

THE MERRIE DAYS OF ENGLAND: SKETCHES OF THE OLDEN TIME

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The Merrie Days of England: Sketches of the Olden Time by Edward McDermott

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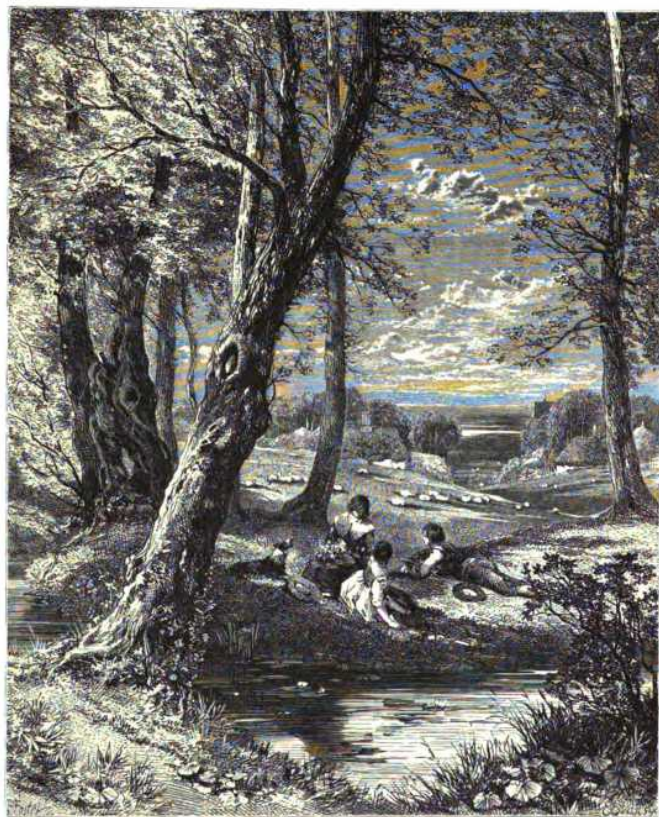
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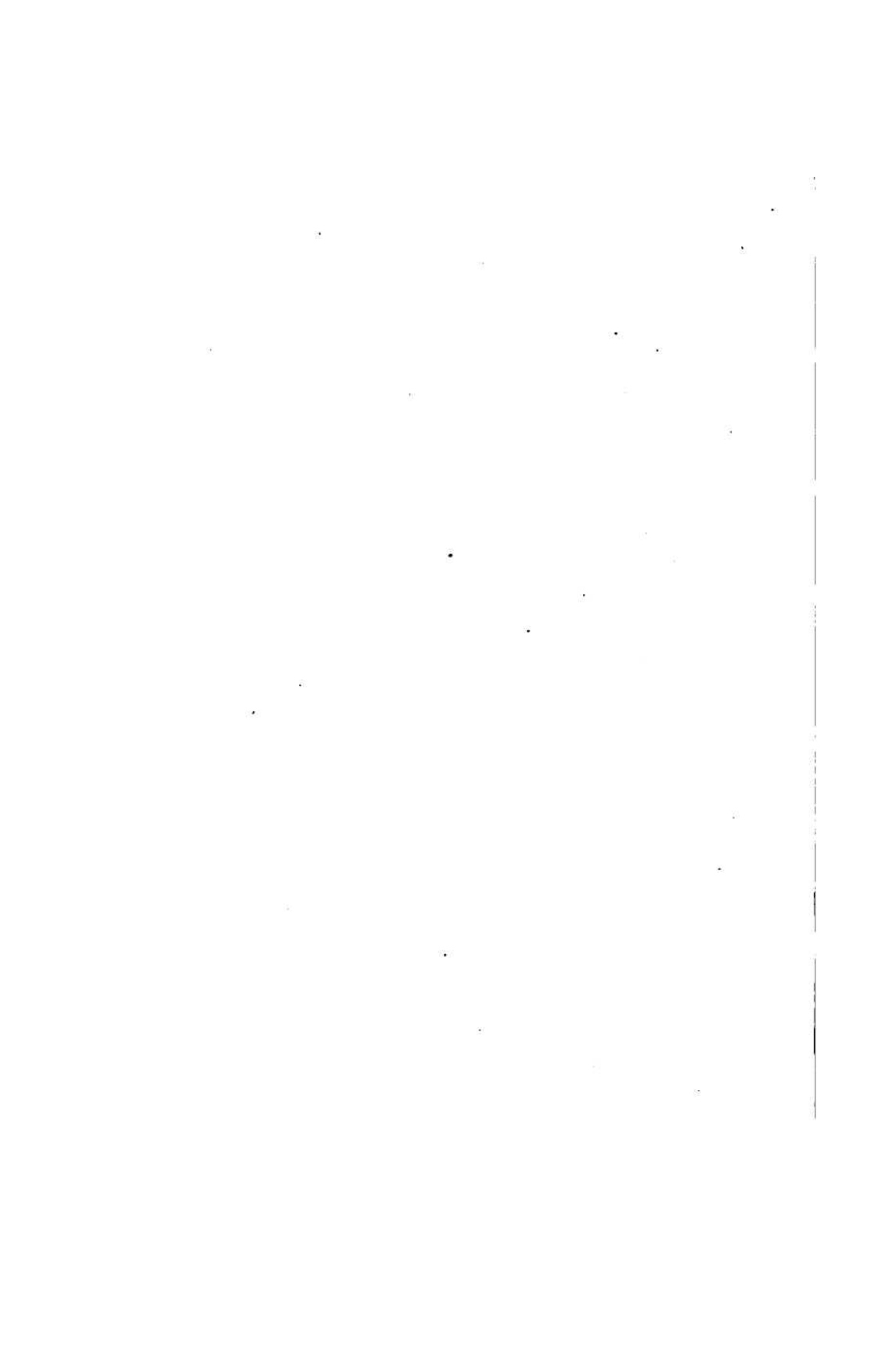
EDWARD MCDERMOTT

