

**THE GIRL  
FROM THE FARM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649593781

The Girl from the Farm by Gertrude Dix

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Cover @ 2017

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**GERTRUDE DIX**

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*'Two opposed Rights come forth: the one breaks itself to pieces against the other: in this way both alike suffer loss; while both alike are justified, the one towards the other: not as if this were right; that other wrong. On the one side is the religious claim, the unconscious moral habit: the other principle over against it is the equally religious claim—the claim of the consciousness of the reason, creating a world out of itself, the claim to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'*

HEGEL, *Geschichte der Philosophie*,

Vol. II., page 102.

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BY GERTRUDE DIX

LONDON: JOHN LANE, VIGO ST.

BOSTON: ROBERTS BROS., 1896





*Second Edition*



## THE GIRL FROM THE FARM

### CHAPTER I

BETWEEN eight and nine miles from Allington stood a square farmhouse with a background of bleak hill. Around it the country was very thinly populated, dotted at wide intervals with cottages for the hinds, built of grey stone and roofed with slates, colourless where colour was most needed.

The farm itself was of another style of architecture. It had originally been intended as a sort of villa residence, with a pretentious stucco front, which had blistered here and there in ugly patches, emphasised rather than concealed, by a thin coating of whitewash. The once trim garden was now an untidy run for fowls, and a filthy duck-pond took the place of the central flower-bed.

Marchant had seen this house from some

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## 2 THE GIRL FROM THE FARM

way off as he traversed the flat valley of unreclaimed land in which it stood. He now seated himself on some tree-trunks, a stone's-throw from its broken gate, and regarded it intently. The uncurtained windows looked at him with a blind stare; the door, with broken hinge, yawned with the eternal *ennui* of an unchanging monotony. Close by, two sentinel poplars—dark and furtive trees—seemed to whisper and beckon to each other the creeping secrets of lives as ugly, colourless, and blind as those of the torpid organisms at the bottom of the pond.

Marchant had walked four or five miles through the damp, level plain, floundering more than once into the boggy land, which had left its traces on his boots and gaiters. Till now he had looked at nothing—pre-occupied with the mood of restless discontent which had driven him from house and town into the country. He had felt rather than seen that his surroundings had been depressing without knowing anything of their details—passing on his way much as he might have walked through some gallery of *mediocre* paintings, merely aware of their uniform want of

### THE GIRL FROM THE FARM 3

individuality, till one should suddenly detach itself from the rest with an imperative demand to be looked at, searched line by line for meanings, and never forgotten.

The ugly, squalid house, with its blistered walls and the sparse nettles at their base, had a fascination for him. He had wanted change and beauty, and the straight, dank valley, bounded on either hand by a low, mist-curtained wall of hills, had brought him to this. He tried to find some explanation for the curious attraction which rooted him to the spot. The air of tragedy which hung about it was due, he thought, to some other cause than the mere disposition of its stones and the signs of neglect and decay about them. Once or twice in his life, other places, with no peculiarities in their physical details, had seemed to single themselves from the rest to appeal to him in this remarkable way with suggestions of horror and crime. He was alive to impressions conveyed thus mysteriously as the sensitised plate is receptive of more than can be perceived by the eyes. He tried to recall the *quasi*-scientific theory which he had himself formed to account for the