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The Pen and The Book

BY
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PREFACE.

THIS book is written for the instruction and the guidance of those young persons, of whom there are now many thousands, who are thinking of the Literary Life. It is written for no other persons, and may therefore be considered as, in a sense, privately printed. After the devotion of over thirty years to this life, I may, perhaps, be allowed to have acquired some experience. During this long period I have been a writer of leading articles, a reviewer, a writer of literary studies, a writer of history and biography, a novelist and a dramatist. I have read for a publisher : I have edited one archæological survey, and I am engaged in directing another : there are, therefore, very few branches of litera-

ture in which I have not been actively engaged. But, in addition to the experience thus acquired of writing in many branches, it has been my good fortune to acquire another and quite a different kind of experience. For four years I was Chairman of the Committee of the Society of Authors: and for seven years I have been editor of their organ, the *Author*. In these capacities I have had my attention necessarily turned to the commercial side of literature; I have been compelled to occupy myself with the study and the understanding of all those facts connected with publishing which have been commonly withheld from authors. In these pages I present to my reader, for his guidance, all the facts necessary to be known in connection with the production and the sale of a book.

To the thousands of young persons whom I address, the *Literary Life* offers attractions which are almost irresistible. The old bugbear—the prejudice formerly so well founded—of poverty has vanished. It is now well known that a respectable man of letters may command

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an income and a position quite equal to those of the average lawyer or doctor. It is also well known that one who rises to the top may enjoy as much social consideration as a Bishop and as good an income. These points being now thoroughly well known and admitted by all, the number of those who would enter the ranks of literature increases every day.

It is my design in this book to present aspirants first with a general view of the Literary Life; next, with a chapter on the requirements of each branch; and thirdly, with the facts relating to the meaning and value of literary property. I have endeavoured to make my readers understand that this kind of work should be regarded as a career worthy of the highest honour and respect: that it should be taken in hand most seriously and earnestly, and with due regard to the responsibilities of the work. And I have endeavoured to make the young writer, at the outset, independent of the publishers by presenting him, as I said above, with the real meaning of a book as regards the