

PREFACE.

AMIDST all the troubled waters of the present warlike and panic-stricken times, where shall *we* find rest for the sole of our foot? and who will accept *this* olive branch of peace and goodwill? Yet, public activity, and joy, and grief, must have their quiet intervals, though it may be few and far between; then, perhaps, an old Family Friend may be welcomed once more, and happy times renewed with old familiar faces.

And now viewing our past and present performances, as in a lengthened tapestry roll of the antique fashion, on which industrious fingers worked continuously from year to year, we ask ourselves anxiously—have we wrought well *this* portion of our storied web?—are the colours as fresh and tastefully assorted—the patterns as harmonious, truthful, pure and graphic, as heretofore? In other words, have we worthily maintained our title to the honoured position we have so long occupied in the homes of England? We make no pause for a reply,—that has been given to our highest satisfaction in the continued increase of our subscribers, and the steadfastness of those who have been with us from the commencement of our long and successful career.

Often, when we have reflected on the vast number of readers of intelligence and refinement to whom we have so long been a household minister, we have inquired what has been the secret of this rare success? and the only solution we could find was this—that we have been in *earnest* with our work—that we have religiously adhered to the object and principles with which we commenced—that we have introduced nothing in our pages unfitting for the sacred precincts of the domestic temple.

Without boasting, we may say of the volume now respectfully submitted to the reader, that, while in the quality of its mental stores it is not inferior to any of its predecessors, it takes its own ground for variety of topic and