
**The Rural Life of England,
Volume 1**

Howitt William

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Author: Howitt William

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THE RURAL LIFE OF ENGLAND.



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THE RURAL LIFE OF ENGLAND:

BY

WILLIAM HOWITT,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOOK OF THE SEASONS," ETC.



IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS.

1838.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY MANNING AND SMITHSON,
IVY-LANE, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

O, dear Britain ! O my mother isle !
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father ! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores,
O native Britain ! O my mother isle !
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain rills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drank in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honorable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joys and greatness of its future being,
There lives not form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country. O divine
And beauteous island ! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God who made me.

Coleridge.



TO
THOMAS AND PHEBE HOWITT,
OF HEANOR,
IN THE COUNTY OF DERBY.

MY DEAR PARENTS,

There are no living persons to whom these volumes can be with so much propriety inscribed as to you. To you my heart desires to present some visible token of that affection and gratitude which animate it in reviewing all the good it has derived from you. It was to your melecations, but far more to the spirit of your daily life,—to the purity, integrity, independent feeling, and simple religion,—in fact, to the pervading and perpetual atmosphere of your house, that I owe everything which has directed me onward in life: scorning whatever is mean; aspiring after whatever is generous and noble; loving the poor and the weak, and fearless of the strong; in a word, everything which has not only prolonged life, but blessed and sanctified it. Following

your counsels and example, I have striven not so much for wealth as for an independent spirit and a pure conscience. Do I not owe you much for these? But besides this, it was under your roof that I passed a childhood and youth the happiest that ever were passed; it was there that I imbibed that love of nature, which must live though it cannot die with me. But beyond this, the present volumes are descriptive of that rural life to which your ancestors for many generations, and yourselves to an honourable old age, have been invariably and deeply attached. To you, therefore, for these and a thousand other kindred reasons,

THE PRESENT VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED,

BY YOUR AFFECTIONATE SON,

THE AUTHOR.