

*A LETTER DECLARATORY TO THE
SECOND EDITION.*

DEAR LOUIS STEVENSON,—It is, I think, a remark of your own that the imprudences of men, even oftener than their ill deeds, come home to roost. At least, if you have not so remarked it, you have not lived so long without observing it. Now, in some wise, you have at least a god-papa's responsibility for the "Stickit Minister," and if you have no spoon of silver for the poor fellow, you will be expected at the least duly to hear his catechism.

A month ago when, entirely without permission, I dedicated the first edition of my prose first-born to you, shame kept me from further connecting you with what no one but yourself might ever read. As for you, I had you in a cleft stick, as you shall presently hear. But now a second edition and a preface imperatively required have together thawed my blateness. But it occurs to me that you may deny any parental responsibility, even vicarious. Well, as much is mostly done on these occasions. In that case we will proceed to lead the proof. You have, no doubt, forgotten a power of good law in your time, and might have forgotten even more had you ever known it. But not the wit of the Great Lord President himself in his best days could have shaken this case of mine.

Let me then suggest to you Saranac Lake, a bleak sheet of ice "somewhere in America"—east winds, hotels with a smell of cooking in the corridors, melting snows, and mountains. It is near flitting and settling