

Dedication

TO THE

REVEREND AND MRS. HAROLD DAVIDSON,
THE RECTORY, STIFFKEY, NORFOLK.

My dear Mollie and Harold,—

I began this story during the "snows of yester-year" in your hospitable house, when the Winter wind blew keen from the North Sea and the great wild geese fell nightly to the guns upon the marshes. Then, when the Spring came, I carried my manuscript to the High Alps, and, there, among the most marvellously romantic scenery in the world, I wrote the middle portion. Alone, among the odorous pines, with the twin miracles of dawn and of sunset over the St. Gotthard Pass ever before our eyes, my wife and I often thought and talked of you both in your wonderful old Georgian house—a very stately setting for you dwellers by the sea! As you know, the book was, finally, nearly completed at Florence, under the shadow of Giotto's Campanile; but such are the coincidences of Friends'ip and of Fate that the last words were written in England—and at your house again!

To whom, then, of all my friends, could I more appropriately offer this book? If you never trouble to read it, though I hope that both of you will, give it to Sheilaigh, with a kiss from me, when she grows up and learns how to read!

Your attached friend,

GUY THORNE.

64, St. James' Street,
S.W.