

# **A WINTER RAMBLE IN THE COUNTRY**

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A Winter Ramble in the Country by C. A. Johns

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**C. A. JOHNS**

**A WINTER RAMBLE  
IN THE COUNTRY**





*"Holy Well," Trillick, near Helston, Cornwall.*

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WINTER RAMBLE

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*The Country.*

BY THE

REV. C. A. JOHNS, B.A. F.L.S.

AUTHOR OF "BOTANICAL RAMBLES," AND "FOREST TREES OF BRITAIN."

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"O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord: praise Him and magnify Him for ever."—*Song of the Three Children.*

"It may be said of fire, hail and snow, trees and other vegetables, beasts, birds, insects, and all animals, when they are commanded to praise God, which they cannot do by themselves, that man is commanded to consider them particularly; to observe, and take notice of their curious structure, ends and uses, and give God the praise of His wisdom, and other attributes therein manifested."—*Ray's Wisdom of God in Creation.*

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## WINTER RAMBLE.



ALL our wanderings hitherto, over field, heath, or mountain, have been undertaken at seasons when vegetation was either bursting into vigorous life, flourishing in the full leafiness of summer, or but showing symptoms of approaching decay. Winter is now set in: every tree is bare of leaves; the heath is bleak and desolate; the mountain has become a pyramid of snow; the fields which, a few months back, were waving with corn, are now but a waste stubble, and the bog which we traversed with great difficulty even in

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June, in quest of the sundew<sup>1</sup> and cotton-grass,<sup>2</sup> is become a swampy lake, dotted here and there with islands of Dutch-myrtle<sup>3</sup> and stunted willows. Now, although the appearance of nature is every where altered, yet we must not on that account suppose that there is less of wisdom and design in the frost that nips the fully expanded leaf, than there was in the sun-beam which cherished it into life. He who "walketh on the wings of the wind," sends that wind to fulfil His own word: frost and snow, and the gloom of winter, are His messengers: "He commanded, and they were created" to execute His will upon earth. We, unfortunately, are in the habit of associating ideas of discomfort with these phenomena; we congratulate ourselves on the power we possess of *resisting* the cold by violent exercise; but

<sup>1</sup> Drosera.<sup>2</sup> Eriophorum.<sup>3</sup> Myrica Gale.

we are not in the habit of contemplating a severe frost as an act of God's mercy, and, on that account, a blessing thankfully to be received. We are inclined to *complain* of what is termed "a hard winter," as if it were brought about by some evil agency instead of the Author of all Good; we indeed think that we are called on, and with reason too, to exert ourselves beyond our means in relieving our poorer neighbours, but not without sundry misgivings (unuttered perhaps, yet suggestive of complaints) whether it would not have been better for all if we had been blessed with a milder season. Many among us, I fear, when they hear the wintry storm howl round their dwelling, make the shutters fast, and contract the circle round their blazing fires; and while they thank God with their mouths, that he has blessed them with a comfortable home,

forget to meditate in their hearts on Him who raised the tempest, and do not regard the visitation as an urgent call conveyed to them through the agency of more than one of the senses, to perform the works of charity towards their neighbours.

“Frost and snow, stormy wind, fulfilling His word.”<sup>1</sup> This single passage, from an inspired pen, ought sufficiently to convince us that during the bitterest winter, as much as during the most fruitful autumn, we are in the hand of God, and that indications of Creative power and love may be discovered by those who search for them faithfully even in such seemingly unproductive objects of contemplation.

Imbued with this spirit, therefore, we will sally forth for a “Winter Ramble,” and we

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxlviii. 8.