

**WILLOUGHBY'S WISDOM.
A STORY OF NEW
ENGLAND COUNTRY LIFE
IN BY-GONE DAYS. 1890**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649734252

Willoughby's Wisdom. A Story of New England Country Life in By-Gone Days. 1890 by N. W. Gilbert

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

N. W. GILBERT

**WILLOUGHBY'S WISDOM.
A STORY OF NEW
ENGLAND COUNTRY LIFE
IN BY-GONE DAYS. 1890**

WILLOUGHBY'S WISDOM

A STORY

OF

NEW ENGLAND COUNTRY LIFE

IN BY-GONE DAYS

BY

N. W. GILBERT

"

Library of
CALIFORNIA

BOSTON

CHAS. H. HUFF, PUBLISHER

131 DEVONSHIRE STREET

1890

953
G465
wib

Copyright, 1909
By N. W. GILBERT

All rights reserved

TO VIBU
AIBORLLAO

PREFACE.

LET no reader imagine that a new literary character has come upon the stage. The writing of a simple, short story, in prose or song — even though it should be conceded to have been written in respectable verse — by no means makes a man of letters. And this is strictly an amateur performance. One, it is true, into which I have put considerable effort, it having occupied a large part of the little leisure I have had for a number of years. And it has helped to while away many an otherwise sad and lonely hour. If it shall do as much for my readers, even in the aggregate, it will not have been written in vain.

My motives have been, to produce a readable story, that somebody might get interested in, and also to put on record some phases of social and religious life in rural New England a half century ago, which have since disappeared, or are now rapidly passing away.

My language is commonplace and familiar. I have made free use of the pronouns I and you, both as a matter of convenience and a matter of choice; as it seems to bring writer and reader somewhat nearer together, and so into closer sympathy with each other, provided the writing be such as shall tend to attract rather than to repel. And to whoever approaches the

door of my little literary air castle, I say most cordially, Come in and sit down. Make yourself quite at home. We shall be all by ourselves, and we can talk about our neighbors as freely as we like. I will speak well of some of them ; and even that is not always done. I may reveal some of their secrets, but they came to me without the customary promise not to tell. And that the narrations herein contained may prove sufficiently interesting and instructive to compensate all readers for their time and money, and that we may separate on more friendly terms than the commercial ones which have brought us together, is the earnest wish of

THE AUTHOR.

WILLOUGHBY'S WISDOM.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

'Twas many years ago, in early spring,
And on a pleasant Sunday; I should say
About the last of April, as I bring
Old recollections up, or first of May:
The buds were out, the birds were on the wing,
Although the earth was still in sombre gray,
Dismantled of its white and snowy sheen,
And waiting for its robe of summer green.

II.

I say the earth, I mean that part of it,
Wherein occurred, by fortune or by fate,
The commonplace events which, seeming fit
For warp or woof of what I would relate,
I weave into my song; with how much wit,
Or sense, I cannot say; and so must wait,
Until the public verdict, being had,
Proclaims it good, indifferent or bad.

III.

Midway between two little country towns,
Along the base of that Green Mountain range,
Above whose lofty peaks old Mansfield frowns,
And looks upon a scene of constant change,

To Visit
Abscon-Land

2

WILLOUGHBY'S WISDOM.

On lake and river, hill and meadow downs,
On many a peaceful home and quiet grange,
Where sways the graceful elm and towers the pine,
And where the bleating sheep and lowing kine

IV.

Roam o'er the verdant slopes to satiate
An appetite that's keen for native food,
Then lie beneath the trees and ruminare,
In seeming happy and contented mood,
Or patiently stand waiting by the gate,
Or graze again some fresh and tempting rood —
Here long ago some incidents occurred,
Of which the world at large has never heard.

V.

Between these towns, and on the old highway,
Which, night and morning, witnessed the approach
Of that famed monarch of a former day,
The heavy laden, rapid running coach,
O'er which the driver held despotic sway —
And on his rights 'twere dangerous to encroach,
For horse or man, at least for boys who tried
To hang upon the rack and run or ride.

VI.]

That old stage-coach, by nimble horses drawn,
With its attendant clatter, dust and din,
Has served its purpose and, alas! is gone;
And now the iron horse comes neighing in:
Some passengers get off, some more get on,
The uniformed conductor may have been
The gallant driver, in the days of yore,
Of the pretentious stage-coach, now no more.

VII.

Well, on this old stage road there used to stand,
Between the villages, as I have said,
Upon an elevated piece of land,
A farmer's dwelling-house, with L and shed ;
And from the intervale on either hand,
A private carriage-way obliquely led
Thereto ; commencing fifty yards or so,
From where the house looked on the road below.

VIII.

Two barns were also standing on the same
Convenient rise, which nature had designed,
Apparently with philanthropic aim,
Of thus conferring favors on mankind ;
At least upon the one who should reclaim,
From native solitude, the place we find
These buildings on, this higher spot of ground,
Which overlooked the intervale around.

IX.

The intervale was smooth, at least not rough,
The elevation mentioned was not high,
Not quite what, in the west, they'd call a bluff,
Or in the east a hill, against the sky.
Its altitude was moderate, just enough
To be convenient, pleasant, sandy, dry ;
And in Vermont at least, a house will stand
The test of wisdom, built upon the sand.

X.

Or sand and gravel, with a little loam,
Which this contained, a good convenient soil
Whereon to found a hearthstone and a home,
In which to rest from weariness of toil ;