

**THE BIRMINGHAM POST**  
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**THE MIND AND MANNER OF THE AUTHOR.**

**FUNCTION OF THE PREFACE.**

**(From a Correspondent.)**

A book's preface is as a sample from bulk to a tea-taster; it should be a pleasurable foretaste of the treasure within. As a form of literature it is a test of authorship, and it shadows the mind of the author at its finest. And though there have been good prefaces to poor books, the contrary is rare. The preface finds the writer proving his strength; he must be at his best, or rather above his best, that his reader may be sure of him— . . .

[ . . . . . ]

Of modern authors Mr. Chesterton writes provocative prefaces, so does Mr. Belloc, and follows them with even more provocative books. Mr. Masfield confers a fleeting immortality on smaller men whose books thereby achieve the dignity of the first edition price lists. Mr. de la Mare has written the most charming preface for "Come Hither," and Mr. Aleister Crowley, a poet, the angriest, and Mr. Machen the most scornful, . . .