

**JAN OXBER**

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Jan Oxber by Orme Agnus

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**ORME AGNUS**

**JAN OXBER**



JAN OXBER



"A girl . . . that he had not seen since he was a boy."  
(Page 38.)

*Jan Orber*

*Frontispiece*

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THE CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION  
NEW YORK CITY

# JAN OXBER

By

ORME AGNUS *brood of*  
*Higg's both in m. John C.*  
Author of  
"Love in Our Village," etc.

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Illustrated by

BERTHA NEWCOMBE



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Jan Oxber

CHAPTER I

TO leave London for Barleigh is like taking a backward leap to the days when our grandfathers were in their prime and our fathers troublesome boys. Railways and telegraphs have transformed the country—Barleigh has not yet reconciled itself to railway travelling, and does not telegraph to its friends. Old Grandf'er Joly finds a melancholy satisfaction in prophesying that the proposed branch line, which will come within three miles of Barleigh, will be the ruination of the place. Like a siren, it will sing to the young men of the fever, and rush, and enchantment of cities, and they will listen and fall; the daughters will hear, and, unresisting, will be dragged into the whirlpools of iniquity; they will mate with the heathens of the city and forget the village of their birth; and nobody but the aged and infirm will be left to carry on the ancient renown of Barleigh as the home of stalwart sons and cleanly, winsome daughters. I have heard

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Grandfer, in Peggin's—the Blue Boar, Zachariah Peggin, proprietor—taking another view, paint in lurid colours the doom of Barleigh if that railway should be brought to their doors. There would be no sleep at nights for any but the soundest sleepers, for the hum of ceaseless traffic would pulsate on the midnight air. Thousands of barbarians from "Lunnon and up along" would flock to Barleigh, as crows to a newly-sown cornfield, bringing with them the wickedness and uncleanness of cities. Houses would have to be built for the invaders on the glebe, on Wenton's land and Grantumen's croft, and even their gardens would be delivered into the builder's hands. Then they would soon set up trams in the streets, and the mortality among the grandfers and grandm'ers would be fearful, to say nothing of the hundreds of "bwoys and maids" that would be cut off in the young and tender blade.

It was simply useless to point out that, granted the line was made—and it has been talked of for eight years to my knowledge—Barleigh would hardly offer such irresistible attractions to the Londoner. I was an alien myself it was suggested in circumlocutory sentences, and it was not to be supposed that I could take an unprejudiced view. This met with cordial approval from most present, and Grandfer was held to have given a fair, if slightly over-coloured, picture