

THE WORN DOORSTEP

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The worn doorstep by Margaret Sherwood

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MARGARET SHERWOOD

**THE WORN
DOORSTEP**

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BY
MARGARET SHERWOOD



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1917

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

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TO THE
BOSTON LEAD

THE WORN DOORSTEP

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AUGUST 25, 1914. At last I have found the very place for our housekeeping; I have been searching for days: did you know it, dear? The quest that we began together I had to follow after you went to the front; and, through the crashes of tragic rumours that have rolled through England, I have gone on and on, not running away or trying to escape, but full of need to find the right corner, the right wall against which I could put my back and stand to face these great oncoming troubles. I have travelled by slow trains across quiet country which does not as yet know there is war; I have driven in an old-fashioned stage or post wagon, — you never told me that there were such things left in

TO ANNU
August 1912
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your country, — past yellow harvest fields in calm August weather; I have even walked for miles by green hedges, which wear here and there a belated blossom, searching for that village of our dreams where our home should be, quiet enough for the work of the scholar, green for two lovers of the country, and grey with the touch of time. I knew that now it could be almost anywhere; that it did not matter if it were not near Oxford, and it seemed to me that I should rather have it a bit — but not too far — away from the “dreaming spires.” So I went on and on, with just one thought in my mind, because I was determined to carry out our plan to the full, and because I did not dare stay still. There’s a great strange pain in my head when I am quiet, as if all the mountains of the earth were pressing down on it, and I have to go somewhere, slip out from under them before they crush me quite.

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Often, at a distance, I thought that I had found it; thatched roofs or red tiles, or a lovely old Norman church tower would make me sure that my search was done; but again and again I found myself mistaken, I can hardly tell you why. You know without telling, as you must know all I am writing before I make the letters, and yet it eases my mind to write. At no time did you seem very far as I searched hill country and level lands, watching haystacks and flocks of sheep, sometimes through sunny showers of English rain.

But now I have discovered our village, the very one that I dreamed in childhood, that you and I pictured together, and I know that at last I have come home. I knew it by the rooks, for I arrived late in the afternoon, and the rooks were flying homeward to the great elms by the church, — groups of them, here, there, and everywhere, black against the sunset. Such a