

PREFACE

REALISM is the unlovely harpy of our generation. Not content with being our everlasting familiar in our daily toil and moil, the ugly harri-
dan has invaded the very realms of imagination, and devastated our pleasures, until most of us would
vainly cry:—Give us something back!—even if it be only one poor old
superstition.

But now and then, for a brief hour, we flee, like very truants, from the sway of
her crooked arm, and wander, far away, into No-Man's-Land, where Oberon, the
lean and jealous, and that "rash wanton," Queen Titania, still cry:

"My gentle Puck —"

Therefore it is that while the tales comprised in this book have been written
mainly to please the young, it is yet boldly hoped that they will amuse others who
would better be if younger.

THE AUTHORS.