

ROUND ABOUT A GREAT ESTATE

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Round about a great estate by Richard Jefferies

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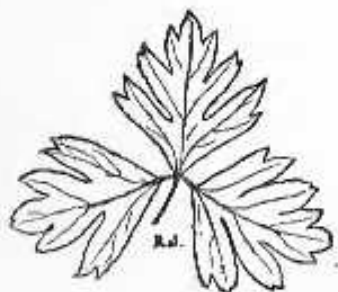
BY

RICHARD JEFFERIES

AUTHOR OF

THE GAMEKEEPER AT HOME ' WILD LIFE IN A SOUTHERN COUNTY '
' THE AMATEUR POACHER ' ' HODGE AND HIS MASTERS ' ETC.

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PREFACE

THERE is an old story which in respect of a modern application may bear re-telling. Once upon a time in a lonely 'coombe-bottom' of the Downs, where there was neither church, chapel, nor public building of any kind, there lived a cottage-girl who had never seen anything of civilisation. A friend, however, having gone out to service in a market-town some few miles distant, she one day walked in to see her, and was shown the wonders of the place, the railway, the post-office, the hotels, and so forth. In the evening the friend accompanied her a short way on the return journey, and as they went out of the town they passed the church. Looking suddenly up

at the tower, the visitor exclaimed, 'Lard-a-mussy ! you've got another moon here. Youn have got figures all round un !' In her excitement, and prepared to see marvels, she had mistaken the large dial of the church clock for a moon of a different kind to the one which shone upon her native home. This old tale, familiar to country folk as an illustration of simplicity, has to-day a wider meaning. Until recent years the population dwelling in villages and hamlets, and even in little rural towns, saw indeed the sun by day and the moon by night, and learned the traditions and customs of their forefathers, such as had been handed down for generations. But now a new illumination has fallen upon these far-away places. The cottager is no longer ignorant, and his child is well grounded in rudimentary education, reads and writes with facility, and is not without knowledge of the higher sort. Thus there is now another moon with the figures of education all round it. In this book some notes

have been made of the former state of things before it passes away entirely. But I would not have it therefore thought that I wish it to continue or return. My sympathies and hopes are with the light of the future, only I should like it to come from nature. The clock should be read by the sunshine, not the sun timed by the clock. The latter is indeed impossible, for though all the clocks in the world should declare the hour of dawn to be midnight, the sun will presently rise just the same.

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