### PEBBLES ON THE SHORE; ALPHA OF THE PLOUGH

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Pebbles on the shore; Alpha of the plough by A. G. Gardiner

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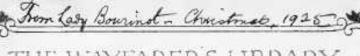
#### A. G. GARDINER

# PEBBLES ON THE SHORE; ALPHA OF THE PLOUGH





He mounted the ladder and began to pick the fruit See page 44



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## PEBBLES ON THE SHORE



Alpha of the Plough



And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge: As children gathering pebbles on the shore



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TO
ALL WHO LOVE
THE COTTAGE IN THE
BEECHWOODS

#### PREFACE

These papers were begun as a part of a causerie in *The Star*, the other contributors to which—men whose names are household words in contemporary literature—wrote under the pen names of "Aldebaran," "Arcturus" and "Sirius." But the constellation, formed in the early days of the war, did not long survive the agitations of that event, and when "Arcturus" left for the battle-field it was finally dissolved and "Alpha of the Plough" alone remained to continue the causerie. This selection from his papers is a sort of informal diary of moods in a time of peril. They are pebbles gathered on the shore of a wild sea.

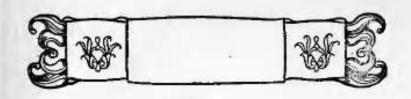
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#### PEBBLES ON THE SHORE ON CHOOSING A NAME

"As for your name, I offer you the whole firmament to choose from." In that prodigal spirit the editor of the *Star* invites me to join the constellation that he has summoned from the vasty deeps of Fleet Street. I am, he says, to shine punctually every Wednesday evening, wet or fine, on winter nights and summer eves, at home or abroad, until such time as he cries: "Hold, enough!" and applies the extinguisher that comes to all.

The invitation reaches me in a tiny village on a spur of a range of beech clad hills, whither I have fled for a breathing space from the night-mare of the war and the menacing gloom of the London streets at night. Here the darkness has no terrors. In the wide arch of the sky our lamps are lit nightly as the sun sinks down far over the great plain that stretches at our feet. None of the palpitations of Fleet Street disturb us, and the rumours of the war come to us like far-off echoes from another world. The only sensation of our day is when, just after darkness has fallen, the sound of a whistle in the tiny street of thatched cottages