

FOREWORD

I WAS talking one day with my friend, Mr. Willis Brooks Hawkins, of the many careless nights we had known together at the old Lanthorne Club, which held its sessions in a very odd and ancient house on Monkey Hill, and later in the old tavern farther south, where once the redoubtable Captain Kidd loved to light his pipe and drink his grog and coffee. We spoke of the boys and men who had sat with us at meat before its ample fireside — of Crane, Field, Masson, Nye, Tarkington, Garland, Gaines, Gilder, Howells, Stedman and Stoddard, some of whom were then beginning their work. As our talk went on I told of my plan for this tale, and particularly of a quarrelsome old sea "Cap'n" who had pushed into my study at odd times and bullied me, busy as I had been with better people, into hearing him. I told how his rough fist had whacked my best mahogany in the midst of unwelcome tales and opinions; how once he had broken into my task with a ribald song and boldly winked at me when I turned to protest, and begun to fight the wind, as one may say, in a long talk about "lady cooks"; how at