**THE MERRIE DAYS OF
ENGLAND: SKETCHES
OF THE OLDEN TIME**



THE COTTAGE HOMES OF ENGLAND.





THE
MERRIE DAYS OF ENGLAND,

Sketches of the Olden Time.

BY EDWARD McDERMOTT.

ILLUSTRATED WITH TWENTY ENGRAVINGS,
FROM DRAWINGS BY JOSEPH NASH, GEORGE THOMAS, HIRKET FOSTER,
AND EDWARD CORBOULD.



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62
96

I'M AN OLD MAN,
AND LOVE THE GOOD OLD WAYS.

Southey.



HOW pleasant are the ideas which are associated with "the merrie days of England;" and how strikingly do they contrast with our experience of the present time! Turn aside for a moment from the records of the misdeeds of haughty Plantagenets; the desolating wars of York and Lancaster; the terrible misfortunes of the Stuarts; the sanguinary conflicts of Towton, of Bosworth, or of Naseby; and even amid these darker scenes of our history, abundant evidence is afforded that England was in truth "a merrie England."

Our fathers fought manfully and earnestly at Cressy and at Agincourt; they worked well and nobly as they piled up castle, and abbey, and groined cathedral; but the

strife for existence was not so keen, nor the struggle of competition so fierce then as now. At break of dawn and close of day, at the early blush of May-tide, amid the bleak winter of Christmas, there were heard from the hill-sides and valleys of old England the joyous shouts of a contented and a happy people. The peasant in his humble abode, the young trading Guilds of the towns, the noble in his mansion, the baron in his castle, the monk in his abbey, and the courtier that applauded the king's jester in the palace, were gay and light-hearted;—men laughed and women smiled, and minstrels sang, and all fared well in "the merrie days of England."

We have culled from poets and writers who lived in the "Olden time," and from a few of our own day who have studied the past, some descriptions of the sports, the pastimes, and the occupations of our forefathers, even when living amid wars and rumours of wars, civil dissensions, and much perhaps that might well have been spared for history to record. Our pen and pencil "sketches of the olden times" are not submitted as finished pictures; our object is merely to present to this utilitarian age some features of the "merrie days" of our ancestors.

E. McD.

THE TERRACE, CAMBERWELL.