## LEISURE HOUR SERIES - NO. 150. A MIDSUMMER LARK

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Leisure Hour Series - No. 150. A Midsummer Lark by W. A. Croffut

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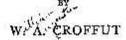
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### W. A. CROFFUT

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### A MIDSUMMER LARK





NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1883

#### To R. T. BUSH,

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OWN DW 124 W

whose vision keen saw through the Masquerading and gave to

Europe's checkered Scene its proper Tone and Shading;

with penetrating eyes, through Cottages and Castles — a clown beneath a King's disguise,

a Man

Beneath a Vassal's;

who

in the Old World's horoscope saw Blinding Desolations, and in the

New World's splendid hope, the Rescue of the Nations;

ere this Book began became the first to instigate it on him the credit and the blame.—

TO HIM I DEDICATE IT.



### A PREFACE.

READERS of a book expect it. Whether its tone is heavier or lighter is little consequence, but to neglect it seems grossly disrespectful in the writer. As merry Touchstone in the Minstrel's story ventured his asyou-like-it observation, if "nought" is found the mustard prefatory, the pancakes are not worth consideration.

I, offer this, not as a finished picture, rich in detail, upon an easel leaning and challenging the critic's lively stricture, but as a hint to them who see its meaning. This splash of paint may pass for an "Impression," like those before whose cloudy vistas linger ecstatic gazers at the Exhibition—done with a very sudden thumb and finger; one of the sort of vague and shadowy guesses into whose fabric Fancy's frolics enter, suggesting vastly more than it expresses,—to all who feel exactly like the painter! It is a kind of phantom recollection; and such hyperboles as may adorn it must be interpreted with-

out correction; I'll not abate a syllable—I scorn it!

Read straight along. A very vicious habit in reading is to flip the flying pages till something succulent appears, and nabit, then wait till something else the eye engages. Like Mrs. Todgers when she boiled the chicken, as Bailey said, who'd seen her bend above 'em, "She's got a fork and dodgin' round and pickin' the tender pieces out a eatin' of 'em!" If true the story that precocious sinner told Mercy Pecksniff to improve his status, his worthy mistress must have spoilt the dinner and ruined her digestive apparatus.

I'm not like those who print their lucubrations because their friends advise and drive them to it. When I consulted friends and near relations they all jumped up and shouted "Don't you do it! A book of travels—it would be too prosy; you haven't humor, pathos or ability. Excuse this yawn——ing! but it makes me dozy to think about the horrid possibility!" Then, with a gloomy frown and tragic gesture, I waved them off, followed my first intention, and gave my thoughts this typographic vesture.

To ask advice is not to ask dissension. "Tis not inviting critics to be free with us, express their doubts and

throw us in confusion, but giving them occasion to agree with us, confirming our already formed conclusion.

There is a deal of humbug about travel, and that same 'tis that I have tried to puncture; but stop; should I the story's plot unravel, it would be quite imprudent at this juncture. Dear reader! make yourself a serious rover and walk with me and we will talk it over.

