

**BEFORE THE GREAT
PILLAGE, WITH
OTHER MISCELLANIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649253081

Before the great pillage, with other miscellanies by Augustus Jessopp

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AUGUSTUS JESSOPP

**BEFORE THE GREAT
PILLAGE, WITH
OTHER MISCELLANIES**

BEFORE THE GREAT PILLAGE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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T. FISHER UNWIN, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

Before the Great Pillage

With Other Miscellanies

BY

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SECOND IMPRESSION

London

T. FISHER UNWIN

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1901

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PREFACE

WHEN, some twenty years ago, the country living which I now hold was offered me by the kind friend to whom the patronage belonged, I accepted it with little hesitation, and I did so with my eyes open and not without counting the cost. I knew that in joining the ranks of the country clergy I was burning my ships and that there was no professional future before me.

I have never regretted my decision. I have found an abiding joy and pride in doing my best for my people and studying them and their ways in the present, while trying to learn something about their forefathers and *their* ways in the past.

In my first volume—entitled *Arcady, for better for worse*—I gave the world the result of my observations upon men and things as I found them. I believe it was and is a faithful picture; but there was nothing retrospective in it reaching further back than the first half of the eighteenth century.

It so happened, however, that certain antiquarian tastes, which were born with me, led me into researches here and there which appeared to me to throw some new light upon mediæval history.

The discovery of the immense body of direct evidence which the Manor Court Rolls afford regarding the incidence of the great plague of 1349; the study of the Rougham charters, which yielded such a minute insight into the life of a village community in the thirteenth century; and the extraordinary find of a prosperous country parson's annual audit for the year ending Michaelmas, 1306,¹ were instances of the fact that even in History there

¹ The first two of these papers are printed in my *Coming of the Friars*; the third in *Random Ramblings*.