

**THE LITTLE
PEAT-CUTTERS, OR,
THE SONG OF LOVE**

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The Little Peat-Cutters, Or, The Song of Love by Emma Marshall

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EMMA MARSHALL

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"Quick as thought, the gentleman had thrown out a little book, which Davie adroitly caught."—P. 8.

FEAT CUTZES.

THE
LITTLE PEAT-CUTTERS;
OR,
THE SONG OF LOVE.

BY
EMMA MARSHALL,
AUTHOR OF "BROOK SILVERTONK," "THE OLD GATEWAY,"
"THEODORA'S CHILDHOOD," ETC., ETC.

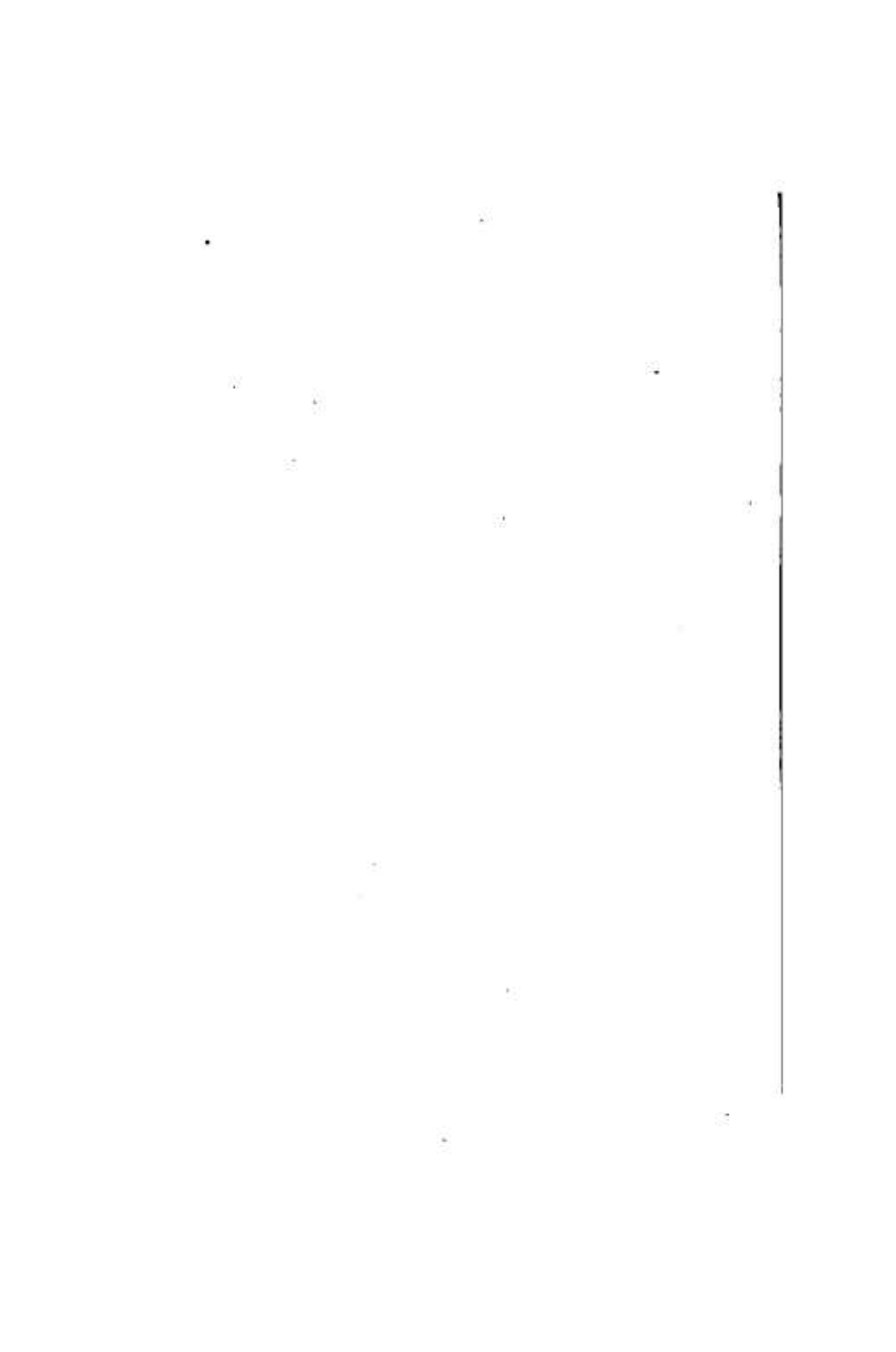


"He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love."

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. THE LARK'S SONG	5
II. A DAY'S EXCURSION	16
III. THE ACCIDENT	28
IV. HELP COMES TO EFFIE	42
V. LIFE IN THE PEAT-FIELD	53
VI. SUNDAY REST	65
VII. A DREAM OF HEAVEN	78
VIII. THE BROTHERS PART	89
IX. DAVIE'S COMFORTER	100
X. LOST AND FOUND	116

THE LITTLE PEAT-CUTTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE LARK'S SONG.

It was a bright spring morning, and the stillness which reigned over the wide peat-field was almost unbroken. Sometimes a shrill whistle might be heard from one of the boys who built up the oblong blocks of peat into the brown black pyramids, which stood at intervals across the waste. Sometimes the men, who were cutting the peat from its bed, called out to each other in their broad Somersetshire dialect; or the women, who were also at work stacking the turf, raised their voices in short spasmodic conversations with their nearest neighbours; but, for the most

part, silence reigned. Here was no glad chorus of singing birds; for, with the exception of three or four tall poplars, not a tree or bush was near.

Here was no sound of lowing cattle, nor bleating sheep, for not a blade of pasturage was to be seen.

The narrow dykes, running transversely across the peat-field, lay serenely calm, and deeply blue under the sky, seeming to smile as now and then the reflection of some tiny, feathery clouds passed over them, or a moor bird, skimmed their surface for a moment, and then wheeling round on rapid wing, disappeared.

Travellers in the railway carriages, as they passed through this barren district, said to themselves that it was a desolate country, and perhaps wondered what sort of life the workers on the peat-fields led, and fancied what it must be to live in those thinly scattered cottages in winter, when the water of the dykes often overflowed, and the whole waste must be inundated.