



PREFACE.

1878-9.

With the world as the book of nature, God as the author, and the Bible as a preface, the precedent for writing a preface is established; and woe be to the Scribe who ignores precedent and custom—he could not live on this planet.

At the present day the preface of a book is read by the public—if at all—in the light of an apology, wherein the author is expected to explain: first, why he did not do better; and, second, why he wrote at all.

FIRST—We have spared neither time, pains, nor money to make this a perfect book. Our statements are *concise, plain, unadorned*, and, we believe, *truthful in every particular*. Yet, we would shudder at the charge of being *absolutely* perfect.

SECOND—We wrote this book for *Money* and *Love*. For MONEY to help the poor. For LOVE of the far western country—the land of the “Golden Fleece.” For love of its broad plains and lofty mountains, its free pure air, healthful climate, magnificent scenery, unrivalled resources, and its unaffected, whole-souled people.

We have taken the traveler with us—in a chatty way—on the longest trip ever attempted by any author in any guide book in the world, and have recorded a telegram of the most important facts and items of information in a trip of 5,493 miles by rail, and 792 miles by steamer, aggregating 6,285 miles, besides over 1,000 miles by stage coach. We have passed over the longest railroad line in the world, the broadest plains, the loftiest mountains, the finest agricultural and grazing lands, and the most barren deserts; we have climbed from sunrise to eternal snow, only to glide down into perpetual summer, and the orange groves and vineyards of the “Land of the Angels.”

We have crossed a level prairie 500 miles in width, then over the most rugged mountains, with frightful chasms almost beneath us, 2,500 feet in depth; and through 100 miles of snow-sheds and tunnels. Again, we have stood beneath a dome rising 6,000 feet above our heads, and trees 400 feet in height, and 48 feet in diameter; have strolled amid the redwoods, where they grow so thick that were they felled, the ground would be covered to a depth of sixty feet. We have passed through the celebrated Echo, Weber, Humboldt, and Solidad canyons; around “CAPE HORN” and the “Dead Sea,” down the *Bitter* and over the *Green* and *Black* waters, *echoing* near the “Devil’s Slide” and the great “Sink” of the Desert; descended into total *darkness*, with jets of boiling *sulphur* on either hand, and finally *through* the DEVIL’S GATE, but *landing safely* at the GOLDEN GATE.

The scenery on this route has been the most varied; we have been 9,339 feet *above*, and 266 feet *below* sea-level; have taken our breakfast amid the eternal snow, and our