

**THE ENGLISH  
VILLAGE. A LITERARY  
STUDY 1750-1850**

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The English Village. A Literary Study 1750-1850 by Julia Patton

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# THE ENGLISH VILLAGE

A LITERARY STUDY

1750-1850

BY

JULIA PATTON

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE RE-  
QUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
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TO  
CARL SAFFORD PATTON  
ANNE PATTON SIMPSON

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## PREFACE

WHEN all the world is in the turmoil and distress of war, it may appear a petty self-indulgence for one to go wandering about among the pleasant and retired paths of rural villages, seeking one's ease in

"country places  
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,"

hearing unlettered but keen and wise old peasant folk tell tales of life and of superstitious fancy, looking on at village festivals, and sharing in all the joys of Arcadia. "What has all this to do with the war?" demands the Conscientious Objector of Mr. Crothers at the close of a delightful but very peaceful essay. Mr. Crothers meets the Objector fairly, recognizing in the imperative question the challenge of a world absorbed in a single all-consuming interest.

But the English village has a very great deal to do with the war. For remote as the sleepy stillness of village life is, in ordinary times, from the hurry of active affairs, there is not one among the most distant and old-world of English villages but has been stirred out of its quiet by the great war. The villagers of England have been swept into the mid-current of national life by the events of the past four years. They have taken a splendid part in the great struggle, and their interests and concerns have in turn become in a new sense those of all England. For a century and a half certain great problems of village life have been growing in seriousness, and pressing with more and more insistence for attention and solution. It is inconceivable that after the war these problems should continue long unsolved.

Literature has given to these more serious phases of village life an attention, not equal, indeed, to that bestowed upon its idyllic aspects, but yet fairly continuous and sympathetic. English prose and poetry for the cen-



tury between 1750 and 1850, therefore, presents not merely a village of Arcadia, but an English village in which conditions were developing that are just now reaching their culmination and approaching their settlement, and that are given a new significance by the war itself.

In the present study the literature of the Scottish village has been taken into account because of its close relation to that of the English village, while the Irish, because of its greater remoteness, has been disregarded. The notably rich literature of village life which has developed in America, has obviously, in spite of its intrinsic interest, no place in a study of the village of England.

The writer is conscious of obligations beyond the power of a Preface to express, much less repay. Indebtedness to printed authorities is acknowledged in the proper places in the text, but the invaluable aid supplied by the kindly interest and encouragement of friends can not be so easily and explicitly recognized, and must go with a general though most grateful acknowledgement. In particular the writer is indebted to her friends Miss Judith Williams and Mrs. Rebecca Lowrie for generous interest and helpful criticism; to Professor Jefferson B. Fletcher for the initial suggestion of the subject and a cordial interest in its treatment; and especially to Professor Ashley H. Thorndike for the stimulus of his broad scholarship no less than for his keen and constructive criticism.

*Vita*

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