

PREFACE.

MY DEAR READER,—This story is not to be a novel, as the world understands the word ; and we tell you so beforehand, lest you be in ill-humor by not finding what you expected. For if you have been told that your dinner is to be salmon and green peas, and made up your mind to that bill of fare, and then, on coming to the table, find that it is beefsteak and tomatoes, you may be out of sorts ; *not* because beefsteak and tomatoes are not respectable viands, but because they are not what you have made up your mind to enjoy.

Now, a novel, in our days, is a three-story affair,—a complicated, complex, multiform composition, requiring no end of scenery and *dramatis personæ*, and plot and plan, together with trap-doors, pitfalls, wonderful escapes and thrilling dangers ; and the scenes transport one all over the earth,—to England, Italy, Switzerland, Japan, and Kamtschatka. But this is a little commonplace history, all about one man and one woman, living straight along in one little prosaic town in New England. It is, moreover, a story with a moral ; and for fear that you shouldn't find out exactly what the moral is, we shall adopt the plan of the painter who wrote under his pictures, "This is a bear," and "This is a turtle-dove." We shall tell you in the proper time succinctly what the moral is, and send you off edified as if you had been hearing a sermon. So please to call this little sketch a parable, and wait for the exposition thereof.

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