

PREFACE.

THE autumn winds are again blowing, and the evenings are growing longer. At the time when the fires are kindled once more upon the hearth, I send this story out to visit those whom I can almost hope to regard as friends. If it meets the same kind welcome and lenient treatment which my previous works have received, I shall have more than sufficient reason to be satisfied. If, in addition to being a guest at the fireside, it becomes an incentive to the patient performance of duty in the face of all temptation, I shall be profoundly thankful. I am not afraid to inform the reader that these books are written with the honest, earnest purpose of helping him to do right; and success, in this respect, is the best reward I crave. I do not claim for these books the character of beautiful works of art. Many things may have good and wholesome uses without exciting the world's admiration. A man who cannot model a perfect statue may yet erect a lamp-post, and place thereon a light which shall save many a wayfarer from stumbling.