pillar, such as one may see in Baalbee, standing up in the air all alone, with nothing on it, and with nothing for it to do.

But an Introductory Letter is different. There is in that no formality, no assumption of function, no awkward propriety or dignity to be sustained. A letter at the opening of a book may be only a footpath, leading the curious to a favorable point of observation, and then leaving them to wander as they will.

Sluggards have been sent to the ant for wisdom ; but writers might better be sent to the spider,—not because he works all night, and watches all day, but because he works unconsciously. He dare not even bring his work before his own eyes, but keeps it behind him, as if too much knowledge of what one is doing would spoil the delicacy and modesty of one's work.

Almost all graceful and fanciful work is born like a dream, that comes noiselessly, and tarries silently, and