

**THE NATURAL
HISTORY
OF SELBORNE**

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The natural history of Selborne by Gilbert White

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GILBERT WHITE

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OF SELBORNE**

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SCIENCE

THE NATURAL HISTORY
OF SELBORNE WITH AN
INTRODUCTION BY B.C.A.
WINDLE Sc.D., F.R.S., F.S.A.

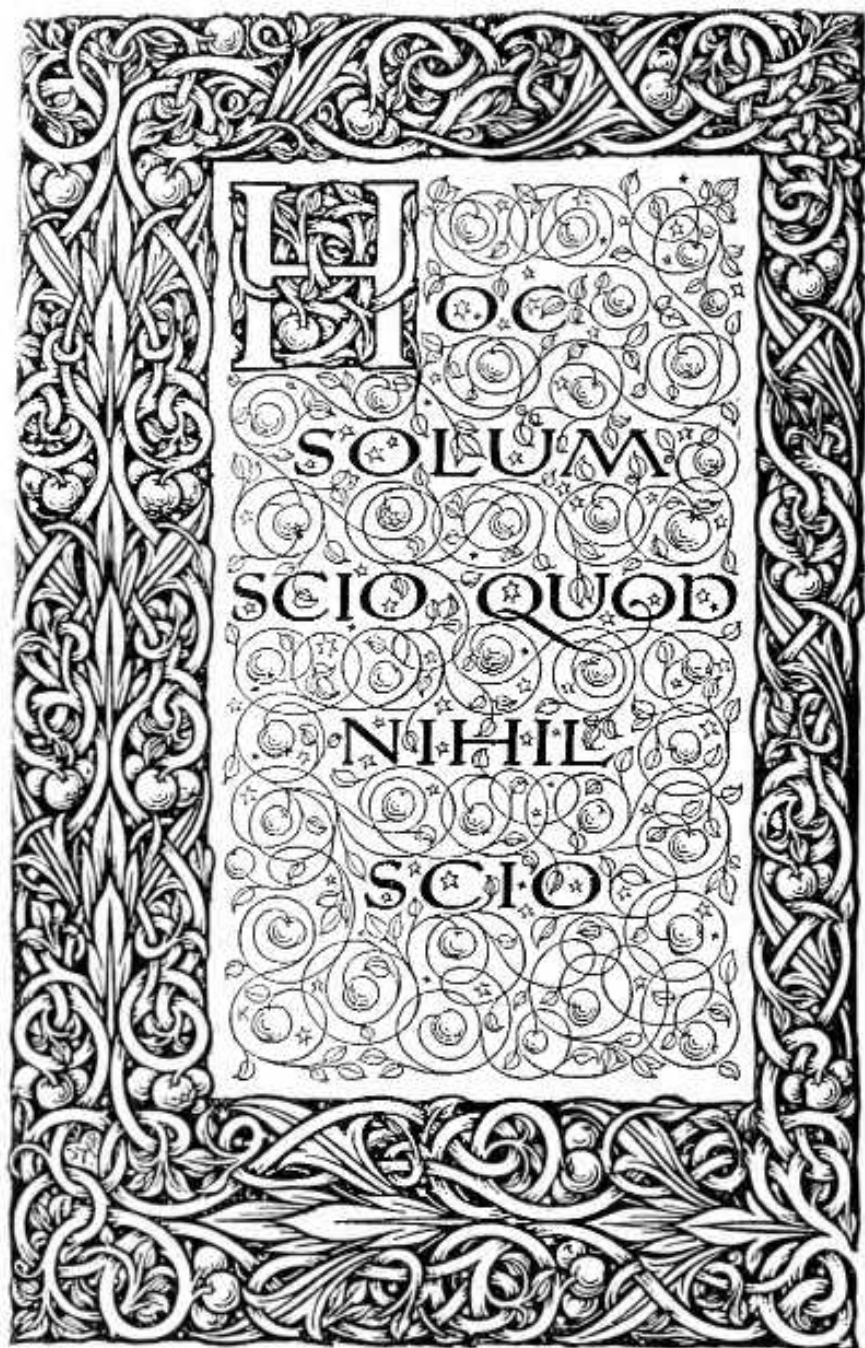
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IN TWO STYLES OF BINDING, CLOTH, FLAT BACK, COLOURED TOP, AND LEATHER, ROUND CORNERS, GILT TOP.

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INTRODUCTION

BY BERTRAM C. A. WINDLE, Sc.D., F.R.S., F.S.A.

PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, COBK

SOME achieve greatness, one might almost say have it thrust upon them, so lightly does it descend, without apparent effort, without that strife and labour through which others win towards their goal. Of such was Gilbert White, of Selborne, who would certainly have been amazed had he known that a hundred years after his time he would be the patron saint of a society named after the little out-of-the-way village in which he was born and where he died. Quiet it is to this day, out of the way, and difficult of access. How much more so in White's time, with the "infamous" roads of which he speaks and of which he gives such a graphic description in his fifth letter. But for White's grandfather, who left a considerable sum of money for their amelioration, one must suppose that they would have been even more impassable than the grandson found them in his time. White had an hereditary connection with the village now famous from his association with it. His grandfather, just mentioned, also a Gilbert White, was a Fellow of Magdalene College, Oxford, and was presented by his college to the Vicarage of Selborne in 1681. There he died in 1727, and his tombstone is still to be seen in the church. One son survived him, John, a barrister-at-law, who was the father of the famous Gilbert. The future naturalist was born at the vicarage on the 18th of July, 1720, and was consequently seven years of age at the time of his grandfather's death. He matriculated at Oriel College, Oxford, in 1739, took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1743, and was elected to a Fellowship in the following year. As was then obligatory, he took orders, and was