

TALES OF THE VILLAGE

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Tales of the Village by Francis E. Paget

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FRANCIS E. PAGET

**TALES OF
THE VILLAGE**



"— Thus, smooth stream!

Art winding all thy sunny meads along,

Murm'ring to cottage and grey hall thy song,

Low, sweet, unchanged. My being's tide hath pass'd

Through rocks and storms: yet will I not complain,

If thus wrought free and pure from earthly stain,

Highly its waves may reach their parent deep at last."

Mrs. Hemans.

TALES OF THE VILLAGE.

BY

FRANCIS E. PAGET, M.A.

RECTOR OF ELFORD,

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

"Now if a shepherd know not which grass will bane, and which not, how is he fit to be a shepherd? Wherefore the Parson hath thoroughly canvassed all the particulars of human actions, at least all those which he observeth are most incident to his parish."

HEAVER'S "Country Parson."



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*Five money
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Introduction.



ELL me, my dear Reginald,—said Ann Warlingham to her brother, as they sat together in the little study at Yateshull Vicarage, “ tell me what you are writing. The question is not a very discreet one, I confess; but then a sister who has travelled so many miles of cross-country road to visit you in your solitude has a right to extraordinary privileges. I have been sitting at my work till I am quite wearied with it, and have not spoken a word for fear of interrupting you: but now I see the pen laid down, and the folio volume closed, and *locked*,

my feminine curiosity can contain itself no longer. May I not know the subject of those closely written pages? Is it divinity, or history, or a novel, or a tragedy, or your own confessions, or what?"

"No, Ann," said Reginald smiling, "you must guess again; for it is none of these things. And yet," he added gravely, "it partakes of all of them. Probably there is more divinity for every-day life *here*," continued he, laying his hand on the book, "than in many professed treatises on the subject,—more truth than in many histories,—more thrilling incidents than most novels will supply,—deeper scenes of tragedy than would be tolerated on the stage,—and for confessions, believe me, I never look into it without confessing my own deficiencies and errors of judgment, and the utter inadequacy of human weakness to a right discharge of the pastoral care. But, not to raise your curiosity, only for the purpose of disappointing it, you must know that the volume which excites your interest is, in fact, a sort of daily register of conversations with the various members of my flock, under all the eventful circumstances of weal and woe, in