

THE CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE SERIES.

EDITED BY HAVELOCK ELLIS.

THE SCIENCE OF FAIRY TALES.

THE SCIENCE
OF
FAIRY TALES.

AN INQUIRY INTO FAIRY MYTHOLOGY.

BY
EDWIN SIDNEY HARTLAND,
FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT,
24, WARWICK LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1891.

PREFACE.



THE chief object of this volume is to exhibit, in a manner acceptable to readers who are not specialists, the application of the principles and methods which guide investigations into popular traditions to a few of the most remarkable stories embodying the Fairy superstitions of the Celtic and Teutonic peoples. Some of the subjects discussed have already been dealt with by more competent inquirers. But even in these cases I have sometimes been able to supply additional illustrations of the conclusions previously arrived at, and occasionally, I hope, to carry the argument a step or two further than had been done before. I have thus tried to render the following pages not wholly valueless to students.

A portion of the book incorporates the substance of some articles which I contributed to "The Archæological Review" and "Folk-Lore." But these have been to a considerable extent re-written; and it is hoped that in the process wider and more accurate generalizations have been attained.

My hearty thanks are due to the various friends whose generous assistance has been recorded in the footnotes, and especially to Professor Dr. George Stephens, the veteran antiquary of the North, and Mr. W. G. Fretton, who have not measured their pains on behalf of one whose only claim on them was a common desire to pry into the recesses of the past. I am under still