



PUBLISHERS' NOTE

IN putting before the public the last work by Mr. Grant Allen, the publishers desire to express their deep regret at the author's unexpected and lamented death—a regret in which they are sure to be joined by the many thousand readers whom he did so much to entertain. A man of curiously varied and comprehensive knowledge, and with the most charming personality; a writer who, treating of a wide variety of subjects, touched nothing which he did not make distinctive, he filled a place which no man living can exactly occupy. The last chapter of this volume had been roughly sketched by Mr. Allen before his final illness, and his anxiety, when debarred from work, to see it finished, was relieved by the considerate kindness of his friend and neighbour, Dr. Conan Doyle, who, hearing of his trouble, talked it over with him, gathered his ideas, and finally wrote it out for him in the form in which it now appears—a beautiful and pathetic act of friendship which it is a pleasure to record.

