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PREFACE.

At the age of sixteen, I commenced keeping a journal, recording the most interesting facts which came under my observation. As this procedure tended to improve my style and yield a gratification, I continued to make these entries until the force of habit became so strong that I had little inclination to abandon it. So this course was continued, wise or unwise, for thirty-four years. Out of these crude and hasty materials, originally designed for my own private improvement, has emanated this volume. When, for various reasons, its publication was decided, the work of revision was commenced. Many things of a local or private nature were omitted, and, perhaps, others might have been without detriment. As the repetition of dates, so common in journalistic writings, tends to mar the beauty and harmony of composition, I had almost concluded to adopt a different style; but I could not do it without remodeling the whole work, which I had not time to do. It is, therefore, presented in its original, and, perhaps, best form; and, if the reader chooses, he can omit the dates simply as prefixes.

The chapters, in order to avoid weariness, are short,

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