

P R E F A C E .

I DESIRE to express my profound indebtedness, for the central mythological idea embodied in this tale, to Mr. J. G. Frazer's admirable and epoch-making work, "The Golden Bough," whose main contention I have endeavoured incidentally to popularize in my present story. I wish also to express my obligations in other ways to Mr. Andrew Lang's "Myth, Ritual, and Religion," Mr. H. O. Forbes's "Naturalist's Wanderings," and Mr. Julian Thomas's "Cannibals and Convicts." If I have omitted to mention any other author to whom I may have owed incidental hints, it will be some consolation to me to reflect that I shall at least have afforded an opportunity for legitimate sport to the amateurs of the new and popular British pastime of badger-baiting or plagiary-hunting. It may also save critics some moments' search if I say at once that, after careful consideration, I have been unable to discover any moral whatsoever in this humble narrative. I venture to believe that in so enlightened an age the majority of my readers will never miss it.

G. A.

THE NOOK, DORKING,
October, 1890.