

PROLOGUE.

THE silent processes have been at work for centuries, and now they culminate, temporarily, in an episode—Hazlewood. Down from sidereal wastes, up from green depths of ocean, centripetally from wide forests areas, forces have come, through perpetual modifications, until the supreme result for the time has been arrived at, and Hazlewood, small, red, plaintive, lies in his nurse's arms. "What interest have we in this infant?" you ask. Has he lived? Is he a real person? Is he the writer? Is he my idea of you, Reader? Yes, he is all these, and being all, is of course none of them. Nevertheless, Hazlewood has been conceived and born, and being born must live and thrive, he having the good fortune not to be one of the schemes for the amelioration of man's lot, which are often conceived, and even born, and yet do not live and thrive.

Hazlewood does not do much at first. He