

**LOVE IN
OUR VILLAGE**

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Love in Our Village by Orme Agnus

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ORME AGNUS

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"' Oh, thank 'ee, Mr. Hoiley,' she said." (Page 82.)

Love in Our Village

[Frontispiece

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LOVE IN OUR VILLAGE

By
ORME AGNUS

Author of
"Jan Oxber," etc.

John C. Higginson

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Introduction

BY ORME AGNUS

OUR village is exactly seven and a quarter miles from Suckton, and it is to Suckton we have to go when we want to take a railway journey or despatch a telegram; and my friends in town cannot understand how I manage to exist year after year in civilization and yet not of it. It may be a pretty village, say they, and rural life may have its charms when taken in small doses and at proper intervals; but eccentric indeed must be the man with pretensions to culture who spends the early summer of his life in a remote village, where his only intellectual equals are the parson and the doctor, where comes not cab and 'bus, nor any evening papers, where gas and the simplest elements of sanitary science are unknown, and, in short, where life is lethargy.

To that I reply, firstly, that we do not possess a doctor, but have a touching faith in poultices and linseed-tea as universal panaceas, and only call in the Suckton practitioner in critical cases ; secondly, that ours is indeed a pretty village, and the tramp can rest by the roadside under the shade of the noblest elms in Dorset ; and, thirdly, I insist that when your eye and ear are cultivated by years of residence among the peasants, and always provided that you are not arrogant and superior, not even mighty London can furnish more interest and excitement. The appetite of the city-dweller is cloyed, and only highly-spiced news can move him from his calm. When a great financial house is tottering, when war is looming, when a Ministry is on the brink of a crisis, the city is stirred to its depths. Yes, but we were in a fever last year when it was reported that potato disease had broken out in the allotments and the infection was spreading. Pleuro-pneumonia and swine fever are vulgar and trivial things to a man whose fortunes depend on the fluctuations of the Kaffir market, but if he earned nine shillings a week, and there was a sow in the sty with her month-old progeny, swine fever would give him