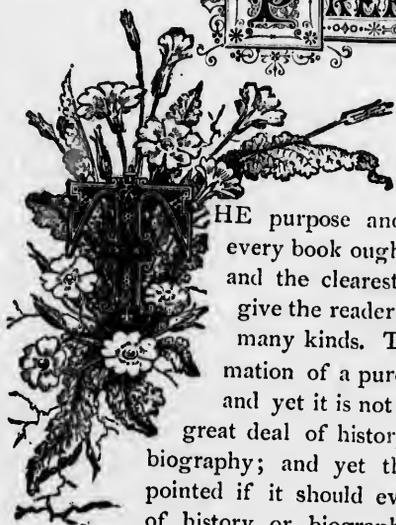




PREFACE



THE purpose and plan of this book,—and every book ought to have the loftiest purpose and the clearest plan,—are in no respect to give the reader knowledge simply of one or many kinds. There is a great deal of information of a purely scientific character in it; and yet it is not a scientific work; there is a great deal of history in it, and a great deal of biography; and yet the author would be disappointed if it should ever be spoken of as a book of history or biography. There are other eyes through which to see things. To the most of us, the sciences as a study fail to possess the interest they should. And yet, all incidents which reveal in animals the qualities of special intelligence, affection, courage, fidelity,—all such things possess a profound interest. It is said of that ungainly creature, the kangaroo, that, when hotly pursued, she will turn and hold up her little one, to move the compassion of the hunter: Now, we are not at all interested in the science that treats of animals, abstractly, but facts like this are never skipped in our reading, and never forgotten afterward. So, also, we are not interested in the science of chemistry; but when it comes to the production of real diamonds by chemical process,—well, the account of it is vastly interesting reading, to say the least. Few of us, also, are