

INTRODUCTION

WHILE I was studying the life of French Canada in the winter of 1892, in the city of Quebec or in secluded parishes, there was forwarded to me from my London home a letter from Mr. Arrow-smith, the publisher, asking me to write a novel of fifty thousand or sixty thousand words for what was called his Annual. In this Annual had appeared Hugh Conway's *Called Back* and Anthony Hope's *Prisoner of Zenda*, among other celebrated works of fiction. I cabled my acceptance of the excellent offer made me, and the summer of 1893 found me at Audierne, in Brittany, with some artist friends—more than one of whom has since come to eminence—living what was really an out-door literary life; for the greater part of *The Trespasser* was written in a high-walled garden on a gentle hill, and the remainder in a little tower-like structure of the villa where I lodged, which was all windows. The latter I only used when it rained, and the garden was my workshop. There were peaches and figs on the walls, pleasant shrubs surrounded me, and the place was ideally quiet and serene. Coffee or tea and toast was served me at 6.30 o'clock A.M., my pad was on my knee at 8, and then there was practically uninterrupted work till 12, when *déjeuner à la fourchette*, with its fresh sardines, its omelettes, and its roast chicken, was welcome. The afternoon was spent on the sea-shore, which is very beautiful at Audierne, and there I watched my friends painting sea-scapes. In the late afternoon came letter-writing and reading, and after a little and simple dinner at 6.30 came bed at 9.45 or thereabouts. In such conditions for many weeks I worked on *The Trespasser*; and I think the book has an out-door spirit which such a life would inspire.