



IN AN ENCHANTED ISLAND

CHAPTER I

THE TRUE TRAVELLER

I SUPPOSE that this book, if classified in the usual way, would be called a book—a very slight book—of travels; but I would rather call it myself a record of a fragment of life which was, by the magic of its unfamiliar surroundings, detached like a dream from the things of the modern world—from steam, from progress, from the glorious march of democracy—and suddenly came between them with the lulling and luxurious charm of an interlude from an opera heard between the acts of a farce.

I tell the reader this by way of a timely warning, so that he may know at starting how much or how little to expect of me. The scenes I shall have to dwell upon lie in a classical country which is full of interest for students, for politicians, and for speculators—