

**VARIETIES IN  
PROSE, VOL. II:  
RAMBLES, PART II**

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Varieties in prose, Vol. II: Rambles, Part II by Patricius Walker

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**PATRICIUS WALKER**

**VARIETIES IN  
PROSE, VOL. II:  
RAMBLES, PART II**





# VARIETIES IN PROSE

BY

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

VOLUME II

## RAMBLES

BY

PATRICIUS WALKER

PART II

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK: 15 EAST 16th STREET

1893

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
XII In a Strange Land . . . . .	4
XIII Down the Wye . . . . .	29
XIV In Devon and Cornwall . . . . .	44
XV Edinburgh—Stirling to Ayr . . . . .	72
XVI Stirling to Dunoon . . . . .	114
XVII Auld Ayr . . . . .	134
XVIII London Bridge to Cabourg . . . . .	146
XIX From Cabourg to St. Malo . . . . .	178
XX In Thanet . . . . .	211
XXI In London . . . . .	238





## RAMBLES BY PATRICIUS WALKER.



### RAMBLE THE TWELFTH.

IN A STRANGE LAND.

(1871.)

I SHUT my eyes and open them again. Am I dreaming? It seems as if this morning (or was it a month ago?) I was endungedoned in a labyrinth of grimy, busy streets. Modern England moved, clattered, chattered around me—'bus men and bouse men, costermongers and merchant princes, shopkeepers, street-haunters, newsboys, waggons, chariots, 'swells' and 'girls of the period,' with all the sights, sounds, and odours of a huge, shapeless modern city, from which was no escape; and no other kind of life seemed possible.

Streets have melted like mist. I am, indeed, no longer in England, but emphatically in 'a Strange Land,' and all the English call it so. I rest on a wild and lonely hill-top, watching the placid sinking sun of a September day, shedding its veil of light over a multitude of many-folded mountains. Westward, even to the gates of sunset, spreads the mystic mountain realm, ethereal as cloudland, but more permanent. I lie on heather; and straight below me drop the steep green fields and sloping woods to a Valley far down, with winding river and scattered cottages. Among

the opposite ramparts of the Vale, one steep crag uplifts the much crumbled ruins of a Castle, very ancient, whose founder's name or time no man remembers rightly. The gray stones seem coeval with the wall of cliff behind them, across which now runs a last ruddy ray of evening. The bare fells behind me fall into a side glen, with rocky faces rising out of copse. A few wild sheep that stare and scour away, and a wide-winged plover flitting round with complaining whinge, uneasy at my presence, are the only living things I see.

What is this strange country? The world is not like a map. When you look forth from a hill-top you see no *names* marked on the landscape. In reality places *have* no names, nor men and women either. Names are extraneous artificialities, convenient so long and so far as people agree about their form. And on this matter people often differ extremely, and much puzzlement is the result. The English call this region by a name signifying the Strange or Outlandish Country; the natives naturally call it something very different. What boots it? Here are ancient mountains, rocky ribs of our earth, and vault of sky coloured with the last light of one more day of earth's history. What are 'Italy,' 'India,' 'England,' and all the rest, but names, words, which some use and far more reject? A landscape, above all things, has no name, not even the pretence of one.

Yet words of some sort we must have, or how can we speak? how am I to go on telling you? I will ask this old woman plodding in a bye-lane half-way down the hill how she names her Valley. She is drest, sure enough, in a very strange way, much like a witch in a story-book. She shakes her old head in answer to my question; I ask again, very distinctly, and she utters two or three words in an unknown tongue. A main road farther down leads me towards a large village. On a corner is a large printed notice which I stop