

INTRODUCTION

In a *Foreword to Donovan Pasha*, published in 1902, I used the following words:

"It is now twelve years since I began giving to the public tales of life in lands well known to me. The first of them were drawn from Australia and the islands of the southern Pacific, where I had lived and roamed in the middle and late eighties. . . . Those tales of the Far South were given out with some prodigality. They did not appear in book form, however; for at the time I was sending out these antipodean sketches I was also writing—far from the scenes where they were laid—a series of Canadian tales, many of which appeared in the *Independent* of New York, in the *National Observer*, edited by Mr. Henley, and in the *Illustrated London News*. On the suggestion of my friend Mr. Henley, the Canadian tales, *Pierre and His People*, were published first; with the result that the stories of the southern hemisphere were withheld from publication, though they have been privately printed and duly copyrighted. Some day I may send them forth, but meanwhile I am content to keep them in my care."

These stories made the collection published eventually under the title of *Cumner's Son*, in 1910. They were thus kept for nearly twenty years without being given to the public in book form. In 1910 I decided, however, that they should go out and find their place with my readers. The first story in the book, *Cumner's Son*, which represents about four times the length of an ordinary short story, was published in *Harper's Weekly*, midway between 1890 and 1900. All the earlier stories belonged to 1890, 1891, 1892, and 1893. The first of these to